

# Managing Change and Continuity: Private Lives in Public Places



Prifysgol Abertawe  
Swansea University

Judith Phillips  
Centre for Innovative Ageing  
Swansea University

# Outline of presentation

- Dimensions of environment and ageing
- Demographic change and globalisation
- Key questions
- UK studies
- Policy and practice considerations
- Issues for discussion





# Managing change

- Continuity and adaptation
- Resilience
- Reconstruction
- Juggling

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# Dimensions of environment and ageing

The physical/material environment includes the natural landscapes, cultivated and open spaces and the built environment, both domestic and non-domestic over time.

# Dimensions of environment and ageing

The social environment concerns the engagement of people to places – how places and spaces are used, organised and structured, from nations to neighbourhoods to homes displaying particular traditions and events within a particular culture

# Dimensions of environment and ageing

The psychological environment concerns the meaning of place, both current and across the lifecourse, and how people feel about themselves.

# Social/Physical

*To understand how ageing is associated with context we need to piece together the geographical and physical features together with their social relational implications and the opportunities and challenges that environment presents to older people (Wahl and Lang, 2004).*


# Frameworks for understanding

- Person- environment fit (Powell Lawton)
- Social models of ageing
  
- Control over environment and choice of lifestyle
- Multi-disciplinary



# Scenario Planning

- What kinds of environments are sustaining for older people?
- Should you age in specialist housing?
- What are the design implications for the use of new technology?
- Are rural areas good to grow old in?

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- Should we design communities for intergenerational integration or segregation? How do we build an age friendly environment suitable across the lifecourse?
  - How do we support robust social and caring networks in different environmental contexts?
  - Do you 'age in place' or move to a potentially more fitting environment?
  - How do we plan for a better quality of life? How can we plan for the diversity of an ageing population

# Main drivers of change and challenge

- Demographic change: beanpole structures,, support expectations, intergenerational equity
- Globalisation: families at a distance, global care chains, different kinds of ageing, astronaut families
- Urbanisation: regeneration, social exclusion, spatial segregation, placelessness, jigsaw cities

# *Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods: A National Strategy for Housing in an Ageing Society*

- A cross-government priority.
- Policy and plans need to join up.
- ‘Housing options for older people shouldn’t be limited to ‘care homes or sheltered housing’. (p11)
- Accommodation and care needs to be ‘future proofed’: ‘so that it does not alienate or exclude; and to allow everybody, regardless of age, to participate and enjoy their home and their environment for as long as possible’. (p11)



# UK Studies

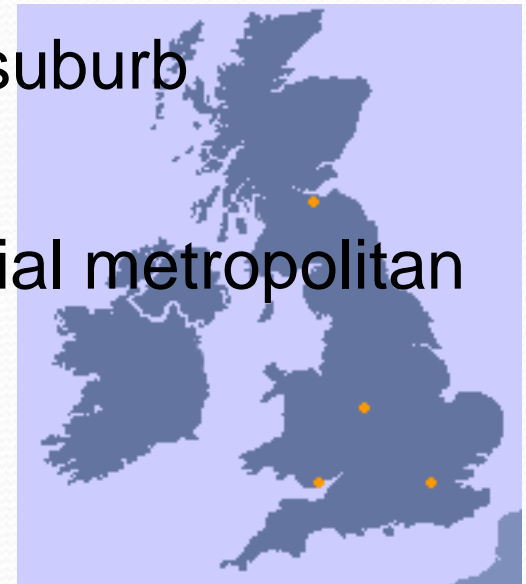
- Family and Community Life of Older People (Routledge, 2000)
- Growing Older in Socially Deprived Areas: Social exclusion in later life (Sage, 2008)
- New Lifestyles in Old Age (Policy Press, 2007)
- Juggling Work and Family Life (Policy Press 2002)

# Management of change

- *Continuity and adaptation* (a case study of three communities in England over 50 years)
- *Resilience* in deprived communities (ageing in the most deprived areas of England)
- *Reconstructing* identity and lifestyle (examples from an evaluation of retirement communities in the UK)
- *Juggling*. (a study of carers in the workforce who were juggling work and family life at different distances).

# Family and Community Life: Three urban areas

- Bethnal Green: deprived, ethnically diverse inner city area
- Woodford: relatively affluent, ageing suburb
- Wolverhampton: multi-cultural industrial metropolitan borough



# Three classic studies

- The Family Life of Old People (Townsend, 1957).  
Bethnal Green
- Family and Class in a London Suburb (Willmott and Young, 1960). Woodford
- The Social Medicine of Old Age (Sheldon, 1948).  
Wolverhampton

# 1950s Bethnal Green



# 1950s Woodford



# Continuity and Adaptation

*'It's the East End and I like the East End. I've loved Bethnal Green ever since I've lived here. I've got so many friends here. It's a real community (Bethnal Green, 70 year old man, widowed)*

# Continuity in relationships

- One child living within a 4 mile radius
- Greater generational reciprocity and gender equity
- Traditional patterns of interaction between mothers and daughters
- Ethnic minority care reflecting 1950 patterns