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Social exclusion in old age: domain-specific contributions to a debate

By Sandra Torres*

Introduction

Finding a suitable way to write an introduction to a Special Issue would seem to be a relatively easy task – at first glance. But when the Special Issue is dealing with a notion that is in the very midst of receiving momentum, the question arises of how one should begin, because although some potential readers may be acquainted with the topic at hand, others may have yet to understand that the topic is now in the process of conquering intellectual space. This Special Issue happens to be about such a topic. The topic of social exclusion in old age does not yet seem to be on the radar of North American scholars, for example, but has certainly become a topic to reckon with in Europe. Understanding how "the notion of social exclusion has found its way into the lexicon of all major global governance institutions" (O'Brien & Penna 2008: 1) is what this introduction is all about. This Special Issue was, after all, first conceived as part of the series of special issues that the COST-action known as ROSENet (an acronym that stands for Reducing Old Age Social Exclusion: Collaborations in Research and Policy; www.rosenet.com) would put together to raise awareness about old-age social exclusion – a phenomenon that deserves attention as populations around the world grow older and live longer.

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For those who are not familiar with what COST-actions are, COST stands for European Collaborations in Science and Technology and is an organization that offers, among other things, European funding to facilitate the establishment of research networks that can address an issue deemed to be of concern not only for scholars but also for policymakers. The actual COST-funded network behind this Special Issue (i.e. ROSENet) brings together over 140 researchers (from 30+ countries) who have been working together – through an array of activities – on the dimensions of old-age social exclusion that have been identified (i.e. economic, social relations, services, community/spatial, civic and symbolic) ever since social exclusion entered the vernacular of European politics about three decades ago. To this end, it would seem to be important to mention that – although it took time before the notion of social exclusion "conquered" discourses about poverty and disadvantage, and although we have seen how the opposite term of social inclusion has slowly come to be widely used by policymakers (Jehoel-Gijsbers & Vrooman 2008) – it has become increasingly clear that social exclusion has made its entrance into the social scientific debate on inequalities, in general, and the gerontological version of inequality, in particular. Both of these facts will be addressed in the sections that follow. For now, all I wish to draw attention to is that, at this juncture, research on how old-age social exclusion can be measured is needed as well as on the specific domains associated with it.

This Special Issue deals with the domains concerned with exclusion from social relations, services, community/spatial exclusion and civic participation. A few words about the broader picture would seem to be necessary, however, if we are to understand why so many social gerontologists in Europe are focusing their attention on this topic. And the first thing to say in this respect is that in one of the first measurements of social exclusion levels among the EU countries (using the first four waves of the European Community Household Panel [ECHP]; i.e. 1994–1997) – which did not focus on old-age social exclusion per se, but does seem to have played a role in igniting the gerontological debate on this issue – it was clearly stated that although social exclusion does not appear to be a problem everywhere in Europe, being an older citizen living alone or a member of an elderly couple was positively associated with the risk of social exclusion in Southern Europe (Tsakloglou & Papadopoulos 2002).

A few years later, Ogg (2005) published a paper using data from the first round of the European Social Survey and looking specifically at old-age social exclusion. He found similar results, that is, the link between developed welfare regimes and low rates of social exclusion in later life was confirmed [see also Jehoel-Gijsbers & Vrooman 2008 for similar results based on combined data from three surveys: European Social Survey (ESS 2002); European Union Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC 2005) and The Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe (SHARE 2004)]. In a more recent study using a large dataset from Sweden, one of the countries where risks for old-age social exclusion are believed to be comparatively low, Heap et al. (2012) not only found that the 75+ population exhibits the highest odds of coexisting disadvantages but also that the variation within the group we often designate as advanced old age (i.e. 85+) is far greater than most seem to understand. Based on data collected through the English Longitudinal Study of Aging, Steptoe et al. (2013) noted that the inequalities in later life are evident not only because "the wealth distribution is heavily skewed" (Steptoe et al. 2013: 1645) but also because this inequality extends to the cultural, social and civic, and health realms. It is research results such as these that have led European social gerontologists to regard old-age social exclusion as a topic in need of scholarly attention.

Social Exclusion: The Policy Phrase and the Scientific Term

The fact that the topic at hand has gained such momentum may seem puzzling to some, considering that the notion of social exclusion has been contested from the start (e.g. Levitas 1996, 1998; Silver 1994, 2007). One of the most utilized definitions of this term, however, is offered by Levitas et al. (2007), who defined social exclusion as follows:

> A complex and multi-dimensional process. It involves the lack or denial of resources, rights, goods and services, and the inability to participate in the normal relationships and activities, available to the majority of people in a society, whether in economic, social, cultural or political arenas. It affects both the quality of life of individuals and the equity and cohesion of society as a whole. (p. 9)

Saunders (2008) argued that this term has been disputed from the start owing to "its flexibility," and that it is this very suppleness that has

"allowed researchers and policy makers to engage in a productive dialogue that draws together otherwise disparate themes, with the promise of developing practical solutions to policy problems. The policy interest has thus acted as a spur to researchers, and their interest and contributions have enriched the policy dialogue" (Saunders 2008: 80).

Peace (2001) – who wrote a dissertation on the discursive shifts European Union policies on poverty made between the mid-1970s and late 1990s – argued that the phrase "social exclusion" was virtually nonexistent in policy documents in English from the 1970s. It appeared, however, in the 1980s through European Union (EU) policy initiatives on poverty, because, he claimed, there was a need to coin a policy phrase to replace the stigmatizing term used at the time, which was poverty. The fact that social exclusion was a recognizable phrase in the French-speaking part of the EU made adopting it in European policy circles relatively easy. To this end, it is important to note that the notion of "exclusion sociale" was already a part of France's political debate at that time (see Béland 2007 for insight into how the notion and discourse on social exclusion as a basis for policy change was originally used in that context). Peace (2001) claimed therefore that because the mandatory languages for all European Union policy documents were English and French at the time, it made perfect sense to adopt the policy phrase "social exclusion" when initiatives to combat marginalization and depravation were being discussed.

Peace (2001) also claimed that the discursive turn that European poverty policy took at that time – from poverty to social exclusion – could be regarded as a branding exercise for the controversial poverty initiatives being launched by the European Union. Explaining the exact reasons why these initiatives were deemed divisive is beyond the scope of the present article (see, however, Béland 2007 who compares the British and the French discourse on social exclusion and shows differences in how these initiatives can be regarded depending on the country in which they have been launched; see also Bradshaw 2004). Suffice it to say that the policy phrase lurking in the background of this Special Issue – a phrase European social gerontologists like myself have appropriated (and are debating) through an initiative of our own: the COST-action ROSENet – is a phrase that has received considerable attention over the past three decades.

Although it is often acknowledged that drawing a line between social exclusion, inequality, marginalization, disadvantage, and the more easily identifiable chronic poverty is not an easy task, the pull that the policy phrase has is undeniable. To some extent, it makes perfect sense that the launching of this phrase into the European policy vernacular paved the way for the scientific debate on social exclusion that had been ongoing since the late 1980s. The fact that social gerontologists have appropriated this term over the past decade also makes perfect sense, considering what was mentioned in the introduction of the present article. There are, however, many definitions for this term, depending, of course, on the research field in which it is used (see, e.g. the definitions offered by Silver 1994 and Abrams et al. 2007, to name a few). In other words, there is no consensus among scholars as to how social exclusion should be defined and/or measured. But the bigger strokes of what this notion is all about are seldom disputed, so it is those bigger strokes I bring attention to in this introduction to a Special Issue on old-age social exclusion.

A few words about definitions are in order. Silver (2007) – who offered a fairly comprehensive discussion of the difference between social exclusion and chronic poverty over a decade ago – defined social exclusion as the "dynamic process of progressive multidimensional rupturing of the 'social bond' at the individual and collective levels" (p. 1). Her definition stresses the bonds between individuals and the societies they inhabit and, as such, offers a more comprehensive and complex conceptualization of social disadvantage than chronic poverty does. Thus, although the policy phrase social exclusion was originally used to launch controversial EU policy initiatives that were primarily concerned with the lack of material resources that some people experienced, the scientific term (and the various debates that it has ignited) brings together the economic dimensions of disadvantage and the relational aspects in a way the debate on poverty never did (Bhalla & Lapeyre 1997). To this end, it would seem appropriate to mention an observation made by a social policy scholar who was originally skeptical of the fact that the "French concept of exclusion sociale (had) crossed the channel" (Bradshaw 2004: 170), and could not see what the new term had to offer. In an article he wrote to "justify (his) change of heart" (Bradshaw 2004: 171), he argued that owing to the interesting ways in which social scientists have begun to operationalize social exclusion,

we have been able to grasp that "the poor are more likely to be socially excluded and the poorer you are the more socially excluded you are likely to be, but not on all dimensions. The existence of valuable social relationships – social capital – does not seem to be particularly related to poverty, possibly because the poor have more time to maintain them" (Bradshaw 2004: 184).

