

the ‘deletion’ of older citizens from social life, hasn’t quite been seized. The book begins to gain some ground in this direction in the closing chapters through the application of the idea of generational intelligence to big questions such as sustainability and responsibility to future generations. At this point, the ‘self-help’ chapters at the beginning of the book begin to make more sense.

Intellectually, the book is appealing, the authors are obviously immersed in the literature in their respective fields and so the book will be of use to students and scholars alike. However, the authors come from different social science disciplines, social psychology and sociology, and as such have different disciplinary orientations and writing styles: as one moves through the chapters it is at times difficult for the reader to maintain a focus on what is important. Chapters vary in tone. Some read like a list of ideas or a self-conversation, particularly Chapter 3. Others are more purposeful, directly tackling how the issue of generation has been dealt with in the social gerontology literature to date. A high note is the section on theoretical perspectives on intergenerational family relations, which raises some interesting questions about the main approaches to studying generation, such as lifecourse ambivalence *versus* solidarity-conflict. The authors’ clear statement on why the family is central in understanding intergenerational relations at both individual and societal level is compelling regardless of whether one views experiences of ageing as a construct of social policy (Townsend 1981) or consumer choice (Gilleard and Higgs 2000). The remainder of the book develops these theoretical ideas by applying the idea of generational intelligence to care-giving, elder mistreatment, workplace and community. These chapters ought to be compulsory reading for anyone working on intergenerational solidarity in 2012, the European Year of Active Ageing and Solidarity Between the Generations.

References

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Malcolm Payne, *Citizenship Social Work with Older People*, The Policy Press, Bristol, UK, 2012, 208 pp., pbk £22.99, ISBN 13: 978 1 44730 127 1.

I was keen to review this book since its title suggested to me a radical and challenging approach to ideas about support to people in their old age. In

fact the book does emphasise the importance of considering older people within an inclusive agenda, and as Payne states in his introduction, to see that 'citizenship social work starts from the idea that older people are equal as citizens of any society' (p. xi). The premise that underpins this statement of intent is that this is not necessarily the experience of many people as they grow older, nor does it always appear to be an obvious assumption in the processes of the agencies tasked to support them. So, while the book provides an overview of the theoretical ideas, policy and practice suggestions about older people, it also seeks to challenge any thinking that might see them as anything less than full citizens. This is most obviously addressed throughout the text by numerous examples of case studies and anecdotes. These serve to illustrate some of the main points being made, but also provide a way of exploring some of the stereotypes and common assumptions that occur in practice, and continually remind the reader of the citizenship focus of the title. These case examples provide a rich source of stories, and support the 'Pause and Reflect' sections suggested by the author. However, although interesting, at times, I did find them distracting from the flow of the text and theoretical information being discussed.

Payne splits the book into two sections. In the initial section of three chapters he writes about the social context for social work with older people. The first chapter explores some theories about ageing and the experience of older people. Chapter 2 looks at the idea of integration, both as a concept which suggests services should work together, and also as a principle of inclusivity in supporting the lives of older people. Chapter 3 leads on to explore the range of social provision both in the United Kingdom and elsewhere. This chapter focuses on the widest view of the range of means that would support quality of life, challenging a narrow organisational focus on provision and social work.

The second half of the book moves on to explore skills and approaches that might be used for the practice of social work with older people. Payne covers a number of general approaches and principles familiar to most social work practitioners. There is discussion and adaptation about how these general approaches might be used with older people. There are also specific chapters on particular approaches to social work that are relevant to this group *i.e.* critical practice; creative work and the use of the arts; and group and community-based interventions. While these chapters provide an overview of ideas and principles that will be useful for all social workers and students, significantly, there appears to be little reference to the bureaucratic and organisational contexts within which older people may come to the attention of many social workers. Issues such as safeguarding priorities, risk assessment or pressures created by the integration of health and social care services, are not addressed directly and so perhaps present a somewhat unrealistic view of the situations many social workers face. So while I think the book could provide inspirational and thought-provoking reading to students and social workers seeking to support older people, they may well be left with the issues of how to incorporate these approaches within an unsupportive organisational environment.

The final chapter of the book returns to social exclusion issues. Here ageism and inequality are discussed explicitly, as is a theme of safeguarding and end-of-life work. Again these issues are covered in a clear way that will help social workers and students clarify key ideas and approaches. But inevitably they provide a brief overview of concepts rather than exploring these issues of social work practice in depth. It is perhaps this that characterises the book. It provides a stimulating and broad international perspective on a range of ideas and services relevant to citizens of an older generation. However, while achieving this, it did not also address some of the specific challenges of the practice of social work for this group in more depth and so for me was a somewhat frustrating text.

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Leonard W. Poon and Jiska Cohen-Mansfield (eds), *Understanding Well-being in the Oldest Old*, Cambridge University Press, New York, 2011, 408 pp., pbk £24.99, ISBN 13: 978 0 521 13200 8.

Striving for happiness is a challenge that we all face during our lives, and immense research efforts have been directed at the identification of markers of wellbeing and the study of changes of wellbeing across the lifespan. However, as the title of the book *Understanding Well-being in the Oldest-old* suggests, in late life the challenge is qualitatively different. How can we understand and interpret the repeatedly found paradox that wellbeing appears to be largely preserved despite social and health-related losses?

Although the 'oldest-old' is a well-established age category, it may at first glance seem out-dated to use this label given the accentuated heterogeneity of health and functioning within this age group. To avoid drawing conclusions that neglect the diversity of the oldest-old, one strategy has been to use functional capacity as a more relevant and appropriate way to cluster subgroups of older adults. However, in this book, co-edited by two authorities within the field, novel and existential questions about wellbeing are addressed in a highly refreshing way that again supports the relevance of using the grouping 'oldest-old'. The book consists of 19 chapters where the contributing authors offer a guide to the complexity of wellbeing in late life, representing perspectives on how wellbeing should be conceptualised, relevant models of adaptation, the factors and individual characteristics that could be related to wellbeing and also important measurement issues.

Understanding Well-being in the Oldest-old is a product of a four-day workshop where US and Israeli researchers in ageing gathered to discuss novel and traditional paradigms that could improve the understanding of the oldest-old age group. More specifically, the aim was to direct focus on the complexity of how positive and negative distal experiences and habits together with proximal environmental influences affect wellbeing, and also to explore how society can support individuals in making the most of their potential. Within this frame the 27 authors manage to draw a both deep and