

as Attias-Donfut and Wolff write, ‘the transfer behaviours of migrants living in Europe have not been sufficiently studied’ (p. 260). What the authors show is that migrant families are just as likely to support their parents as their children, in clear contrast with earlier European studies that have shown that the direction of support is predominantly downwards.

Two remarks about the general content of the book seem justified. Firstly, the book claims to focus on European welfare states, but there are no contributions on any of the Eastern European countries, which is unfortunate if understandable given the general lack of appropriate data. These countries have only relatively recently begun to implement welfare policies, and for the most part differ considerably in their demographic composition, making them a particularly interesting area of study. Secondly, the title suggests that social policy is an important aspect of the book. Although most of the chapters use typical welfare regimes as their conceptualisation of social policy, the actual policies assumed to have implications for the type of intergenerational exchange remain largely unknown. As in most scholarly work, welfare regimes are merely used as an overlapping construct to explain any type of exchange, from elder care to monetary support. The question of what specific policies are responsible for differences in exchange patterns between European countries is not answered. Historical and cultural patterns, also operating at the macro level, may turn out to be equally plausible explanations. As Keck writes in his contribution, ‘cross-country comparisons ... often fail to consider that it is not just the provision of social services that may account for different degrees of family solidarity’ (p. 150). This critique applies to some of the chapters in this book as well. That said, this book encapsulates the state of the art in the European intergenerational solidarity discourse. Scholars and students alike will find it very informative. For those new to the subject, the development of scholarly work on intergenerational solidarity in Europe is clearly sketched in the introduction. Those already familiar will appreciate the combination of innovative empirical chapters and thought-provoking theoretical chapters.

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Rocio Fernández-Ballesteros, *Active Aging: The Contribution of Psychology*, Hogrefe and Huber, Gottingen, Germany, 2008, 194 pp., pbk €29.95, ISBN 13: 978 0 88937 360 0.

This book provides a timely overview of the concept of ‘active ageing’, which is increasingly used by policy-makers. It aims to present the perspective of psychology. The chapters cover population ageing, theoretical models and active ageing in relation to behavioural health and physical fitness, cognitive functioning, emotional and motivational functioning, social functioning, and social participation and promotion, including the contributions of sociology, public health, health promotion, epidemiology and clinical medicine, as well as

psychology. While the overviews of each field are extremely useful, the book covers so much ground that depth is inevitably sacrificed. The Conclusions at the end of the book are presented unusually in the form of numbered notes. There is no index, which is a limitation, especially as related concepts are used throughout.

The author's definition and concept of active ageing was developed from the plethora of 'positive' concepts of ageing which are evident in the literature, and states that all of them will be considered under the term active ageing. As the literature search of 'positive' ageing found the concept of 'successful ageing' to be the most commonly used of these, the author focuses Chapter 3 largely on this concept. A lifecourse, multi-dimensional, multi-level concept of active ageing, based on previous frameworks of related concepts is adopted. This model consists of: micro-person levels (distal factors from genetics to behavioural repertoires, and proximal factors from reserve capacity to pro-social attitudes); meso-context levels (distal factors from family to physical environment, and proximal factors from social and family networks to health and social services); and macro-levels (distal and proximal factors from education system to culture and values). Active ageing is stated to be based on health and physical fitness, cognitive, emotional-motivational, and social functioning.

The book focuses on the promotion of ageing 'positively' from multi-disciplinary perspectives, and this is labelled as a new paradigm in scientific gerontology. Positive ageing, rather than active ageing, would have been a clearer title and explicit focus for the book. While an integrated approach is to be welcomed, there are dangers inherent in basing the currently popular concept of active ageing on other, well-used, positive concepts of ageing. The author switches between different terminologies without warning, which can become confusing for the reader and the lack of an index does not help. Chapter 3 starts with synonymies of successful ageing, ends by defining positive ageing, then the concluding remarks focus on active ageing. Under the sub-heading 'Toward a multidimensional-multilevel proposal of active ageing', it is stated that a model for successful ageing will be posited with constructive elements. Literature referred to as focusing on active ageing (*e.g.* the systematic reviews referred to at the beginning of Chapter 4 on behavioural health and physical fitness) did not necessarily use this term, but other 'positive' terms (*e.g.* successful ageing).

It is rare to find an approach in this field which builds on related but different concepts, but this book is an ambitious and even contentious attempt. The book deserves careful and close reading. The later, more practical, chapter on active ageing programmes is especially useful, as it brings together the various strategies for promoting health and wellbeing, and lists several international projects. The multi-dimensional, multi-level approach should appeal to students and researchers from a wide range of disciplines.

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