and what is needed now is to convince the policy makers of the merits of the approach. One potential obstacle here – emphasised in several chapters and implicit in many others – reflects the difficulties that will be faced in tackling the complex, multiple, deeply embedded, inter-related and often mutual reinforcing determinants of people's positioning on the social advantage and disadvantage spectrum. In order to effect real change, policy will need to address the underlying issues in a sustained way that may not produce noticeable change within the political horizons of most governments. This message needs to be heard and this book takes an important first step on that journey.

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Simone Scherger (ed.) (2015), *Paid Work Beyond Pension Age: Comparative Perspectives*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, £65.00, pp. 320, hbk.
doi:10.1017/S0047279417000174

After ever earlier exits from work, current reforms aim at increasing retirement age and prolonged work, thus leading to a rise of working pensioners. However, such late careers have not always been a success story, despite the calls upon active ageing. Based on international case studies and comparative analyses, this volume looks at the recent trends toward paid work beyond retirement age across Europe and in comparison with the USA, Russia, and China. Edited by Simone Scherger, a German sociologist leading a research group at University of Bremen on this topic, it collects a dozen contributions by international experts on old age work and retirement. The volume is organized in three parts: several country case studies, discussions of the changing context, and the potential consequences of work beyond pension age.

As the book's focus is on post-retirement work, the national pension age and its reform are of crucial importance for the empirical studies. Thus it might come as a surprise that the discussion of the context comes only after the national studies. Therefore, reading part two first is useful. The chapter by Karen Anderson provides some background context of ongoing pension reforms in Europe. Then we might turn to the other studies in the second part that discuss North American company strategies (Victor Marshall) as well as EU and German workplace policies (Jutta Schmitz) in the face of globalization. A British-German comparison by the German project team investigates the age-related norms with the help of qualitative interviews of employers, unions and pro-age groups, showing considerable variations between weak and strong conceptions of retirement as a social right between the two societies and interest groups. These comparative and analytical chapters provide an important context in addition to the introduction and should be read before turning to the (comparative) national country studies.

Among the six chapters of part one, two have opted for comparisons, either of liberal market economies, Britain and the US, or a comparison of Britain with continental welfare state Germany. The four others look at the early exit culture of Italy, the post-socialist transition economies Russia and China as well as the active ageing model of Sweden. These chapters all

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0047279417000174 Published online by Cambridge University Press

approach the trend toward late career work based on quantitative analyses, though they are not following a very standardized format. Nevertheless, all national treatments provide some statistical patterns of working in late career. Yet note that the pension age limit might vary depending on national conditions: paid work after age 65 in Anglophone countries, Germany, and Sweden, but among British women and Russian men already from 60 onwards, even age 55 in Italy and for Russian women, and as early as 45 in China. A comparison thus reveals significant cross-national variations in pension age realities and the subsequent incidence and social composition of late careers. Moreover, comparison is difficult, as there might be limits on combining work and benefits as well as varying rules in respect to disability, long-term unemployment and early retirement as well as survivor pension arrangements, though we lack any systematic overview.

While agricultural jobs and self-employment have always been prominent among late careers, the more recent increase in working pensioners comes in a dual nature. Some work late, because they want and can do so, while others have to work in order to make their living. Generally, the national results show that working pensioners tend to be more often men than women, and they slightly tend to continue working if their partner still works and particularly in case they have good health. Thus besides economic motives, opportunities such as good health, higher education and available age-conducive work are prerequisites for successful active ageing. In fact, the country results indicate, "paid work in retirement can thus be a privilege for some and a burden for others (p. 20)." However, the patterns of employment careers of older workers remain unmapped: Are they staying with their employer or changing? Are they shifting their jobs and to what degree do adjustment of working hours play a role? The employer role remains also unexplored, partly given the lack of appropriate data.

This collection of empirical studies on a relatively new phenomenon caused by the paradigm shift toward active aging is a substantial contribution. The comparative approach shows considerable variation within Europe and beyond, this is a useful reminder that national developments still differ despite similar trends. The combination of contextual chapters, national case studies, and of some micro-level analyses provides a wide-ranging treatment. Indeed, the volume seeks to combine quantitative and qualitative methods. The multivariate analyses of late career work in the first part, however, remain mainly cross-sectional, since it is a rather recent phenomenon. Some chapters have also used qualitative vignettes and interviews with organizational agents to provide a more in-depth view on the life experience, motivations, and age-norms of those still few people working past pension age in these societies. At the moment, it may be difficult to generalize about future trends.

The final part draws at least some lessons by discussing the consequences of active ageing. A gerontological analysis of later career and its impact on health and well-being by Katey Matthews and James Nazroo draws on micro-level evidence of social and health inequalities. Policies that raise retirement age and active ageing often ignore persisting social, health, and educational inequalities with counterproductive effects, in particular when work is involuntary. In a discourse analysis of American and German age norms, Silke van Dyk argues that productive ageing is far from being "good for everyone". The concluding chapter by Harald Künemund and the editor discusses different models for future reorganization of the institutionalized life course, though they caution against a fully flexibilized approach void of needed social regulation. There are still many unexplored aspects of paid work after pension age, for instance, the implications for volunteering and care giving in old age that would warrant further analysis.

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https://doi.org/10.1017/S0047279417000174 Published online by Cambridge University Press