

CRITICAL PERSPECTIVES ON MEDIA REPRESENTATIONS OF AGEING
IN THE AUSTRALIAN PRESS: *The Sydney Morning Herald (SMH)*,
Daily Telegraph, Newsonline, The Australian and The Conversation,
2010 - 2016

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Vivienne Selwyn

Macquarie University

Dept. of Arts

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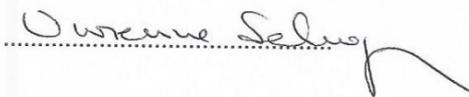
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Statement of Authentication

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The work presented in this thesis is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, original except as acknowledged in the text. I hereby declare that I have not submitted this material, either in full or in part, for a degree at this or any other institution.



VIVIENNE SELWYN

Abstract

This thesis critically examines Australian newspaper representations of ageing people 55 years and over between January 2010 and March 2016. This research fills a gap in Australian Cultural Studies research on ageing. I draw on disciplines such as gerontology, sociology, welfare and politics in my framing of ageing. This thesis identifies two discourses of ageing; ageing as an inevitable decline and active ageing. I analyse the complex relationship between these two discourses, as they appear in debates over health and the economy. This thesis explores the way these two discourses inform the visual and textual elements of newspaper coverage in *The Sydney Morning Herald*, *The Daily Telegraph*, *Newsonline.com.au*, *The Australian* and *The Conversation*.

Patterns in representations in Australian newspapers identified in this thesis include the representations of ageing Australians as posing a pressing social and economic problem. Newspapers represent older people as a homogenous group, with little representation of ethnic diversity or class differences. A further underpinning assumption is the need for this homogenous group to accept scientific, medical, political and policy knowledge to manage their health and activities as they age. These representations are fundamental to social inclusion within mainstream Australian society or exclusionary 'othering' from it.

Chapter 1

Introduction and Method

Introduction:

This thesis examines newspaper representations of ageing through a discourse analysis of selected newspaper texts. I commence this introduction with a discussion of the theoretical framework applied to the research, followed by an examination of the place of newspapers within Australian media and the manner in which they are involved in the cultural construction of ageing. I will conclude with a brief discussion of the most commonly occurring representations of ageing. A preliminary analysis of newspaper articles published during this period elicited an economic framing of ageing as the most commonly occurring followed by a health discourse. Implicit within these representations I identified two constantly reproduced paradigms of ageing: ageing as an inevitable decline and ageing as a positive experience, referred to as active ageing.

The introduction outlines my methodology, situating the method of data collection and analysis applied to the large corpus of articles generated within the conventions of Cultural Studies. The articles analysed are sourced from two formats of newsprint publications. *The Sydney Morning Herald (SMH)* and *The Australian* represent “broadsheet reporting”, *The Daily Telegraph* and *Newsline* “tabloid reporting”. These newspapers are available in Australia as print and online versions. I also analysed articles from *The Conversation*, an “on-line” forum accessible by the population for academic discussion of topics appearing in mainstream media.

There is limited literature on cultural studies and newspaper constructions of ageing particularly in the Australian context. This lack of attention to this medium’s involvement in the portrayal of successful ageing in Canada was addressed by Rozanova (2010) when she

stated the reason for her newsprint based research project was 'research on successful ageing has largely bypassed media portrayals of older adults' (2010, 214). This thesis addresses that gap, focussing on newsprint representations of ageing, specifically in people 55+ years of age in the period since 2010. Disciplines including gerontology, sociology and social policy offer significant additional academic insights supporting the analysis. For this research, I apply the same conceptual tools of power/knowledge, surveillance, discourse, governmentality and technologies of self that are increasingly applied in ageing research (Gilbert, Leedham and Hendricks in Powell and Wahidin, 2006, Katz, 1996). Utilising Foucault, further Katz (2000) explored some of the 'critical intersections between activity and regimes of care and lifestyle with a focus on the management of everyday life in old age' (2000, 136). This thesis examines the representations of these regimes in contemporary Australia.

By applying a Foucauldian lens to the construction of media representations of ageing, this thesis aims to determine the discourses that have articulated and structured the perspective of ageing in Australia over the past 6 years. Foucault himself did not examine the concepts or issues of ageing, however, his thinking and theories are applicable and have informed existing ageing research conducted in other disciplines. Powell & Wahidin (2006) observe that the past twenty years have seen an upsurge in research on ageing that has 'primarily focussed on older people as a problem or active ageing' (2006, vii). A Foucauldian approach allows me to interrogate the construction of representations, their manner of organisation and legitimisation. Culpitt provides some directions for Foucauldian work on ageing: - 'any investigation of aging, applying Foucault's methods, would look to how the fears, experience and inevitable physical deprecations of old age are shaped by the various institutional structures and practices we put in place' (Culpitt, 2006, 113). At the same time, I contextualise my analysis through a 'framing perspective', a tool utilised in political

communication research as ‘a way to tie news content to larger structures and develop new ways of capturing the power of media to define issues visually and verbally, thereby shaping audience perceptions’ (Reese & Lee, 2012, 752). Cultural constructions embody discourses that are socially shared and offer symbolic structure to the social world. This thesis therefore examines the symbolic organisation, articulation and structuring of the group defined as ageing.

Theoretical framework

The value of Foucauldian concepts such as power/knowledge, biopower and surveillance in interpreting constructions of ageing have been presented by numerous scholars across a range of disciplines. Scholars whose work on ageing I reference include Powell & Biggs (2004), Powell & Hendricks (2009), Katz & Calasanti (2015) and Katz (1996). I incorporate theories and ideas from sources which whilst not specifically about ageing, offer insights that are applicable for this research (Rabinow & Rose, 2006). Foucault’s theories and their applicability to the study of ageing in the discipline of cultural studies have been discussed by Powell & Wahidin (2006), Powell & Biggs (2004), Rabinow (2006) and Katz & Gish (2015). Consequently, I frame this research in terms of Foucauldian thinking, extending this analysis into the hitherto under-discussed Australian context.

This thesis involves a discourse analysis of newspaper articles. Foucault (1972, 141) defined discourse as an ‘entity of sequences, of signs’. A discourse is a construction of ideas, attitudes, courses of action and beliefs that inform the practices of individuals, groups and institutions in everyday life. Despite the rise of alternative online news sources, newspapers through their intersections with social media maintain their role in strengthening dominant constructions. Emphasising this link between print news and online sources, Dwyer et.al. (2011), state ‘the domestic news Australians consume online is dominated by media sources

familiar before social media were born, Fairfax, News Ltd, the ABC and Ninemsn' (2011, 65.1).

Analysis of these articles reflects a strong message homogenising the group and with specific framing of the ageing self as the core element. Foucault proposed the theory of biopower or biopolitics as a regulatory system designed to control the population through the individual to manage potential threats to the economy (Foucault, 1997, 241-247). Control of the population is at both a political and individual level. The individual is presented as having a responsibility to work on and manage the body. Foucault (2000) explained this further saying 'power had to be able to gain access to the bodies of individuals, to their acts, attitudes and modes of everyday behaviour' (2000, 125). Rabinow & Rose (2006) express this through notions of a human body that is born, matures and dies, and which during this trajectory 'can be trained and augmented' (2006,197). Biopolitics is thus understood as the 'specific strategies and contestations over problematizations of human vitality...forms of knowledge, regimes of authority and practices of intervention, that are desirable, legitimate and efficacious' (Rabinow & Rose, 2006, 197). Katz (1996, 2005) and Minichiello & Coulson (2005) in their writings are in agreement that ageing is therefore constructed through biopolitics. In this thesis, I have analysed the articles with a view to elucidating the elements of biopolitics that appear in these representations of ageing.

Forms of knowledge or 'truth discourses' were originally defined by Foucault as 'a system of ordered procedures, for the production, regulation, distribution, circulation and operation of statements' (Foucault, 2000, 132). Rabinow & Rose (2006), Rose (2007) agree that there are now a proliferation of authorities encompassing many disciplines considered as experts offering or supporting these truth discourses. The truth discourses are then implemented into the formulation of 'the strategies for intervention upon collective existence in the name of life and health...biological citizenship' (Foucault, 2000, 132). The strategies offer the

regulatory framework for the individual's responsibilisation to work on themselves, surveilling themselves and applying appropriate modes of subjectification.

Whilst Foucault (1997) emphasised that 'disciplinary societies' constructed inclusion and exclusion through a negative system of rules being broken, he later revised this to suggest that resistance is important in creating disciplinarity as a holistic rather than negative force. It was Foucault who first called attention to 'discipline' as a "system of control in the production of discourse" (Foucault 1972: 224), where discourse is the verbal traces left by history that influences the construction of the historically and culturally specific set of rules for organizing and producing different forms of knowledge. These rules inform the statements that are unquestionably accepted (Foucault, 1972, 193). This notion of discourse has been examined, interpreted and utilised by different disciplines including sociology, gerontology and cultural studies.

Rabinow & Rose (2006, 209) in their examination of "Biopower today" explain this as the manner in which personal choice requires responsibilisation on the part of the individual who accepts the imposed obligations. Katz & Calasanti explore disciplinarity and truth discourses critiquing Rowe & Kahn's 'successful ageing' hypothesis and the idea that it represents a truth discourse. They suggest that a viewpoint which limits itself to examination of truth discourses ignores 'ideas of individual choice and lifestyle' and suffers from 'inattention to intersecting issues of social inequality, health disparities and age relations' (Katz & Calasanti, 2015, 26). This research is designed to explore the manner of distribution and circulation of these concepts and whether they are limited by inattention to difference within the current representation of ageing in Australian newspapers.

Newspapers as a data source

Newspapers in Australia achieve broad readership across the population. The *SMH* reached 4+ million readers through its paper, web and app. editions in the twelve months to June 2016 (Roy Morgan Poll, 2016), *The Daily Telegraph* 3+ m, *The Australian* 2+m and *NewsOnline* approximately 4m (ibid.). Newspapers in the past represented the first reporting platform. However, the growth of online access to information has altered newspaper reporting to also include information already available through other formats. There is a growing synergy of informational sources shaped and framed by social media, television and other news sources, and the international and limited ownership of media sources.

Fairfax newspapers are owned and operated by the international conglomerate of John Fairfax Holdings. News Ltd, is owned, alongside other TV, news and broadcasting properties by Murdoch Corporation. The ABC is the national public broadcaster (Radio, TV and on-line podcasts) of Australia, and Ninemsn previously owned by Microsoft, is now owned by CVS Asia amongst other assets including Sky News and ACP Magazines. These media outlets are internationally owned and have national representation in Australia through the wide range of titles and presentation formats. *SMH* is linked to the *Canberra Times*, *The Age* (Melbourne) and *The Financial Review* as part of the Fairfax group, whilst *The Australian* and *Daily Telegraph* are part of News Corps. This creates space for the sharing of reporting between sister publications and programming sources.

The Conversation offers specific editions in Australia, Africa, France, United States and United Kingdom as well as an international edition. Journalists mediate the site and articles working with researchers from around the world. The mandate of *The Conversation* is “to provide cutting edge ideas and people who know what they are talking about” (The

Conversation, 2016). *The Conversation*, estimates its current reach as 3.3 million users and 35 million by 'commons re-publication' (ibid.).

All sources apart from *The Conversation* are available in paper as well as web and app. formats. Consequently, articles from these publications offer a helpful sample of the wider representation of ageing in newsprint across Australia, with many articles appearing in more than one publication.

Foucault's (2000) theory of power/knowledge effects the construction of cultural understanding and expectation through the interrelatedness and constant presence of a framework that is seldom static or absolute but rather constantly affected by external forces. It's most effective proponents are those people, policies and ideas that dominate in specific domains. These articles sourced from Fairfax and News Limited publications, influenced by ownership mandated editorial perspectives are a major media source, and as Hall (1977) suggests, most commonly disseminate a dominant cultural view. To be successful in the media marketplace publications need to present stories in a cultural context that has meaning for the audience. As previously noted this research explores the representation offered and the cultural context they convey to the reader. I concur with the ideas of Philo (2008) when he stated

that there is a powerful body of evidence which shows the influence of media messages on the construction of public knowledge as well as the manner in which evaluations are made about social action and what is seen as necessary and desirable in our world (2008, 542).

With reference to this research, this constructs the readers of these articles as having a similar understanding of the encoded messages of the articles. However, they then interpret them within their own frameworks and knowledge base.

International research on ageing in the media

A number of scholars argue that media representations shape broader cultural constructions of ageing. Gee (2002), Fealy et.al (2012), Lundgren & Ljuslinder (2011) and Northcott (1994) examined international newspaper representations concluding that this medium has a significant impact on the construction of identities. A literature review by Fealy et.al. (2012) that included Powell & Wahidin, 2008; Coupland 2009; Hardy, 2007; Bonnesen & Burgess, 2004 and Martin, Williams & O'Neill, 2009, concludes that whilst there are some positive stereotypes of ageing, the predominant representations are negatively framed in terms of decline, decrepitude and burdensome to society. Lundgren and Ljuslinder argue that 'from an international perspective, media representations of population ageing have been described as apocalyptic in character' (Lundgren & Ljuslinder, 2011, 39). The word catastrophe or apocalypse when applied to ageing demographics or the economic framing of ageing is a descriptive term most commonly utilised in media reporting. Demographers have been highlighting the changing demographic profile in nations states since the second world war. One major factor in this is the baby boom that followed the Second World War (1946 – 1964), the members of which are now range in age from fifty-two to seventy years of age. However, the description of these demographic shifts in apocalyptic terms is one which has been regularly critiqued by scholars. The frequency of the use of 'catastrophic or apocalyptic demography' in newspaper reporting supports the use of the phrase in this thesis.

