



MANCHESTER
1824

The University of Manchester
Institute for Collaborative
Research on Ageing

The Manchester Urban Ageing Research Group

Urban Ageing: A Spatial Justice Approach

Dr Sophie Yarker
University of Manchester



To create cities that are good places for people to grow older, we need to adopt a spatial justice approach to age-friendly cities

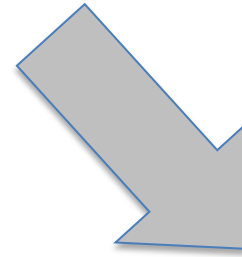
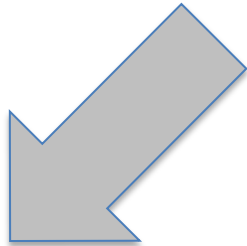
1. What is urban ageing and why is it important?
2. Challenges facing older populations living in cities
3. The Age-Friendly Cities and Communities Framework
4. A Spatial Justice Approach



**WHAT IS URBAN AGEING?
WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?**

What is urban ageing?

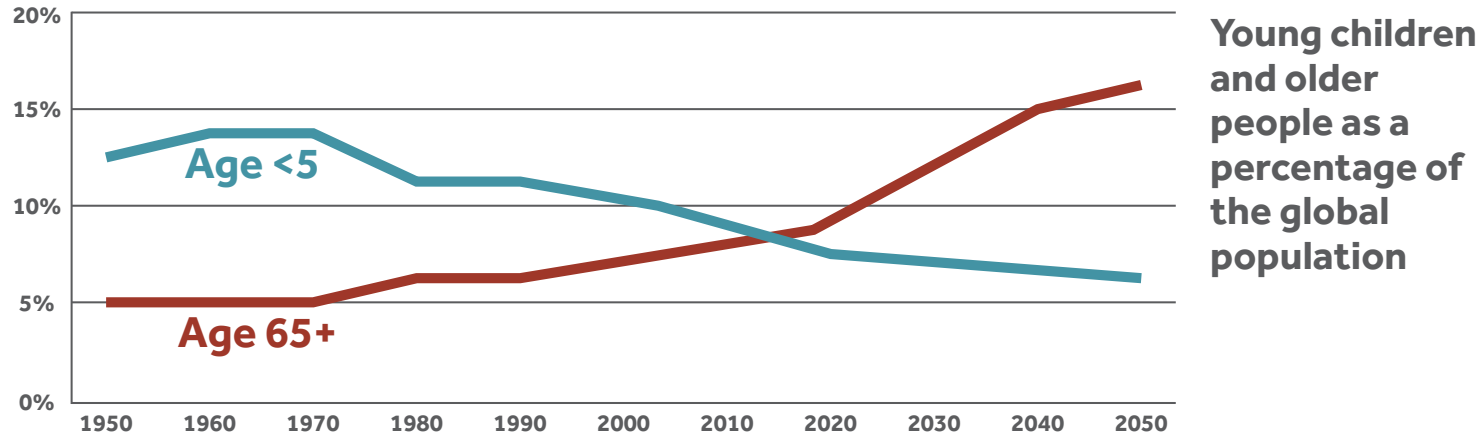
Two of the most important trends shaping social and economic life
in the 21st Century:



Population Ageing

Urbanisation

Population Ageing

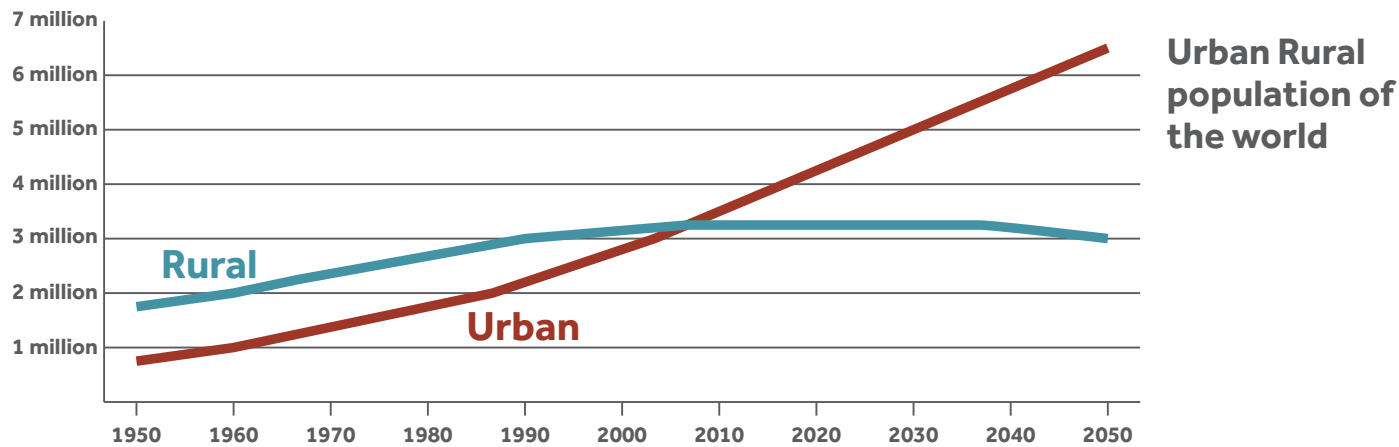


In OECD countries, the population share of those 65 years and over increased from less than 9% in 1960 to more than 17% in 2010 and is expected to reach 27% in 2050.