Irrespective of whether one regards social exclusion primarily as a question of the outcome of a lack of material resources or as the structural processes underlying social isolation, the interesting thing about the scientific term social exclusion is that it draws attention to the array of activities, relationships, and resources that are needed for people to experience adequate social participation and a certain degree of power over their situation (Room 1995). Saunders (2008) argued that "it was the limitations of the *concept* of poverty rather than its *measurement* problems that led to the emergence of social exclusion as an alternative paradigm in Europe" (p. 75). He further claimed (as others have also done) that it was the problematic and mistaken homogenization of "the poor," "characterized by a single common factor, low-income (relative to need)" (Saunders 2008), that led to the demise of poverty as a policy priority. Irrespective of what one thinks about the "replacement" of poverty with social exclusion, and the array of policy initiatives and discourses that this replacement ignited, it is important to note that the verdict on definitions and measurements of social exclusion is not yet out. The same can be said for the debates on whether or not the distinction between poverty and social exclusion is a fruitful one, and on what constitute fruitful indicators of social exclusion (Halleröd & Larsson 2008; see also Room 1995 for insight into how the evolution of European anti-poverty programs shifted the language of disadvantage).

Berghman's (1997) definition of social exclusion – as the non-realization of citizenship rights – is, however, an appropriate one to bring to the fore here, as it is one of the first to list the arenas from which a person or group can be excluded. Early on, he identified the spheres of normal relationships and activities that are important to the realization of citizenship rights by referring to the societal systems where inclusion takes place:

- the democratic and legal system (which make civic integration possible)

- the labor market (which makes economic integration possible)
- the welfare system (which is key to social integration)
- the systems of social networks of affiliation (which make interpersonal integration possible)

Burchardt et al. (1999) focused, in turn, on the activities we all need to engage in if we are to combat social exclusion (see also Hills et al. 2002). These are:

- production activities (which in their model pertain not only to economically valued activities but also to socially valued ones)
- consumption activities (which refer to individuals' ability to consume the types of goods and services considered "normal" in a society)
- savings activities (which refer to the accumulation of savings, pension entitlements or property ownership)
- political activities (which concern the types of collective efforts people make to improve their immediate or wider environment)
- social activities (which entail engagement in significant social interaction through one's networks of affiliations as well as identification with a cultural group or community).

The array of spheres and/or activities that have been listed when the scientific term "social exclusion" has been debated is large, but on close inspection it is primarily the activities and spheres listed above that are mentioned. Worth noting is also the fact that scholars have differing views on the role that they believe the welfare state can play in combating social exclusion. For example, O'Brien and Penna (2008) argued:

> …there is at least a prima facie case for seeing "integrative" institutions of Europe as locked into processes of discrimination and marginalization. When questions of gender, race, class and colonialism are applied to the institutions of the political and economic subsystems, it becomes clear that these institutions are infused with cultural and historical identities, statuses and expectations. Exclusion, it can be argued, is not a by-product of system malfunction, it is woven into the fabric of those institutions – the labor market and the welfare state – that are offered as the means to resolve the problem of exclusion. (O'Brien & Penna 2008: 89, see also O'Brien & Penna 1996)

Thus, although the policy term "social exclusion" was used to launch European initiatives to combat the types of "marginalization" that poverty can lead to – marginalization that encompasses an array of societal spheres – there are social scientists who do not believe that policymakers' efforts can succeed in eliminating social exclusion. Most social gerontologists who depart from the holy trinity of research, policy and practice seem to think that policies to combat social exclusion can have an impact on the way in which cumulative disadvantage over the life course is addressed (see Dannefer 2003 and Ferraro & Shippee 2009 for insights into the gerontological debate on cumulative disadvantage), and that collaborations between scholars, policymakers, and practitioners working with and for older people are key to managing the formulation and implementation of such policies. The COST-action initiative ROSENet is an example of a scholar-driven initiative that aims to contribute not only to the scholarly debate on old-age social exclusion but also to the formulation and implementation of policies and practices that can address the types of social exclusion some older people are at risk of experiencing.

Social Exclusion in Old Age: The Gerontological Debate

Pinpointing exactly when the gerontological debate on social exclusion started is not an easy task. The early 2000s, however, would seem to be the period in which a number of articles debating the fruitfulness of the concept of social exclusion for studies of aging and old age began to surface (van Regenmortel et al. 2016). This abridged section offers a chronological presentation of some of the most cited contributions to the gerontological debate on social exclusion. The chronology hereby presented is in no way comprehensive, as it only includes publications that have explicitly used the term social exclusion and old age (or other euphemisms for this part of the life course) in their titles. Having said this, it is perhaps necessary to state that the reason I have chosen to rely on chronology here is that it is easier to tease out how the gerontological discussion has developed when one looks at the literature in this manner.

From the start, the gerontological "appropriation" of the social scientific debate on social exclusion was conditioned, because the need to "adapt" the notion for use as a theoretical lens through which to study

old-age-related disadvantages was a given (Scharf et al. 2001). The reason for this was rooted in the fact that the heavily criticized notion of "paid work as a major factor in social integration" (Levitas 1998: 27) was so central to the original discussion, and during old age engagement in paid work is not a given. Relatively early on in the process hereby described, empirical evidence from a study on older people living in some of England's most deprived neighborhoods was used to propose how the notion of social exclusion could be "adapted" for gerontological use (i.e. Scharf et al. 2005). The reason such neighborhoods received attention to begin with is probably that, very early on in the debate on social exclusion, it was stated that one of the attributes of this notion was that "this deprivation has a neighborhood dimension, since it can be caused not only by lack of personal resources but also by insufficient or unsatisfactory community resources" (Tsakloglou & Papadopoulos 2002: 212). Thus, by arguing that social exclusion draws attention to the social costs that disengagement from society can entail, Scharf et al. (2005) proposed that the study of disadvantage in old age could benefit from a deeper understanding of the debate on social exclusion.

Worth noting is also the fact that the process of appropriating and adapting the notion of social exclusion for usage in the social gerontological vernacular (which is ongoing) entailed – from the start – identification of the activities we ought to regard as crucial to old age inclusion. For example, Scharf et al. (2005) argued that at least five types of social exclusion were relevant to older people (i.e. material resources, social relations, civic activities, basic services and neighborhood). The resemblance to the dimensions mentioned in the previous section is striking, as are the differences, as neither the service nor the spatial dimension was among the dimensions mentioned earlier. By stating this, I am not claiming that it was social gerontologists who put those dimensions on the social exclusion map, so to speak, but rather that the distinctiveness of old age was at the forefront of the gerontological discussion on old-age social exclusion at an early stage.

In the same year that the abovementioned scholars continued to set in motion the gerontological discussion on social exclusion, a paper was published in a policy journal that drew attention to the role that place plays in the lives of older people existing on the margins (Abbott &

Sapsford 2005). Also that same year, Ogg (2005) used data from the European Social Survey to analyze the prevalence of social exclusion among older people in the three types of welfare regimes often alluded to in this part of the world (i.e. the Nordic, Mediterranean and the Post-socialist regimes). The results showed that there is a link between developed welfare regimes and low rates of old-age social exclusion. Although these results were in no way revolutionary, Ogg's article seems to be one of the first peer-reviewed contributions to the gerontological debate that applied social exclusion indicators (in this case 11 indicators were used, among others: income, social isolation, social activities, political engagement, well-being, and self-rated health) to the study of older people's situation in an array of spheres.