Martin, Williams & O'Neill in their report on articles relating to older people and ageing in *The Economist* between 1997- 2008, determined that over two-thirds portrayed a contextualised and ageist viewpoint (Martin et.al., 2009, 3). They note that 'the subject matter in three quarters of the articles involved pensions, demography, health care and politics' (ibid). Ageing people are represented within a discourse of inevitable decline as a

burden to society due to frailty, non-contribution to the tax base and access to the age pension. Rudman & Molke's (2009) research in Canada concluded that the shaping of later life workers occurs through the singular lens of 'productive ageing', presented as the individual managing their body and the ageing process so as to be able to continue working for a longer period.

A key discourse of ageing in newspapers already outlined is that of ageing as inevitable decline. These international studies identified a discourse of 'apocalyptic demography' (Gee, 2002, 750) as common in the press coverage of ageing, built on national and international demographic predictions. The estimated fastest growing demographic group is over 65's, accounting for 524 million (8% of world population) in 2010. This is estimated to rise to 1.5 billion (16%) by 2050 (WHO, 2011, 4). In this thesis, I analyse the texts to determine whether apocalyptic demography also emerges as the most prominent discourse within Australian representations of ageing.

Framing of Ageing

Ageing is a construction with a constantly moving locus. It emerges in different forms, offering multiple, often contradictory and inexplicable meanings. Mayer (2004) examined the sociological viewpoints that have underpinned the development of life-course theories. He discussed a trajectory that moved through the theories of Piaget's (1970) biological principles, to Foucault's (1977) institutional ones. This was followed by Thompson's (1976) notions of tradition and class and Winter (1986), Kertesz (1992) and Levi (1995) all of whom focussed on war and catastrophe. This trajectory has led to an increased awareness of the impact of 'mutual interaction...and the significance of human agency' (Mayer, 2004, 161). Mayer concludes that there has been a further development of understanding that extends beyond the 'general conceptualizations of the social organization of human lives' (2004,

182). In his view life-course outcomes are varied and infinite, affected by human agency and with 'close causal linkages to the web of institutions specific to given societies and periods' (ibid.). Lassen and Moreira (2014) encapsulate the conflict between small scale studies of individual's or of institutions as constructors of the remaking of paradigms of ageing. They suggest that a broader examination is required as 'lifestyle interventions ideally will hinder the transition from the third to the fourth age' and society is 'changing the societal institutions endeavours to radically rearticulate what we mean when we talk about late life' (2014, 34). Lassen and Moreira acknowledge the tension between the application of Foucauldian theory and the requirement to evaluate the presence of alternate life-course narratives within the representations under examination. The lack of an accepted definition of 'old age' or 'ageing' presents an issue for any research in the field. Within this thesis 'ageing' has been defined chronologically as people over 55 years of age and defined by a range of words and phrases that suggest ageing.

Disciplinary formations often help to create rather than just describe identities. Katz poses the question 'How is the development of gerontology linked to the disciplining of old age and the constructions of specific subjects of power and knowledge?' (1996,1). He, Minkler (1996), Gusmano & Allin (2014) and Lundgren & Ljuslinder (2011) theorise that disciplinarity inhabits two spheres: the first legitimising and authorising knowledge concepts, and the second involving the power relations that regulate and legitimise behaviours for and by people. Consequently, I explore the representations of ageing presented in these articles for the manner in which they reflect the spheres of disciplinarity.

Gusmano & Allin and Lundgren & Ljuslinder's research endorses the theory that media is involved in the creation of specific identities. Definitions of ageing vary according to the discourse under discussion such as: - health, decline, economic dependency, medical

innovation, medical costs and welfare policy. As a response to power/knowledge these representations of ageing reflect a disciplinary construction that defines and identifies.

International scholarship around representations of ageing emphasises media texts' legitimisation of a homogenous view of ageing, as already referenced in the work by Martin et. al. (2009). Simultaneously however, they offer an opposition composed of a positive construction of ageing acceptable within society, and a stage moving beyond this which is marginalised and 'othered'. An example of this is Rudman & Molke (2009) who discuss the manner in which

productive aging discourses might be drawn on to justify further state and workplace retreat from policies and programs that support those who face challenges to continued engagement in work, or who cannot, or chose not to, be *forever productive*' (2009. 377).

Ageing, dependent upon context, can be the root cause of a problem, the solution to a problem, or, point towards the group most affected by the problem. The international scholarship reflects the potential for any article to incorporate more than one of these framings of ageing within it.

Methodology

A critical discourse analysis was undertaken on the chosen articles, with newspapers selected as the primary resource. Examination of broadsheet and tabloid offerings provided the opportunity to map different articulations of discourses of ageing in papers appealing to different constituencies.

Access to the primary sources was through the online archives of The State Library of NSW and News Limited Online. *The Conversation* was accessed directly via its website. A classical key word Boolean search methodology utilising the following words was applied: ageing,

aged, age, pensioner, pension, senior, anti-ageing, medical innovation, medical breakthrough, baby boomer, boomer, grey nomad, retirement, retiree, retired, health, healthier, healthy, active, live longer, longevity and long life. Specific medical conditions or treatments often defined as age related were not actively included. However, the search methodology used did not preclude generating articles that linked ageing and women, disability or other elements of differentiation. The search period defined was 01/01/2010 – 30/03/2106. This generated a corpus of one hundred and seventy-eight newspaper articles, one hundred and thirty-six broadsheets and forty-two tabloids. *The Conversation* generated a further forty-six articles. A total of fifty-four newspaper articles appeared in the period 2010 – 2012 and one hundred and twenty-four between 2013 – 2016. The pattern of growth is similar in *The Conversation*. This growth is particularly noticeable in articles with an ‘economic disaster framing’. One hundred and twenty-five articles related to an economic discourse overall, 90 of them published from 2013 onwards.

The years 2010 – 2016 saw a number of changes of government in Australia. The spectre of the economic problems facing the nation formed an important element of the election campaigns and opposition rhetoric throughout this time. The ratio of Australian debt to GDP rose from 20.5% in 2010 to 30.5% in 2013 (Tradingeconomics.com). Equally significant, the Productivity Commission Report on Ageing, “An Ageing Australia: Preparing for the Future”, was released late in 2013. These factors may have influenced movements in dominant discourses at this time including significantly increasing the emphasis on ageing and its links to the national economy.

Method of analysis

Articles were analysed using “NVivo11” a qualitative data analysis program. Both images and language were coded for themes, styles, frequency, metaphors, stereotyping, lifestyle and

emotive content, commencing with a word frequency analysis. Matrices of relationships, intersections and interactions of concepts and discourses were then developed. Two broad groupings emerged: a discourse of ageing as the risk factor cause of an incipient economic disaster and a discourse of ageing framed as a health or medical problem.

Word frequency analysis provided a framework of the language appearing across articles. These words and phrases were then used to frame the coding matrices applied to each article. The coding matrices constructed clusters within areas such as homogeneity, health, economic rationalism, individualism and disaster. These were then used to construct analytical queries of classification, comparison and cluster analysis. I re-examined the data a number of times following the approach advocated by Denzin and Lincoln (1994) and Jackson & Mazzei (2012).

Key discourses of ageing

I will argue in Chapter 3 that ageing is presented in Australian newspapers as a demographic time bomb and the cause of a projected economic problem, and that the paradigms of ‘inevitable decline’ and ‘active ageing’ are used to support and inform this argument. I will highlight that representations of health are both incorporated into the economic discourse and also framed as a separate discourse of ageing. Chapter 4 contains the analysis of health, the second most prominent discourse to emerge.

The work of academics Biggs (2001), Minkler & Estes (1998), Katz (1996) and Rowe & Kahn (1998), has informed my classification of the two paradigms commonly used to represent ageing in the context of Australian newspapers: a discourse that sees ageing as inevitable decline and one that views successful active ageing as a positive experience. The discourse of inevitable decline is framed as bodily movement towards frailty, decrepitude, dependence and death. The World Health Organisation (2002) defines active ageing as ‘the process of

optimizing opportunities for health, participation and security in order to enhance quality of life as people age' (WHO, 2002, 11). This definition is expanded upon in their publication to explore elements such as volunteering, caring, access to social groups and activities and economic contribution. In 2010 in Australia, 43% of 55 – 64 year olds volunteered and 31% of over 65's (Volunteering Australia, 2015, 4). Hours volunteered per year increased with age from an average of eighty hours per year to over one hundred. The overall value of volunteering for this period is estimated as twenty-five billion dollars to the economy (2015, 8). The value of informal care in the community is estimated at over sixty million dollars per year (Carers Australia, 2015, 17). These figures reflect the estimated direct importance of these activities to the economy. An indirect benefit to the economy can be hypothesised linked to a lower requirement for governmental supports. The psychological and physiological benefits of volunteering, caring and contributing to society underpin the WHO definition of active ageing.

Biggs explores these discourses of ageing, writing of the decline model, 'Prior to the social-democratic turn in western politics, a narrative held sway that was characterized by increasing dependency as adults aged' (Biggs, 2001, 306). He notes a recent refocussing by the U.K. Government on 'active aging', that he argues 'constitute(s) a significant attempt to engineer a new identity for British elders and counteract ones based on decrement and disengagement' (Biggs,2001, 308). These ideas continue to be articulated in UK policy in very similar ways as can be seen from the UK Government (Dept. of Works and Pensions) 2015 policy update paper, the first action point of which is 'Improving recruitment and retention of an ageing population' and where 'We see retirement as an increasingly active phase of life where people:

- have opportunities to continue contributing to society by working longer or volunteering in their communities

-take personal responsibility for their own wellbeing by working, saving and looking after their health' (2015, 1).

These two models of ageing underpin academic knowledge in other disciplines. Minkler (1996) examines the changing focus in critical gerontology away from a 'political economy of ageing' towards a 'perspective from the humanities' (1996, 468). The work of Lassen & Moreira (2014), Rozanova (2010) and Tulle & Mooney (2002) reflect the continued inclusion of a humanities perspective in the focus of critical gerontology. Katz (1996), Bernard & Scharf (2007) and Featherstone & Hepworth (1994) discuss the widespread negative attitudes to older people as a group as evidenced through the negative imagery and language that surrounds representations of ageing. They theorise that a change in imagery from decline to constructions reflecting a period of opportunity and pleasure would have a major impact on the construction of ageing and age identities.

The international literature highlights the construction of ageing through particular political and cultural framing of the nations in question at the time of the research. This thesis examines the Australian framing. Comparisons are drawn with the international research where possible taking account of the differing imperatives of the research design.

This research established a homogenised representation of ageing in almost all presentations, with the most common discourse of ageing as the cause of an impending economic problem. A continuation of the narrative offers a solution requiring subjectification on the part of the individual and responsibilisation to ensure a continuing ability to work and contribute economically. The second narrative of health emerged both separate to and synergistically linked to the economic characterisation. The health messages are fragmented, with some discussing potential medical innovations to increase longevity whilst others are directed at body management in terms of exercise, diet and positive

outlook. Another form of health message informs the medicalisation or problematisation of ageing. In this framing, problematisation constructs as age related, conditions that require body management strategies to avoid them. Medicalisation is the moment at which a diagnosis is invoked and medical control became applicable. In this thesis I discuss the manner in which these discourses intersect, constrain and construct overt and subliminal messages of homogeneity, marginalisation, regulation, inclusivity and exclusion targeting the individual and society.

Chapter 2

Literature Review: Defining and Framing Ageing

Preliminary findings situate most of the articles into the two discourses identified – economics and health. These findings raised a number of further questions. Who are ‘the experts’ in the articles? What constitutes their expertise? Is this a health based discourse, an economics one, or does it synergise both? Does the framing of the article homogenise, marginalise or ‘other’ ageing? Are the voices of ageing included? Do the articles delegitimise other discourses? Is the viewpoint consistent with the most common representations offered, or does it present an alternative scenario? This literature review is framed with these and other questions that arose as the focus.

I have drawn on theorists from aligned disciplines who have conducted research into ageing, to aid in the interpretation of the primary sources. I apply insights from academia on topics including medicalisation, social welfare, health fear campaigns, gender, racism, disability, economic participation and dependency to my interpretation of ageing.

This literature review is organised into relevant topic areas incorporated into my analysis.

The theories and knowledge gathered from aligned disciplines is incorporated in the interpretation and presentation of a cultural studies perspective on current representations of ageing in the Australian press.

Paradigms of ageing

Until recently, public discussion of ageing has been underpinned by the assumption that ageing is about decline. The decline paradigm has been linked to access to the pension at the fixed age of 65, legislated for in the early twentieth century to ensure a basic lifestyle for older people having left the workforce. This was the first legislative measure to homogenise a chronologically based framing of ageing. Access to the age pension has been conflated

with retirement age, however Australia has never legislated a specific retirement age. The current paradigm of active ageing as stated by WHO is framed for both individuals and populations and has a broad construction that incorporates economic, social, cultural and spiritual elements.

Catastrophic economic framing of ageing

The explicit framing of catastrophic demographics of ageing as producing economic problems is evident from this European Commission quote,

‘Demographic change in Europe is seen as a challenge for many policy areas...As many of these areas involve significant shares of public finance expenditure, population ageing is also subject to examinations from the perspective of fiscal sustainability’ (2014, 9).

The social contract with regard to work, retirement and life after retirement was ratified with a chronological fixed point in most western countries through pension legislation (Rudman & Molke, 2009). When the pension was originally legislated for, average life expectancy for a man was 64 years (Rudman & Molke, 2009, 379). The actuarial calculation of the cost to the nation of the pension was that it would not significantly impact the economy. Rising union and labour force power, political requirements and industrial organisation consolidated the institution of retirement as part of the typical life course (Harper, 2006, Ch. 1). Longer lifespans, greater calls on welfare provisions and the projected negative impact on the tax collection base of a nation are offered as the basis for the framing of the ageing population as problematic (OECD, 2013). One suggested claim emerging within academia that is currently gaining in popularity and endorsed by Harper (2006, 20) is that the existing arrangements for retirement need to be revisited.

