

Excerpts, 14 academic journal reviews of Vanhuyse and Goerres (eds), *Ageing Populations in Post-industrial Democracies*

1. *Ageing & Society*, 2012, Vol. 32, No. 7, pp. 1264-1266.

'makes a major contribution towards addressing this paucity of data and empirically informed argumentation in an area that has raised so much interest and controversy in recent decades, but until now remained largely unexplored territory in the literature. ...a firm rejection of the 'grey power' hypothesis and the 'war of generations' stereotype, with the complexity of generational politics convincingly highlighted ... Generation and age matter surprisingly little in the light of the empirical evidence marshaled here: rather, institutions and structures (welfare state design, electoral system, interest organisation) are paramount. Interestingly, perceptions are also highlighted as important, in particular the perceived need to control budgets which may trump over the perceived need to protect age-related entitlements. ... *Ageing Populations in Post-industrial Democracies* has provided a tantalising invitation for advancing an increasingly important field of scholarship and is essential reading for graduate students and researchers working on this topic.'

2. *Bulletin of Italian Politics*, 2012, Vol. 4, No. 1, pp. 193-197.

'The politics of ageing societies is finally being discovered as a field worthy of serious attention. The two scholars have assembled a wide-ranging collection of comparative essays, covering pension politics and regimes, spending patterns, pensioner parties, family policy and intergenerational justice. ... formulates a number of questions whose salience is on the rise in the wake of the third decade of 'permanent austerity' and the consequent intensification of the demographic challenge. Is there a mounting generational cleavage influencing party politics in Western and Eastern countries? ... Have politicians responded to the demographic emergency through traditional blame-avoidance tactics? What are the lines along which segmentation in the labour market and in the welfare state run in the twenty-first century? Rather than providing definitive answers, the contributors provide stimulating thoughts for reflection, setting the agenda for future research on the politics of ageing.'

3. *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, forthcoming 2012

'The compelling argument for a political science examination of generations and politics is two-fold: ... In setting out the framework for a political analysis of generations, Vanhuyse and Goerres point to the ambivalence of the term, 'generation,' – at once, a cohort, family generation and age grouping. ... Politics impact us differently as members of a cohort, a family and an age group. ... The editors then outline what they call 'causal black boxes' of the political dimensions of population ageing, by asking key questions, ... How does ageing change political processes? Why do generational policies change? Does population ageing elevate generational issues in politics? How do governments balance interests of growing older populations with other priorities? How do political institutions mediate? ... This is a welcome and refreshing book, one that offers new insights on the complexities of population ageing and generational relations through the lens of politics. It could productively be added to the bookshelf of population ageing and generation scholars, no matter what their discipline.'

4. *Canadian Journal of Sociology*, 2012, Vol. 37, No. 2, pp. 208-212.

'*Ageing Populations in Post-Industrial Democracies* ... helps us understand population ageing in a global context by illustrating the ways in which politics and institutions matter across countries and welfare regimes. This collection finds striking differences in the politics and policies of different countries. ... it fails to support convergent arguments that the demographic and economic pressures related to population ageing will lead to similar political action among OECD countries. ... (it) implores us to move beyond convergent presumptions about ageing populations ... (It) will be of particular interest to sociologists and other social scientists studying ageing, demography, politics, and the world of work.'

5. *Canadian Public Policy* Vol. 38, No. 3, pp. 443-444.

'This is a great addition to the Studies in European Political Science series .. taking an explicitly comparative political science approach. ... A main theme of the book is the interplay of demographic and fiscal considerations with political variables in the evolving adaptation to aging populations. ... In some regards, the similar demographics and fiscal constraints among European countries push in the same direction, but at the same time there is path dependency based on existing institutional and policy frameworks in each country. ... Robert Hudson argues that the economic crisis of 2008/09 and fiscal constraints have shifted "the perceived stakes of action on behalf of pensioners" from "positive-sum to zero-sum or even negative-sum" territory (p. 14). Similarly, on the side of this convergence hypothesis, Achim Goerres and Pieter Vanhuyse observe in the introductory chapter that the increase in life expectancy and the relative size of the elderly population bring into question the very basis of the welfare state'

6. *Intergenerational Justice Review (Journal für Generationengerechtigkeit)* 2012, Vol. 7, No. 1, pp. 31-32.

'This ... is a collection of articles which examine different aspects of the relationship between age and political power in advanced nations. In particular, several of the papers question whether older people show a greater inclination to vote following their logical self-interest, in support of parties who promise them more generous age-related benefits, or whether their voting decisions are based on a more complex range of factors. ... Taken together, the papers in this book ... present compelling evidence that some aspects of government policy are affected by the age of the electorate (particularly pension reform and generosity), while it seems that the interests of the elderly are not necessarily privileged during the design of labour market reforms.'