A few years later, Cavalli et al. (2007) studied how three critical life events (i.e. deterioration of health, death of a close relative, entry into a nursing home) impact the oldest old's relational life and social involvement. Just a year after, Moffatt and Scambler (2008) studied whether welfare rights advice could combat social exclusion in old age, while Grenier and Guberman (2009) utilized a Canadian framework to study social exclusion – a framework that relies on seven types of exclusion (symbolic, identity, sociopolitical, institutional, economic, meaningful relations and territorial exclusion) to argue that older people who cannot afford to supplement public care with private services risk social exclusion. Moffatt and Glasgow (2009) also published a contribution to the debate around the same time, asking whether the concept of social exclusion is useful in studying the situation of rural older people in both the United Kingdom and the United States. Just like Grenier and Guberman (2009), these social gerontologists noted that the North American gerontological debate had yet to engage with the concept of social exclusion and that much could be gained if the "the institutional entrenchment of the poverty discourse in the US" (Moffatt & Glasgow 2009: 1301) were to be replaced by the more dynamic notion of social exclusion, at least with regard to disadvantaged older people living in rural areas. A few years later, O'Shea et al. (2012) tapped into how Irish older people, here too living in rural areas, conceptualized the relationship between age and social exclusion. Their findings proposed that four interconnected thematic areas were important to how older people living in rural areas regard social exclusion (these were: place, economic circumstances, social provision, and social

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connectedness). Both of these last-mentioned papers – together with the articles published by Scharf and colleagues mentioned earlier – argued that it matters *where* old age exclusion is experienced, and showcased the fact that, from the very start, the situation of rural older people and/or of those who live in disadvantaged neighborhoods has been at the forefront of the gerontological debate on social exclusion.

During the past few years, we have witnessed a steady increase in the number of publications dedicated to social exclusion in old age. These publications have slowly but surely extended the angles of investigation used. Scharf and Keating published, for example, an edited collection in 2012 arguing that social exclusion in later life was becoming a global challenge not only because population aging demands our attention but also because many Western nations are experiencing both austerity and growing economic instability, and these phenomena have brought with them individualization of the risks associated with aging. In this edited collection, an array of social gerontologists (myself included) have tackled the question of old-age social exclusion from different perspectives (some did so from the perspective that a material, social, spatial, and symbolic focus offers, while others did so from the perspectives that globalization and international migration offer). A year later, social gerontologists based in Central and Eastern Europe added their two cents to the debate by using data from the European Quality of Life Survey to study social exclusion among older people in that part of the world. They argued that their findings – which showed that older people in these countries were experiencing greater social exclusion than both older people in other European countries and their younger counterparts in Central and Eastern European countries – revealed that "post-socialists welfare states do not promote inclusion of the elderly in a satisfactory degree" (Hrast et al. 2013: 971).

A year later, the topic of social exclusion in relation to rural older people was on the agenda again when Walsh et al. (2014) assessed the relevance of the "age-friendly" concept for this population by shedding light on the informal practices these older people use to address social exclusion. A few years later, a systematic (van Regenmortel et al. 2016) and a scoping review (Walsh et al. 2017) were published on old-age social exclusion. The systematic review included only the 26 articles that explicitly focused on social exclusion/ inclusion in later life. This review showed not only how the debate had evolved but also how old-age social exclusion had been conceptualized

thus far. One of the noteworthy things mentioned in this review was that the life course approached is "little applied in studies addressing social exclusion or inclusion in later life" (van Regenmortel et al. 2016).

The scoping review by Walsh et al. (2017) approached the topic from a broader perspective by mapping out what the research to date on later life has suggested about social exclusion. Acknowledging that "the full body of literature pertaining to old age social exclusion may be conceptual and empirical; scattered across different literatures; specific to only one exclusion domain (e.g. financial and material resources); and may not even be labelled or referred to as exclusion" (Walsh et al. 2017: 83), these social gerontologists conducted a two-stage review of the available literature (which included 440+ sources). The research questions guiding their endeavor were twofold: first, they wanted to shed light on how old-age social exclusion has been conceptualized thus far; second, they wanted to shed light on the main themes that the literature touches upon in relation to the domains of old-age social exclusion that the first stage of their review had identified (i.e. neighborhood and community; services; amenities and mobility; social relations; material and financial resources; sociocultural aspects, and civic participation). Worth noting – considering that this Special Issue is one of the ones that the COST-action ROSENet (Reducing Old Age Social Exclusion) has brought together – is that it is on the basis of these domains that this network has been working since it was first established. Of particular relevance to this Special Issue is the definition Walsh et al. (2017) offered in their scoping review:

> Old-age exclusion involves interchanges between multi-level risk factors, processes and outcomes. Varying in form and degree across the older adult life course, its complexity, impact and prevalence are amplified by old-age vulnerabilities, accumulated disadvantage for some groups, and constrained opportunities to ameliorate exclusion. Old-age exclusion leads to inequities in choice and control, resources and relationships, and power and rights in key domains of neighborhood and community; services, amenities and mobility; material and financial resources; social relations, socio-cultural aspects of society; and civic participation. Old-age exclusion implicates states, societies, communities and individuals. (p. 93)

This definition brings attention to the multilevel factors, processes, and outcomes associated with old-age exclusion, whose impacts are amplified

by the array of vulnerabilities with which old age is associated. In recent years, a few more articles on old-age social exclusion have been published. Some of these articles are based on the work that the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) Centre for Analysis of Social Exclusion (CASE) is generating. Sacker et al. (2017), for example, has used the UK Household Longitudinal Study to study how older people's health is related to social exclusion. Macleod et al. (2019), in turn, proposed a framework for measuring social exclusion in later life, which they argued offers us "a platform that will enable research to move beyond descriptive analysis to a more detailed examination of the relationships between different dimensions of exclusion and possible mediating and moderating factors" (p. 78). In this framework, they started from the domains spelled out by Walsh et al. (2017), but considered health and well-being to be a domain of its own. The testing of this framework – which used data from the first three waves of the UK longitudinal study hereby mentioned – showed that "as expected, the degree of exclusion experienced by people increased with age, with the oldest old experiencing more exclusion overall and on each domain" (Macleod et al. 2019: 101).

The work reviewed in this section has hopefully given an adequate insight into how the debate on old-age social exclusion has evolved (from an interest in the ways in which community/spatial exclusion impacts old age to the manner in which social exclusion in old age can be measured in a comprehensive enough fashion). The number of angles of investigation that deserve our attention is large at this juncture, as the research on old-age social exclusion is still in its infancy. It is, however, clear that the vulnerabilities associated with advanced old age are at the very core of the debate thus far. It is our growing concern with what these vulnerabilities may mean for quality of life in old age that is the driving force behind European social gerontologists' increasing interest in this notion.

This Special Issues' Contributions to the Ongoing Debate

This Special Issue – which is entitled *Old-age exclusion: theoretical, conceptual and critical policy contributions* – aims to make four dimension-specific contributions to the ongoing discussion on old-age social exclusion. In keeping with the title of the issue, we have an article by Wanka and

colleagues that makes a theoretical/conceptual contribution by focusing on the domain of old-age social exclusion known as neighborhood and community. Their article – which aims to broaden what the authors refer to as the Anglo-Saxon hegemony of the gerontological literature on socio-spatial environments – introduces concepts from urban and environmental sociology in order to expand the gerontological vernacular on socio-spatial exclusion and bring to the fore new questions that are not yet part of present-day discussions on the dimension of old-age social exclusion that Walsh et al. (2017) called "neighborhood and community."

The second article in this Special Issue is by Serrat and colleagues. This paper makes an empirical contribution to the discussion on old-age social exclusion that deals specifically with the domain of civic exclusion. Looking into the barriers to political participation that older people who are active in senior organizations in Spain and Australia experience (and have given voice to through two different projects), their article could be said to add to the critical policy perspective that this Special Issue is hoping to contribute to, as the empirical evidence offered in this piece can be used to facilitate participation in these organizations – something that policymakers deem to be necessary if active aging is to take place.

De Tavernier and Draulans have written the third article in this Special Issue and tackle the domain alluded to as services, amenities, and mobility in Walsh et al.'s (2017) scoping review. In their paper, it is the informal care arrangements of the Turkish immigrant community in Belgium that are brought to the fore through stakeholder interviews. Using an array of theoretical frameworks to explain how informal care plays out, their article alludes to the ways in which social exclusion in old age affects the care negotiations that take place between older migrants and their families.

The fourth and final contribution to this Special Issue comes in the form of an article by Winter and Burholt, who bring attention to the rural angle that ignited (as shown in the previous section) much of the debate on old-age social exclusion. In this contribution, they use a critical human ecological framework to make sense of the cultural exclusion that a rural-dwelling group of older adults in South Wales experience.

Taken as a whole, we hope this collection of articles will contribute to the debate on old-age social exclusion by offering new insights into domain-specific questions. In doing so, these articles bring to fore the

complexities that using a social exclusion lens can expose, and they urge us (albeit in indirect ways) to continue thinking about what this lens offers to the study of aging and old age.

