

Book Reviews/Comptes rendus

Peter Lloyd-Sherlock. *Population Ageing and International Development: From Generalisation to Evidence*. Bristol, UK: Policy Press, 2010.

Reviewed by Armando Barrientos, Brooks World Poverty Institute, University of Manchester, UK

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Developing countries are aging at a much faster rate than developed countries did at a similar stage in their demographic transition. This is borne out by the relatively short period of time that it has taken currently developed countries to double the share of their population aged 65 and over from 7 to 14 per cent. Notably, in Thailand, the population aging process will take 22 years. Brazil will go through this transition in 21 years and Singapore in 19 years. By way of contrast, it was 115 years for France, 69 years for the United States, and 45 years for the United Kingdom.

A rapid demographic transition is a reflection of the success that developing countries have had in improving the welfare of their populations. At the same time, however, it presents a considerable policy challenge. Developing countries need to quickly set in place appropriate institutions and policies, and in some cases with very limited resources. Accordingly, Peter Lloyd-Sherlock's book is an important contribution to understanding population aging in developing countries, and to piecing together the main components of a successful population aging strategy for them.

The book is extremely ambitious in scope, aiming to cover Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the Caribbean in a single volume. A majority of the world's populations live in these regions, and there is considerable diversity across countries and regions in the way in which population aging unfolds and policies are shaped. The book's topics are similarly ambitious. Whereas the book focuses on population aging, development, pensions, health, and social relations of older people, each topic in and of itself could provide the material for a volume or more. The author identifies and discusses the main issues within each topic, and illustrates their importance by reference to specific country or individual experiences. The book's six thematic chapters cover the aforementioned topics and are buttressed by three country case studies, one each on South Africa, Argentina, and India. As a result, the book has a matrix-like structure with thematic discussion, broad policy focal points, and country case studies with detailed illustrations of the focal points.

The 39-page bibliography is itself a valuable resource for researchers and students.

A key feature of the book is hinted at in its sub-title, "From Generalisation to Evidence". In this regard, Lloyd-Sherlock is especially concerned that "discussions about population ageing and the lives of older people are often framed in a number of stereotypes and generalisation" (p. xi). Lloyd-Sherlock's arguments thus aim to demonstrate the importance of a detailed, nuanced understanding of the realities of older people's lives in developing countries, and the most interesting sections of the book are those which capture this dimension. Moreover, the approach Lloyd-Sherlock has adopted is informed by his research interests as social policy specialist, and guided by qualitative methods.

Chapter 1 paints a broad picture of the ramifications for social and economic development by population aging. The main argument is that population aging matters for achieving successful development strategies. The chapter then moves to a critical discussion of approaches to aging and social development which emphasise the gradual exclusion of older people from social and economic life. The application of life course, cohort, and generation approaches, Lloyd-Sherlock argues, leads to more nuanced findings on the role of older people in development. The author's research establishes that older people in developing countries can draw important benefits, in terms of access to health and other services and more broadly in terms of improvements in well being, from processes of social and economic transformation.

Chapters 2 and 3 focus on income security and health care, and present a good discussion of pensions and pension reform in middle-income developing countries. The main argument is that pension schemes in developing countries have produced some benefits for the better off, with few benefits for the rest. In Latin America in particular, pension schemes have tended to reinforce structural inequality. More recently, countries in the region have extended the coverage of non-contributory pensions to low-income households and are shown to have contributed to improving income security in old

age. Chapter 4 on population aging and health care provides an interesting overview of the very significant challenges faced by developing countries in providing effective health care to an expanding older population. A discussion throws light on the role of older people in managing the impact of the HIV/AIDS pandemic on older people's households and particularly children. Households left with older people and their grandchildren are extremely vulnerable. This discussion leads directly to an examination in the following chapter of the nexus of individual aging, households, and community. A detailed discussion on migration brings out their interactions, exploring the impact of migration on patterns of care and resources.

There are a few aspects of the book that an attentive, critical reader might find relatively less impressive, although this should not detract from its overall contributions. The book pays more attention to middle-income

developing countries than to low-income countries. It could be argued that the implications of population aging are less visible in lower income countries, especially as those countries find themselves at an earlier stage in their demographic transition. Yet, it is likely that the knowledge gaps and policy challenges will be significantly greater in low-income countries.

Overall, this book will make an excellent contribution to our understanding of the social and economic consequences of population aging in developing countries. It will stimulate critical perspectives on aging which eschew untested generalisations. The arguments in the book emphasise the urgency attached to finding policy responses to rapid population aging in developing countries. The book will be especially welcomed by researchers and students in social policy, public policy, and gerontology who wish to gain a firm and critical perspective on population aging in the South.

Peter S. Silin. *Nursing Homes and Assisted Living: The Family's Guide to Making Decisions and Getting Good Care* (2nd Ed.). Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009.

Reviewed by Lori E. Weeks, University of Prince Edward Island

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Navigating the world of long-term care can be an overwhelming experience for family members. Peter Silin draws on his extensive experience as a social worker in long-term care and as a geriatric care manager to provide family members with valuable and practical information and advice.

This book is written for family members who are in the process of placing a relative in long-term care or who have a relative already in long-term care. Silin explains that this book is also written for those contemplating a move to long-term care themselves, although the book is unlikely to attract these readers, given the book's title and primary audience. It would be useful, nonetheless, to people working or planning to work in long-term care as they could gain additional insight into the needs and concerns of family members and help improve the quality of life of people residing in long-term care.

Throughout the book, Silin has chosen to use a randomized selection of family members when citing examples (for instance, referring to "your mother" in one instance, and "your husband" in another), which is unfortunate. Although intentionally used, this device distracts the reader. The choice of a more generic noun,

such as your "relative" or "family member," would likely be less discordant.

Silin targets a wide range of family members in this book and integrates, with some success, both Canadian and U.S. content. While much of the book refers to family members irrespective of the country in which they reside, Silin recognizes that important differences exist between the two countries on such issues as accessing long-term care and subsidization policies. However, since long-term care is provincially administered in Canada, and therefore varies greatly from province to province, it is difficult to capture succinctly inter-provincial variation. For example, Appendix 1, which includes specific information on accessing care in Canada, could include more-specific information on accessing care in each of the provinces. It would perhaps be more beneficial to the reader if both a Canadian and a U.S. version of the book were available.

Another way in which Silin appeals to a broad audience of family members is his inclusion, in this second edition, of assisted-living facilities in addition to nursing homes. While many issues are shared by family members who are placing relatives in both forms of long-term care, great differences exist, such as in the