

Book Review

Vega, W. A., Markides, K. S., Angel, J. A., & Torres-Gil, F. M. (2015) Edited work, *Challenges of Latino aging in the Americas*. Switzerland: Springer.

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This edited book is the sixth in a series for the Conference Series on Aging in the Americas, sponsored by the National Institute on Aging of the National Institutes of Health. The purpose of the series is to investigate issues about the health of older Hispanics.* This book in particular looks at both Mexico and the United States, as the issues of aging Hispanics for both countries are intertwined and, with unprecedented migration, the editors argue that a binational and transnational migration perspective is pertinent. Readers are invited to “participate in the unraveling [of] a very complicated story of Hispanic population diaspora and health” (p. v).

There is an incredible amount of socio-demographic and study-specific variable information in the text. There are 24 edited chapters, more than 420 pages, broken down into four sections. This review will be broken down into those four respective sections. Within each section are not only policy articles, but research articles outlining historic trends, current analysis, and future issues.

*The authors use the ethnic terms “Latino” and “Hispanic” interchangeably. For this review, I use the term

Part I Demographic and Economic Implications for Health and Well-being (Perspective) in Mexico and the USA: An Overview

Chapters 1-5 address immediate and future implications of the current migration patterns and population growth of Hispanics in the United States. As a direct cause of a significant portion of the United States population growth, the greatest of which is represented by relatively high birth rates and migration of Mexican Americans. Educational attainment is lower on average than whites and blacks, the median age is younger than non-Hispanic whites, and a less economically secure old-age is predicted. The future of the United States is inextricably intertwined with its burgeoning Hispanic population, specifically, its socioeconomic future. With this growing population are the concomitant issues of aging and politics. As the Hispanic percentage of total population increases, Hispanic political ‘leverage’ will increase at a time when aging policy for Hispanics will be center stage. There are three trends seen to be important for the labor market activity of older workers of Mexican origin—the rapid growth of the Hispanic population, increased later-in-life migration, and increase in late-life labor force activity. There are implications for demographic changes as a result of mass migrations, where and how late-life labor will fit into the labor market, and Social Security participation for late-age migrators. Lastly, issues surrounding aging and retirement security for

Hispanics in both Mexico and the United States are reviewed.

Part II New Data and Methodological Approaches on Aging Research in Mexico and the United States

Chapters 6-10 discuss and utilize data sets (of Mexican and United States origin and populations) as well as techniques to study the aging Hispanic populations and predict future trends. Studies on self-employed and entrepreneur workers and health insurance, migrant remittances and caregiving for transnational aging populations, dementia and informal caregiving, as well as prevalence and determinants of falls are among issues presented to explore data sources and methodologies.

Part III Binational, Transnational Migration Perspectives: Mexico, Latin America, and the USA

Chapters 11-17 explore the interconnected “worlds of migrating and non-migrating people of Mexican heritage in the U.S. and Mexico, and examines selected issues accompanying consequences of resettlement and rebuilding lives and lifestyles” (p.191). Issues surrounding foreign-born aging in the United States, including social, psychosocial support, geographic mobility and environmental issues for “older people’s social adjustment and well-being” are reviewed (p. 191). The demographic transitions of Mexico, the United States and Latin America are explored. Of particular interest is the greying of Mexico and the United States, but at different rates; the differences in health insurance for the older adults in both countries; and variations in mortality. Differences in formal medical care and family caregiving between the countries are discussed. Family living arrangements, particularly those that have proved advantageous for multigenerational migrants, also prove to be important to providing care to aging family members. Issues involving separations of generations as well as intergenerational family

members that deny structure and support for migrant families are discussed. Housing issues, substance abuse (alcohol) and demographic profiles for late-life Mexican migrants are also reviewed.

Part IV Cost and Coverage Fiscal Impacts

In Chapters 18-14, political issues, economic politics and how to care for a changing, aging, and increasingly longer living Hispanic population, and their relationships to entitlement programs are discussed in the last section. Novel are the issues surrounding the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, and the issue of expanding and non-expanding states (expansion of Medicaid without losing Medicaid funds). Disparities in willingness to pay for health improvement, economic security of Hispanic baby boomers, the current state of elder care in Mexico, pension reform for financial security for elders in Latin America, and politics surrounding aging in the United States for the majority-minority Hispanic population are covered.

The readings would be a great supplement to a course covering aging, minority aging, and aging policy. The book is big, the number of studies and issues covered are just as big. The chapters are short, concise, with the policy chapters straight to the point and the studies asking and providing clear answers. The book would also serve as a concise reference to any of the topics involving Hispanic aging and Mexican and American demographic changes and policies for Hispanics. The greatest strength of the sixth book in this series is how it demonstrates the intricacies of Hispanics in the United States and issues of their binational and transnational statuses, both in the United States, in Mexico, and their migration between the two countries. The facts and research speak to the complex social nature of the rapidly increasing Hispanic population, the aging of both the Hispanic and white non-Hispanic populations, and the political and economic milieu of both nations.