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From environmental stress to spatial expulsion – rethinking concepts of socio-spatial exclusion in later life

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Abstract

Gerontology has a longstanding tradition of researching the relationship between older adults and their socio-spatial environments. However, environmental gerontology often shares a positivistic understanding of space as either a "prosthetic" or a stressor and consequently searches for the "best fit" between a person and their environment. In this article, we argue for a stronger theoretical corpus on social and territorial exclusion in later life by exploring concepts from urban and environmental sociology, as well as examining the usefulness of these concepts for gerontological thinking. In doing so, we discuss trans-European research traditions beyond the hegemonic body of Anglo-Saxon literature. In conclusion, we discuss how gerontology and sociology might exchange ideas in order to build a stronger theoretical background on the relations between age, space and exclusion.

Keywords: environmental gerontology, spatial exclusion, urban sociology, critical gerontology, age-friendly cities and communities

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Introduction

Urbanisation and demographic change constitute two of the major developments of the 21st century. In 2014, 74% of Europe's population lived in urban areas (United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division 2018), and by 2030, at least a quarter of that percentage will be aged 60 and over (Handler 2014). In this process, older urban residents are becoming more ethnically and socio-economically diverse (Koceva et al. 2016), but attention is also called to achieve a better understanding of how physical and social environments influence ageing in rural and remote communities (Keating et al. 2013). Hence, there is a need to systematically discuss the relations between age, space and exclusion (Moulaert et al. 2018).

In reference to Walsh, Scharf and Keating, spatial exclusion can be understood as:

> …a complex process that involves the lack or denial of [spatial] resources, rights, goods and services as people age, and the inability to participate in the normal relationships and activities, available to the majority of people across the varied and multiple domains of society. It affects both the quality of life of older individuals and the equity and cohesion of an ageing society as a whole (adapted from Levitas et al. 2007). (Walsh et al. 2017: 83)

To understand and counteract the risk of spatial exclusion in later life, we need to strengthen theory in gerontology in general (Estes et al. 2003) and, more particularly, in the specific domain of spatial exclusion in later life (Walsh et al. 2017). In fact, a longstanding tradition of research on spatial living conditions and place perceptions of older adults does exist in gerontology. Over the past 50 years, environmental gerontology (EG) has specifically emerged as a distinct subfield of gerontology that focuses on the description, explanation and optimisation of the relationship between older adults and their socio-spatial environments (Wahl & Weisman 2003). The growing popularity of this field is due not least to the attention that the policy concept of "ageing in place" has received since the 1990s. The notion of ageing in place suggests that older people should stay in their familiar environments despite the potential needs for care that may arise and that they should not be forced to move into retirement homes. In line with supporting independence and autonomy in older age,

another major argument for this policy is that it decreases costs for the health care system (Wiles et al. 2012).

Despite having emerged from a care-focused discourse, ageing in place has ignited a debate about age-friendly cities and Philipson has called for a new "environmental gerontology" that would put the changing realities of the urban experience at the forefront of its research agenda (Phillipson 2004). The focus on cities here can be explained by the fact that the older population is growing more rapidly in urban areas, but also by the finding that differences between urban and rural areas persist regarding informal and family care giving. For instance, older adults in rural environments are still more likely to be taken care of by their social networks and are less likely to be living in an institutional setting (McCann et al. 2014). The focus on cities might also illustrate what has been termed a "spatial turn" across disciplines (Warf & Arias 2009).

The World Health Organization (WHO) thus launched a number of policy initiatives in age-friendly cities throughout the 2000s, with active ageing as the core element (Buffel et al. 2012). In 2005, they initiated the "Global Age-Friendly Cities" project involving 33 cities, producing a "Global Age-Friendly Cities" guide (WHO 2007) that has been used as a flexible, yet influential, checklist for policy-makers (Plouffe et al. 2016), which contrasts with the critical interpretation of a "static" vision of age-friendliness (Keating et al. 2013). Even though analysis of the literature suggests that the WHO's age-friendly cities framework is only one model that appears among a variety of potential ones (Lui et al. 2009), and even though it has been applied in different forms and with different foci (Moulaert & Garon 2016), the main idea of promoting active ageing through age-friendly environments has spread across policies in various places of the world[1]. However, it is not only the urban population in general that is becoming more diverse but also the older population in particular. For researchers and policy-makers alike, questions arising from age-friendly guidelines and standards for cities remain: do concepts of age-friendly cities consider all older individuals? Can they cater to the diversification of older age? Which new mechanisms of socio-spatial exclusion emerge against the backdrop of these developments?

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[1] Though not everywhere, as the absence of African cases demonstrates.

In this article, we argue that EG can learn a lot by exploring theory from other disciplines and regional research traditions. Many disciplines other than gerontology – ranging from sociology to human geography – have advanced theories about the environmental aspects of social exclusion.

Hence, this article is organised into three parts: in the first and second parts, we discuss theoretical concepts from gerontology (2) and sociology (3) that can be – or have been – fruitful for the analysis of later-life exclusion. Finally, in the third part, we discuss what gerontology and sociology can learn from each other about socio-spatial exclusion.

Socio-Spatial Exclusion from Gerontological Perspectives

EG has a long tradition of describing, explaining and – with gerontology being historically an applied field of science, this must be emphasised – working to optimise the relationship between older adults and their socio-spatial environments. Beyond emphasising the role of the physical environment, it acknowledges the entanglement of the physical, social, organisational and cultural aspects of environments.

In their reflexive literature review of environmental gerontological research, Wahl and Weisman (2003) differentiate between gerontological theories that research (1) maintenance of, (2) stimulation through and (3) support from the environment (based upon Lawton's three basic functions of environments, 1989). However, perhaps due to the still widespread deficit-oriented image of ageing, the most influential body of research in this field focuses on the support function of environments. In 1964, Lindsley coined the term "prosthetic environment", and in 1973, Lawton and Nahemow established their competence-press model. This "environmental docility hypothesis" states that people are more independent of their environments when they have more resources at their disposal. Socio-personal and socio-spatial resources thus complement each other, ideally holding a balance like a pair of scales. This assumption holds true for basically every age group. It does, however, gain importance in older age due to the loss of socio-personal resources that the authors assume come with age. In older age, so the hypothesis goes, the "environmental press" increases. Environmental press is thus a relational concept, taking into account both environments and personal capacities. Interestingly,

this increase in press does not only imply effects on the quality of life but also influences behaviour. A certain degree of press, particularly when equipped with sufficient resources, can lead to positive affect and adaptive behaviour, whereas too much press in relation to competences triggers negative affect and maladaptive behaviour, such as withdrawal. Similarly, the concept of person–environment–congruence (Carp 1987; Kahana 1982) departs from the idea of a different level of congruence between a person and an environment, depending on the resources and competences. Going further than Lawton's model, congruence is based upon not only competences but also preferences and perceptions.

Today's EG research is still heavily based upon these "classics" – or, as Wahl and Weisman put it: "it is not easy to identify much innovation in recent EG research" (Wahl & Weisman 2003: 621). Wahl and Oswald are among the most influential thinkers continuing Lawton's legacy. In 2006, Wahl and Lang developed the Social-Physical Places Over Time (SPOT) model, combining both the notion of physical, outside and social, affective space with a life course perspective[2]. The SPOT model claims that social-physical agency decreases throughout the life course, due to decreasing personal competences, but the social-physical sense of belonging increases. This model was further developed by Wahl and Oswald (2010) into the concept of person–environment (P–E) fit. P–E fit describes the relationship between place valuation, belonging and attachment on the one hand, and spatial agency, behaviour or appropriation on the other hand, with identity, autonomy and well-being (Figure 1).

In contrast to early environmental gerontologists, Wahl and Oswald emphasise the significance of subjectivity and the personal meaning of an environment for a person (or group) and the role of personal agency in intervening and acting on one's environments. This thus "empowers" older adults and frees them from their role as "victims" of their environments, responding to the post-positivist critique that sees most EG models as overly functional. A lot of research has been conducted on both the dimension of belonging and spatial agency already, but Wahl and Oswald try to bring both perspectives together. However, despite their

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[2] A similar model is used by Keating and her colleagues to discuss the large variations in ageing in rural areas (Keating et al. 2013).

Figure 1. Person–environment fit (Wahl & Oswald 2010).
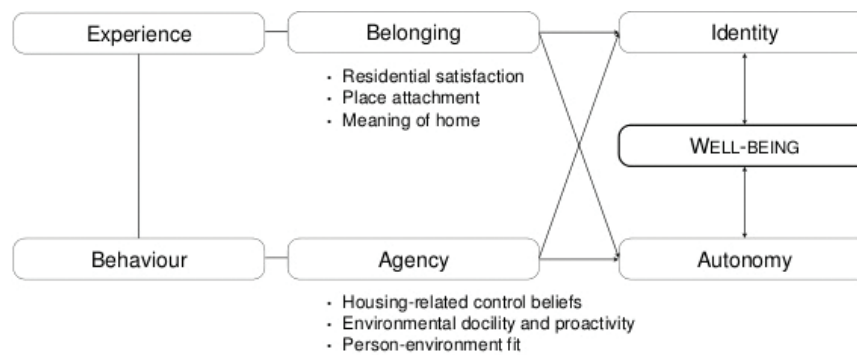
consideration of the subjective assessment of one's environment, such model approaches tend to stay positivist and have been criticised for trying to explain, but not understand, the relationship between older people and their environments.

