In other chapters, interviews with care workers are used to give a vivid picture of participants' working lives. I was particularly struck by the chapter on universal workers in which participants described their daily work. Unlike the UK, there is no separation between care work and domestic work. and the accounts given by the workers in which they switch from helping residents bathe, to cleaning, to doing laundry gives an impression of care as a production line in which there are comparatively few opportunities to offer a personalised service. The chapter on relationships with residents shows, however, that it is the time spent 'sitting down and talking' together that offers study participants the greatest professional and personal satisfaction.

The book also illustrates the universality of some themes in research looking at workers giving direct care. The issues of poor pay and the racism experienced by workers from minority ethnic groups resonate with experiences reported elsewhere. Having worked as a care worker myself in care homes and in a hospital, I was also vividly reminded of the sense of cohesion and conflict that could operate among, and between, shifts. The employers' perspective is not neglected either and the emphasis on recruiting workers with 'heart' reminds me of those employers in our own (ongoing, UK) Department of Health-funded longitudinal study of the adult social care workforce who talked about the need for a 'caring nature' as an essential requirement for the job, often prizing this above experience or qualifications among potential recruits. The final chapter draws the themes of the book together and ends with some suggestions about how to improve recruitment and retention and job satisfaction as a way of improving the quality of support given to residents.

While the readership for this book is likely to consist mainly of researchers interested in the workforce employed to support older people, it would be a shame if it did not reach a wider audience. This is a work of real scholarship and many of the individual chapters would help students undertaking dissertations or theses in this area. It would also be of interest to policy analysts concerned with long-term care. It is often said that the traditional monograph has become less common now that researchers tend to concentrate their efforts on, for example, a web-based report and a series of journal articles. However, Ball and colleagues have shown that this format can still offer a valuable resource for all those interested in workers in long-term care settings.

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Catherine Bonvalet and Jim Ogg (translated by Krystyna Horko), *Baby Boomers: A Mobile Generation*, The Bardwell Press, Oxford, 2011, 254 pp., hbk £65.00, ISBN 13: 978 1 905622 33 7.

I found this to be an immensely absorbing sociological study of 60 baby boomers from the cities of Paris and London from the perspective of their

housing, professional trajectories and transition to retirement. Given the plethora of publications currently purporting to identify baby-boomer characteristics, mostly by secondary analysis, it was refreshing and very satisfying to access the rich tapestry of the differential experience of these two cohorts. This book is an English translation of a French study published in 2009 by the French Demographer Catherine Bonvalet, Director of Research at the Institut National d'Etudes Demographiques, Paris and Jim Ogg, a sociologist and fellow of the Young Foundation London and researcher at the Caisse Nationale d'Assurance Viellesse, Paris.

The primary data of the book is a survey and analysis of the narratives of 60 individuals born between 1945 and 1954 living in London and Paris. These individuals participated in semi-structured interviews, mostly undertaken in their own homes, between March and August 2006. At the time, almost all of the participants were in their fifties with the majority being classified as middle class. The book systematically sets the demographic, social and spatial canvas on which this cohort played out their lives in these two cities. Chapter 1 introduces some of the key characteristics of the 1945–54 birth cohort in a European context, tracing the post-war rise in birth rates and the social conditions under which the baby boomers grew up, arrived at adulthood, began to articulate a youth culture, and constructed and experienced mass consumerism. Chapter 2 identifies some of the key characteristics of the four locations where the interviews took place, namely Islington and Southwark in London, and the 11th arrondissement and Montrouge in Paris. Many of these were densely populated working-class areas gentrified by the inflow of the baby boomers. The link between residential and social mobility is explored in Chapter 2 and the authors emphasise the path dependency of earlier and later housing choices in the lives of their subjects. Chapter 4 traces the mobility of the baby boomers from a spatial perspective in terms of the routes that migrants to the city took in their youth and that contributed to their later embeddedness in, and attachment to, different neighbourhoods and holiday places. In Chapter 5 the work history of the baby boomers is retrospectively examined as they transition to retirement, and the final chapter asks them to look ahead in terms of the retirement projects with which they will choose to involve themselves and the locations in which they expect to grow old.

As Phillipson points out in his foreword, the fine detail of this study nicely debunks the many generalisations that are made about baby boomers: that is, that they are relatively homogeneous, financially secure, and live independent lives free of responsibilities for family care; and that they have a strong sense of identity as a particular generational group. Both the quantitative and qualitative data indicate considerable diversity while also illuminating the ways in which boomers have challenged traditional attitudes in work and employment, consumption and leisure. The rise in mobility and status of this group across the lifecourse is usefully reflected in their housing trajectories, from renting to home ownership with some purchasing a second home. For others divorce and loss of employment

forced relinquishment of the family home and cast them back into the rental market and financial insecurity. As a group, however, they do not appear to have cast off family ties and responsibilities, many of their later life decisions reflecting continuing support of children's financial welfare, housing and employment.

The subtitle of *A Mobile Generation* refers to the improvement of housing conditions and the spread of home ownership that led to new types of mobilities, ranging from the acquisition and use of second homes to extended time spent outside of a main residence and the practice of living between two residences. I found myself querying this subtitling, feeling that in some ways this cohort were decidedly non-mobile, mostly staying around the city and country of their birth and sticking to the predominant forms of housing of their respective cultures of apartments, terraced houses and sometimes summer holiday homes. In the era of globalisation, mobility now conjures up a much more diverse range of options and trajectories which are more likely to involve multiple countries and considerably more diverse housing types and tenures than experimented with by this cohort. This may relate to the fact that they were a largely working- to middle-class cohort. The persistent theme which comes through in many of the interviews is the degree to which this cohort have been surprised by their affluence, which most put down to the good fortune of the period in which they were born, rather than good management. Although there are marked variations and divergences in this experience – they are as a cohort, as the authors suggest, still 'bemused' (p. 228) at the level of the good fortune they encountered earlier in their lives. In this sense I wondered whether the subtitle should not more appropriately have emphasised this affluence which made what mobility and choices they had possible.

The other somewhat underplayed dimension of this study was some more in-depth analysis of how this cohort managed their finances. Though this is referred to in passing and is to some degree implicit in their housing and professional careers, there is very little data presented on other sources of assets and income and the different investment climate and policy regimes prevalent in each country that might have affected these decisions. The conclusion does mention that negative gearing against housing assets was far more prevalent in the UK than France, and given the market crash in 2009, this no doubt would have had a major impact on UK baby boomers.

None of this, however, takes away from the fact that this is an absorbing and carefully crafted sociological study of a cohort whose housing experience provides a critical window on the reality of baby boomers' lives. This book will be enjoyed by scholars of sociology, demography and social gerontology. Given that it is written in an accessible style it will no doubt also appeal to the general public who are part of this generation.

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