The increase has been particularly rapid among the oldest group, with the share of the population aged 80 and over projected to more than double from 4.6% in 2019 to 9.8% in 2050 (OECD, 2021).

Urbanisation

More than half of the world's population (55%) now living in cities, with this set to increase to around two-thirds by 2050 (UN, 2019).



Demographic change is occurring more **rapidly** than cities can either respond to or adapt

Why focus on urban ageing?

The simultaneity of the demographic transition, deepening urbanisation, a technological revolution, frequent shocks brought on by health and climate emergencies mean that *we need to plan for an older and more urban future* (Das et al, 2022, p 2, emphasis added)

- **Urban change** and increased **inequality**
- Social, cultural, economic and political **opportunities** for older people, but also very pressing **challenges**

CHALLENGES FACING OLDER PEOPLE IN CITIES

Urban Change

Urban redevelopment aimed at younger, affluent groups

Older people are often ‘erased’ from discourse around urban regeneration (Kelley et al., 2018)

Gentrification can leave older people ‘stuck in places’ with increasing rents ‘culturally displaced’, socially excluded and isolated in unfamiliar environments

Increased privatization of public space leading to increased securitization as well as cultural and economic exclusion of different groups





Austerity & Increasing Inequality

Strain on public health systems

Rising pension age, cuts to social welfare

Cuts to other public services such as transport, libraries, day centres

Austerity urbanism (Peck, 2012)

Responsibilities passed on to communities

Highest cuts in most the economically deprived neighborhoods

The most marginalised older people left the most vulnerable

Disinvestment in Social Infrastructure



The spaces and places in our communities where we have social interactions and that facilitate the development and maintenance of social connections and support networks (Klinenberg, 2018)



‘Passing places’- spaces of everyday encounter in the city (Yarker, 2022)

Can protect against loneliness and social isolation

Places to see others and to be seen



Connect with shared culture and identity

Can provide the basis for vital support networks in times of crisis

CREATING AGE-FRIENDLY CITIES AND COMMUNITIES



Why should we be concerned with developing age-friendly communities?

Importance of home and neighbourhood in later life – 80% of time of people aged over 70 is spent in home and immediate locality (Wahl et al., 2012; Peace, 2022)

Neighbourhood as a source of **inclusion** (e.g. social connectedness) and **exclusion** (e.g. poverty, crime)

Research and policy focus on **‘ageing in place’** – meaning to create the conditions where older people are able to remain living in their chosen home and community (as opposed to residential care)

Where you live matters greatly for the quality of life in old age

Causal relationship between **neighbourhood deprivation** and **social exclusion in later life** (Prattley, Buffel et al., 2020)

Health inequalities between **poor and rich neighbourhoods** are **increasing** (Marmott Review, 2020)

Familiarity, attachment and identity are the main psychological processes that confer a sense of **belonging** that contributes to wellbeing in later life (Fullilove, 1996, Yarker, 2018)

Rowles' (1983) work on the **'insideness'** of place that can provide a sense of identity

Development of **'natural neighbourhood networks'** (Gardner, 2011)

Matters for how well you are protected against the worst effects of shocks and crisis



The pandemic exposed 'longstanding mechanisms of exclusion and entrenched multiple forms of disadvantage' (Walsh et al., 2021, pp.18)

Lessons from the Covid-19 Pandemic

Where you lived affected your chances of getting the virus and surviving it.

Over-representation of deaths in areas of multiple deprivation.

People (of all ages) living in **more deprived areas** in England have experienced **COVID mortality rates more than double** those living in less deprived areas (ONS, 2020)

Community services and support networks already operating past capacity before the pandemic.

Experience of a 'double-lockdown' for older people living in the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods

A framework for Age-friendly Cities and Communities



Age-friendly communities are places where people of all ages can live healthy and active lives. These places make it possible for people to continue to stay in their homes, participate in the activities that they value, and contribute to their communities, for as long as possible.



