AGEING BETWEEN CULTURES

THE EXPERIENCES AND CHALLENGES OF ITALIAN MIGRANTS IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Daniela Cosmini-Rose

This interdisciplinary volume addresses the multiple dimensions of the ageing experience of Italian migrants in South Australia by revisiting the concepts of health and wellbeing, intergenerational family care-giving practices and the role of language and culture in the ageing process. This collection of essays highlights the importance of a multi-layered approach, which recognises that elders, their families and their communities are closely intertwined and need to be explored in relation to one another.

Older Italian immigrants are one of the largest ethnic ageing groups in Australia, but their experiences of ageing in a foreign land have been largely overlooked. This volume addresses the multiple dimensions of the ageing experience of the Italian elderly by revisiting the concepts of health and culture in the ageing process. It analyses how the population gathers the information they need for their everyday lives in an era when governments and businesses use the Internet and mobile devices to disseminate information about services and products. It also examines the home as the locus and symbol of migratory goals and host country experiences of first-generation Italian Australians and discusses how food habits are intricately bound up with life experiences and personal identities and how they remain psychologically and physiologically significant in their later lives.

At a time when the world's population is ageing at a rapid rate, this comprehensive study on an elderly migrant minority, their families and communities, is a valuable contribution to the literature of migration and ageing and serves as a framework for the development of aged care models for other migrant communities. To date there has been very little research undertaken to explore the issues related to the ageing of the Italian community in Australia, and even few studies that are specific to South Australia. Ageing between Cultures aims to address this.

Daniela Cosmini-Rose is Senior Lecturer in the Italian Section in the Department of Language Studies at Flinders University. Her primary area of research is the history of Italian migration to South Australia. She has published nationally and internationally and her most well-known publication, with Professor Desmond O’Connor, is Caulonia in the Heart: The story of the settlement in Australia of migrants from a Southern Italian town (2008). She has also published papers on return migration, on the maintenance of Italian traditions and on the bonds that migrants maintain with their homeland. She is also interested in material culture and is currently involved in the Migrants’ Belongings Project, a research endeavour that examines the significance of belongings included in the trunks that Italian migrants brought to Australia at the time of their migration in the post-WWII period.

PUBLISHED 28th January 2016
£24.99
ISBN 9781784624682
Distributor: Troubador Publishing Ltd, 9 Priory Business Park, Wistow, Kibworth, Leics LE8 0RX
BIC subject category : J – Society & social sciences
Paperback 234x156 mm Portrait

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