Research on spatial belonging or place attachment emphasises exactly these internal (cognitive, affective, perceptual) processes that lead to a subjective feeling of being included or excluded from one's environment. Much of this research stems from the field of developmental psychology and approaches the topic of place attachment from a perspective of cognitive and affective development. However, various concepts do consider agency, behaviour and active coping strategies. One of the earliest representatives is Havighurst (1976), who framed the establishment of a satisfactory physical living arrangement as one of six central developmental tasks in late maturity (60 years and older). Similarly, Rowles and Watkins (2003) conceptualised a life course model of environmental experience. In their experiential phenomenological research, they analyse the dynamic nature and the development of the P–E relationship across the life course

and how the development of this relationship entails the formation of new competences. One of the core competences for building relationships with places is the ability to "make places," and this evolves and changes across the life span (Rowles & Watkins 2003).

Whereas Rowles and Watkins see a positive assessment of one's living environment as the outcome of successful place-making practices (or successful flexibility in Havighurst's perspective), Golant (2015) frames appraisal processes as influencing factors for coping strategies in his model of residential normalcy. Thus, assimilative (cognitive) coping cannot be separated from assimilative (action) coping. Successful coping then leads to successful ageing.

These scientific understandings, although based upon sophisticated research, reveal the underlying norms of EG: going outdoors is "good," as it is beneficial to one's health, and staying at home is "bad" and, hence, can hardly ever be voluntary. All activities suggested by seminal gerontology (Havighurst 1954: 311) implicitly require going out, be it either for women ("a discussion group for a housewife whose large family has grown up") or for men ("a men's brotherhood in the church for a man who has worked on a lathe"). Motivations for staying at home are hardly ever researched, leading Künemund and Kaiser (2011) to reason that staying at home is only then legitimate when a person is physically impaired, or bound to the home by care obligations, or hindered from going out by physical barriers.

Beyond P–E fits, spatial agency and place attachment, some research in EG also considers environmental justice. Environmental justice research focuses on the intersectionalities between age and socio-economic status (and, sometimes, gender and ethnicity; cf. Wanka 2018b) and how these lead to multiple jeopardy (cf. Norman 1985) in regard to socio-spatial exclusion. Aiming to understand social inequalities in relation to space, many ethnographic and qualitative studies have adopted a neighbourhood approach, choosing case sites based on their level of deprivation (e.g. Buffel et al. 2012; Day 2010; Holland et al. 2007; Scharf 2002). These studies depart from a socio-economic, sometimes political, understanding of exclusion as a starting point, and research how older adults deal with and live in deprived neighbourhoods. Some of the most sophisticated research in the field of gerontological environmental justice

research stems from Chris Phillipson and colleagues who had early on called for a "new environmental gerontology" that puts urban areas at its centre (Phillipson 2004). He critically discusses how dichotomies are produced in cities, dividing older adults into the "elected" who benefit from globalisation and the "excluded" who suffer from rejection and marginalisation in this process (Buffel et al. 2018; Phillipson 2007). However, by focusing on urban areas such perspectives neglect the fact that globalisation affects not only cities but also a wide variety of regions and risk unintentionally neglecting ageing in suburban (Marchal 2017) or rural areas (Keating et al. 2013).

More recently, gerontologists working in this field have also considered processes of gentrification from an environmental justice perspective (cf. Wiles et al. 2012). Gentrification can be defined as "the process by which higher income households displace lower income residents of a neighbourhood, changing the essential character and flavour of that neighbourhood" (Kennedy & Leonard 2001). Keating and colleagues argue that similar replacement processes also take place in rural areas. "The history of Robertsville [a bucolic village] illustrates how a changing place can exclude long-term residents while at the same time attracting those for whom aging in a new place is a preference" (Keating et al. 2013: 329). While place is the location of exclusion, the process of exclusion is a dynamic of the personal and the environment. However, whether it is in such a rural area or in a deprived urban neighbourhood, a recurrent aspect of ageing is the long-term stay of some inhabitants.

How do these different strands of environmental gerontological literature understand the relationship between age, space, and exclusion? Gerontological literature on the support function of the environment frames age as a particularly vulnerable stage of life in which people tend to lose resources and are, thus, more dependent upon their environment. Space, in this regard, has the function of a "prosthetic" (Lindsley 1964) or a stressor (Lawton & Nahemow 1973): if it works as a prosthetic, older adults can remain autonomous and satisfied; if, instead, the environment puts additional barriers in their way, their quality of life will decrease. A certain level of environmental stress can lead to positive adaption; too much of it, however, will lead to maladaptive behaviour, such as withdrawal. This definition of space resembles that of the "container model

of space." Understanding space as a container implies that "humans cannot construct anything without being first in place – that place is primary to the construction of meaning and society" (Cresswell 2004: 32). Exclusion, from this perspective, would be the result of it being impossible to autonomously use or be part of a certain environment, for example, move around in it, and hence lead to withdrawal from this place.

Gerontological literature on environmental justice, similarly, frames age (or, more exactly, duration of residence) as a risk factor and the environment as a space of possibilities, which puts older adults at lower or higher risk of being socio-spatially excluded. This literature broadens the perspective on exclusion from the direct use of the environment to manifold dimensions, like exclusion from social relationships, exclusion from important infrastructures, exclusion from participation in political processes and so on.

Gerontological literature on place attachment, finally, is concerned with the subjective feeling of exclusion from one's environment. From this perspective, coping – both practical and cognitive – with environmental change is seen as crucial for spatial inclusion and exclusion in later life (Golant 2015). A person can, however, be able to use a place but still feel excluded from it (cf. Wanka 2018a). From this perspective, age and space are co-constitutive, with space being subject to human "place-making" practices, with the ability to do so evolving across the life course (Rowles & Watkins 2003).

When contrasting these gerontological approaches, we can conclude that socio-spatial exclusion is framed by EG as:

- *Relative*: resulting from a lack of capacity to use places due to age-related decline in resources.
- *Structural*: resulting from a lack of access to important infrastructure.
- *Subjective*: based on personal assessment.

In the next section, we discuss literature from (urban and environmental) sociology by questioning how it understands age, space and exclusion. Finally, we will contrast both perspectives in order to see what gerontology can learn from sociology when researching socio-spatial exclusion in later life, and vice versa.

Socio-Spatial Exclusion from a Sociological Perspective

Space has been of concern to sociological enquiry for a long time now, and it has a particularly long research tradition when it comes to cities. One of the most influential early scholars, Simmel, as long ago as 1903, highlighted the significance of urban life for forming the social character of its inhabitants (Simmel 2010). Urban and environmental sociology is concerned with how socio-spatial relationships are formed, how spatial inequalities develop and how places shape the identities and lifestyles of their inhabitants.

Sociological research on the person–place relationship and socio-spatial exclusion has focused on the following areas of research: (1) socio-spatial segregation, (2) environmental effects on identity building and (3) the production of space.

Research on socio-spatial segregation has its roots in the early Chicago School, which perceived cities as "integration machines," although today they are mainly said to have lost this function (Geiling 2003). Social segregation, replacement and even expulsion (Sassen 2014) have taken its place in today's cities. The "spatialisation" of social inequalities points to the phenomenon that disadvantaged populations tend to live in disadvantaged areas, and vice versa (Savage et al. 2003). This spatialisation, in turn, affects the life chances of these populations, reproducing social inequalities (Häußermann & Siebel 2000). Residential segregation is defined as all those processes that eventually lead to internally homogenous spaces that can be based on different social criteria such as socio-economic status or ethnicity (Löw et al. 2007) – however, in a free housing market, income plays an essential role in distributing people across the city (Keim & Neef 2000).

Much of the early sociological and geographical work makes use of the container model of space. For instance, a "vicious circle" between socio-economic and spatial deprivation can be portrayed as follows: persons with little income move to areas where rent is low, and the rent is most likely low because little public (i.e. green spaces and care facilities) and market infrastructure (e.g. shops) exists in these areas. If the residents of an area have low income, even less infrastructure (e.g. shops) will be provided by the market, which again can lead to a selective outflow of people (Friedrichs 1988). Gentrification research has stressed the role of

cultural capital (Bourdieu 2015 [1992]) in addition to economic capital, but the "container thinking" has been preserved.

