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The Experience of Retirement

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more to compare the programs in anthracite regions with other community revitalization efforts. More interesting are their chapters on individual responses that are based on census IPUMS (Integrated Public Use Microdata Series) data and their own interviews. These differ from the interviews in John Bodnar's *Anthracite People* (1983) in two ways. The present volume focuses on the period after the mine closed, and it employs more social science methodology, including charts, tables, and statistical tests. However, the tables on which much of the discussion is based are in the appendices; placing them in the chapters would have made for easier reading. Most of the findings are predictable, for many of the changes they depict were broadly characteristic of declining regions and sometimes of American society during these years (out-migrants were comparatively young and well educated; married women increasingly entered the labor force; unemployed men did "women's work" around the house; children became more educated than their parents). One interviewee makes two arresting points: his father would not let him go into the mines, and the "best thing" that ever happened to him was the Korean war. The decline of anthracite may have been destructive, but the loss of such hard and dangerous work is surely a mixed tragedy.

In the last chapter of the book, on the legacies of anthracite, the authors focus on the abandoned mine sites and declining communities. They return to what they see as institutional failures to deal with these issues, but many readers may take issue with their analysis. They lament that the lack of strip-mine redevelopment has led communities to employ old sites as landfills. But such a choice raises a host of questions they do not address. Since we have a shortage of waste sites and a surplus of farmland, are landfills really a poorer use of old mines than restoring them to farmland, as the authors claim is done in Britain? Their view that public policies in Britain, Belgium, and elsewhere have addressed the problem of industrial decline more effectively than have American institutions may be correct, but their analysis is too brief to be convincing and, as noted, it raises a host of policy questions.

Overall, although I find some of the analysis unpersuasive, this is a marvelously researched, compelling portrait of some of the social costs of economic change. It should be of interest to a broad audience of labor and social historians and economic historians as well.

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Economic and Social Security and Substandard Working Conditions

The Experience of Retirement. By Robert S. Weiss. Ithaca, N.Y.: ILR Press (an imprint of Cornell University Press), 2005. xii, 293 pp. ISBN 0-8014-4406-3, \$45.00 (cloth); 0-8014-7252-0, \$18.95 (paper).

Thanks to the postwar demographic bulge and an approximate 20% increase in average life expectancy since the end of World War II, an unprecedented number of individuals are now leaving the labor force permanently. During their working years, as the author of *The Experience of Retirement* points out, much of their day-to-day life was structured by their employment. In many cases, it may be added, even much of their non-work personal and family activities were work-related, such as company-sponsored athletic teams, hobbies, family picnics, and vacation facilities. The broad question implicitly addressed by this study is how individuals are replacing that structure during the last phase of their lives, designated as retirement. On its own terms the overall result of the inquiry is interesting and largely successful.

The author, a sociologist, motivated in part by the wish to understand his own retirement, found the resources to conduct a study of other similar retirees. Drawing from the voter lists of six suburban Boston communities, Weiss assembled a mostly random sample of 89 middle-class, still-employed individuals over sixty years of age. He makes no claim that this group is representative of the universe of retirees. The sampled individuals are well above average in education—broadly defined, nearly three quarters of them held professional or semi-professional jobs before retirement—and, compared to the elderly population at large, most of them are very likely better off financially and have different interests.

No hypotheses were being tested in the course of the study. The intention only was to interview the sample members both before retirement—to find out plans and expectations—and again in retirement, without prior notions about responses. Only about half of the sample, for various reasons, could be interviewed prior to retirement, however, and thus many of the "pre-retirement responses" were retrospective and perhaps tempered by the actual experience. The interviews appear to have been open-ended, though the substance of the book's chapters suggests the kinds of questions that were asked. Interviewees are identified by occupation but

quoted pseudonymously to protect their privacy as well as to encourage participation.

Coverage of the retirement experience is quite complete and well-organized both in the book as a whole and within chapters. A beginning chapter on the reasons for retirement echoes the history of the changing functions of institutionalized retirement since its modern development in the 20th century. It is followed by a chapter describing the initial separation from work. Subsequent chapters explore all aspects of the experience in retirement, from social and family relations to financial concerns and the use of time. The possibilities of social isolation and loss of identity are given considerable attention. Although the reality and, especially, the diversity of the retirement experience are highlighted, the author could not refrain from some prescriptive recommendations in a final chapter.

There is a considerable academic literature on much that is covered in this volume, but most of it is neither interesting nor easily accessible to the general reader. Here the findings are not explicitly discussed but are used extensively to interpret or explain the responses of the sample members. One subject that might have been explored with the participants, but is not evident in the text, is their plans and expectations for later years: the members of the sample are relatively young, there is no indication that they plan to leave New England for warmer climates or to reside in places of special interest, and there is no talk of exploring entry into life-care communities. A longitudinal cohort study of retirement experience would be useful in understanding the total retirement experience, since situations, resources, and interests change, often markedly as aging progresses.

As the demographic bulge continues, policy issues already under discussion or even implemented in both the public and private sectors will directly affect those leaving the labor force for retirement. Whatever the outcome of those developments, this volume provides some assurance to those contemplating retirement that the experience will continue to be *sui generis*, governed by the diversity of individual tastes and preferences.

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Work, Family, Health, and Well-Being. Edited by Suzanne M. Bianchi, Lynne M. Casper, and Rosalind Berkowitz King. Mahway, N.J.:

Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2005. 583 pp. ISBN 0-8058-5254-9, \$145.00 (cloth).

Employment and family circumstances are crucial determinants of health outcomes for adults and children, and health status plays a central role in determining the constellation of jobs and family roles available to individuals. Nonetheless, these linkages rarely take center stage in research on health or on work and family. The editors of *Work, Family, Health, and Well-Being* seek to rectify that situation by blending the scattered evidence from earlier studies with new findings and ideas for future research. The sheer heft of the resulting volume, which weighs in at 33 chapters and over 500 pages of text, inspires hope of at least some fresh information and analysis. Happily, that hope is not disappointed.

The introductory chapter by the editors provides a summary and asks us to consider the importance of interdisciplinary approaches both for interpreting existing evidence and for conducting future studies. The theme of the following four-chapter section is time. S. M. Bianchi and S. B. Raley examine changes in time allocation among mothers and fathers, and the attendant feelings of time pressure. H. B. Presser considers the implications of a 24/7 economy for time allocation. A. C. Crouter and S. M. McHale, who look at how parents' scheduling affects child development, report evidence that children are, on average, harmed more by constraints associated with the father's than the mother's work schedule—specifically, *short* work hours by the father, and especially shift and weekend work—but that the structuring of children's and adolescents' own time, which is heavily conditioned by social class, is more influential still. B. Schneider and L. Waite use Experience Sampling Method data to understand links between time use and emotional states. Among their findings is that both housework and television viewing have positive emotional effects when performed with others.

The next six chapters address work and employers. H. J. Holzer's article, on the economics of work and family, highlights the lose-lose dynamics of absenteeism as a response, mainly by low-income workers, to child care and child health problems in a world where employers find such absenteeism costly. E. E. Kossek examines the prevalence, use, and outcomes of work-family policies such as flexible work arrangements and child care supports. These policies, she finds, are far more commonly offered to workers in high-status jobs than to others. C. A. Thompson, J. K. Andreassi, and D. J. Prottas ask why most employers do not develop policies to help employees balance their work and