Projections by demographers for the Australian Bureau of Statistics estimate the population to grow from 22.7 million people (June 2012) to an estimated 36.8 to 48.3 million by 2061,

with the ageing demographic expected to continue rising over this period. This is the result of sustained below replacement levels of fertility combined with increasing life expectancy. There were 3.2 million people aged over 65 years in 2012 representing 14% of the population, estimated to increase to 22% or between 8.1 and 10.6 million by 2061 (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2012). This predicted pattern of growth of the ageing demographic in Australia is similar to established levels of other developed nations (OECD, World population ageing, 2013). Thus, the increased lifespan and quickly growing cohort of over 65's is expected to create an unprecedented impact on society. This normalisation of the potential to live 20+ years after 65 supports the search for new models to grow old by and challenges the stereotype of the timing of inevitable decline.

The demographic composition of population ageing within a national context is distinctive to each generation and is a 'function of past experiences and unique circumstances' (Borowski, 2007, 27). For Australia factors that have an important effect on the changing composition are 'the gender mix... ethnic diversity ...and spatial/geographic distribution of the aged' (ibid). A key question raised in this research and discussed in Chapter 3 and 4 is whether representations reflect these factors.

Saunders (2013) states that, 'globalization presents nation states with an increasingly integrated set of economic challenges and opportunities' (2013, 617). An effect of globalisation and neo-liberalism in the western world has been the commodification of temporary workers in the labour market (Rosewarne, 2010). The international movement of people in and out of the labour market to suit the needs of economic rationalism constructs a situation where that particular population is considered as a commodity. McClelland (2010) discusses the changing nature of Australian policy altering the relationships between the government, labour market and the workers, particularly labour market protections.

International research by Harper (2006), Bernard & Scharf (2007), Martin, Williams & O'Neill

(2009) explore the discourse of ageing homogenisation, presenting this in a new light as an element of the labour market. Examination of these combined theories construct ageing as a homogenised group within the economic discourse of the nation. These treatments of ageing do not consider the diversity of the actual ageing experience. They do not encompass the effects lived experience might have on an individual's ability to maintain a role in the labour market. The notions of capacity, ability and opportunity to work and contribute beyond the traditionally accepted point at which an age pension or superannuation can be accessed is unquestioned. Thus, the ageing are treatable as a commodity form in relation to the economy, rather than as individuals.

Australia's welfare and neo-liberal economy

The aim of social policy in Australia is to improve the welfare of the people especially the most vulnerable. It is exemplified by concepts of shared social risk and redistribution of assets that limit inequalities in society. Examples of policies affecting ageing as well as other groups such as women and the disabled include the 1980's anti-discrimination legislation enlarging the rights of minority groups, the welfare to work policies of respective governments from the mid 1980's linking expectations and responsibilities to welfare receipt, and the current focus on the development of capacity to work and the expectation of more people being in paid work for a longer period of time (McClelland, 2010).

The early 1980's in Australia saw neo-liberalism starting to gain traction within economic framing, with a focus on the individual, free trade, lower taxation, smaller government and market economies (Quiggin, 1999). Logically this should have translated to the creation of a small government model of individualism and self-reliance (Cahill, 2004). However, as Spies-Butcher (2014) states 'social spending has increased based on a highly redistributive model while inequality has grown' (2014, 185). Compulsory superannuation, which was legislated in

Australia in 1984 has allowed those already on higher earnings levels to build up significant economic assets to fund their post work lifestyle. These are often significantly higher than the assets of those dependent on a full or part pension. The ability to manage the post work years and the ageing scenario is affected by both economic and social factors. This research examines the corpus of articles for commentary on these factors. Neo-liberal reform is presented as offering greater flexibility and increasing the economic potential for the nation and therefore the individual. However, increased levels of inequality have been noted in Australia (Quiggin, 1999, 258). Reforms of the tax and welfare systems have been regressive and punitive, whilst at the same time changes in workplace and market protections have diminished the unskilled labour market sector and increased that of the skilled (Quiggin, 1999, 258). Professor Eva Cox in her 2014 article in *The Conversation* states that ‘the measures of inequality are increasing’. The implicit model of Australia’s social contract incorporating the notion of a fair go for all, has been undermined since the 1990’s ‘as neoliberal policy models of a minimalist state started to displace more socially driven policy priorities’ (Cox, 2014). The changes in the labour market present a potential problem for those ageing and attempting to continue in the work force. The loss of unskilled or manual positions means those who have traditionally worked in these areas have fewer options, often aligned to retraining needs.

The current neo-liberal governmental framework privileges ‘intense market competition, less state intervention and more entrepreneurial orientation to action’ (Hall & Lamont, 2013,3). This is reinforced by the development and framing of welfare legislation that alters the parameters within which individual responsibility occurs. An example of this is “Working Nation” (Keating, 1994), that ‘contained a range of detailed proposals related to reducing unemployment and long term unemployed’ (McClelland, 2010, 7). The policy included industrial relations changes, the introduction of job compacts and reciprocal obligations on

the part of the community as well as the individual (McClelland, 2010,7). Whilst legislatively ageism should not affect the workplace and limit opportunities for older people, Australian Bureau of Work statistics highlight a reality that it does. Older people are more likely to take longer over job seeking and accept part time or contract work.

This cultural framing of the economy constructs a space of individual responsibility especially for health and welfare and a free market economy for products and services. Social welfare in this framing is designed to support the marginalised, whilst the capable accept self-responsibility. Neoliberalism suggests a need for a self-reliant individual. However, in this period in Australia as Spies-Butcher elucidates the citizen was framed through a 'model of targeting reinforced paternalist tendencies' (2014, 187). A fast-growing ageing demographic with the potential need to access the pension and medical support underpins the increased focus on the potentially difficult economic problem facing the nation. A change in focus from 'decline' to 'active ageing' provides a construction offering a solution to this estimated disaster through an elongated working life and a revised vision of social responsibility.

The construction of the economic problem thus frames a threat to the physical security of the nation. Diprose defines 'political technologies of pre-emption' as 'threats that have a low probability of occurring but would have potentially catastrophic effect' (2008, 141). Martin (2011) and Diprose (2008) discuss the manner in which political stratagems can be invoked to reduce the incalculable threat. Ageing is represented in this risk category through its estimated disastrous effects on the national economy. The paradigm shift from decline to active ageing has been translated in social and welfare terms to a 'tendency of lay and expert discourses to increasingly use the notion of risk' (Martin, 2011, 51). Risk in this context is framed in terms of either bodily or economic dependence; the point at which the productive plane upon which the active body is situated dips down the slope into decline.

The rising ageing demographic is the cause of this risk and pre-emptive body and life management programs are the means of managing it.

The predicted catastrophic problem is predicated on the generally endorsed decline model calculation whereby the ratio those over 65 is compared against those of working age. The calculation assumes that all people over 65 have left the paid work force. Thus, active ageing is presented as the solution to this problem, maintaining people in the work force for longer. Staying in the workforce and contributing to the economy is presented as an imperative for ageing. The discourse of ageing is homogenising this group as belonging within the labour market, excluding those who for whatever reasons can no longer participate. Powell & Biggs discuss an ethical ageing subject where, 'Self responsibility when passed through the metaphor of 'health', becomes a covert form of moral judgement upon which decisions can be made' (Powell & Biggs, 2004, 20). Such "responsible" ageing brings its own rewards and limits the obligations on others (individual or state). Declining into dependency is framed as due to lack of care and attention and questionable morals. This raises the ethical question of whether to provide scarce resources for these cases.

Ethical practices of individual subjectivity in Foucault's terms involve 'a process by which the individual delimits that part of himself that will form the object of his ethical practice, defines his position relative to the precept that he will follow, and decides on a certain mode of being that will serve his moral goal' (Foucault, 1987, 28). Armstrong (2002) interpreted Foucault's work as describing a system where power is involved in shaping constructions. For instance, the ageing individual can access a broad range of information on medical and non-medical interventions on ageing. They are then expected to make the right choices to fulfil their moral obligation. The media reflects or encourages dominant discourses such as the notion that ageing individuals have a responsibility to take control, exert power and minimise risk.

Neoliberalism engages individual agency with a responsibility for economic and social involvement as a means of maintaining society (Foucault, 1988). Certain groups, organisations or holders of knowledge are accepted as expert to validate truth discourses in particular domains. They define the cohort of “ageing”, define boundaries of behaviour and describe expectations of ageing. Subjectification to these ‘truths’ and the acceptance of the regimes of authority constructs ageing such that ‘the individual’s life and happiness is attuned to maximizing the health and strength of the state’ (Foucault, 2000, xxvii).

Framing Ageing

Katz (2005) suggests that the twenty-first century offers a plethora of interpretations of ageing within society. Ageing is no longer a linear, biological, chronological, psychological and social process but rather a construction with roots in history and affected through increasingly globalised cultural frameworks. As Blaikie (1999) in his examination of ageing in popular culture theorised attitudes towards the aged are ambiguous and undefined. This he suggests has left them open to political manipulation. Applying Foucault, it is possible to say that cultural representations are effected by power/knowledge relationships in their construction. Lupton & Tulloch (2002), Novas & Rose (2000), Rabinow & Rose (2006), Powell & Wahidin (2006) and Katz (1996) critically deploy Foucault’s framework incorporating concepts of power/knowledge, bio-power, the somatic individual and active citizenship to understandings of identity. The implicit definitions of ageing in the analysed articles are consistent with a cultural construction of ageing rather than a linear one. This is an important factor in this research as the representations under examination reflect dominant cultural discourses rather than chronology as involved in the construction of ageing. I also noted an implicit difference between the use of the words ageing and aged. The category of ‘aged’ is more difficult to define and appears to depend on an ephemeral construction of dependence, frailty and non-contribution.

The international newspaper research does not reflect the complexities of the specific societies within which they were conducted or discuss the effect this might have on the cultural constructions. The analysis in each case examined the current cultural construction on offer to readers of specific publications. In the same manner, this research is an examination of the specifically Australian representations on offer. One of the major tropes under examination is the inclusion or exclusion of markers of differentiation, the framing of homogeneity, and the manner of incorporation into particular forms and definitions of ageing. The articles are examined for the presence of or the absence of depictions of diversity such as the access to superannuation or reliance on the state pension, employment history - blue collar/manual workers or white collar office and race -immigrant and generation of immigration/ ethnicity.

Theoretical perspectives of ageing

The application of Foucault's ideas to this research, including topic areas such as subjectification, medicalisation and problematisation has been discussed in the introduction. Rabinow & Rose, (2006) offer conceptual clarification of Foucault's biopower, 'that characteristically entails a relation between "letting die" (*laissez mourir*) and making live (*faire vivre*) that is to say strategies for the governing of life' (2006, 195). They elucidate this further as 'focusing on the species body, the body imbued with the mechanisms of life: birth, morbidity, mortality, longevity' (2006,196). They refine this concept through three interlinked ideas. The first is 'one or more truth discourses about the 'vital' character of living human beings' (Rabinow & Rose, 2006, 197). I suggest that this is involved in the framing of the active ageing discourse. Ageing is represented as the cause of economic problems and the need for the ageing to manage their bodies for the common good support the second and third concepts. These concepts are the strategies required for the benefit of

the collective, and the subjectification through which individuals work on themselves (Rabinow & Rose, 2006, 197).

Powell & Biggs explore bio-medical framings of ageing through notions of surveillance. They argue that the power of medicine as a 'truth purveyor' has been diminished through increased access to other sources of information. Information is obtained from multiple sources to construct a personal understanding (Powell & Biggs, 2004,20), leading to an understanding of the necessary body management or technologies of self. Powell & Biggs define the bio-medical framings as formulating the construction that 'a healthy old age is seen to be the result of prudent self-care' (2004,20).). Active ageing involves subjectification and the acceptance of the problematisation of ageing, such that ageing is not a medical condition, but a problem to be managed to avoid the medicalised state.

Ageing and productivity

The current environment that links ageing, economic problems and productivity has been touched on earlier in this thesis. Carr et.al. (2015) state 'The current international policy environment promotes work and productive activities over and above other sources of meaning' (2015, 8). Harper (2006), Bernard & Scharf (2007), Minichiello & Coulson (2005) and Katz (2005) agree that active ageing is now most commonly represented through the lens of economic participation. These authors construe 'active ageing' as a singular discourse, one that legitimises economic participation whilst delegitimising other activities imagined in the WHO definition of ageing such as volunteering, enrichment programs and maintaining strong social interactions.

A focus on the self and productivity is endorsed by this representation of active ageing.

There is a need to maintain or transform the body through 'technologies of self' to achieve this (Foucault, 1988). These practices and strategies are developed within the framework of

'truth discourses' which are themselves framed through governmentality and power/knowledge. Society and the individual endorse the productive nature of these constructions and enact them through subjectification.

The international research findings already referenced highlight the negative impact of the ageing demographic and link it to the importance of active ageing. Economic participation is conflated with active ageing offering a positive construction of ageing. The implication is that as long as participation in the labour market is continued, the individual is recognised as part of society, and ageing is not ascribed a negative connotation. However, perceivable decline or an inability to contribute constructs and differentiates the aged as another group. A binary opposition is thus constructed between the discourses of decline and active ageing within the narrative of the economic problems.

Active ageing legitimises various 'technologies' such as working beyond the age of 65, nutritional supplements and ageing body management strategies. Powell & Biggs (2004, 33) referring to Foucauldian analysis in the discipline of sociology argue 'individual lives and illnesses which were thought to be determined solely by biological, medical and psychological actors, are, in fact heavily influenced by social environments in which people live'.

