



Gender, Social Inequalities, and Aging (Gender Lens)

By Toni M. Calasanti, Kathleen F. Slevin

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The experience of men and women in later life varies enormously, not only along the lines of gender but also due to ethnicity, class, sexual orientation, and race. Calasanti and Slevin explore these differences, their genesis, their meaning to men and women, and their treatment in the policy arena.

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Editorial Review

Review

Finally, a book with gender and age relations at its center; a persuasive response to existing aging texts that, by homogenizing old people, reduce old women, people of color, lesbians and gay men, and members of the poor and working classes to the status of 'other.' Focusing beyond individuals and their interpersonal ties, Calasanti and Slevin reveal the limits and biases of existing research and challenge what is known about old people and their sexuality, their work, their care, and their families, thus reclaiming and redefining what it means to be old. (Alexis Walker, Oregon State University)

This book takes an original feminist perspective on old age as a political location, foregrounding gender, aging, and social power. By placing the old within the intersections of other stratifying social identities, Calasanti and Slevin present a major critical analysis of ageism. It will be indispensable reading for women's studies and sociology courses, as well for family and gerontology. (Judith Lorber, City University of New York)

I think this book is important for all sociologists, not just those interested in gender or aging. It has a special relevance for researchers, teachers, practitioners, and activists who focus on old women. I have been looking for many years for a comprehensive book to use in my class on women and aging. This is the best I have seen. (Anne Rankin Mahoney, University of Denver *Contemporary Sociology*)

In this book, Toni Calasanti and Kathleen Slevin travel a long way to unravel the paradox that the discourses of gerontology and feminism both fail to address adequately the issue of gender relations in old age...a refreshingly well-balanced account [that] examines the experience of both men and women in later life and takes into account age, ethnicity, class and sexuality...The authors elaborate a compelling case for theorising gender and age relations, rather than, as at present, 'bolting on' age to feminist discourse or gender to social gerontology...Calasanti and Slevin consolidate their argument in a highly readable, intelligent format, and have made a most valuable contribution to the understanding of later life. The book will add depth and strength to the reading lists of gender studies, gerontology, and, importantly, mainstream sociology. (Kate Davidson, Dept. of Sociology, University of Surrey, Guildford, UK *Ageing and Society*, Vol. 23, 2003)

Gender, Social Inequalities and Aging is a thought-provoking and accessible account of the ways in which gender and age relations intersect in producing systems of advantage for some and disadvantage for others. This book makes several important contributions to the literature. First, it places emphasis on older women and age relations, both of which have been understudied in feminist research. Second, in the literature on aging, feminist scholarship is lacking and hence analyzing older women and age through a 'gender lens' is an important task that this book takes up. Third, I do not know of any other work that systematically considers the intersections of class, age, race, gender, and sexuality. Hence, Gender, Social Inequalities and Aging will have wide spread appeal in gerontology programs, women studies programs, and in courses on the sociology of age or gender.. (Julie McMullin, University of Western Ontario)

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About the Author

Toni Calasanti teaches in the department of sociology at Virginia Tech. Kate Slevin teaches in the department of sociology at the College of William and Mary.

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