

femininity, as much as it can be read as resistance against ageist ideas about the asexuality of older women's bodies. Twigg's assessment of women's biographical narratives about their ways to dress across the lifespan shows how there is as much continuity of style as there is change.

Twigg's work is positioned at the crossroads of cultural gerontology and fashion studies. Readers affiliated with each of these fields will find themselves drawn into her stunning argument about how fashion and age do indeed intersect. Her detailed account of the ways in which the design of clothes is age-coded makes it directly relevant to fashion designers. Women of any age, to whom fashion is dear, will find this book to be an exciting and illuminating read.

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Philip Taylor (ed.), *Older Workers in an Ageing Society: Critical Topics in Research and Policy*, Edward Elgar Publishing, Cheltenham, UK, 2013, 288 pp., hbk £80.00, ISBN 13: 978 1 78254 009 0.

This edited collection critically discusses the labour market status of older workers together with how they are considered by employers and policy makers. Its aim is to contribute to wider public debate about perceptions of older workers and what it means to retire and grow old. Taking an international perspective, the book is organised into five parts, each with its own theme. The five themes are: public policy for an ageing workforce; investing in ageing human capital; redesigning workplaces for an ageing society; generations at the workplace; and managing labour supply in an ageing society.

Each chapter represents a mini case study of context and experience and, with varied writing styles and analytical approaches, each reads very differently from one another. Working from my own research interests, I was particularly engaged by three of the chapters. The first of these, by Masato Oka (Chapter 4), discusses the place of older workers in Japan, which is working towards assuring employment security by 2025 for all workers until the age of 65 in the form of a continuous employment scheme. In Japan, there is currently a 'gap' between the mandatory retirement age of 60 and the full pension age of 65, and the scheme is designed to provide 'bridging' employment between the two. Oka argues that the scheme, characterised by low pay, is in reality a publicly subsidised cheap labour system that has the potential to restrict access by younger workers to the labour market, with the attendant risk of intergenerational conflict.

The subject of lifelong learning in the work context is the topic of Chapter 6 by Harvey Sterns and Diane Spokus, featured in Part Two of the volume. Drawing on the context of the United States of America (USA), this chapter highlights both the demand for older workers and the cultural restriction on their employment arising from beliefs that older workers are less likely to learn and so adapt to changing work environments. The authors

consider a number of aspects of workplace learning including mentoring and training, the success of which, they argue, is contingent upon a tailor-made approach to take account of prior knowledge and skills. Learning alongside younger workers, particularly connected to computer-based technology, is not always helpful for older workers who may find that they are not as quick to pick up both the tools and the language of technology-based skills. What particularly interested me in this chapter was discussion of learning concerned with planning for retirement that might be a phased process and might also include some kind of bridging employment. The authors comment on this learning as something that should be a career-long project so that when retirement finally arrives, whether forced or chosen, it feels less daunting – though this does rather assume that retirement is a problematic if not unwelcome stage of life!

The third case study I want to highlight is Chapter 16, authored by Donald Atwater, which considers the issue of who is managing the labour supply of older workers. The context for the chapter is a cross-national study of the labour markets of five countries – Australia, Japan, Romania, the USA and the Netherlands. The analysis presented is complex, incorporating a number of variables and contextual characteristics, and a close reading of the narrative is required to grasp fully the interplay of such factors as skills, choices and worker mobility. What emerges is the fascinating finding that it is older workers, not employers, who are taking the lead in managing the labour supply of older workers primarily through mechanisms that include flexibility, compensation choices such as taking lower-paid work and skill diversification.

The brief outline of three of the book's chapters is intended to convey a flavour of the diverse nature of the various topics and overarching themes. Although it is unlikely that readers will find all the volume's chapters equally interesting, given their different styles and analytic approaches, the rich nature of the material presented makes this a very worthwhile book both for policy makers and scholars working in this area that is of growing significance for western economies. If I have one minor criticism, it is that a stronger articulation of contemporary employment models as part of the volume's introduction would have provided a more rounded context in which to situate the relevant empirical and theoretical debates considered in the chapters' case studies.

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