

commitment to improve the care-home experience for residents, relatives, professional carers and providers can lead to innovative and exploratory projects, which in themselves could feed into policy and practice.

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Erdmute Alber, Sjaak van der Geest and Susan Reynolds Whyte (eds),  
*Generations in Africa: Connections and Conflicts*, Lit Verlag, Berlin, 2008,  
432 pp., pbk €39.90, ISBN 13: 978 3 8258 0715 3.

This appealing collection of papers looks at intergenerational relations through the lens of the social anthropologist. It deftly switches between the viewpoints of generations, as elegantly captured in the cover illustration of a youth and an older man exchanging spectacles. The book takes us on a geographical tour of a dozen countries in Africa. The authors are mainly European scholars with an intimate knowledge of Africa gleaned from their own field experience as well as ethnographic records. The 16 papers in the collection draw on rich materials to describe continuity and change in intergenerational relations including everyday discourse, historical records, field notes, poetry and popular songs. As one contributor notes, poets may be even better than ethnographers in capturing the spirit of the age.

The generation concept is introduced as a powerful analytical tool for studying society because it implies relations in time (p. 1). The lead chapter introduces the three most common concepts: *genealogical* generation that defines kinship relations and rights and obligations; *age-generation* that uses chronological age or birth order as a principle for structuring society; and *historical* generation that concerns the cohorts of people born at the same time who share common experiences and may make 'fresh' contact with, or reinterpret, their cultural heritage. The substantive topics addressed in the chapters that follow reflect the rich cultural diversity of the world's 'oldest continent'. They are neatly grouped under four key themes starting with *reciprocity* between the generations, moving to adaptations to intergenerational living from the *past to the present* attuned to the shifts in the political and economic situation, and ending with a section on *virtue* that discusses the manner in which issues of moral excellence, success, faith, maturity or 'good sense', and sexual integrity are spoken of from a particular generational position. Appropriately, an essay on wisdom has the final word. The appendix includes biographical notes on the authors and there is a useful subject and author index.

As the saying goes, there is always something new coming out of Africa. In this respect *Generations in Africa* does not disappoint. Plenty of novel insights and surprises are in store for the reader. For instance, we learn that there can be multiple trajectories into adulthood and grandparenthood in Tanzania. Thus, pregnant teenagers can to a certain extent negotiate to which generation they wish to belong by variously demonstrating maturity or rejecting care-giving responsibilities. In Swaziland, tradition is reinvented when young girls revitalise a ritual

that may protect their age-generation from harm in the time of HIV/AIDS. In Ghana, urban youth have introduced Valentine's Day celebrations that hold promise for facilitating intergenerational communication on sexuality. While access to jobs and money in eastern Uganda and Zimbabwe and new ways of being religious in Ethiopia empower youth, they also challenge the authority of elders.

To its credit, *Generations in Africa* looks beyond the stereotypical image of contemporary Africa as a continent plagued by poverty, disease, corruption and political turmoil. The authors are neutral and unbiased in their analysis. They consistently focus on people and relationships, but readers are never allowed to lose sight of the backdrop to Africa's generations – the influences of economic decline, political instability, the AIDS epidemic and rapid urbanisation. Tellingly, even remote rural Africa is portrayed as part of the globalised world. While African elders 'certainly never visited an Internet café or disco' (p. 382), contemporary African youth are described as global citizens who are increasingly subscribing to ideas of personal success rather than collective progress. They 'dream of wealth, power and consumer goods, yet only a few will have the opportunity to acquire social position, influence or a good income' (p. 64). Thus, real success may be equated with emigration. For good measure, the chapter on 'transnational reciprocity' follows Ghanaian economic emigrants out of Africa to their destinations in Europe to document the problems they experience in caring for elders at a distance.

The collection was first conceived at a panel on generations at the First European Conference of African Studies held in London in 2005. Most of the contributors appear to be 'outsiders' to the societies they analyse. This may be appropriate as there is a longstanding tradition in social anthropology of studying the 'other', which affords the advantage of distance in seeing the overall picture. Judging from the biographical sketches appended, only four of the 18 contributors were born and bred in Africa. If there is any hint of a western perspective in the interpretation of generations, this might only serve to make this collection of papers more accessible to an international readership. *Generations in Africa* should attract a wide readership. It will be essential reading for those with an academic interest in the subject of intergenerational relations, but practitioners and Africa watchers will also benefit from the valuable insights into African society.

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Christine Milligan, *There's No Place Like Home: Place and Care in an Ageing Society*, Ashgate Publishing, Farnham, UK, 2009, 188 pp., hbk £55, ISBN 13: 978 0 7546 7423 8.

As the population ages, and welfare policy shifts care-giving responsibilities away from the state, it is increasingly necessary to consider the long-term care of older people and the role of informal carers. This book draws together a decade's