3. **MARXISM**

- Argue that age inequalities serve the purpose of managing the supply of labour in capitalist societies, with the very young and very old often part of a reserve army of labour.
- Those under 14 provide cheap labour in jobs such as newspaper delivery.
- Those over 65 seek to extend their working lives with part-time work for financial and social reasons.
- Both groups have little power as it’s easy to hire and fire both groups.
- Reserve army of labour - can be applied to other sectors of the workplace and it fails to explain the breadth of age inequality which can be applied to social groups from any age.
- State provision for the young and old through child benefits and pensions reinforces the idea that the state wants to create dependent groups who have the power to be the rule makers in society.

**Political economy theory**

- This theory argues that the capitalist requirement to continually renew the workforce means that the elderly are denied access to social resources.

  ➔ **Philipson**

  - Argues that the elderly are seen as a burden on the economy thus they carry out a negative position.
  - Profit will increase if young workers are recruited as they are more productive.
  - The old are dependent because they’re denied access to social resources.
  - The denial of access to social resources creates dependency.
  - Institutionalised dependency benefits the ruling class by removing unproductive workers from the economy thus creating space for new and more productive workers.
  - The elderly are institutionally marginalised - a forced dependency takes place as the elderly become dependent on society as they’re denied access to work which lowers their status.

**Vincent**

- Argues that age inequality isn’t experienced the same way in all societies and that it’s most severe in societies which focus on the importance of private property.
- In capitalist societies, working age is the most important because work provides people with status and income.
- Elderly have low status because they don’t work and are seen as a burden.
- A low retirement age allows unemployment to be minimised - as a result of this, the elderly suffer from maternal deprivation.
- Elderly are ignored because they’re economically unattractive meaning they have limited disposable income to spend on consumer goods.
- The young are seen as cheap pool of labour as they’re paid low wages because they don’t have experience and competition for jobs ensure low wages are maintained.

**The elderly**

- The phrase ‘too old to employ’ is used to describe them - the cost of the economically inactive over fifties is a considerable drain on government resources.
Featherstone and Hepworth
- Found that there's a constant bombardment of messages from the media to try to stay young and delay the ageing process
- Botox injections have increased by 70% since 2000 - referred to the ‘mask of ageing’
- Children are encouraged by the media to take on adult behaviours

Postman
- Identified the death of childhood
- Children are given the same rights as adults e.g. the games children play are more explicit than in the past

Milne et al
- The wealthier retired are described as having grey power as they’re seen as conspicuous consumers
- This means that they consume goods to achieve a higher status

Everingham
- Age is a meaningless concept
- Points out that it is now people are so individualised that it impossible to use age as a measure of a person
- For example, many 80 year olds still behave as they did in their 30s, while others may better fulfil the traditional stereotype

Shildrick and Macdonald
- Argue that youth subcultures emerge as a response to maternal deprivation in poorer areas
- Certain lifestyle choices e.g. plastic surgery may not be available to those with low income

Powell and Biggs
- Pointed out that the use of technology and cosmetic surgery allows old people to recreate themselves
- They’re described as wearing a mask meaning that they’re one thing on the outside and another on the inside
- This implies that it’s impossible to tell those who can afford to recreate themselves may suffer less ageisms due to factors such as wealth

Laczko and Phillipson
- Found that in 1965 - 90% of men between 60-65 were working
- This decreased to 60% by 1990 and the trend seems to be continuing
- The tendency for companies to downsize has had a greater impact on older employees who have involuntarily used their redundancy money to fund their early retirement knowing that it’ll be harder to find another job
Youth

- Poverty rates for children in lone parent families have increased recently - nearly half of children in lone parent families live in poverty (that is the fastest rise in child poverty for any group in the last decade)
- Lone parent families usually consists of low paid work, high rents and weakening support
- Poverty rate for children in families with three or more children is also rising fast – from 35% in 2013/14 to 42%
- Child poverty in the North East of England has increased from 28% last year to 33%
- Low pay and unstable work means millions of families are struggling to put food on the table - two thirds of working-age adults and children in poverty live in working families

The elderly

- Almost 400,000 more children and 300,000 more pensioners are now living in poverty - there have been continued increases in poverty, across both age groups
- official figures shows that the number of people living in poverty in the UK now stands at 14 million
- Social isolation is reported more frequently by pensioners than working-age adults - 14% of all pensioners say they have no close friend compared with 8% of working-age adults