Academic research conducted with older people reflects a wide range of different views on ageing, decline and the meaning of active ageing. Responses to media representations from a wider variety of formats and the feelings they engender in many cases conflict with the lived experience. Stephens, Breheny & Mansvelt (2015), Onyx & Leonard, (2007), Featherstone & Hepworth (2007), Dant, (1990) and Westerhof, Whitbourne & Freeman, (2012) all noted the expressed differences between the lived experience and understandings of the framing of media representations of ageing. Self-definition of age is often based on

feeling and not chronology. The definition of health may ignore the effects of chronic conditions under management. Thus, decline and health are interpreted in individualistic manners which depend on personal circumstances and the people involved in the particular discussions. Responses to newspaper representations of ageing are interpreted through the life experiences and knowledge of the reader.

The representations or 'truths' are often supported by expert opinions. Featherstone & Hepworth (2007) in their examination of "Images of Ageing" concluded that politicians and academics represented the expert face of the presentations of 'truth'. This will be shown to be evident in the articles examined for this research where veracity and authority are accorded through quotation from or association with scientists, academics, politicians and the broader medical fraternity. The ageing are not considered expert in this context and are rarely quoted.

The constantly evolving construction of ageing interpreted and understood through personal experience is a factor that I acknowledge has the potential to affect the interpretation and conclusion of this research. I acknowledge the embodied framing I have brought to this analysis the effects of which I have attempted to mitigate through my broad multidisciplinary reading.

Medicalisation and problematisation of ageing

Medicalisation occurs when a condition or behaviour is deemed pathological and treatable or manageable through medical interventions or scientific knowledge. Zola (1983, 295) explained this as the 'process whereby more and more of everyday life has come under medical dominion, influence and supervision'. Conrad attempts to clarify medicalisation by offering a more nuanced and conceptual framework: -

‘on the conceptual level a medical vocabulary is used to order or define the problem...few medical professionals need to be involved and medical treatments are not necessarily applied’

‘on an institutional level, organizations may adopt a particular approach to treating a particular problem’

‘on the interactional level physicians are most directly involved’ (Conrad,1992, 211).

Rose (2007) suggests that medicalisation might ‘be a useful neutral term to designate issues that were not at one time but have become part of the province of medicine’ (2006, 701).

Rose (2007), Halfmann (2011) and Williams & Calnan (1996) all examine the limitations of medicalisation as described by Conrad. They theorise a fluidity between medicalisation and demedicalisation. Demedicalisation occurs when an issue that has been medicalised is no longer culturally constructed as aberrant. Historically, for example homosexuality was medicalised and legislated as aberrant behaviour, and has more recently been demedicalised and accepted as a variant of normal behaviour. Ageing, historically was constructed as a natural stage of life. The effects of greater scientific and medical knowledge create the opportunity to conduct research to lengthen or alter the structure of ageing. Certain conditions such as high blood pressure and dementia are positioned as medicalised conditions of ageing in the current reading of newspaper articles. The referencing of scientists, doctors and academics in articles that discuss these issues as an effect of unmanaged ageing constructs a medicalised vision. However, many of the body management techniques which are proposed in the same articles as a means of limiting the possibility of these conditions are not themselves a medicalised response. These tensions suggest a problematised framing of ageing to be managed through technologies of self. Foucault (1984) explores problematisation as the tensions that are created when a set of practices construct an area of human existence into a crisis scenario. He defines it as ‘the set of discursive or nondiscursive practices that makes something enter into the play of the true

and false, and constitutes it as an object for thought' (Ewald, DE350.4, pp. 456-7). Katz (2000) raises the question 'Following Foucault, we might also ask how, why and in what forms was active adjustment to old age constituted as an ethical domain, and why has this ethical form become so persistent despite its varying forms and intensity' (2000, 137).

The role of the medium of newspapers in problematising ageing is evident through the range of scholarly work reflecting a negative image of ageing previously cited. As Featherstone and Hepworth suggest 'public images are considered to both reflect and shape social attitudes toward older people and the treatment they receive' (2007, 735). There has been a movement in the framing of life span away from a limited chronology towards one that reflects those years spent illness and disability free. Vincent proposes a dominant view of old age [ageing] as 'a stage in life medically defined wherein people are in the first instance 'at risk' from a set of specific diseases and thereafter afflicted by them' (Vincent, 2006, 690). Responsibilisation dictates accessing information, acting on that information and managing the body to delay the onset of age related medical conditions. The idea of ageing is more likely to be presented as a stage of risk, a problem to be addressed by the individual to delay arriving at the medicalised stage.

Lupton (2015) draws together the threads of risk, responsibilisation and problematisation in her research on 'the pedagogy of disgust'. Responsibilisation is effected when the 'desire within autonomous individuals to choose to follow imperatives set out by health promoting agencies ... thus....taking on responsibility of changing their behaviours' is incited (Ayo, 2012, 100). Lupton's examination of health information reflects the manner in which disgust is being incorporated into messages, marginalising those who are shown as involved in risk behaviours, and offering them a morally acceptable manner to move out of this marginalising framework. The articles examined in this research have thus been analysed with a view to their implicit or explicit framing of ageing through the lens of risk,

responsibilisation and disgust with the concomitant potential for marginalisation (Diprose, 2008; Lupton 2015, Ayo, 2012).

Chapter 3

The economic story of ageing

This chapter explores the most commonly identified construct of ageing in Australian newspapers: as the cause of an impending economic crisis. Of the one hundred and seventy-eight articles analysed, one hundred and twenty-five framed ageing in this context. This was consistent across all the publications analysed. *SMH* and *The Australian* published sixteen and seventeen feature articles respectively analysing the economic issue in question. *The Conversation* only publishes feature articles and eleven of these were economic. This construction has been noted in scholarly work conducted in other western countries, and is most commonly described as apocalyptic demography or apocalyptic ageing (Lundgren & Ljuslinder (2011), Harper (2006), Rudman & Molke (2009), Martin, Williams & O'Neill (2009), Gee (2002). This thesis highlights the growing importance of this discourse of the anticipated and calculated risk of economic crisis. Ninety out of the one hundred and twenty-five articles framing ageing in this construct were published between 2013 and 2016, as against thirty-five in the three years 2010 – 2012.

The economic focus

Framing ageing as the cause of the impending economic disaster facing Australia gained significant traction as a major media representation in the period from 2013 to 2016. The effects of neo-liberalism on public health and social welfare program provisions has previously been discussed. Gee examined representations of ageing in terms of 'the emergence of neo-liberal policies and agendas, and the parallel dismantling of the public provision of health and social services and programmes in most western countries' (Gee, 2002, 750). I share her definition of neo-liberalism at its most basic level as the 'primacy of the individual and his/her efforts to ensure his/her own wellbeing' (ibid). This places

emphasis on individual responsibility for the management of risk and a movement away from the common good or societal sharing. The articles analysed reflect a similar construction of neo-liberal underpinnings in Australia with reference to ageing. Ageing when managed correctly is constructed as a commodity benefitting the labour market with the ageing group required to contribute to the economic base in a manner defined by others. It is also presented as a commodity the existence of which depletes the nations resources. The commercialisation of ageing is apparent in the framing of products and ideas as developed specifically for this group. Foucault's notions of 'truth discourses' inform my analysis of this commodification and commercialisation of ageing. This commodification is particularly apparent in the articles that discuss longer working lives. Some examples are: "Ageing population, work until you're 80, retrain at 60" (*The Australian*, 2016), "Aussie labourers told to find new careers in their 50's" (*Newsonline*, 2015), "75 is the new 60 so we should all keep working longer" (*The Conversation*, 2014).

As previously referenced Australia has social welfare policies designed to provide universal health care and a social safety net. At the same time, there is a concurrent discourse, visible in some articles, which suggests a pejorative framing of entitlement attached to accessing the pension or other provisions. This is a change from the original construction of social welfare as discussed previously. The implicit negative associations and 'othering' of those accessing welfare is highlighted within the following examples.

"The government wants workers to retire at 67, but the average retirement age is closer to 59 for men and 50 for women, the Bureau of Statistics revealed... For men, the commonly reported main sources of personal income at retirement were government pension/allowance (51 percent) ... For women...government pension/allowance (42 percent)" (*SMH*, 2013).

A pensioner referring to Joe Hockey's budget speech targeting the ageing stated "he talks about the sustainability of our quality of life and safety nets becoming cargo nets and the age of entitlement belonging in the Age of Aquarius" (SMH, 2014).

Both these articles appeared at a time when the government was campaigning to make changes to the age pension and other welfare programs targeted at ageing. Joe Hockey the Federal Treasurer was the main face of this campaign. The language in these articles and the ideology that they frame was politically contentious in this period.

The ageing population as a homogenous group

My analysis reflects the framing of ageing through the two most prominent discourses; that of 'inevitable decline' or that of 'active ageing'. The movement between these two discourses has been noted since the 1990's and examined in detail by scholars such as Katz (1996), Bernard & Scharf (2007), Minkler (1996) and Featherstone & Hepworth (1994).

This thesis explores the homogenisation of ageing. Authors of the articles analysed use generic words and phrases to loosely define the group. There are limited instances (20 of 178) where specific ages are mentioned, and another twenty where the term "baby boomer" is used. These words and phrases examples of which include, "seniors", "elders", "retirees", portray a stereotypical vision of ageing defined by Featherstone & Hepworth (2007, 735) as 'oversimplified public images that are often stigmatized'.

A further element of homogenisation is the incorporation of ageing into dependency calculations within the economic debate. Dependency calculations consider the percentage of the population entitled to access welfare (age pension, aged care facilities and programs and estimated medical requirements) against those of working age who are paying into the tax base. These calculations are an important factor in the decline discourse as they delineate the time at which decline can be measured from, thus constructing the 'truth' to the economic impact discourse.

The construction of economic risk estimates is currently calculated based on dependency ratios (Harper, 2006; Harvey & Thurnwald, 2009 and Clare & Tulpulé, 1994). Predictive technology and calculations reflect the discourses politically or socially expedient in any given period. This is visible in the OECD 2013 World Population Ageing report and its framing of the economic disaster facing the western and developing world due to ageing.

Reference to dependency calculations is found in the longer articles authored by regular economic or political contributors. The Productivity Commission used the same calculations in the Intergenerational Report (2013). The ageing population is homogenised through the assumption that retirement at 65 is equivalent to becoming dependent. Gee and Gutman (2000) suggest that the construction of ageing as catastrophic from demographic data is fallacious. They suggest that dependency ratios utilise the decline model for their basis and do not factor in improvements in health, health management, altering family structures and the flow of economic capital between generations. Gee and Gutman theorise that the effects of demographic change on the economic outlook of a nation is complex and not best reflected through the phrases of apocalyptic or catastrophic demography.

We can see this logic operating in three articles in *The Conversation* which critique the popular accounts of the ageing population drawing on this paradigm. Each of these articles accept that the ageing population is an incontestable fact in Australia's future economic outlook. However, each questions the continued use of the age of 65 in the dependency calculation. Their interpretation of data proposes that people now experience longer and healthier lifespans. They suggest that active ageing aligned to extended labour force participation, should be reflected in a dependency calculation based on 70 or 75 instead of 65 years. These articles thus agree with the framing of an ageing population as an economic problem. However, according to their accounts, older peoples' healthcare needs will start at a later stage as will their calls on pension and other supports. The overall effect on the

economy will be negative but potentially at a lower level of risk than mapped out in newspaper articles offering the same premise.

The pattern of subject matter and representations of ageing are similar across the different Australian newspaper formats. The broadsheet newspapers offer longer and somewhat more sophisticated articles incorporating more facts and figures than the tabloid press. However similar discourses appear across all newspapers examined. These articles frame the necessity for continuing to work and also the benefits that accrue to society and the individual from paid work. The difficulties facing workers of finding suitable retraining opportunities are only mentioned in one article in a discussion with the “Age Discrimination Commissioner”. Fewer than five articles reference the changing technological face of the labour market and the movement from a market supportive of blue and white collar work to one where unskilled labouring work is vanishing, replaced by service industries and technology. Examples of the manner in which this is presented in articles can be seen from:

“for workers to be able to retain jobs or find new ones in a period of digital disruption and globalisation they will have to re-skill to ensure they are not left behind or spat out of the workforce” (*The Australian*, 2016)

“Bunnings (retail service industry), has recruited about 2000 "team members" aged over 55 in the past five years...Retraining workers who are past normal retirement age is also a priority” (*The Australian*, 2015).

These articles present retraining as a fact without any discussion of the many difficulties that might be faced by an individual in this circumstance. The article about “Bunnings”, a major hardware and home renovation retail chain showed a picture of a man alongside the text. This helps to construct ageing men as suitable employees in a gendered and stereotypical manner (Balkin, 1998, 231). At the same time the article has overtones of a need for gratitude on the part of ageing men that they are being offered the opportunity to continue past the date when they are expected to retire.

There are limited references to gender across the sample of articles. Two articles discuss ageing men finding work in service industries in retail chains that specialise in tools and mechanical hardware. Four articles include visuals of men in front of computer screens. Three articles in total reference women and the gender bias affecting their ability to self-finance a longer life. Of these, one reported an interview with a divorced woman who worked in a mid-level corporate environment, and who understood her need to work longer to provide a reasonable lifestyle for her future. The other two reported on older married women whose only access to work was part time in coffee shops, supermarkets, cleaning or health support services.

The articles that were women-specific mentioned issues women face as they age from elements such as moving in and out of the work force due to family commitments, their increased likelihood of having been in part time work with fewer protections, and their more limited ability to build up savings for later life. However, the majority of articles ignored any elements that differentiated the ageing group or that could affect their ability to engage with the proposed behaviour management processes. The presentation of ageing was homogenous with regards to both being the cause of the problem and the potential solution.