**World Health
Organization**



WHO Global Network for Age-friendly Cities and Communities

2010

2011

2023

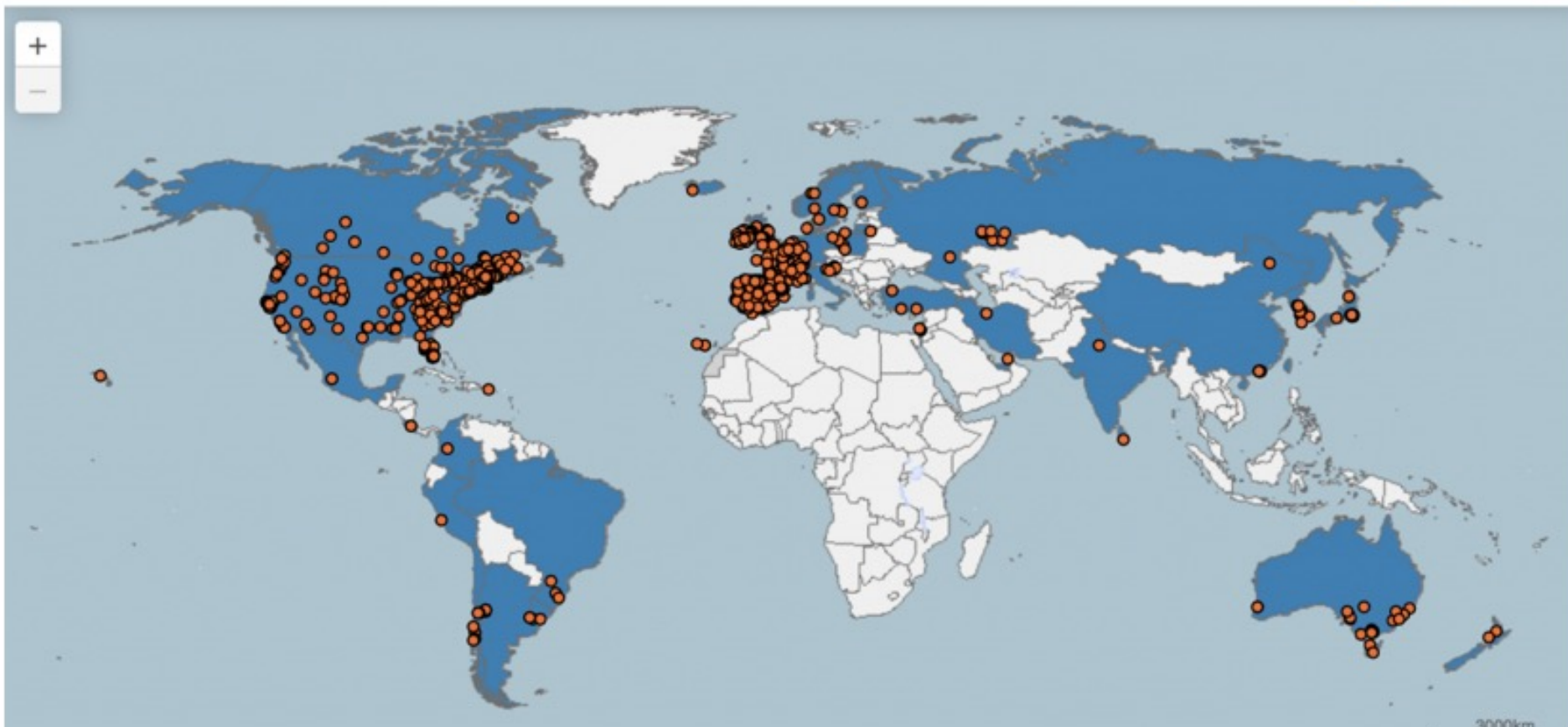


Barcelona

Network launch

1445 members

Global Network for Age-friendly Cities and Communities



Achievements of the Age-Friendly Cities and Communities Network

Placed ageing on the political agenda

Gathered the support of multiple stakeholders, including older people

Implemented a variety of initiatives for older people

Developed this work in diverse contexts



WHO Global Network
for Age-friendly Cities
and Communities

Challenges still facing the Age-Friendly Cities and Communities Network

Meeting the (diverse) needs of an ageing population

Increasing ways of involving older people

Delivery and evaluation

Developing policies and initiatives that recognize and address structural inequalities

Developing inclusive forms of urban change

Recovery from COVID-19 Pandemic, rising cost of living and responding to environmental crises



WHO Global Network
for Age-friendly Cities
and Communities

A SPATIAL JUSTICE APPROACH TO AGE-FRIENDLY CITIES

What is Spatial Justice?