7. *Japanese Journal of Political Science* Vol. 14, No. 3, pp. 447-449.

'Aging is one of the most important issues in developed countries, and this book discusses it from various points of view. The issue is particularly serious in Japan; the monograph notes that Japan's 'old age dependency ratio' ... will be 83.1% in 2040 — the highest among OECD countries. Japanese scholars, policymakers, and politicians have long been discussing this problem, but this book offers empirical analyses from an international perspective, making comparisons of the situation faced by many countries (and is) ... is extremely valuable when thinking of reforms in post-industrial democracies, including Japan.'

8. *Journal of European Social Policy*, 2012, Vol. 22, No. 5, pp. 530-531.

'Pieter Vanhuyse and Achim Goerres wish to shed light on ... one of the major policy challenges in advanced democracies. ... The book undoubtedly represents an original and timely contribution to existing research ... By including contributions that discuss a wide range of social policy areas (e.g. family, old age, labour, gender), the volume offers a much-needed broadening of the research agenda related to generational politics. ... One of the merits of this book is to demonstrate that to fit the label 'generational politics' the research agenda should comprise the life-course from the cradle to the grave. ... Ranging from small-n comparative case studies to formalistic, model-based analyses the contributions represent different ontological and methodological traditions. This methodological pluralism is refreshing and gives room for an inventive exploration of issues that a more stringent conceptual framework would most likely have rendered out of range. In short, the volume caters for a broad range of interests and everyone vaguely concerned with the consequences of population ageing for modern welfare states will find something useful. ... Vanhuyse and Goerres have put together a book that enhances our knowledge base for an enlightened debate about how population ageing affects the making of social policies.'

9. *Journal of Turkish Social Policy Conferences*, forthcoming, 2013

10. *Norwegian Journal of Social Research (Tidsskrift for Velferdsforskning)* 2012, No. 3

'The editors (...) clearly have a point in that political scientists have traditionally been much more concerned with conflicts related to class, income, region and education. (...) in view of the demographic changes that are presented thoroughly in the opening chapter, it is obvious that the theme of the book is also central to political scientists. Will demographic change lead politicians (...) to push forward cuts in the generosity of public pensions, or do larger shares of grey voters constitute a political bloc that defends the status quo? And to what extent do political and economic institutions affect the choices of different countries in the face of demographic change? These are the questions that motivate the book. ... Vanhuyse and Goerres have edited a useful, well-organized, and at times original book about the challenges and consequences of an aging population from a political science perspective. I can confidently recommend the book for anyone interested in comparative welfare research.'

11. *Political Studies Review*, 2013, Vol. 11, No. 1, p. 111.

'The intergenerational conflict of interests is often framed in terms of a 'war of generations' ... this book offers eleven chapters that sketch a more nuanced picture, by answering a wide variety of questions with different methods and at different levels of analysis. This plurality of approaches is where the strength of the book lies; it allows the reader to understand the issue on many different levels. The volume provides important findings for those interested in the politics of ageing democracies, and the editors do an excellent job of placing the contributions within the larger debates in the literature.'

12. Sociologický Casopis(Czech Sociological Review), 2014, Vol. 50, No. 2, pp. 312-314 (in Czech).

13. Swedish Political Science Review (Statsvetenskaplig Tidsskrift), forthcoming, 2013

14. Swiss Political Science Review, 2013, Vol. 19, No. 1, pp. 118-121.

'This timely volume ... aims to understand and explain how political configurations and legacies among OECD countries result in varying levels of policy and preference divergence in the face of permanent austerity and issues linked to an ageing society. ... Both Sean Hanley (Chapter 2) and Markus Tepe and Pieter Vanhuyse (Chapter 6) make an important contribution to welfare state scholarship with their unique research topics and sophisticated analyses. ... The findings in this volume add to our knowledge about generational politics and welfare state politics in the following aspects. First, a simple distinction between "old" and "new" welfare politics is of limited use in understanding political dynamics of ageing population. ... Second, generational politics is not a zero-sum game based on short-term material interests. ... Third, despite varying degrees of influence, all chapters show that domestic political institutions and policy legacies play an important role in mediating convergence pressures. The book tells us convincingly why we should pay more attention to details to notice the mediating effects of institutions, such as distinguishing between smaller and larger cuts (Tepe and Vanhuyse) ... *Ageing Population in Post-Industrial Democracies* represents a competent venture into a relatively uncharted terrain from a comparative political science perspective. This book provides a wide range of interesting and nuanced findings to learn from and puzzle over. It is undoubtedly a must-read for any student of welfare politics, ageing societies, and family policy.'