

Professor Lim has, however, been badly let down by her publisher in regard to the only two maps, both small but large-scale, monochrome versions. One covers, on one page, the region bounded by northern Australia, the Arctic Ocean, Moscow and the Aleutians. The other depicts the North-East Asian region centred on Manchuria. Both maps are marked with small print but still fail to detail or otherwise easily indicate many of the locations mentioned in the text. A work on geopolitics requires clearly drawn, readable and comprehensive maps, not the third-rate versions offered here.

*The Geopolitics of East Asia*, within its limitations of size and requirement for summary rather than detail, is a masterful work. Its occasional oversimplification invokes the odd twinge of reflexive counter argument but the book contains no obvious or serious errors of fact. This is a book which has the sure touch of both an unbowed practitioner and a scholar, and in both cases one comfortable with the milieu of debate in North America and North Asia rather than just Australian perspectives. It should be required background reading for Australian diplomats, strategists and senior commanders and those who aspire to otherwise comment on Australia's national strategy.

One final question the book generates is why Professor Lim has not been snapped up by a university or think-tank in her own country. She would certainly be a breath of fresh air in a country where strategic debate at an academic and wider level has greatly suffered from an insufficient turnover of participants over the last three decades, and more recently a marked degree of intellectual atrophy. Perhaps her reputation for being a somewhat hard-edged critic of the academically complacent has told against her. On the evidence of *The Geopolitics of East Asia*, Australia is much the worse for her apparent intellectual exile.

**Reviewed by Neil James**

*The Escape from Hunger and Premature Death, 1700-2100: Europe, America and the Third World*

by **Robert William Fogel**  
Cambridge University Press,  
New York, 2004  
216 pages, US\$24  
ISBN 0 521 00488 8

**T**his short book, written by a Nobel laureate in economics, is a fascinating read, dealing with issues of long-run macro-level importance. I doubt any book published this year has as many astonishing facts and convincingly argued assertions per page.

The book consists of two concise and important essays (Chapters 1-3 and Chapters 4-5) and a postscript, each of which can almost be read independently. The first essay convincingly links, over the last three centuries, dramatic developments in the availability of calories and essential nutrients in some developed nations to significant improvements in the average health and longevity of those nations' populations. The result has been an extraordinary increase in the capacity of the average person to engage in work and pleasure, leading to substantial increases in productivity and reductions in inequality. This in turn, Fogel emphasises, has synergistically facilitated better average access to calories and nutrients.

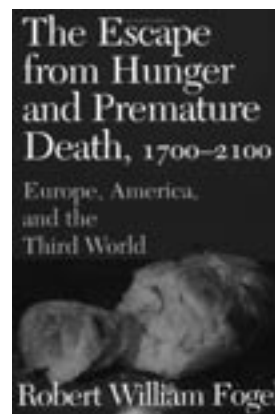
Fogel's second essay looks at the implications for healthcare in the light of the long-term changes just discussed. Fogel argues that we should not be concerned about, but rather expect and welcome, dramatic increases in healthcare expenditures. In a society as productive as those of the developed nations, expenditure on food, shelter, and work-saving devices in the home amounts to a

relatively small proportion of average total income. Consequently, people want to spend more time and money on leisure and health. In Fogel's view, removing constraints on individuals' ability to spend more on health can foster a health revolution that (again synergistically) will drive economic growth in the next century. Fogel also makes a strong case that growth in demand for healthcare in developing nations such as India and China will lead to much greater growth in expenditures, as a percent of total output, than in developed nations.

The second essay is also concerned with inequality in healthcare. Specifically, Fogel argues that the US should increase: pre- and post-natal care, especially for poor single mothers; targeted education of those poorly *informed* in health matters; periodic health screening in schools through to year 12, especially in poor neighbourhoods; convenient access to public health clinics in underserved poor neighbourhoods, as without ready access, even the insured do not use healthcare facilities; and international health aid.

Interestingly, Fogel does not see the large percent of uninsured Americans as being a substantive problem. Instead, the issue is inequality of access, which he argues convincingly would not be solved

by increasing insurance coverage. Moreover, he notes that merely increasing insurance coverage by taxation would be largely regressive. (On a personal note, my nearly 15 years as an insured individual in the US compares unfavourably to what I experienced in Australia between 1973 and 1990 in three respects not addressed by Fogel: high personal administrative costs in dealing with insurance companies, doctors and hospitals; lack of access to healthcare facilities outside of weekdays between



9 and 5; and gross unfairness when it comes to debilitating illness—a 17 year old girl diagnosed with multiple sclerosis becomes essentially uninsurable unless she can land a job with a large and generous corporation or government body).