'an intentional and focused emphasis on the spatial or geographical aspects of justice or injustice... and the fair and equitable distribution in space of socially valued resources and the opportunities to use them.' (Soja 2009, pp 2)

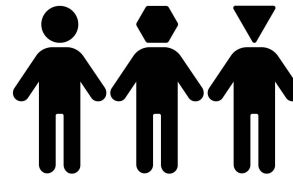
Allows research and policy on urban ageing to not only consider how the lives of older people are impacted upon by living in urban environments, but how they can be fully engaged in **shaping the future of urban environments.**

A focus on urban development but also **redistribution, the democratic experience of cities and citizen empowerment**

Ensuring all older people are able to exercise their right to the city (Lefebvre, 1968)

3 core principles of a Spatial Justice approach to Age-Friendly Cities

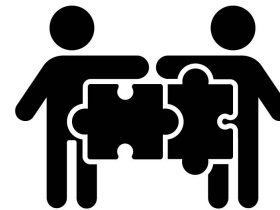
Diversity



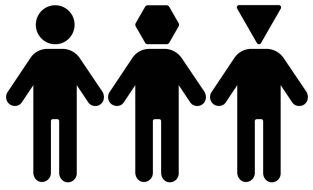
Equity



Co-production



Adapted from
Fainstein, 2010



DIVERSITY refers to the recognition and inclusion of minoritised identities in age- friendly policies.

Oslo

Stolt og fri

Handlingsplan for kjønn-, kjønnsuttrykk- og seksualitetsmangfold 2020 - 2023

Oslo Extra Large

En by for alle

Oslo bystyre Sak 87/2020, 22. april 2020



the ‘reproduction of and respect for group differences without oppression’ (Young, 1990, p.47).



Centre for Ageing Better

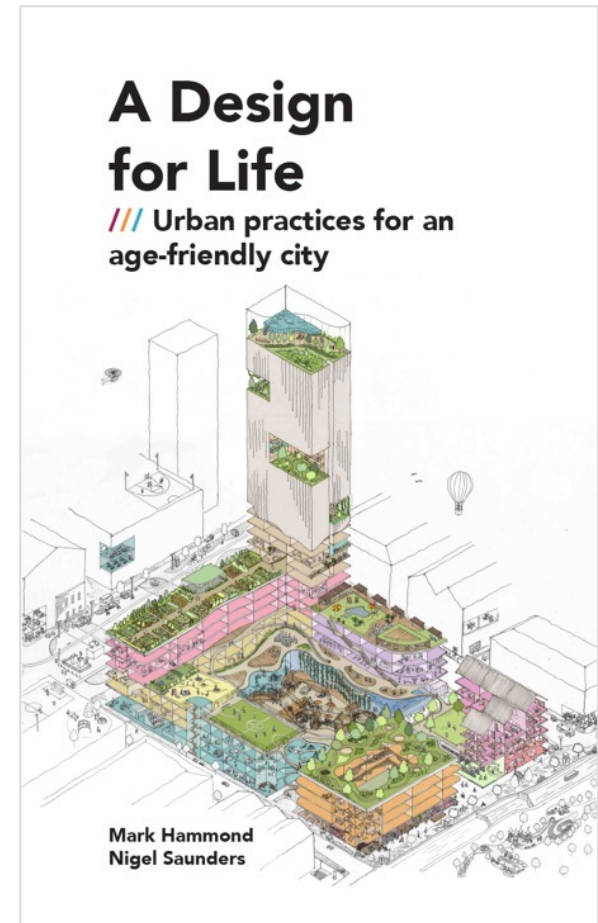
<https://ageingbetter.resourcespace.com/pages/home.php>



EQUITY is about ensuring that there is a fair distribution of socially valued resources and the opportunities for everyone to use them.

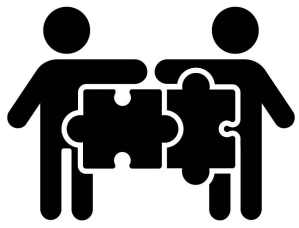


Equity does not require that everyone is treated the same, but that everyone is treated appropriately to their needs. It implies fairness. Therefore, this calls for age-friendly policies and programmes to be redistributive, ‘not simply economically but also, as appropriate, politically, socially, and spatially (Buffel et al, forthcoming, adapted from Fainstein, 2010)



Available at:

www.msa.ac.uk/ageing



CO-PRODUCTION is a collaborative approach to working in equal partnership with older people in the design, implementation and evaluation



“Cities have the capability of providing something for everybody, only because, and only when, they are created by everybody.”

Jane Jacobs (1961)



What a Spatial Justice approach can bring to Age-Friendly Cities:



Fair and equitable distribution of resources, opportunities, and access to urban amenities within and between geographical areas.

Recognition that inequalities and power dynamics are deeply embedded in and shaped by the physical and social fabric

Transformation of urban environments through intentional planning, policy-making, and social interventions to ensure that individuals of all ages, **can fully participate in, shape, and benefit from** the social, economic, and cultural resources in cities.

Challenges the **unequal production of urban space** and strives for a more inclusive, sustainable and just urban environment



Further information, reading and examples on a spatial justice orientation to age-friendly cities in can be found here; <https://stories.manchester.ac.uk/afc-spatial-justice-framework/>

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME 😊