The Australian representation of ageing identifies a problem – an ageing workforce as an economic crisis. However, in most articles it also offers a solution – active ageing. The ageing are represented as a homogenous group of people able and willing to work longer. Thus, they will continue to contribute to the tax base, personally fund their lives and be less reliant on social welfare provisions. Whereas accounts in the international press are more likely to offer singular representations of either decline or active ageing, Australian articles differ in incorporating both decline and active ageing in the same space.

This research compares and contrasts these Australian representations to the traditional understanding of social responsibility that emerged from the legislation of a national pension age in the early 1900's, and the suggestions that have been noted of the need to re-frame this. The acceptance of the idea of the working life extending to 75 would justify the authors who critiqued current dependency ratio calculations. It would also maintain the framing of a period post working that is similar to current representations of retirement. My analysis reflects that Australian newspapers in common with international reporting offer representations of ageing that are informing and supporting notions of a changing social construction. The need for this change to occur is constructed as the only solution to the economic disaster scenario.

“Active ageing” as has already been stated, requires the individual to accept the moral requirement to engage with the new social contract, behaving appropriately, delaying visible and affective signs and stages of ageing and contributing to the economic base of the country. Decline is framed as an opposition to this creating risk for society. Individuals perceived as fitting within the decline paradigm are represented as different to those ageing, as potentially belonging to the aged. ‘Aged’ in Australian newspapers emerges as another category possibly marginalised from society. This is apparent in one or two of the articles analysed, and raises important questions that would benefit from further research.

The direct link between ageing, catastrophic economic risk and the social contract is discussed by Sheen (2014) in an article in *The Conversation* titled “The Commission of Audit wants to rip up Australia’s social contract”. She explains the social contract in terms of being the ‘fundamental building blocks of Australia’ that help to ensure the minimum level of life style for all. The social contract is a cultural construction informing notions of citizenship and nationhood. It represents the implicitly understood philosophical framing of the moral and/or political obligations on an individual for the smooth functioning of their society. The

titles, word and images in most of the other articles examined offer implicit links to notions of citizenship and nationalistic rhetoric. Language such as “you are”, “you must”, “your pension”, “your costs to the nation”, “can Medicare sustain our ageing population”, address the reader as needing to respond to these moral imperatives. The use of Australian statistics compiled by Australian government departments, and the appearance of “Australia”, “Australian” or “nation” in the articles helps to determine the citizenship and nationalistic framing of the discourses. Examples of older Australian being depicted both as a homogenised group and the cause of this projected economic problem is evident in headlines like *SMH’s* “Challenge of an ageing nation” (2013) and “Healthy, old and poor — Australia in 2055” from *The Australian* (2015). Words such as “ageing” or “old”, “nation” and “Australia”, “Challenge” and “Healthy, old and poor”, serve to frame a nationally based ageing issue. Implicit within both these titles and expanded on explicitly in the articles is the link to the economic impact of ageing.

Many of the articles include references to authorities stressing the need of the ageing population to continue working longer. This discussion of the extension of working life is often prompted by reporting of, or commenting on, projected policy changes. These policy changes are designed to lift the pension age or access to superannuation from 65 to 70 years of age. Furthermore, the articles propose retraining to other fields of work if necessary as one means of maintaining a place in the workforce. Physical problems such as the potential effects of a blue-collar background on bodily functioning, class, gender, education and access to employment opportunities are not discussed. The articles suggest that the individual is responsible for ensuring their hireability. Career consultant Catherine Cunningham is quoted in the article “Ageing population: work until you’re 80, retrain at 60” (*The Australian*, 2016) discussing the requirement for future workers to retrain. She suggests that people will need to strategise their work life, re-evaluating every two years and

considering what modules of training will best enhance their employment potential. The same article also quotes the chief economist of an investment company saying “For a lot of blue-collar workers, the ability to move from manual jobs on the production line to people-focused jobs on the service line will determine their ongoing employability”. These experts are offering suggestions about the expected behaviour necessary on the part of the individual to manage their continued presence in the work force.

The majority of these newspaper articles ignored or dissolved most differentiating elements of ageing. This finding is in accord with Featherstone & Hepworth (2007) who in their paper on the “Images of ageing” stated that, ‘the subtle differences and nuances that distinguish one individual older person from another are dissolved in order to transform ageing into one uniform process’ (Featherstone & Hepworth, 2007, 737).

The negative effects of an ageing population on the Australian economy are discussed or identified in a wide variety of article formats including pre-budget political writings, economic commentary, social welfare commentary, financial predictions and more. The results of this analysis are in line with the viewpoints on Australian constructions of ageing expressed by Carr, Biggs & Kimberley (2015). They concluded that ‘The dominant view of adult ageing has recently changed from one based on dependency to one formulated on economic contribution’ (2015, 7). The following headlines reflect both the variety of ways the “problem” of the economic burden posed by the ageing population is framed and the consistently homogenous and negative scope of this framing.

“Age Pension burden at political breaking point” (*The Australian*, 2016)

“Demography’s time bomb threatens economic growth” (*The Australian*, 2015)

“Challenge of an ageing population” (*SMH*, 2013)

“75 is the new 65, so we should all keep working for longer” (*The Conversation*, 2014)

Gee (2002, 750) states that demographic alarmism is being used to ‘reconstruct and redefine social problems in ways that fit a political agenda, or at least, that calibrate with popular and ideological positions’. I echo this idea in common with other scholars such as Carr & Biggs; Harper; Carney & Grey; Fealy et.al. and Rudman & Molke. The Australian representations are based on a presentation of an economic crisis facing the country. The only construction offered as to the cause is ageing and the only solution offered is a change in behaviour on the part of the ageing. The findings therefore show that there is a consistently constraining presentation of ageing that limits any alternate social or political interpretation.

The following quotes further illustrate the framing of older people as homogenous and the ageing population as a cause of impending doom. Quotes appearing in articles from the conservative national broadsheet, *The Australian* include,

“By 2050, typical workers may be expected to pay nearly as much towards other people’s retirement each year as they do towards their own” (*The Australian*, 2016)

“advanced economies...combined working-age populations will decline...and by 2050 will shrink by 5%. The ranks of workers will fall” (*The Australian*, 2015)

“As population ages, what people buy also changes...toward healthcare and away from durable goods” (*The Australian*, 2015)

Similar themes are found through the more centrist Sydney broadsheet *SMH*

“In 40 years time, the number of people over 65 years will have more than doubled...people under 18 will have fallen slightly... it could threaten Australia’s viability” (*SMH*, 2013)

The same themes are evident in the academic journal *The Conversation*

“An ageing population is a threat to not just the Australian economy, but also our political system... Australia... is facing a serious challenge in the form of an ageing population... ageing population would place increasing stress on health, aged care

services and other sectors. It would result in a decreased labour force and tax base”
(*The Conversation*, 2013)

The visuals accompanying these articles underline the authoritativeness of the articles’ economic predictions, through the use of graphs, charts and photographs of politicians. Featherstone & Hepworth remind us that images both reflect and shape social attitudes, and that it is necessary to bear in mind the multicultural variations of the world (2007, 735 – 740). Sturken & Cartwright (2001) suggest that, the meaning of a media produced image should be contextualised through the cultural lens of the society at which it is aimed. Sturken states that there is a need to understand that one of the functions of an image is in ‘regulation, categorization, identification and evidence’ (2001, 22). Thus, a photograph of Joe Hockey (Federal Treasurer), standing up, dressed in suit and tie, delivering a speech in parliament reinforces the authority of his message through dress, inhabited space and body positioning. Graphs are read as a scientific format for presenting truth and normalising data. The value of statistics presented in graphs in establishing the ‘othering’ of specific groups is a focus of contention by Davis in his work on the classificatory treatments of disability (Davis, 2013).

An exemplar of a cartoon/drawing that reflects both ageing and nationalistic tropes sits alongside an article titled “Boomers retirement starting to bite” (*SMH*, 2013). It is a predominantly grey scale image of a sailing boat battling high seas, with shapes in the rear which appear to be people bailing water. Hiding half of the mast, and dwarfing the overall visual, is a large pink toned cloud in the shape of the map of Australia imposed over other deeper grey clouds. Between the cloud map, the raging waves and the grey clouds are six shadow figures, some male, some female, apparently holding briefcases or bags, being thrown about the sky by the wind, trying unsuccessfully to return to the boat with their arms outstretched.

The imagery and title of this article present boomers as a national problem. The high seas invoke elements of national tropes of boat people and illegal immigrants as well as religious based morality stories. The figures flailing in the wind are lacking in agency, unlike those involved in the bailing. There is a linking of ageing and other important national and cultural narrative tropes.

I have compared and contrasted the findings from this research with the international conclusions about the impact of the press on the creation of identities, in this case an apocalyptic demography. Fealy et.al. (2012) examined the manner in which ageing and age identities in Ireland were constructed in newsprint through reproduction of a variety of stereotypical understandings. They determined that linking a potentially serious future crisis to population ageing constructs the social space for a self-fulfilling prophecy. This research reflects a similar effect and creation of identity, highlighted by the lack of alternative paradigms in the articles. Within this framing, they offer representations of solutions, the means by which ageing can be reconfigured to become acceptable within society.

The representations frame ageing as part of society but at the same time potentially separate from it, 'othered' through the risk it presents. Active ageing when interpreted as working longer and contributing to the economy, engenders a continued presence in society. Different labelling may occur, moving from middle age to ageing, however, this is aligned to the theme of continued participation in the fabric of society. The decline paradigm can be seen as presenting ageing in a different framework, moving it from participatory to the stage of burdening society. These articles frame this state as the risk for the country, constructing a marginalising and 'othering' representation for those involved.

Implicit and Explicit framing of Causality

The majority of the one hundred and twenty-five economic problem based articles include a headline or copy that explicitly suggests ageing as the cause. Exemplars of headlines include:

“Boomers blamed” (*SMH*, 2011)

“Age pension burden at political breaking point” (*The Australian*, 2016)

“Bucket listers put pressure on rural hospitals” (*SMH* 2014)

“The \$100 billion question: can Australia afford our retirement bill as the ‘grey vote’ booms?” (*The Conversation*, 2015)

More than thirteen causative phrases appear in the article titled, “Boomers retirement starting to bite” (*SMH*, 2013), which offers a good example of the actual manner of framing cause and the different narrative elements that may be applied.

“as more reach retirement age it will unleash big economic changes”

“ACTU confirmed the slide in participation in recent years is the result of the population getting older”

“slowly but surely the same dynamic [ageing population] is starting to drag on growth in material living standards in most big Western economies”

“the challenges of an ageing population”

Reframing the management of the ageing population and their associated risk profile in terms of active ageing and continued participation in the workforce, according to these perspectives delays the onset of the problem and will potentially diminish its impact.

Headlines such as:

“Ageing population not such a problem” (*SMH*, 2014)

“Ageing population to require grandparent friendly workplaces (*Newsonline*, 2010),

“Plan to raise retirement age to 70: Push to lift pension age to 70” (*The Australian*, 2014)

reflect the conflation of the active model of ageing with a delay or diminution of the projected problem, whilst maintaining implicit acceptance of ageing as the original cause of the problem.

Martin in his article titled "Taking a longer view on life expectancy" (*SMH*, 2015) is the only author to critique the incontestable nature of the discourse of causality. He writes "Here's the good news: we're living longer. Here's the bad news: There isn't any." His article offers a rebuttal of the conflation of longevity with the increase in the health care budget. He frames this conflation as an anti-welfare, neoliberal and expedient discourse. He offers a different presentation of the issue which he suggests has been established by the frameworks of media, politics and social welfare provisions. I would argue that in Foucauldian terms this is an example of the effects of the intersection and application of power/knowledge.

However, the typical framing of ageing as economically negative and active ageing as the solution homogenises the group and limits most forms of resistance. Stating in an article that if a worker is disabled and can no longer perform physical labour then they must find something else to do instead, denies the worker agency. It denies their right to question what other work they are interested in, whether it exists in their location and the potential loss of social networks and status through a change of industry and classification. Within this representation of causality, those who cannot or do not want to follow the suggested regulations are disenfranchised as their agency is negated.

The decline model of ageing is a negative association that is presented as directly linked to dependence upon resources already under pressure. Specific reference to medical funding and resources is apparent in the following examples. "Ageing, growing population blamed for rise in costs" (*SMH*, 2010), is the title of an article that quotes the cost of the health budget and the anticipated significant growth in those costs as a percentage of GDP. Debora

Picone Director-General of NSW Health, supported this view when she “blamed an ageing and growing population”. A 2013 *Newsonline* article similarly states that “Nearly half the nation’s hospital beds are filled by the over 65s and hospital emergency departments are set to be overwhelmed as the population ages... population ageing is the definitive health policy challenge in Australasia”.

There is broad agreement from all article authors that ageing as currently constructed and supported by social welfare and government economic policy is a major problem for the future. The only critique offered is of the framework for calculation of the associated costs. The trope of responsibilisation – the need for the ageing to take responsibility for managing their bodies in order to be able to continue to contribute economically is apparent in the majority of articles. For example, Dr Valenzuela (*The Age*, 2015) discusses the growing concern in Australia that the reduction in per capita production caused by a diminishing labour market will adversely affect living standards. Valenzuela suggests that national savings are predicted to fall due to a reduction in private savings and greater calls on welfare programs. Thus, a sensible means of combatting this inevitable decline is to invest in human capital as presented in the discussion of raising the pension age, working for longer years and retraining at different stages of the working life. Valenzuela’s article can be interpreted as offering a means of reframing the social contract with reference to ageing, or offering a revised cultural construction of ageing and its component elements.

