Contents

Preface ix

1. Introduction: Integrating Ethnographic and Cross-National Perspectives on Old Age	1
Ethnographic or Cross-National Research? Why Bring Cross-Cultural and Cross-National Pe Together? 5	2 rspectives
Part I. The Nature of Age: Biology, Chronology, and Culture 11	
2. Cultural Variation and the Biodemography of Aging 17	
The Biology of Aging 17 The Biologic Expression of Senescence 20 Aging and Survivorship 22 Aging and the Evolution of Human Longevity Comparative Analysis of Life Tables 29	26
3. Population Aging and Comparative Demogra	phy 35
Variation in the Proportion of Elderly 37 Variation in Life Expectancy 44 Age–Sex Pyramids 46	

vi Contents

Aging and the Demographic Transition 50 Fertility, Population Aging, and Government Policy	54
4. Culture and the Lifecourse 57	
Conceptualizing the Lifecourse 58 Time and the Lifecourse 60 Cultural Variation in the Definition of the Lifecourse	63
★ The Stages of Old Age: Old People, Ancients, and Ancestors ← 67	00
Formal Models of Life Stages and Transitions 68 Informal Models of Life Stages and Transitions: Implicit Systems of Age Stratification 74 Old Age as a New Stage of Life 77	
Part II. Social Relationships, Kinship, and Generational Transactions 81	
5. Family Relationships of the Elderly: Living Arrangements 85	
Living Arrangements of the Elderly: The More Developed Countries 87	
V Living Arrangements of the Elderly: The Less Developed Countries 89	
 ✓ Determinants of Living Arrangements ✓ Position of the elderly within Households 102 	
6. Family Relationships of the Elderly: The Flow of Intergenerational Transactions 108	
Cultural Variation in the Construction of Generational Ties 111	
Generational Transactions within Families 115 Comparative Research on Intergenerational Solidarity Family Caregiving to the Frail Elderly 128	118

Contents vii

7. The Aged and Intragenerational Relationships 13	9
Reciprocity and Interpersonal Exchange among Elders 140	
Variation in Rules and Rule-keeping in Interpersonal Relationships 144	
Disengagement, Activity, and Selectivity in Social Participation 151	
8. Succession to Seniority 155	
The Aged and Resource Control 158	
The Aged and Resource Transfer 167	
Resource Control, Elder Authority, and Modernization	170
Generational Equity in Cross-Cultural Perspective 183	
Part III. Health Decline and Death 187	
9. Aging, Health, and Dependency 191	
Comparative Study of Aging and Morbidity 194	
Measuring Functional Capacity in Other Cultures 195	
Measuring Cognitive Impairment in Other Cultures 199	
Self-Rated Health in Cross-Cultural Perspective 202	
Aging and the Disablement Process 208	
Cross-Cultural Variation in the Impact of Disability 216	
10. Death, Death-Hastening, and Decrepitude 221	
Death-Hastening in Comparative Perspective 224	
Comparative Research on the Last Year of Life 229	
Elder Abuse in Comparative Perspective 234	
11. What Next? Hypotheses for Cross-Cultural Investigation 237	
Living Arrangements: Aging Parents and Adult Children 240	

241

242

Children 240 Family Relationships: Reciprocity

Family Relationships: Caregiving

viii

Contents

Modernization and Succession to Seniority
Health Decline, Death, and Death-Hastening
Health and Social Participation

244

References 249

Index 283