

Reviews

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Richard Marback (ed.), *Generations: Rethinking Age and Citizenship*, Wayne State University Press, Detroit, Michigan, 2015, 353 pp., pbk US \$31.99, ISBN 13: 9780814340806 (pbk), 9780814340813 (e-book)

This multi-disciplinary edited collection sets out to explore the intergenerational nature of citizenship. Its style is essayistic, with age, generation, time and place as the linking themes. The book is organised into four parts: ‘Age, Cohort, and Generation’, ‘Young Age, Globalisation, Migration’, ‘Generational Disparities and the Clash of Cultures’ and ‘Later Life, Civic Engagement, Disenfranchisement’. In Part 1, the four essays are based in the United States of America (USA) and focus on contemporary and historical questions concerning citizenship. First, Peter Levine discusses the theory and practice of ‘Civic Renewal’, arguing in favour of deliberative and participative engagement, after which the focus turns to examples of historical struggles – in Jane Green’s analysis of struggles by young people to assert their own cultural identity and status as citizens of the USA, to Amy Grey’s discussion of gendered Native American citizenship and, finally, in John Hink’s essay to the citizenship status of American-born children domiciled abroad at the time of the Cold War. So far so American.

In Part 2, the perspective broadens to cover discussions of Pakistani youth in Britain (Saeed Khan), children of immigrants in Italy (Enzo Colombo) and migrant Indonesian children in the Netherlands after the Second World War (Pauline Stoltz). Stoltz’s essay argues powerfully for the citizenship of children to be integrated into our thinking about citizenship *per se*, particularly in the context of conflicts and migration.

Part 3, ‘Generational Disparities and the Clash of Cultures’, considers examples of repatriated Mexican children (Yuki Oda), relationships between African National Congress youth and older black South African anti-apartheid activists (Richard Marback), and differences between older and younger generations of North Africans in France (Abdeljalil Larbi Youcef). In this part of the book we see how the relationship between the individual and the state as experienced by an older generation influences that of a younger generation.

The final part of the book turns to the experiences of citizenship in later life. Here, in the first essay, a team of researchers (Jennie Sweet-Cushman and others) present findings from a study of civic participation by African American elders. It poses the question: ‘Is participation decline inevitable as generations age?’ Perhaps unsurprisingly, their answer is ‘not necessarily’. They analyse a range of factors that influence civic participation, including those related to health and mobility, which might be responsible for

declining participation in later life and conclude that it is necessary to take account of different modes of civic participation. Since those that are less physically demanding do not appear to decline in later life, finding ways of facilitating participation by older people is essential.

Jessica Robbins-Ruszkowski's essay focuses on active ageing in Poland, drawing on 18 months of ethnographic research. She points to the disparities between voting patterns of older and younger Poles and argues against the binary thinking that pits older 'backward' against younger 'progressive' Poles. To understand the complexities of relationships between age cohorts in Poland, the influences of 20th-century history, the Cold War and the European Union need to be understood. Active ageing is often held up as a way of bringing backward-looking older Poles into a more open, freer form of citizenship, but Robbins-Ruszkowski points to the ways in which active ageing and the social relationships it fosters resonate with elements of the socialist past. In the final essay of this part, Tamara Mann takes us back to a historical account of post-Second World War US policy making and how, through this process, ageing became increasingly medicalised and intergenerational care relations dwindled.

With such a diverse set of essays it is fair to ask how effectively they are linked so as to produce a coherent account of the relationship between age, generation and citizenship. In the concluding essay, Robbins-Ruszkowski and Marback argue that the essays demonstrate that 'the rich human experience of civic membership ... cannot be understood through a single disciplinary perspective' (p. 314). The role of time and temporality in shaping experiences of citizenship is a key overarching theme, which adds an important dimension to the study of citizenship. Similarly, the book elucidates the emotional and relational nature of citizenship through its rich descriptions of particular accounts.

Despite its title, the book is more about citizenship than about age or intergenerational relations. Maybe it is a case of disciplinary arrogance but I found myself thinking that more input from gerontologists would have been beneficial. For example, the concept of generativity could have added to the discussions on intergenerational influences on citizenship and a clearer distinction between cohort and generation would have helped to draw out the linking themes from individual essays. Given the importance of time and temporality, a lifecourse perspective on citizenship would have been valuable, particularly as the book aims to challenge simplistic 'arc of citizenship' thinking.

Nevertheless, I found the individual essays enjoyable to read. The book offers interesting and fresh historical perspectives as well as insights into youth, migration and citizenship which are of direct relevance to social and cultural gerontology and which have tended to be overlooked by gerontologists. Turn around the question of what a greater understanding of age and generation tells us about citizenship to ask what a more informed understanding of citizenship can tell us about ageing and, in this way, gerontologists will find the book has much to offer.

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