Responsibilisation as risk management

A consistent message emerges from the analysis of this group of articles that whilst the ageing demographic group are the cause of the incipient problem, they also hold the key to the management of identified risk. As I have noted, the reporting of active ageing is tightly framed within the economic discourse. Harvey & Thurnwald in their examination of health

and sociology related texts relating to the contribution of Australia's ageing population

wrote,

In Australia we have become preoccupied with the potential adverse impact of our ageing population on our health and social systems... emerging as a major challenge for governments and private insurers: so much so in fact that the government is now urging older people to stay at work longer. (Harvey & Thurnwald, 2009, 379)

However, as Harper (2006b, 20) states 'Demographic maturing is a global trend that heralds long-term shifts in individual and society behaviour – changes that are likely to restructure societies'. The thematic interpretation of these concepts through these articles is that working longer is constructed as a positive ideal and achievable by acceptance of the active life paradigm. A specific word and phrase search of 'working longer' retrieved sixty-three articles from the one hundred and seventy-eight. There is a consistent pattern in the language used in media framing of a revisionist cultural construction of acceptable ageing.

"Aussie labourers told to find new careers in their 50s" (*Newsonline*, 2014)

"Target is 67, but more people retiring in 50s...Australians are ignoring government pleas to work longer" (*SMH*, 2013).

"Incentive to hire older workers as aged pensioners tighten their belts... the pension age will rise to 70" (*Newsonline*, 2014)

"A generation made to pay the price of new financial order" (*SMH*, 2014)

This language highlights the manner in which these representations limit most forms of resistance to the discourses. The 2014 reporting of the statement by Joe Hockey (Federal Treasurer) that Australian labourers should retrain rather than leave the workforce due to work related disability ignored any factor that might diminish their ability to conform.

Hockey did not discuss the effects of a changing industrial landscape, status, geographical location, education or interest on manual worker's ability to change job. Hockey's statement was all encompassing and negated the opportunity to question or resist, with any resistance

limited and restricted to comments or letters to the editor. One such example is from a female contributor. She points out the media framing of a negative association between the cost to government of subsidised pharmaceuticals and the ageing. She comments on the constant suggestion that ageing is a time of inactivity. Her contention is that even those who take medication are often very active especially within the unseen world of volunteering. I concur with her view that volunteering is an unseen world in these representations, as the analysis only found two other occasions on which it was even mentioned.

The increase in importance of the economic framing apparent from 2013, coincided with the increasing political debate over the need to examine legislative changes to pension and access to superannuation (self-funded pensions). The Intergenerational Report (2013) is mentioned in the reporting on parliamentary budget discussions relating to the rising costs associated with welfare in terms of pensions, programs and health care. These discussions are presented using the paradigms of 'inevitable decline' and 'active ageing'.

In articles that relate to economics and health, active ageing is presented as offering the potential to delay declining health and dependency in older people. Of the one hundred and twenty-five articles in the economics framing approximately half incorporated images. This was consistent both across the different formats, and within the style of images used. The images attached to articles reflecting active ageing were likely to include photos of a well-dressed, youthful looking, couple, looking at each other and enjoying an activity together. These activities included walking on the beach, walking in a pretty tree lined setting, or enjoying an outing in a convertible. In "Boomers chase the wisdom of old age" (SMH,2015), the image is of a youthful looking ageing couple, seen from behind, looking at each other, sitting in a red open convertible in a pretty village setting. The article discusses that boomers will live a longer, healthier and happier life and need to reframe their thinking to make the

most of it. Other visuals showed an elderly person (male or female) enjoying an unexpected pastime, such as weightlifting or sky diving.

Decline is presented as the point at which frailty and dependence exist and impact on society and its provisions. One image trope occurring frequently to portray decline is a cropped torso minus the head, viewed from the rear. The subject is recognisable as ageing through old fashioned clothing, shoes and the use of mobility aides such as a stick or frame. I have argued earlier that the decline model offers an implicit marginalising construction for certain people within ageing. These images that I have referenced, by offering only a cropped torso, dehumanise the body, creating a subject rather than a person. The use of particular clothing and mobility aide cues in this context create a further subliminal message to the reader of decrepitude and frailty, constructing a means of defining those in the marginalised group.

Hummert et.al. (1994) theorising on the understanding of stereotypes suggest that they 'are loosely structured constellations of traits that perceivers recognize [that] are variably true of individual members of the category' (1994, 240). Their theories are applicable in understanding the messages that the images are adding to the articles they support. The active ageing images frame the positive life style and body management tropes that have been discussed. By excluding a head, the fragmented images of torsos dehumanise the presentation, limiting the potential for an emotional response. The dehumanising and marginalising effects of this portrayal of faceless images has been commented on by Lydon (2016) in her work on refugees and Puhl et.al. (2013) and Heuer et.al. (2011) in their work on representations of obesity.

Thus, based on my analysis I argue that working longer is the only acceptable representation of ageing portrayed. In order to achieve this, responsibilitisation and body management is a

requirement. The constant framing of ageing as a source of risk to the nation excludes the potential for other framings to be articulated. The circular argument constantly reiterated becomes the only acceptable representation with articles critiquing these concepts noticeably absent.

Homogenisation and the cloak of invisibility

The earlier portions of this chapter have outlined the homogenising techniques and tropes being applied in the creation of these articles. Carr, Biggs & Kimberely (2015) argue that 'Australian ageing policy obscures rather than promotes diversity in the experience of growing older, and represents a risky mismatch between policy initiatives and personal changes in later life' (Carr et.al., 2015, 8-9). As I have shown here, this obscuring of diversity is also reflected in newspaper coverage of ageing. These representations are supported by, and also reinforce the limited and constricting framing of ageing in Australia.

The broad and generic words used to describe ageing homogenise without clearly defining who belongs in the group. Each reader has the freedom to draw on their own experience and knowledge to construct their interpretation of the meaning. An individual's interpretation of the sort of person the term "senior" applies to, depends on their individual knowledge and experience of people in this category. Is the construction of "retiree" the same as that of "senior"? Is it possible for the same person to fit into both classifications? None of the terms employed specify gender, ethnicity, class, geographical location, ability or disability or any other markers of difference.

The discussion of causality and the limitations of risk also exclude differentiating markers within this population. There is a lack of attention paid throughout this set of articles to elements that offer the potential to differentiate within the ageing population. Scholars in gender studies, gerontology, sociology and social policy have all stated that ageing is not a

homogenous process. Individual ageing is a reflection of lived experience, which by definition is and has been affected by categories of differentiation. Minkler encapsulates the scholarly thinking of Katz, Minichiello & Coulson, Bernard & Scharf, Powell & Wahidin, Biggs, with her statement 'The profound differences in life chances by race, ethnicity, gender and social class continue to operate in old age, this simple fact has never had greater relevance than at the close of the twentieth century' (Minkler, 1996, 468). If articles on ageing that included the topic areas of differentiation existed in the newspaper archives, the Boolean search format used would have generated them. The lack of such articles reflects the incontestable homogenisation of ageing.

The images that support these economically framed articles support this homogenisation and lack of differentiation. Most of the images of individual people (fourteen in total) are of men. They are all white males. They are dressed in dress shirts when presented in an office setting, or wearing high-vis vests when in an outdoor or warehouse setting. Their dress does not necessarily reflect occupational differences as both a geologist and a factory hand are wearing high-vis vests. There are four occasions when images of solo women are used. These included an interview with a divorcee, an article with the female Commissioner for Ageing and two articles that discussed the part time employment options for older women. Only two articles out of eighty-eight that had an image attached included non-white people. One article references the East and the problems facing factory workers there, while the other article references a Chinese genetic research laboratory. White-Anglo Australians are presented as the ubiquitous face of ageing. This presentation is consistent with Featherstone & Hepworth's UK work where they note that 'In the not too distant past...the predominant image of aging was very often White and middle class, excluding a wide range of other social groups' (2007, 740-741). Within the analysis there were ten images reflecting gendered positioning through activity; seven involving men placed in labouring, outdoor of

hardware/tool retail settings or in front of computers, and three with women placed in cafes or care situations.

In common with international research there is a strong movement towards framing ageing through a limiting economic contribution frame. The Australian framing differs in its inclusion of the decline model as an opposition to active ageing in all of the major articles. Both discourses as has been discussed are used to construct and inform particular framings of ageing. Active ageing's conflation with a longer working life, and the decline model with frailty and dependence is involved in the reframing of the social contract and also the reframing of the stages of life. The framings form a complete story that becomes difficult to question or critique.

The definitions offered of ageing are ephemeral and open to interpretation. Each individual is open to interpreting and internalising the discourses offered through their own experiences. The effect on those defined by others as belonging to the ageing group is influenced by these media representations. Current representations offer a narrow and limiting construction of and for ageing. The discussions all look to the future and where mention is made of the past contributions made by the ageing, this is only as an adjunct to the need to maintain them in the workplace. As I have argued the catastrophic economic framing of ageing restricts the agency of those who define themselves as ageing or are defined by others as ageing. The narrowness of these priorities as framed in these representations precludes a discussion of 'the cultural contribution and social capital of older adults' (Carr, Biggs & Kimberely, 2015, 12).

Chapter 4

Health and ageing: the complexities

In this chapter I focus on the fifty-three health focussed articles on ageing published between 2010 and 2016. Three themes emerged: the tensions between medicalisation, demedicalisation and the problematisation of ageing; medical and scientific messages around ageing; and the linking of health and economics. The 'inevitable decline' and 'active ageing' discourses that underpinned the economic discussion will be shown to be equally important within the discussion of health.

I will argue that a major element in the framing of health in relation to ageing is that of bodily regulation. Health and the regulation of the body is the second most referenced discussion area after economics in the articles analysed. Examples of articles that reflect this manner of framing of regulation of the body include "Gentle exercise protects ageing brain" (*Newsonline*, 2012), "Getting fit over the age of 50- the secret to a healthy, older body" (*The Australian*, 2016), "Veggie diet could help you live longer, research reveals" (*SMH*, 2013) and "Monday's medical myth: a diet high in antioxidants slows the aging process" (*The Conversation*, 2011). Each of these articles is an exemplar of the information and advice offered for body management. The focus on the management of the body as it ages informs the 'active ageing' discourse. I will argue that the discourse of 'inevitable decline' has acquired a cultural construction of 'lack of bodily regulation' a lack on the part of the individual to accept and conform to the modern regime of power and knowledge (Katz, 1996,7).

Within the three themes that emerged I will highlight the manner in which they interact, inform or are informed by the discourses of inevitable decline and active ageing. Twenty of the articles suggest a link between age related conditions, the medicalisation of ageing and

the discourse of inevitable decline e.g. “Live Longer, Ail Longer” (*SMH*, 2013). Thirty-three articles discussed medical innovations and lifestyle choices as the process for achieving active ageing, e.g. “Make friends and live longer” (*SMH*, 2010); “Scientists close in on clues to long life” (*Newsonline*, 2011). Fourteen articles incorporated elements of both discourses, e.g. “Have scientists found a cure for all our old ills?” (*The Australian*, 2015). Active ageing is the period when the individual is responsible for managing their body and mind such that they are not affected by conditions associated with ageing. These conditions are defined by the medical establishment, medical research, health policy, welfare policy pharmaceutical and product marketing to the ageing population. The potential for these conditions of signs of ageing to appear are culturally framed as a problem for the individual and society as they are the first stages of the decline to old age, dependence and decrepitude. The range of voices involved in the medicalisation, problematisation and demedicalisation of issues of ageing, construct ageing as a problem to be managed by the individual and society, for the benefit of all involved. At a societal level these discourses homogenise the population, removing the opportunity for the diversity of lived experience to be included in the cultural construction being offered.

I will argue that the representations in these newspaper articles similarly homogenise ageing and the relative construction of health. This homogeneity and framing through the lenses of inevitable decline and active ageing are an important strand to the narratives already discussed in the economic disaster discourse. In common with the economic discourse and discussions of the framing of apocalyptic demography, scholarly research reflects the need to consider gender, class, ethnicity and other variables in the construction of understandings of health and ageing. Pritchard & Whiting (2015), Martin (2011), Torres (2015), Katz & Calasanti (2015) and Zubair & Norris (2015) conclude that there are important differences between lived experiences and embodied understandings of ageing. These elements of

difference are important in the health of older people. I will highlight the homogeneity of representation within the health articles that in common with the economic articles makes those elements invisible.

Medicalisation, demedicalisation or the problematisation of ageing

Medicalisation: As previously discussed Conrad (1992) suggests that

Medicalization consists of defining a problem in medical terms, using medical language to describe a problem, adopting a medical framework to understand a problem, or using a medical intervention to 'treat' it. (1992, 211)

Rose (2007) critiques this broad definition of medicalization, framed during a historical period that presumed a passive body. This was a time when the medical fraternity were the major source of power/knowledge and their pronouncements unequivocal. Rose suggests that in the current neo liberal period and with greater access to information, individuals are tasked with the responsibility to make better and more informed consumer choices (Rose, 2007). These changes have eroded the absolute power of the medical practitioner as the primary owner of health knowledge. Williams & Calnan (1996) describes this progression as the move from a passive body as imagined in academic accounts, to an increased emphasis on bodily subjectivity and reframing of disease through 'psycho-social' contexts (1996, 1612). These changes 'create the conditions which call for the individual reflexive (re)organization of the life-span' (Williams & Calnan, 1996, 1612). An example of this is that slowing brain function and losses were historically considered a normal part of ageing. There is now a body of medical research that supports the notions of maintaining brain functionality and cognitive skills through specific practices available to the individual. The maintenance of cognitive levels is presented as in the hands of the individual and that losses are a medicalised condition that can be delayed or avoided completely.