Fogel's postscript concerns the extent to which longevity increases are likely to continue. He takes the optimistic view that the linear increases experienced in the last 300 years will continue over the next 100 years. On that basis, the average life expectancy of a woman born in 2070 would be about 97 years. It would have been nice to see evidence beyond extrapolation (of both actual increases in longevity and in the underestimation of these by the experts of the day). For example, comparisons of the life span of animals such as genetically similar feral dogs, pets and show dogs, could provide additional evidence on what lifetime extension better environments might bring.

The book's first 'essay' is the most demanding and occasionally frustrating. This is where Fogel's professional expertise lies, and yet, putting aside the section's overarching themes, it is where the reader repeatedly has doubts about various propositions advanced. Nor does it help that Fogel repeatedly cites an unpublished work still in progress. Let me provide two examples that are interesting and important, though not critical to Fogel's basic arguments.

Fogel takes the view that the ideal average height for males is perhaps well over 190 cm. A good deal of Fogel's evidence for this comes from military records. However, he does not discuss whether there might be some endogeneity in this finding. In particular, relative rather than absolute height differences could play a role. For example, it may be that bigger men, especially those in the military, are marginally less likely to get into fights or otherwise be hurt, leading to greater longevity. Similarly, some evidence suggests that relatively tall men are more likely to be married and

earn higher incomes than other men. Marriage and income are known to play a role in longevity.

Fogel also provides fascinating discussion on a controversy about ideal body size, concluding that, on average, small is unlikely to be healthy. While the evidence he presents from the US and northern Europe is compelling, it contains no data from Japan, where one suspects data exists. This seems a curious omission. The Japanese are among the longest living people in the world. I would guess, from casual observation, that, with the possible exception of today's Japanese children, Japanese are on average smaller than their American and European counterparts (even after excluding those who are overweight). Moreover, Japan is the most affluent Asian nation, making it a good comparator with America and Europe. Consequently, examining the Japanese data could conclusively support or negate Fogel's view.

Fogel's demonstration of the main points in the first section of the book also gets a little lost in the details. For example, he makes the staggering claim that the increase in accessible calories between 1790 and today accounts for 30% of the British growth rate over the same period. Yet I did not appreciate why this was likely true until I had pieced together information found in later chapters (such as on the extraordinary increase in the average working life access to adequate nutrition allowed).

Some quibbles in ending: This book desperately needed an editor. It uses inches, centimetres and metres interchangeably. It employs complex graphs that are difficult to read and with thought (in some cases very little—see Figure 3.1) could have been made more readable. It relies on endnotes instead of footnotes, despite having 1.6 notes per page. Surely not because footnotes scare off the general reader? Anyone frightened of footnotes will be terrified of the first 20 pages of this book.

**Reviewed by Eric Kodjo Ralph**

*The Persuaders: Inside the Hidden Machine of Political Advertising*

by Sally Young

Sydney, Pluto Press, 2004

404pp, \$34.95

ISBN 1 86403 304 5

**T**he study of political advertising and its impact on democracy is a growth industry. It interests observers of politics as well as university students studying political science. Sally Young, who currently lectures in media and communications at the University of Melbourne, is at the forefront of its scholarly study. She completed a PhD on political advertising in Australia (1949-2001) in 2003 and has also written widely on the subject, including in the *Australian Journal of Political Science*. *The Persuaders: Inside the Hidden Machine of Political Advertising* is her latest contribution.

Young's study is well researched and supported by a range of primary and secondary literature. One of the book's most valuable aspects for a political science readership is the quality of the reference list contained in the bibliography (p.365). She clearly spent many hours reviewing National Library of Australia collections for each of the major parties.

Given the insiders nature of Australian major parties, academics generally find it very difficult to ascertain what really goes on in party backrooms. Young has an insider story of her own to tell. She confesses to having worked as a Labor Party volunteer in the lead up to the 2001 federal election and the 2002 Victorian state election (p.3). Her experience was one of being shut out, unable to get near the action. Sadly this is a typical sensation for new entrants into the world of political staffing/volunteering. On both sides of politics it is often not what you know but who you know.

Young's experiences clearly left her with a story to tell—that of the difficulty ordinary citizens