Research on cultural factors in socio-spatial segregation led to a focus on the relationship between one's residential environment and one's identity – and opened up the container thinking to a more post-positivist perspective. From a general sociological or geographical perspective, the neighbourhood is a key element of identity (Authier et al. 2006). Taking the case of a French suburban neighbourhood, Marchal (2017) refers to the work of Di Méo to clarify the concepts of space, territory and place (Di Méo 2007; Di Méo & Buléon 2005). At a macro level, space refers to anonymous and globalised trends; at a meso level, territory offers opportunities for collective action and identities; at a micro level, place consists of informal, experienced and sensitive personal aspects.

Through these levels, whenever (more or less) homogenous groups form, they must set up borders. The same is true for the spatial dimension. While this can be done by material means – actual walls or fences can be found in gated communities – it can also be done by symbolic means. The case of Villa Vermeil de Biscarrosse (in southwest France), a private gated community for seniors inspired by the American model of retirement communities, is of particular interest here. The community had to open its gates to younger generations in order to counter housing vacancies. However, the older residents considered such imposed intergenerational cohabitation as a betrayal of their original choice to move there (Vuaillat & Madoré 2010). Gerontological segregation research from the US has long focused on "gated communities"; however, not as a means of analysing social exclusion (cf. Townsend 1979, 2002), but rather as a place to create and experience collective solidarity and the same shared activities, similar to a trailer park (Hoyt 1954).

The symbols that are being used to evoke identification or alienation help to include and exclude groups on a more subtle level, but nevertheless produce and reproduce inequalities. One example is the use of local gossip as a form of distinction between "the established" and "the outsiders," through the process of civilisation using "we-images" (Elias & Scotson 1994). Such staging processes can also facilitate place identity and place attachment among those that are included; however, they evoke feelings such as alienation among those excluded. Conversely, Sampson (2009)

highlights the psychological effects of symbolic segregation through visible disorder, deploying Goffman's (1986 [1963]) concept of stigma together with Kelling and Wilson's (1982) "broken windows" theory of urban decline. Werthman and Piliavin (1967) were two of the first urban sociologists to use the concept of stigma in a socio-spatial way. Their "ecological contamination hypothesis" implies that the stigma of a neighbourhood can stain persons and their identities – they are identified with their area by themselves and by others. Similarly, Wacquant elaborated on an analytic framework termed "territorial stigmatisation" that weds Goffman's concept of "spoiled identity" with Bourdieu's theory of "symbolic power," constituting "advanced marginality" in the dualising metropolis. The framework of territorial stigmatisation aims to describe how spatial taint affects its residents and how they cope with it (Wacquant et al. 2014). Wacquant has also analysed the coping strategies of residents of disparaged neighbourhoods. He differentiates between strategies that submit to and reproduce, and those that rebel against, spatial stigma (Wacquant 2011). Which strategy is being adopted by whom depends on the position and the trajectory in social and physical space, therefore varying with class, age, life course, housing tenure and duration, ethnicity, and so on (Figure 2).

One of the strategies that is particularly important to discuss is that of retreat into the private sphere. Pereira and Queirós (2014), for example, found this strategy to be deployed by residents of a public housing estate

Figure 2. Strategies to cope with territorial stigma (Wacquant et al. 2014).

Table 1. Distribution of strategies designed to cope with territorial stigma (source: Wacquant, 2011b).

Submission ←	→ Recalcitrance to resistance
1—dissimulation	6—studied indifference
2—mutual distancing and elaboration of microdifferences	7—defense of neighborhood (individual or collective)
3—lateral denigration	8—stigma inversion (hyperbolic claiming)
4—retreat into the private (family) sphere	
5—exit	

in Porto, Portugal. They found that residents react to the stigma of their living environment by restricting their public relationships and limiting outdoor activities to subsistence activities, and they refer to this strategy as "subsistence sociability" and "focused avoidance." Although he does not himself refer to Wacquant's framework, Marchal explains how a typical French suburb in the northeast of France is experienced as a "village in the city," in reference to the Young and Willmott ethnography of *Bethnal Green*, London (Young & Willmott 1957). While housing is often considered as a central element of identity for older persons, Marchal demonstrates that the identities of older residents are more linked to their neighbourhood than to their personal housing. The territorial stigma is transformed here from a "retreat into the private sphere" to the "defence of neighbourhood." Avoiding the neutral/impersonal concept of "space," Marchal prefers the notion of "territoire" as a place for shared and lived experience, collective identities based on inhabitants' initiatives and/or informal routines situated in a clear manner (at the chemist's, on the corner shop, etc.; Marchal 2017)[3]. We can thus see that territorial stigmatisation is not a condition, but rather a form of "action through collective representation fastened on place" (Wacquant et al. 2014: 1278), thereby advancing the empirical understanding of its role in producing urban inequality and marginality.

Beyond segregation and identification, spatial exclusion is concerned with the production of space itself. According to Lefebvre (1991 [1974]), space is produced through spatial practice, representational space and representations of space. Spatial practice refers to the everyday practices and perceptions with which ordinary people encounter and use space. It comprises their daily routines, the places they avoid and the ways they appropriate places and attach a feeling of home to them. Representational space refers to passively, instead of actively, experienced space – the way people subconsciously read and understand the signs and symbols in space (e.g. through signs of disorder that might symbolise crime in a certain area; cf. Kelling and Wilson's "broken windows hypothesis," 1982).

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[3] The French notion of "territoire" could to some degree be compared to the Anglo-Saxon term of "community," which is often used in age-friendly city and community policies. However, "territoire" also points to institutional policies covering local areas.

Representations of space are, finally, the conceptualisations of space made by planners, scientists and policy stakeholders. They may take on physical form in terms of maps, plans, models and designs. Such representations are laden with ideologies and have a substantial role and specific influence in the production of space. With regard to ageing, concepts of age-friendly cities, like the WHO concept (Lui et al. 2009), constitute representations of space.

Lefebvre's (1991) claim that all citizens should have a "right to the city" implies that all people should participate in the production of space in all three dimensions. They should be able to appropriate space both practically and cognitively, and they should be allowed to participate in decision-making and in the representation of space (Purcell 2003).

How do these perspectives from sociology understand age, space and exclusion, and how does this differ from gerontological concepts? Sociological research on socio-spatial segregation bases exclusion on the spatialisation of social inequalities, that is, the processes that lead to disadvantaged populations living in deprived areas (Savage et al. 2003). Space, in this conceptualisation, is viewed as a "container," but at the same time as dynamic: it changes with the people who live in it. These processes can generally be traced back to socio-economic inequalities. Hence, wealthier people can afford to live in areas with better infrastructure, wealthier neighbours, less crime and a better "image." Whereas research has proceeded from merely looking at economic inequalities to also considering, for example, ethnicity, age is hardly ever considered by sociologists. Urban and environmental sociology still seems to be age-blind. However, this strand of research has influenced gerontological research on environmental justice in particular (cf. Scharf 2002), as well as research on the displacement of older, economically deprived persons through gentrification processes (cf. Wiles et al. 2012).

Sociological research on environments and identities has emphasised how living in deprived areas may lead to stigmatisation and hence "spoil" identities (cf. Sampson 2009; Wacquant et al. 2014; Werthman & Piliavin 1967). In this sense, exclusion refers to a cultural status of disesteem based upon the image of a person's residential area. Space matters in its perception and representation – however, not primarily that of the people living in it, but particularly that of those living outside of it, as Elias and Scotson

(1994) express by distinguishing "the established" and "the outsiders." Again, age is not particularly considered in these approaches. However, by applying the general logics of stigma to later life, it can be assumed that the "stains" of an environment will be more intense the longer a person has lived in this environment. Inspired by sociology, such an argument is recurrent in Phillipson's perspective about cities in a globalised world (2007) and is also described in rural areas (Keating et al. 2013).