A further element involved in the medicalisation or otherwise of conditions is the inclusion of the notion of risk into the management of human life. Williams & Calnan (1996, 1614) state 'in an increasingly decisionist culture, the profiling of risks becomes an important means of colonizing the future, instilling a sense of calculability in what is fast becoming a runaway world'. The decisionist world is one where surveillance, data collection and statistical interpretation are a normal part of society. They are used in structuring the disciplinary regimes and policies of that society. Whilst the link between risk and ageing have been previously discussed in the context of economics, this chapter considers risk as part of the constructions of responsibilisation, body management and the problematisation of ageing.

Critiques of medicalisation suggest that the medicalised framing of ageing has broadened, with the knowledge underpinning it no longer solely provided by medical practitioners. The 'truth tellers' now include pharmaceutical companies, health scientists, politicians, policy writers and the media. This is reflected in these newspaper articles by the diverse range of quoted authorities spanning a range of disciplines who are presented as experts in support of specific health messages.

An example of the manner in which the newspapers present this broadened framework of medicalisation was published in *The Daily Telegraph* (2014). The article is titled "Chronic inflammation affecting your health and weight". This condition has been classified as lifestyle related leading to a range of conditions including dementia. The sufferer is accountable because "Chronic inflammation" has been called a "man-made condition" because of its direct links to the 21st century "western lifestyle". The article states "inflammation also appears to be a key factor in visible signs of ageing, such as of the skin". A medicalised condition that is a function of body mismanagement is defined as integral to the generation of further medicalised conditions, two of which are clearly age related. Thus,

inflammation sits in the problematised area of ageing. Inflammation, dementia and skin changes are problems to be managed, until the moment of diagnosis at which point they are medicalised. In the article “Gentle exercise protects ageing brain” (*Newsonline*, 2012), the opening sentence is “As we age, we are more likely to suffer from memory problems and confusion”. The concluding sentence of this article reads “this study provides exciting evidence that a little moderate exercise is protective against age-related problems with health and immunity”. These articles reflect the tension between medicalisation and body management. Each offers information on technologies of self that alter the path to the medicalised condition. These ‘truth discourses’ fit within Rabinow & Rose’s (2006) view of the need for individuals to base their choices on responsabilisation and an acceptance of the imposed obligations. These representations offer a limiting framework that suffers from ‘inattention to intersecting issues of social inequality, health disparities and age relations’ (Katz & Calasanti, 2015, 16)

Demedicalisation: Demedicalisation occurs when a behaviour previously defined as pathological (medicalised) is re-established as an accepted part of the ‘norm’ within society. These two states are in constant flux, altering as cultural constructions within society alter. ‘Medicalisation and demedicalisation often occur simultaneously...there may be crosscurrents and interstices in which change runs in the opposite direction’ (Halfmann, 2011, 189). Ageing has traditionally been a natural progression of the lifecycle (Katz, 2005; Gullette, 2004; Bytheway, 1995; Victor, 2005; Hepworth, 2000). Age related conditions, such as heart disease, raised blood pressure, decline in cognitive skills, diminished stamina were all accepted as normal and occurring as one became older, without a fixed locus of time at which they would occur. Improved medical knowledge and technology constructed a paradigm where many of these elements became conditions to be treated and cured. In *SMH*’s (2010) article “A case for elderly to ditch long-term use of medication”, the

suggestion is made that the common act of prescribing medications that affect the brain and nervous system, to ageing people is contra-indicated. Research supports improved health outcomes for ageing people who do not take them. This article suggests that rather than framing the issues of isolation, sleeplessness and depression amongst older people as a medical problem, they would be better expressed as social, political and cultural ones.

The term “age related” is a phrase used frequently by authors of the articles examined. The suggestion is that the existence of a diagnosed condition is a medical problem. The potential for these conditions to develop is the risk posed by ageing. Managing that risk is the responsibility of the individual. In one article titled “Have scientists found a cure for all our old ills?” (*The Australian*, 2015), the following phrases appeared in the first three paragraphs, “the fundamental cause of ageing...Alzheimer’s, heart disease and osteoporosis...illnesses of old age”. This article defines the risky conditions associated with ageing, and medicalises them through the word “cure” and “our old ills” in the title.

Problematization: Foucault explained his definition of problematization in an interview with Rabinow (1998). Problematization is the ‘development of a domain of acts, practices and thoughts...that pose a problem for politics’ (Foucault, 1998). The problematization of ageing is constructed through the politics of regulation of the body. This functions as a means of lessening risk through the delay or exclusion of medicalised conditions. The following two examples from the articles offer contrasting representations of the problematization of ageing. “The 50 signs you're finally ageing - how many do you have?” (*Newsonline*, 2013) can be contrasted with “Fifty ways to live to 100” (*Daily Telegraph*, 2012). The first article offers the individual a means of surveilling their risk profile of moving towards medicalised conditions. The second article proposes a wide range of technologies of self. The individual is required to choose those that are a best fit in terms of their self-assessed risk profile.

The breadth of sources of knowledge about health and the proliferation of authorities offer wider access to information for the ageing population. Featherstone & Wernick (1995) suggest that an effect of this is reflected in the growth of the health-related consumer culture. Powell & Biggs (2004, 20) state 'A healthy old age is seen to be the result of prudent self-care'. Another manner of framing this is that the application of technologies of self-generate a healthy old age. Responsibilisation frames the need to take care of the self thus 'relieving others of any obligation to care' (Powell & Biggs, 2004, 20).

Active ageing has been shown to be the face of responsibilisation, of the application of technologies of self, of the subjectification of the individual, such that they are framed through a lesser profile of risk to the economic prosperity of the nation. Being unhealthy is defined within the medicalised framing of ageing and referenced through the discourse of declining health as an oppositional presentation. The headlines of "50 ways to recognised you're ageing", and "50 ways to live to a 100" highlight the requirement on the part of the individual to recognise and perform, in order to maintain an acceptable place in society.

Conrad argues that across the twentieth century, 'medicalization has occurred for both deviant behaviour and "natural life processes" ...natural life...include...ageing and death' (1992, 212 – 213). This is clearly visible in articles such as "Scientists close in on clues to long life" (SMH, 2011). The article discusses Japanese scientific research in the area of 'superlongevity – living beyond 110'. The researchers hypothesised that "people with superlongevity are less susceptible to problems such as hardening of the arteries and the development of cancer and that their cells may have a stronger defence mechanism". This knowledge will be applied to further gene manipulation research to determine methods of mimicking this within a broader population. Another article "A new anti-ageing drug could prevent diseases associated with growing older" (*Newsonline*, 2015) discusses a potential medical breakthrough against the diseases of ageing. The scientist is reported as saying

“Ageing is a synonym with disease ... When we are young, we don’t have these diseases. But when we are old, it doesn’t matter what background or gender or culture, we all have them while the drug will not save humans from inevitable death, it could help prevent ageing-related diseases like cancer, Alzheimer’s, diabetes and Parkinson’s.”

The possibility to alter lifespan, to reframe the natural, delaying or removing the stages of a declining body, links with the debates of apocalyptic demography and forecasted economic problems discussed in Chapter 3. Active ageing requires a regime of body management on the part of the individual to delay the onset of medicalised conditions associated with ageing. Apocalyptic demography represents the risk profile of the ageing population within these two paradigms of ageing health.

The declining body is culturally constructed through discourses of fear, loathing and disgust in binary opposition to the glorification of youth. Featherstone (2007, 738) discusses cultural conceptions of youth as vibrant, energetic and happy, and ageing as ‘stepping inexorably downward through old age toward death’. Two articles in particular explore this opposition. The first, “The Age of Beige” (*The Australian*, 2013), involves the author dressing as an older person and exploring the invisibility this conferred on her. The second is “Ageing gracefully in a culture that worships youth is a challenge for the over 40s” (*Newsonline*, 2015). This article is a journalistic commentary on the language and images used in newspapers glorifying youth or the ageing who present visually or through their behaviour as significantly younger than their biological age. The fear of becoming invisible, and the disgust associated with bodily decline frame both of these articles.

Lupton’s (2015) examination of the use of disgust through explicit messages in public health campaigns can be appropriated for analysis of ageing health messages. The messages about ageing as represented in the articles considered are typically implicit. A letter to the newspaper (*SMH*, 2013) for example suggests that the extra years we are living are at the

wrong end of the lifespan. They also feel that medicine's ability and desire to keep people alive is often against the living will of the individual and leaves them in a pitiable state. The notion of a pitiable state suggests one where bodily and cognitive controls are diminished, a state that is culturally constructed as both disgusting and frightening. The body has moved away from the 'hegemony of normalcy' to the 'grotesque', a visually understood form that is 'inversely related to the ideal' (Davis, 1995, 24 -25). An article in *The Daily Telegraph* (2013) debates the age at which to start using Botox so that the unacceptable and visible signs of ageing never emerge, presenting an 'ideal' picture as against an 'ageing' one that could be framed as 'grotesque'.

Lupton's (2015) scholarship on the use of disgust campaigns relating to healthcare offers insights to interpreting Davey's (*SMH*, 2013) article that links longevity to increased chronic health problems and disability. Davey notes that whilst the very explicit and confronting health campaigns around tobacco and road safety (disgust campaigns as defined by Lupton) have all been involved in improving outcomes, the same has yet to occur for age related conditions. She quotes Tim Gill's statement, "strong prevention campaigns and political leadership were now needed" in the context that "poor lifestyle choices constitute a major threat to health, with the number of years of health lost due to obesity, alcohol and drug use all increasing." In common with more explicit health campaigns this article is demanding behavioural modification to avoid the feared stage.

As has already been explored in Chapter 3, active ageing presents an alternative discourse. Powell & Biggs (2004) state that 'the use of diet and exercise as techniques specifically related to later adulthood, is closely related to the growth of leisure and a lifestyle approach to the creation of later life identities' (2004, 24). A further analysis of these articles explores the representation of responsibilisation and behaviour modification which is then invoked in the framing of the economic discourse.

Analysis of the articles produces a constituent discourse where individuals are held accountable through their actions. An example is the article “For the best chance of long life be careful, a mite obsessive and stick at it” SMH (2011). The expert opinions offered are a book “The Longevity Project” and researchers, “Friedman and Martin; Lewis Terman”. Another article from *The Australian* (2014), “How to keep your brain young — and slow the process of ageing” offers expert opinion from “Mind & Its Potential Conference in Sydney and University of California neuroscientist Michael Merzenich, “The King of Neuroplasticity”. *Newsonline* (2016), offers two relevant titles, “Getting fit over the age of 50: the secret to a healthy, older body” and “50 ways to live longer: Surprising, sexy and simple ways to make sure you’re in this for the long haul”. These articles are addressed to the reader, through use of the second person. According to these accounts you are responsible for your body and its journey through ageing. The information you as an individual need and the skills you are required to apply are within your reach.

The articles homogenise through their use of pronouns creating a commonality of the ‘you and your’. These articles, representative of those examined, are not urging change on a broader scale. There is limited suggestion of the need for policy development in these areas. one of the articles (discussed earlier) suggests a need for the development of stronger health campaigns focussing on individual responsibility. However, the consistent message of this group of articles is that there is a personal responsibility to learn, understand and adopt the strategies necessary for managing the ageing process.

The images attached to these articles endorse this homogenisation through use of stereotypical imagery. The visuals use white models, with invocations of active ageing including imagery of attractive, vibrant young women. Images illustrating articles about exercise and ageing are more likely to show an older person with wrinkles and age spots involved in gym exercise and holding a pose or equipment more commonly associated with

youth and body building. These images link the application of ageing strategies at any stage in the ageing process to presentations of youth.

Medical and scientific messages

Two topic areas emerged from the analysis of articles offering health and scientific messages. The first relates to areas such as diet, exercise, social integration and life style choices that enhance the experience of ageing and delay the onset of deficits. The majority are aimed at the individual, addressing the reader with references to “you” and “your” life. Approximately half of the health articles include references to the economic benefits of active ageing and a continued presence in the labour market. The second topic area is medical innovation and research that holds the prospect of increased longevity. These discuss the potential to improve longevity to 120 years or beyond. None of them question the potential effects this might have for an individual’s life, society or nations.

The first topic area has been covered in some detail in the section on problematisation, the delineation of managing the ageing process to delay or avoid the onset of the phase of decline. The appearance of ageing does however have different gendered meanings. Gullette (1998) offers a constructionist theory that she argues produces ‘a culturally endemic fear and dread of ageing, which takes the form of a self-vigilant paranoid concern with the body’s visible signs of ageing’ (1998, 17).

For a woman, signs of ageing – wrinkles, lines, greying hair, a thickening waist, are associated with a ‘period of moral asexuality’ (Katz & Gish, 2015, 44). This is a period when a woman is no longer constructed as a sexual being. She is expected to conform in her behaviour and dress, becoming culturally invisible in the process. Only one newspaper article “56 shades of grey” (SMH, 2014) references the topic of beauty. The article discusses the pressure brought to bear on women to colour their hair as they start to go grey. The author

had resisted the call to colour her hair for most of her life having turned grey at an early age. The visual with the article is of a working model in her 70's who has beautifully styled grey hair. She is well made up, her neck hidden in a high collared flattering black jumper. Her hands are well looked after and her nails perfectly painted. She performs a similar function in this article to that produced in articles that include photographs of the actor "Helen Mirren" presented as a style icon for the ageing woman. This article frames all women as responsible for their body and their looks. A similar narrative occurs in *The Conversation* (2015), "Ageing gracefully: how women steer the line between inauthentic and old". The image offered constructs the acceptable face of ageing and ignores any factors that might inhibit the ability to achieve a similar outcome. The articles "Shades of Beige" already mentioned discusses the invisibility that occurs when the female body articulates a declining image through clothing, movement and mobility aides.

