

Reviews

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Martin Hyde and Paul Higgs, *Ageing and Globalisation*, Policy Press, Bristol, UK, 2016, 264 pp., hbk £24.99, ISBN 13: 978 1447322306.

Using the dual lenses of time (gerontology) and space (globalisation), Martin Hyde and Paul Higgs examine the interconnectedness of ageing and globalisation and how each impacts on the other. Improved communication technology, for example, has allowed generations to speak and see each other across continents. Migrant workers can send money home to ageing relatives. Cheaper transport has made it possible to reduce the time and distance between different national, regional and global geographical spaces. As one of the first books in the Policy Press's 'Ageing in a Global Context' series, *Ageing and Globalisation* makes a useful contribution to the field of gerontology. It will be of particular value to those with a good grounding in sociological theory.

Ageing and Globalisation is structured into three parts. Part One provides a theoretical base addressing gerontology and globalisation, where the authors present their perspective on the linkages between time and space and their application to the development of gerontology in a changing world. The interconnectedness of 'spatial and temporal regimes' provide the *leitmotif* of the book. The authors argue that the responses of gerontologists to ageing societies have generally been framed within the notion of the nation state, and thus determined by national characteristics and policies. Today's world systems and globalisation theories of interdependence and interaction are now seen as taking precedence over this, and thought must be given to the implications for policy development. How, for example, are the new communication channels, increasing international work mobility and changing working practices to be addressed by evolving gerontology theories as structured dependency, successful ageing, ageing in place or the lifecourse?

The second part offers empirical data about the lives of older people, covering health and care, employment, pensions, cultural engagement of older people and discourses of older people around the world. Gerontology has been primarily Western-based in its approaches, understandings and responses to ageing populations and older people. This has not been helped by the limited data available on the lives of older people in the Global South (international data came from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development and World Social Values). The authors acknowledge that more research needs to be done about different identities and lifestyles which they say would likely show different priorities of older people and different cultural responses to ageing. Similarly, issues of poverty must be taken into account when looking at comparative

experiences across income, health, care leisure and lifestyles with the Global South. Like the West, income difference within countries of the Global South are growing too. There is, for example, a growing middle class in many of the large cities of the less-developed countries. The difference is significant in a book about globalisation where gerontology is primarily concerned with Western concepts, and the process of ageing with its different rates of life expectancy across the globe.

The final section concludes that the shapes between ageing and globalisation are ever-changing and raises significant challenges about how to develop adequate criteria that will enable us to measure ageing and old age in a world where there are huge variations in life expectancy. Retirement age, for example, is not a useful biomarker for people in less-developed countries who are unable to retire because of an absence of social protection and pension systems. If pension age is seen to be the starting block of old age, where does this leave less-developed countries? How will global organisations set pension levels and retirement age in different countries? In ordinary usage in the West attention to old age tends to be confined to later maturity. In some countries of the Global South it is sometimes viewed as when grandparenthood starts.

The authors highlight the need for gerontologists to extend the breadth and depth of data collection about ageing and later life to encompass all countries around the world; and to be clear about what is being measured and hence what indicators to develop, saying this would allow for different life expectancies in Africa and Europe. The inclusion of references to some of the small studies in this area could have contributed a little to counterbalancing the Western perspectives. Das, Basu and Chakravarty (2008: 5), for example, suggest that 'in western culture the markers of successful ageing are fulfilment of one's potential, self-sufficiency, individual freedom and a choice to live according to one's wishes', whereas in the 'eastern' context 'successful ageing' is associated with the satisfactory completion of family duties and obligations. Similarly, wellbeing is used to indicate quality of life not only with reference to the health and happiness of the individual but to the social role that they play (*see* Molzahn *et al.* 2010).

Although the overall perspective of the book remains Western focused, it nonetheless provides substantial material for thinking about older people and ageing in a changing world. It seeks to go beyond the anthropological studies of older people in different societies; beyond policy and service responses, such as social protection, pensions, health and welfare within different ageing societies; and beyond approaches to old age such as lifecourse and positive ageing. The absence of data about older people in many countries means the book cannot, however, portray a full picture of global ageing. The authors acknowledge the need for further research about identities and lifestyles in other cultures. They conclude that chronological age is a poor indicator for later life. Not only does it shift within countries, because of differing lifecourses and incomes, but across regions and continents. Globalisation is about a particular economic hegemony that will continue to keep people in place because they are also unable to move. Older

people will thus continue to age in place in most of the world and will in fact be left behind as their families move to find education and work away from their homes.

References

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Polly Kaiser and Ruth Eley (eds), *Life Story Work with People with Dementia. Ordinary Lives, Extraordinary People*, Jessica Kingsley Publishers, London, 2017, 277 pp., pbk £19.99, ISBN 13: 978 1 84905 505 5.

In their book, the editors Polly Kaiser and Ruth Eley introduce life-story work as an approach to enhance quality of life and quality of care for people living with dementia and their families, as well as to improve work satisfaction for practitioners in the field of dementia care. According to the editors, life-story work is far more than collecting care-relevant information, but is 'above all, a process that involves having helpful conversations to elicit, capture and use stories about a person' (p. 16). In doing so it can serve as a bridge to the person with dementia and as a tool that enables family and professional carers to provide care in a way that empowers people and values their personhood.

The editors aim at providing their readers with an overview on what is currently known about life-story work from different perspectives – from people with dementia themselves, family carers and professional staff – and across different settings. The book indeed offers a very comprehensive picture of life-story work and provides the reader with profound information and practical advice on how to adapt the approach to their own circumstances. Whilst the book is clearly written from a UK perspective with a focus on local (care) structures and organisations, the authors succeed in making the contents comprehensible to an audience outside this geographical area by shifting the subject matter to a general theoretical basis.

The book consists of five parts. Part 1, 'Where Has Life Story Work Come From?', is dedicated to the theoretical roots and the policy context of life-story work.