Research on the production of space, finally, stresses the notion that space is constituted through spatial practice, representational space and representations of space. Space is, from this perspective, not something that pre-exists, but something that is constantly co-constructed by various actors with varying levels of power. It draws attention to the questions regarding which places are used or not used by whom, how they are perceived by whom, and who represents them in which way. Exclusion is, from this perspective, multi-dimensional, comprising the use, perception and representation of space. Anyone who is excluded is hence neither able to actively or passively appropriate space, nor to take part in the decision-making and representation of space. The latter, in particular, entails an emphasis on power relations that unfold in spatial mechanisms of social exclusion. Even though age has not been considered in Lefebvre's theoretical concepts, his call to the "right to the city" has been taken up by gerontologists as a flagship for an alternative discourse on age-friendly cities (cf. Phillipson 2011; Buffel et al. 2012). However, critical gerontologists have not yet considered the threefold and complex Lefebvrian conception of space (Moulaert et al. 2018), but prefer to focus on "giving a voice" to "the most excluded" by promoting participatory methods in social sciences (Buffel 2015) and in urban planning and design (White & Hammond 2018). Furthermore, representations of space comprise not only decision-making but also spatial conceptualisations made by planners, scientists or policy stakeholders that shape representational spaces (images and perception of environments) and therefore occupy a crucial role in the production of space and spatial exclusion. If older people were able to appropriate space both practically and cognitively, and were allowed to participate in the decision-making and representation of space (Purcell 2003), such an agenda would support the WHO's model of "age-friendly cities" by promoting the "social participation" of older people.

This has been translated into multiple ways of consulting older people, including seats on local or central steering committees reserved for seniors, and many authors call for intensification of such participatory approaches supporting a "citizenship- and rights-based narrative of ageing" (Buffel et al. 2018: 288). However, one may doubt the real access of older people to decision-making and processes of power. Can they really and successfully oppose the decisions of local authorities? Even if we can consider ourselves as inspired by "public sociology" when observing and supporting local "age-friendly" practices (Moulaert & Garon 2015), we, as researchers, must ourselves be careful about how we represent age, space and socio-spatial exclusion, particularly when we use existing representations like age-friendly cities.

Summarising urban and environmental sociological perspectives, we can conclude that socio-spatial exclusion is framed as:

- *Based upon socio-economic status*: resulting from income inequalities and leading to socio-spatial segregation.
- *Cultural*: resulting from the reputation and labelling of an environment and leading to stigma and "spoiled" identities.
- *Multidimensional*: comprising active and passive appropriation, as well as participation in the representation of space.

Conclusion: What can Gerontology and Sociology Learn from Each Other about Socio-Spatial Exclusion?

In the two previous sections, we tried to show how gerontology and sociology have conceptualised the relationship between age, space and exclusion thus far.

Both sociology and gerontology have longstanding traditions of researching the spatial mechanisms of social exclusion. The most obvious differences between them might be that theoretical concepts from urban sociology hardly ever consider age explicitly, nor do they adopt a life course perspective, and many (though not all) gerontological accounts neglect power relations. However, there are also some connections to be made between the two disciplines. In particular, we can find (infra-) structural definitions of exclusion in both disciplines, pointing to lack of (access to) important infrastructure in certain residential areas.

This lack may particularly affect older adults, as their action scope tends to be smaller than that of younger adults, and they usually spend more time in their immediate residential environment (cf. Wahl et al. 1999). Whereas sociological concepts of socio-spatial segregation often do not consider age, environmental justice accounts from social gerontology depart from a socio-economic understanding of exclusion as a starting point, but then focus on older adults and how they deal with living in deprived neighbourhoods. In doing so, they – in accordance with sociological accounts – also extend the notion of exclusion to comprise service exclusion, exclusion from social relationships, economic exclusion and civic exclusion. The latter is often linked to the call for the "right to the city" (Lefebvre 1991) and is used to legitimise research on how older people are able or unable to participate in decision-making processes, thus ultimately affecting their residential environments (cf. Buffel et al. 2012).

This leads to the preliminary conclusions that we can draw from both disciplines, namely that (1) inequalities are intersectional and (2) exclusion is multidimensional and (3) processual. Intersectionality refers to overlapping systems of advantage or disadvantage, or as Crenshaw (1989) puts it, systems of oppression and discrimination, which certain groups face based on their location at the intersection of gender, age, ethnicity, sexuality, economic background and so on. These intersections are, using the words of sociologist Emile Durkheim, "greater than their sum." Both gerontology and sociology have considered such intersections, for example, in concepts like "double jeopardy" (c.f. Dowd & Bengtson 1978; Baykara-Krumme et al. 2012) – mostly, however, from a deficit perspective. Often, such accounts ask about how intersecting personal attributes that are defined as risk factors lead to an increased risk of socio-spatial exclusion. Enriching such accounts with notions of "territorial stigma" (Wacquant et al. 2014), however, allows for treating one's environment as an additional attribute and might re-shape such questions to ask how – for example – being an older migrant woman living in a deprived area affects identity-building processes and images of ageing for this group of people. For his part, Marchal (2017) illustrates how ageing in a suburb can come with increased risk of exclusion, but only under certain circumstances. He illustrates this with the example of an older widow, who lives on the upper slope of a hill, while shops and public transport are "only"

200 meters below and who receives little help from neighbours. In her case, space becomes a driver of exclusion.

Using analogy, we can frame socio-spatial exclusion as being multidimensional, and these dimensions can also intersect. In its most basic form, spatial exclusion may refer to the lack of access to a certain place. However, socio-spatial exclusion can comprise a lack of access to certain shops and services, such as public transport – for either infrastructural reasons or reasons of economic affordability – but it can also comprise a lack of access to relationships with friends and neighbours – both face-to-face and online, depending on online infrastructure – and can also entail barriers to civic participation within or concerning the neighbourhood. These dimensions of socio-spatial exclusion can intersect, but do not have to. For example, in her analysis of a deprived area in Vienna, Austria, Wanka (2018a) has shown how very economically disadvantaged older residents have hardly any access to local infrastructure like shops or cafés, but may be well integrated into neighbourhood communities and may also participate in political activism regarding their neighbourhood. We can, hence, understand socio-spatial exclusion rather as a dynamic continuum than as a fixed status. Such a perspective results in a differentiating look at exclusion, both in terms of quality and quantity. Hence, some older adults might be "more excluded"; however, this does not necessarily equal being excluded in more dimensions. This might also suggest using other terms than "exclusion," which place more emphasis on its gradual nature, like deprivation.

Beyond its gradual nature, exclusion is also processual. It is particularly Lefebvre's theory of urban development that elaborates on the dynamic and co-constructive processes that "make places," involving everyday practices of spatial appropriation, cognitive perceptions of space and its (powerful) representations. Again, we can borrow the notion of intersectionality to speak of an intersection between practices of place appropriation, place perception and representation at which different forms of socio-spatial exclusion are constructed, reproduced or deconstructed. Taking this into account requires reflexivity in one's own research practice, questioning one's own approaches, methods and assumptions, and also challenging notions dominant in one's scientific field.

Finally, what kind of research agenda can be derived from a social-constructionist, processual and intersectionalist perspective of socio-spatial exclusion? Critical researchers working in the field of ageing

Table 1. A future research agenda for environmental gerontology

Dimension	Agenda	Examples
Research	How do intersections of age with income, education, gender, ethnicity, sexuality, health, and residential conditions relate to different forms and degrees of socio-spatial deprivation?	• Which intersectionalities are behind different socio-spatial segregation processes (e.g. like gentrification)? Which role does age play in them? • How does the intersection of age and territorial stigma influence old-age identities and images of self? • Under which conditions do which dimensions of socio-spatial exclusion intersect, and where can we find spaces of possibility?
Reflection	In how far does our own research contribute to the construction, reproduction or destruction of socio-spatial exclusion?	• Which groups, social situations and life-worlds do we make visible and invisible through our concepts, questions, methods and samples? How do we portray, label and – potentially – stigmatize them? • Which implications do the concepts we use, and their theoretical traditions, have? Do they, for example, impose criteria for successful or active ageing, and hence implicitly devaluate those who do not meet these criteria?
Implementation	Which practical implications can we draw without constructing new or reproducing "old" forms of socio-spatial exclusion?	• How can we cater for the housing needs of, for example, gay men, in later life? Which concepts can we develop beyond age-friendly cities to establish planning ideas for demographic change?

studies, like Phillipson (2004, 2007), have shown what such a critical and reflexive research agenda for socio-spatial exclusion in later life may look like with their discussion of "age-friendly cities" (Buffel 2015; Buffel et al. 2012). In their recent "manifesto" for change, Buffel et al. (2018) demand an intensification in the participation of older adults, stakeholders and multidisciplinary research teams to further develop the age-friendly agenda. Acknowledging the call for a "participatory turn" in the practice of the age-friendly movement, our complementary approach calls for a "reflexive turn": hence, we propose intensifying not the involvement with the practice of age-friendly cities and communities, but its theorising, going even deeper into sociological theory, critique and reflexivity. Such an agenda might touch upon research, its reflection and – as gerontology has always been an applied discipline – implementation, and entail a range of questions, as portrayed in Table 1. To follow such an agenda, a new generation of environmental gerontologists might deploy theories from different disciplines and regional research traditions, thus broadening the horizon for understanding mechanisms of socio-spatial exclusion in later life.