Gender differences are apparent in the broader newspaper reporting of ageing celebrities. There are continual portrayals of male personalities with much younger female partners, or reports of their fathering children whilst in their 60's and 70's. This helps to maintain the stereotypical construction of gendered ageing where men maintain virility, attractiveness and power for longer than women. Celebrity women are noted for their beauty and youth. However, the newsprint articles analysed do not explicitly reflect on these discursive differences of gender identity either in the language used or in the images that support them. Men and women appear in almost equal numbers in support of this type of story. There is also no significant difference in the usage of the two genders across the 85 articles with images that reflected decline, active ageing or the economy.

Brain training, social inclusion, continued economic contribution or lifestyle choices when discussed in these articles are presented as applying to the ageing group as a whole. The framing is broad, consistent and homogenising in headlines like - "Carry on abroad" (*SMH*

2014), “Bali set to boom as Australians move to retire on the cheap” (*Daily Telegraph*, 2014), “Make friends and live longer” (*SMH*, 2010). These articles frame ageing as a time to take control, to look at behaviour, to determine changes that are needed, and to make them. The ability within the lived experience to translate these messages to reality is neither questioned, nor referenced. The articles express a fixed viewpoint that restricts notions of adjustment to suite.

The remaining articles in the health area referenced medical innovations and research into the causes of ageing and potential for medical interventions. The concepts covered included gene manipulation and potential therapies, the role of telomeres and ageing, the potential to increase life span to 120 years or beyond, and the potential to construct testing to pre-determine the likelihood of one day being affected by an age-related condition (e.g. Alzheimer’s). Within these articles the body is separated from the individual. The research is engaged with elements of the body to determine their involvement with the ageing process outside of links to individuals, populations, cultural constructions of society, ethical or moral dimensions. “A new anti-ageing drug could prevent diseases associated with growing older” (*Newsonline*, 2015), “Aussie scientist David Sinclair claims anti-ageing superbug breakthrough” (*Newsline*, 2013, 2015), “Have scientists found a cure for all our old ills?” (*The Australian*, 2015) are examples of headlines in this area. Further explanation about the new anti-ageing drug suggests it may “hold the key to eternal youth... ageing is a synonym with diseases...while the drug will not save humans from inevitable death, it could help prevent ageing-related diseases...that affect us all regardless of race or gender”. This research separates the notion of people from the essence of the issue; that ageing occurs, everyone suffers from it, and a solution needs to be found.

The articles based on medical and scientific research reflect the narrative that all medical research is valid and offers truth. They do not interact with the questions of economics

except in so far as longevity is equated with a longer working life. Rather, they offer accounts of new research and its possible outcomes. Most of the articles refer to the scientific credentials of the experts whose research is reported. An example quote references “Australia’s leading anti-ageing genetic researcher is, Harvard researcher Professor David Sinclair”. Similarly identified as an expert in another article is “study adviser Professor Gordon Lithgow from the Buck Institute for Research on Ageing in California”. Most of the articles do not question the authority of the expert knowledge or whether there are any conflicts or counterclaims about their research within the scholarly world.

An article in *The Conversation* (2015) on the research topic of longevity to 120 years or beyond includes a broader discussion of the implications for humanity. The article presented a range of philosophical thinking about the potential meaning of an extended lifespan. This was the only examined article that offered a critique of enhanced longevity. Within all of the formats of reporting there was a consistent framing of health and ageing with very few points of divergence that is limiting to agency and the ability to resist.

Linking of health and economics

I have argued here that in many articles ageing is framed both as a health and an economic issue. An account of ageing which stresses declining health underlines the negative impact of the ageing population on health care and social welfare provision. Healthy ageing or active ageing is the behaviour endorsed in the neo-liberal framework that encapsulates personal responsibility. The healthy body enjoys a longer, healthier midlife period which is represented as able and accepting of the societal requirement to work longer. Harper (2006, 19) posits ‘many of us will live out much of the remainder of our lives in reasonable health, with limited disability’. In common with Katz, Harvey & Thurnwald and historic ABS

statistics, I suggest that the current Australian ageing generation is homogenised through having better access to education and health. This along with more easily accessible information enables them to make better informed decisions. They are a group that is 'better placed than ever to tackle the issues and challenges of ageing in a much more creative manner' (Harvey & Thurnwald, 2009, 384). Rudman (2006) examined the issue of ageing in Australia from a social policy viewpoint and suggests

For a person to adopt the 'ideal' subjectivities, fairly substantial health and financial resources are required ...there may be an increasing number [of older people] who are able to participate in the practices associated with 'age-defying' and 'prudential' subjectivities, but a gap between well- off and poor seniors persists (2006, 196).

These articles have been shown to be focussed on the individual whilst at the same time homogenising the group and ignoring the wider social determinants of health and health inequalities.

Chapter 5

Conclusions

This cultural studies approach to analysis of Australian newspaper texts and their representations of ageing points to a consistent and highly focussed mode of problematisation. Ageing Australians are constructed as a homogenous group the existence of which poses a pressing social and economic problem for the nation. The newspaper articles examined offer a narrative of problem and solution. If this economic threat is framed as the problem, the solution involves the ageing individuals accepting subjectification via scientific, medical, political and policy knowledge to manage their health and activities.

The overarching discourses that frame these representations are those of neo-liberal ideology, the commodification of ageing, market logic and consumer choice. The emphasis is on individual responsibilitisation, risk, rights of citizenship, and a movement away from the common good or societal sharing. These trends in discourses around ageing appear against a backdrop of social welfare policies originally designed to improve people's welfare especially those who are vulnerable. A more current discourse has seen them negatively framed as entitlements for a broader base of Australian society. There is a constant positioning of individual responsibility to conform, to produce and support the economic base of the nation. This discourse exists in the cultural construction that informs and disciplines the behaviours of individuals to maintain their position within that society, whilst lacking any acknowledgement of the effects of the diversity of experience of ageing on the individual's ability to conform.

The most visible and consistent narrative to emerge from these articles is that the ageing will need to work longer, maintaining their contribution to the economy through taxes and output and delay their recourse to welfare and social supports. In neo-liberal terms the

ageing are increasing the wealth of the nation through their taxes, whilst also increasing personal savings by continued contributions to superannuation. Working longer and maintaining a healthier body limits calls on welfare infrastructure allowing for smaller government. The articles did not reflect the contributions that the ageing can and do make in the informal areas of volunteering and caring within the community. The voices of the institutions that support and utilise the services of the ageing, and the ageing themselves were absent from the corpus of articles examined. These neo-liberal economic arguments have gained increasing importance in the period since 2013, as can be seen from the trebling to ninety of articles published from 2013 to 2016. This growth reflects the heightened attention focussed on the paradigm of ageing as a problem for society.

The coverage in Australian newspapers is broadly consistent with international findings. However, there are differences in emphasis. The discourse of decline as a counterpoint to the benefits of active ageing is apparent in the Australian representations in contrast to the more limited international positioning's of either decline or active ageing. Australian articles are more likely to frame a cause and effect story. The catastrophic economic case is unquestioned and constructed through the expression of decline and the solution as a narrative of active ageing.

Analysis of topic frequency and word usage frequency informed the discourses that emerged as most important – those around the economic impact of the ageing population, and of health, its maintenance and the possibilities for further improving longevity. This study was specifically designed to be broadly focussed at inception, and then refined through the initial analysis. The analysis reflected that there are some broadly similar ways of representing ageing across international borders. There is a consistent presentation of active ageing and the economic benefits of maintaining longer working lives across all studies. A noticeable difference is that the formatting of this research elicited a strongly presented discourse

linking the inevitable decline model of ageing to the causative discourse of economic problem. There are strong and visible connections in the Australian press between strategies for body management supporting the active ageing model or as a means of delaying the decline model. The strategies of body management appear in economic articles informing supportive discourses of risk management. This research has highlighted the broadly expressed nature of the discourses supporting the narrow framing of ageing as causative of the risk evaluation of impending economic crisis.

The economic focus has been shown to be increasingly important throughout the period under examination, followed by the discourse of health. The definition of health that emerges from the analysis is broad and deals with conditions, maintenance and medical innovations. The importance of health over the whole period did not change, with approximately eight articles published each year. The economic discourse reflected a different pattern, with approximately ten articles each year until 2012, and thirty a year from 2013 to 2016.

This research is grounded in Foucauldian thinking and theory. The articles were examined to determine how ageing is being constructed and whether the discourse of ageing as presented is being maintained or altered. The analysis reflects a changing level of importance and a more targeted framing. The targeting invokes notions of responsibilisation, a longer working life and a changed understanding of the social contract as the solution to the potential problem. An important question that would benefit from further study is 'What regimes of practices are apparent through these representations?'

As has already been noted there are elements of difference between the Australian newspaper experience and the international one. Some of the differences are attributable to the different specific objectives of each of the projects. In addition, as has been reflected

throughout this research, discourses of ageing and identities are informed by specific cultural narratives of each society. These differences are visible in the framing of ageing represented in international newspapers and affect the ability to make direct comparisons. The existing international scholarship of newspaper representations of ageing offers limited constructions of ageing through the lens of health. Representations of ageing were examined within the tropes of economic disaster, ageing and the effects on social welfare policies and provisions and intergenerational perceptions of ageing. This Australian research was framed to determine those representations that are most important as determined by the quantity of published material.

The Australian press focusses on framing ageing as both the cause and the potential solution to the economic problem through explicit statements and implicit ideology. This is not represented as a primarily political problem to solve. Rather ageing individuals are seen as having the power to solve this problem in their own hands. This focus on responsibilisation and the homogeneity of ageing constructs a limiting framework. The articles reflect a trope that inclusion in society is dependent upon managing the body so as to be able to continue contributing. In these articles this trope is presented as incontestable and excludes any discussion of factors that might make this difficult or impossible.

Strains on the economy are presented as creating risk for the nation as a whole. Risk is portrayed as being due to ageing and a growing dependence on welfare. The newspaper presentations inform and enhance the negative framing of those who access these supports, whilst iterating the message of risk.

This research has drawn on scholarly thinking on ageing from aligned disciplines that have defined the same two important paradigms of ageing: ageing as an inevitable decline and active ageing (Katz & Calasanti, Katz, Minichiello & Coulson, Powell & Wahidin, Bernard &

Scharf, Vincent, Featherstone & Hepworth). These two discourses are used in the framing of both the economic and health narratives. The discourse of inevitable decline supports the narrative of an upcoming economic disaster. Articles around health invoke inevitable decline as an area for research and medical innovation and as an area of control by the individual. Various definitions are offered depending on the political (the need to work beyond 65), social (staying involved and active) and cultural (accepting the construction of ageing). There are synergistic relationships between the framing of these discourses and their applications to the broader narratives of individual responsibility, good citizenship and a strong nation.

Three distinct narratives emerge from articles around ageing and health. The first is accounts of age related conditions, the second is the means and manner of delaying the onset of health-related ageing, and the third is medical innovation especially increases in longevity. The voices of medical experts, politicians or researchers appear in the majority of articles whilst the voice of ageing is silent. This is a further example of the power/knowledge restrictions placed on ageing by the limited construction of ageing presented in these articles.

Age related conditions are linked to the decline model and framed as leading to frailty and dependence. Research into elongating longevity is presented as a scientific right and the obvious wish of any right-minded person. There are limited occasions when resistance to the incontestable narrative is observed, and the ethical and moral implications facing society as a consequence of increased longevity are questioned. These ethical and moral points of debate are not raised in the representations of ageing in the newspapers. The incontestable framing of ageing through a specific and limiting economic lens ensures that alternative framings are not articulated and are refused a platform for legitimisation.

The rising costs of medical treatment, the medical requirements of an ageing population and the strains this places on the health and social care systems are important throughout the economically based articles. Cost is also mentioned in articles that focus on strategies for health. There is an implicit message within these articles that subjectification and the concomitant body management messages limits reliance on an already stressed health system.

Ageing is constructed as homogenous throughout the majority of the articles examined. Minkler's (1996) statement that 'race, ethnicity, gender and social class continue to operate in old age' (1996,448) appears almost irrelevant in the representations noted. A new paradigm of ageing is presented as the only way forward for Australia. The articles representation of homogeneity excludes the framing of subgroups or 'at risk' groups within ageing. Active ageing is the positive face of this paradigm. Inevitable decline is the negative face, framed as causing the economic problem. The requirement to adopt technologies of self to delay decline is framed within both the discourses of health and economics. The articles considered here do not reflect the diversity of the population being discussed. Differing economic circumstances, health status, access to work opportunities or reasonably priced healthy food are ignored in the creation of the homogenising viewpoint represented on ageing. These representations are in conflict with current cross-disciplinary academic thinking, which frames ageing as diverse. Lived experience and alternate framings of ageing have become available to the non-academic audience through the growing library of publications such as, *Older & Bolder: Life after 60* (2015), *When I'm 64: The new Retirement Society* (2008) and *In praise of Ageing* (2013). These books contain reflections of the actual experience of ageing of the authors and others within their networks whose stories they have recorded.

The rapid growth of articles relating to the economic impact of ageing reflect the politically and socially important constructions during that period. The economic discourse frames the inter-relatedness of Australian neo-liberal ideologies with the social welfare provisions provided by government and non- government agencies. Individual responsibility is clearly evident in the economic discussion and also through the health discussion. This prevalence of articles linking the discourses of body management to economic problems and solutions constructs a framing that is difficult to refute. Factors of difference that have been shown by other disciplines to affect ageing are invisible in these articles. The implicit reframing of the social contract in relation to the working life is constructed in a manner that limits opportunity for resistance. The voices of those in the ageing demographic, or the organisations involved in areas of ageing have limited agency in this forum of expression.

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