discourse behind it, for it is favored as a natural option over other birth control methods. The pill, the IUD, or condoms are seen as intrusive, invasive, and disruptive to the nature of the body, and therefore, undesirable. Another relevant finding forwarded by Halkias is that contrary to what is usually defended as women's individual choice, reproductive decisions are largely a couple's decision. This is not only because abortion is often discussed with partners, but also because abortion decisions are quite informed by how a woman feels about the relationship with her partner at the time of the pregnancy. That is to say, abortion is not only about women not wanting to have a child at a particular point in their lives, but also not wanting to have a baby with their existing partner. Nonetheless, Halkias does not present abortion as an 'easy' option. She focuses on women's choices that surround abortion decisions, which have led many of them to experience the situation and the decision-making process as a rather lonely time in their lives. Although women may count on friends', relatives' or their partners' support, ultimately, the final decision is theirs. Thus, as Halkias shows how some women try include their male partners in the abortion decision-making process to feel that the responsibility of the decision is not theirs alone. The author argues that given this situation, individuals (both male and female) should not be considered fully autonomous, as their choices are generally relational to others.

Overall, this is a well-written and relevant book. However, it is repetitive in places and therefore, unnecessarily long. The usefulness of certain parts is not completely clear. In this regard, the multiple references to Athenian popular culture to analyze and explain data tend to make the text somewhat contrived. This point could also be extended to the ethnographic data thats could have included more alternative interpretations and experiences to give a more diverse picture of reproductive practices in Greece. Nonetheless, the book is rich, relevant, and puts forward novel interpretations of the undeniable relationship between gender, reproduction, identity, and the nation.

María Fernanda Olarte Sierra, Anthropology
Universidad de los Andes, Bogotá, Colombia

Peter Lloyd-Sherlock, ***Population ageing and international development: From generalisation to evidence***. Bristol: Policy Press, 2010. xiv +288 pp. £ 22.99. ISBN 978 1 84742 192 0 (pb).

The main theme of Peter Lloyd-Sherlock's book is that generalizing about the life conditions of older people and the implications of a greying society for economic and social development and health is misleading and dangerous. The author criticises two widespread stereotypes about ageing and international development. The first is that population ageing is problematic for development and the second that everywhere in developing countries older people face similar problems of poverty, vulnerability and marginalisation. Critiquing these common beliefs, he argues that ageing is an integral part of and not a threat to development; that processes of development vary and lead to different experiences of growing old; and that, moreover, within similar develop-

ment processes ageing experiences may also vary considerably. The chapters deal with (1) international development and population ageing, (2) experiences of ageing in the context of development, (3) pensions and development, (4) ageing and health, and (5) ageing related to family, care and migration. These are followed by three more descriptive country case studies of South Africa, Argentina and India.

The author intended the book to serve as a counter-weight to the pessimistic and negative bias that permeates most of what is written and said about population ageing. In a personal communication, he told me that he agreed that population ageing presents major challenges, particularly with regard to the provision of long-term care for the frailest old. But, he also believed that "with the political will, there are affordable opportunities which could do much to stave off these challenges."

The author's argument is most convincing in chapter 2 where he discusses experiences of ageing. He criticises the 'life stages' approach in studying older people. That approach assumes that people can be categorised in stages that differ from each other. In this generalising view, older people are as it were locked up in a static model of dependence and inactivity. The author argues that a 'life course' perspective does more justice to the lived reality: lives are looked at more holistically. Older people are different; some have the agency to remain active and play a crucial role in family and economic affairs: They "construct their own life courses through the choices and actions they take within the opportunities and constraints of history and social circumstances" (p. 43).

That optimistic view is hard to maintain in the next chapter about pensions. The author can do little but admit that few developing countries have been successful in setting up a realistic pension system for all older citizens. In most countries only a small elite enjoys a – often meagre – pension. The inability and unwillingness of governments to provide substantial nation-wide pensions mark the problem they face: they cannot – or are not prepared to – bear the 'burden' of a growing older population. Claims that it is their tradition that the family takes care of its grandparents are a convenient excuse clothed in respectful cultural terms.

Writing in broad terms about development and ageing is ambitious and not without risk. The author bases the work on a wealth of quantitative data interlaced with some ethnographic illustrations and references to qualitative studies, which are mainly found in the country case studies. The author's call for caution and his more optimistic view on the consequences of ageing are well taken, but one wonders if his plea for a more differentiated perspective is not a generalisation of another kind. In spite of the variations in development and ageing, one can hardly deny that the present demographic transition does place both rich and poor countries in an awkward dilemma. Even if older people get pensions and/or continue to contribute to the economy, in the long run the balance between the economically productive and less productive population is bound to become problematic and will unduly increase the burden on the young and middle-aged. Increased migration, another development, may bring remittances to the older generation, but these will not compensate for the growing absence of relatives willing and able to provide care and company. Calling these worries about the future 'clichés', as the author does, is too brusque.

In conclusion, this book unfolds an impressively optimistic view about ageing. It is also, without doubt, a much needed and extremely well documented plea against simplicity, generalisation, and pessimism concerning ageing and development. But I am afraid that the author is too drastic in his denouncement of existing worries about the greying of the world, 'developing' as well as 'developed'.

Sjaak van der Geest
Medical Anthropology, University of Amsterdam

Katharina Schramm, David Skinner & Richard Rottenburg (eds.), ***Identity Politics and the New Genetics***. Oxford, Berghahn Books, 2012. 226 pp. $80.00/£47.00. ISBN 978-0-85745-253-5 Hb.

Identity politics is becoming increasingly complicated with the emergence of DNA technologies and growing knowledge of molecular science. The element of identity, or what binds a group of people, is sometimes clearly visible, based on the 'here' and now' yet can also be invisible, far away, hidden in a remote past. A central question cutting across this book is, 'in what way forming of identity is changing because of the practices of emerging DNA technologies', or, more simply put, 'identity before and after DNA technologies'. Highly interesting is that this book does not take the (making of) identity for granted, but every chapter unpacks the extremely complicated process of its formation. Consistent in various chapters is a critical attitude towards the assumption of DNA as something 'infallible' and 'telling us the truth' (p. 3). Topics range widely and in what follows I introduce a brief summary of each chapter.

In Chapter 1, Smart et al. discuss what it precisely means that 'race' is socially constructed and the effects this has in debates about 'race'. After analyzing four main discussions on 'race' (e.g., as a social and/or a biological phenomenon), they point out that the contemporary shift towards 'molecularised race' may actually negate previously foregrounded physical markers of 'race.' This shift makes it important to consider how DNA is mobilized in boundary making in the production of 'race' (p. 48).

Chapter 2 discusses 'if, why, when and how people can be categorized into distinct racial or ethnic groupings' (p. 53) by analyzing the British case of the racialization of forensic DNA. The chapter shows us that discussing 'the validity, reliability and legitimacy of ethnic categories and processes of categorization is endemic to the operation of the British forensic data base' (p. 18), and that a 'continuing politics of categorization takes place in conditions that defy easy distinctions between the social and the biological' (p. 18).

Discussing examples from Latin America and Europe, Wade explores in chapter 3 the changing connections between 'race' and 'kinship'. It focuses on the practice of reproductive genetic technologies, especially the international movement of reproductive gametes for fertility purposes. Highly interesting is his analysis of reproductive activities involving non-kin with regard to family, kinship, and/ or blood tie groups, and the related process of 'naturalising' non-kin into a community. Thus, Wade shows us forms of reproductive activities which are crucial in the 'naturalising' process yet