

longer. This puts them in a difficult position of finding work at older ages if they are physically able to work, and creates challenges for employers to redefine jobs in such a way to accommodate an aging workforce.

The chapters in the book address a wide range of topics related to low-income workers, age discrimination, labor market experience post unemployment, disability, and health insurance coverage. The background chapters are informative and easy to comprehend, especially for those not well versed in the field, but the chapters on what to do about the aging population as it pertains to continuation of work get into the real issues. Nevertheless, because the book was based on a 2006 conference, some of the options offered are not relevant four years later. For instance, the chapter on options to expand health insurance coverage among older workers focuses only on options for older workers. By contrast, policymakers in 2009 spent months debating aspects of comprehensive national health reform – during which most agreed that insurance reforms would benefit older workers at the expense of younger workers. Incremental approaches that would benefit only older workers were absorbed into comprehensive approaches. Yet the chapter questioning retirement at the normal retirement age could have easily been written today, since the topic is as relevant today as in 2005. We know that there will be more individuals of retirement age and, at least on average, the health status of retirees will be better than of previous retiree cohorts. The key questions are: can they afford to retire; can Social Security avoid insolvency without a cut in beneficiary retirement income; will jobs be available for those able to work; and how can we provide financial security to those incapable of working in their later years?

The book raises an interesting question as to whether retirement should be based on years in the labor force, instead of age. Basing benefits on years of service is already common practice in the pension world, as well as the health benefit world; many employers use a combination of age and years of service in determining eligibility for health benefits in retirement. But the idea would not be as easy to implement in a social insurance program, where there would be issues to resolve such as penalizing those who take time off work to raise a family.

Ultimately, the public and private sectors must work together to address the aging workforce. Employers may be reluctant to hire older workers because of their expected healthcare costs, though older workers may be attractive due to projected labor shortages. Older workers may also seek non-traditional jobs permitting them to gradually withdraw from permanent full-time work. The last chapter of the book examines some areas for private and public sector collaboration in addressing the needs of society and an aging workforce. As our society is on the cusp of the Baby Boom generation turning 65, more research will be needed and more opportunities for experimentation will present themselves, to make the transition towards an older workforce as smooth as possible for workers, employers, public policy, and society.

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*The Longevity Revolution: The Benefits and Challenges of Living a Long Life.*

Robert N. Butler. Public Affairs Press, 2008, ISBN 978-1-58648-553-5, 576 pages. doi:10.1017/S1474747210000417

The ‘longevity revolution’ has been happening for centuries, with improvements in lifespans occurring for as long as there have been records and estimates of life expectancy. Yet its impact has not been as well addressed as it should have been by researchers and policymakers. This book provides a broad coverage of current issues in longevity, touching on the health, economics, politics, and science of longevity. It also discusses the issues and current problems arising from humans living longer and dying at increasingly older ages.

The author begins with a discussion of longevity challenges including ageism, and then it moves on to the science and politics of longevity. Impacts of diseases and biological science on

longevity are also covered, after which solutions are then discussed, including research funding, health care, labor supply, and social security. The material spans areas including the economics of aging, promotion of better health, health care for the aged, productive aging, early retirement, social security and the intergenerational contract; additionally topics covered include social security financing, the annuity market and personal saving, market risk, and scandals over product fees and costs. In the end, the book covers so much ground that it does not focus on any particular aspect in detail.

The book's second section, *The Science*, with its discussion on the science of longevity is of interest, including a discussion of the possibility of underestimating life expectancy. A full chapter is devoted to Alzheimer's disease and links with aging. Genetic factors are also mentioned, including why females outlive males and the biology of aging. There are many suggestions for possible research areas and developments in aging including medical prevention strategies, and some analysis about aging research from both government and private sectors.

The third section, *Solutions*, again covers many possibilities, including health promotion and disease prevention, strategies for working longer, changing employment policies, and opportunities for older people as volunteers. The politics of aging and longevity also are treated, although with very much a U.S. perspective. Financing social security is an international problem, relevant for all developing and developed economies. A fourth section expands the discussion to cover worldwide inequality of longevity, poverty and famine, and threats to longevity including environmental destruction, climate change, disease and epidemics.

In all, the volume offers an excellent review on the science of longevity and aging. Yet at just over 400 pages (with an additional almost 40 pages of tables in an Appendix and 50 pages of notes), it is a long read, and some segments are more stimulating reading than others. The book is also kaleidoscopic, covering so many different topics briefly that it can only list ideas and suggestions in many cases. The book could have benefitted from more thought to topic structure and cohesiveness that would have made the book easier to read. This is not a textbook or detailed reference book. Readers seeking to increase their awareness of the issues of longevity and aging, and the proposals of a leading figure in the field, will find the book informative and an excellent base for generating debate and discussion. Discussion of funding for research in longevity and aging is mostly U.S. based.

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*Whatever Happened to Thrift: Why Americans Don't Save and What to Do About It.* Ronald T. Wilcox. Yale University Press, 2008, ISBN 978-0-300-12451-4, 159 pages. doi:10.1017/S1474747210000429

Published in 2008, one of the worst years for economic declines since the Great Depression, Ronald Wilcox's comprehensive but slim book on the importance of saving is very timely. The volume reads easily and incorporates content relevant to the individual, household, policy-maker, and CEO. The author starts by asking whether Americans save too little, a question often asked in popular and research circles. Wilcox's answer is prescriptive-focused: sensible policy is the answer.

Targeted toward those who have the ability to save but do not, Wilcox evaluates why many Americans do not save enough and why they make so many bad decisions. The author proposes that Americans have low levels of financial literacy and therefore tend not to make good financial choices. But because he lacks confidence in individual decision-making, he therefore believes that policymakers must intervene. He proposes increased education yet acknowledges that its impact on saving may be limited. He also recommends that the government increase the personal saving via a consumption tax. Acknowledging that this type of tax may be difficult to