Acknowledgements

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Political participation and social exclusion in later life: What politically active seniors can teach us about barriers to inclusion and retention

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Abstract

Addressing older people's social exclusion is a major challenge for contemporary societies. However, policies designed to address it have tended to focus on poverty and unemployment. This paper explores the relationship between social exclusion and political participation from the perspective of those already holding responsible roles within seniors' organisations. We aim to highlight the impact of later-life social exclusion in relation to politically active older individuals from two diverse socio-political contexts, Australia and Spain. Participants perceived a range of potential barriers for the inclusion of new members and their own continued

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involvement. These related to practical and resource issues, beliefs and attitudes towards participation, and organisational and contextual issues. Members' views of retention of existing members as well as the recruitment of new members highlight the complexity associated with building the diversity and representativeness that organisations need if they are to represent seniors' views in the policy process.

Keywords: seniors' interest organisations, political participation, barriers, retention, inclusion.

Introduction

Addressing older people's social exclusion is a major challenge for contemporary societies in view of global population ageing. Yet, social exclusion is "…a complex process that involves the lack or denial of resources, rights, goods and services as people age, and the inability to participate in the normal relationships and activities, available to the majority of people across the varied and multiple domains of society" (Walsh et al. 2017: 83). Despite impacting societal cohesion and individuals' quality of life (Levitas et al. 2007; Scharf & Keating 2012), older people's social exclusion has been largely overlooked in nations' social policy debates.

Broadly speaking, policies designed to address social exclusion have tended to focus on poverty and unemployment, ignoring many of the broader challenges that face people as they age (Jehoel-Gijsbers & Vrooman 2007; Warburton et al. 2013). Yet, recent scholarship has suggested that social exclusion should be conceived as a multidimensional concept rather than as a single entity. When applied to older people, social exclusion implies a lack of opportunities for having meaningful relationships and roles in society (Warburton et al. 2013). Social exclusion gains greater significance in later life, when lifelong accumulation of risk can be carried into later life and when older people have fewer pathways to avoid exclusion (Jehoel-Gijsbers & Vrooman 2007; Warburton et al. 2013). There is growing evidence of old age exclusion associated with factors such as cultural background, location, gender, education and income, and these factors can be compounded by age discrimination or ageist attitudes (Lui et al. 2011).

There is also a growing body of literature focussing on the particular challenges of social exclusion in later life, with a recent landmark review identifying six key domains of old age exclusion. These comprise neighbourhood and community, social relations, services and mobility, material and financial resources, socio-cultural aspects of society and civic participation (Walsh et al. 2017). Of all these domains, however, Walsh et al. (2017) identify civic participation as receiving less overall attention than the other domains.

Civic participation itself is a multidimensional concept and includes a range of potentially diverse activities. According to Walsh et al.'s recent review (2017), the literature includes attention to citizenship, civic participation, general civic activities, volunteering and community responsibility, and voting and political participation. These are important topics, speaking to the ethical rather than utilitarian dimension of social exclusion, as discussed by Nobel Prize winning economist, Amartya Sen, who draws attention to the moral significance of lives valued by individuals (Nussbaum & Sen 1993). This perspective takes us beyond the economic dimension, and participation in paid work, to explore other aspects of civic participation more pertinent to older people.

Here, we focus on one dimension of civic participation, that of political participation, given the lack of attention to this domain of old age exclusion, and its potential significance to ageing populations. In particular, political participation provides older people with the potential to express agency and achieve integration for themselves (Atkinson 1998; Walsh et al. 2017). We explore a specific and frequently overlooked form of political participation, the involvement in seniors' organisations. Many of these organisations are gaining growing significance in an ageing world and provide key opportunities for older people to redress social exclusion and advocate for seniors' issues (Warburton & Petriwskyj 2007). There is little evidence reflecting how political participation by seniors is impacting social exclusion, except for some work that has highlighted the challenges of powerlessness and poor advocacy (Raymond & Grenier 2013).

Thus, this paper explores the broad relationship between social exclusion and political participation from the perspective of those already holding responsible roles within seniors' organisations. We aim to highlight the impact of old age exclusion in relation to two samples of

politically active older individuals from two diverse socio-political contexts, Australia and Spain, whose ageing policy and welfare contexts are quite different (Warburton & Jeppsson Grassman 2011). The particular focus of this research is how these individuals view barriers both to their own continued participation as well as to the involvement of others in these organisations. While there is a large research literature on volunteering in later life, there is far less on what stops people from giving their time (Serrat et al. 2018).

Thus, the study explores three research questions: What are the barriers active members of seniors' interest organisations perceive to their own retention (RQ1)? What barriers do these members identify to the inclusion of others (RQ2)? How do participants' views on barriers to inclusion and barriers to retention differ across the two country contexts (RQ3)?

We begin by presenting the key concepts in this study, civic participation and barriers for inclusion and retention, before discussing the sociopolitical contexts of Australia and Spain in more depth

The (Forgotten) Political Dimension of Civic Participation

Civic participation provides important opportunities for a growing proportion of older people to remain healthy, active and involved (Anderson et al. 2014; Greenfield & Marks 2004). At the same time, it also enables older people to be more involved in the democratic process and to have their voices heard (Barnes 2005; Fung & Wright 2001). However, civic participation is a fuzzy concept with no consensus among researchers on its definition (e.g. Ekman & Amnå 2012). Berger (2009) claimed that the term has been stretched over the last 20 years, as it has been applied to so many different things "… that it clarifies almost nothing" (335). Some have used it to refer to specific activities such as formal volunteering (e.g. Cutler et al. 2011) or a range of political activities (e.g. Burr et al. 2002), while others have used it in a generic way, to refer to any activity – from watching political shows to bowling in leagues – that creates social capital (e.g. Putnam 2000). The limited agreement among scholars on what it means to participate civically has hindered the advancement of research in this area (Berger 2009) as, in words of Van Deth, the study of civic participation has become "… the study of everything" (Van Deth 2001: 4).

In an attempt to create an operational definition, some researchers have proposed to distinguish between social participation (which includes all the activities connecting individuals to each other, such as volunteering or caregiving) and political participation (which refers to activities aimed at influencing political outcomes) (e.g. Mcbride et al. 2006). A large body of this research was focussed on volunteering by older people, with far less focussing specifically on participation in political activities (for some exceptions see Doyle 2014; Goerres 2009; Nygard & Jakobsson 2013). However, understanding older people's political participation is key to foster their inclusion in policy-making processes, particularly in the context of ageing populations.

However, political participation is itself further complicated by being multidimensional and including different types of activity. Verba et al. (1995) described political participation as either low investment, such as voting behaviour, or high investment, which requires high levels of effort and commitment and is more likely to be stable over time. Political participation could also be classified according to the degree of institutionalisation, as in institutionalised (Kaase 1999) or conventional (Barrett & Brunton-Smith 2014) or non-institutionalised or non-conventional forms of political activity.

Much of the previous literature on older people's political participation can be critiqued for its focus on low-investment forms of participation such as voting (e.g. Binstock 2000) as well as to a lesser extent on non-conventional forms of participation such as social-movement organisations (e.g. Narushima 2004). However, high investment and conventional political activities, such as participation in responsible roles within political organisations, have been underexplored in previous research (Serrat & Villar 2016). Particularly, there is a scarcity of studies addressing older people's political representation and collective action through seniors' interest organisations (Doyle 2014). There are a large number of organisations globally that focus specifically on seniors' interests, including AARP in the United States and the European Federation of Retirees and Elderly People in Europe (FERPA). However, there is a general lack of understanding of what drives and what prevents older people from being included in these organisations. This type of political participation, which includes political advocacy, input into the policy process and

enabling diverse views, is critical in the contemporary global context if older people's inclusion in civic participation is to be achieved and a diversity of views considered in policy and planning decisions.

Barriers to Political Participation by Older People

There is an emerging literature on political participation by older people (e.g. Goerres 2009; Nygard & Jakobsson 2013); however, there are identifiable gaps in knowledge. First, much of the literature focusses on social capital predictors of political participation (e.g. Burr et al. 2002) or on motivations as stimulus for action (e.g. Barnes et al. 2011). However, it is also important to consider what stops people from participating politically in the first place, that is, barriers for inclusion, or what leads people to stop participating, that is, barriers to retention. Barriers to older people's political participation have received far less attention in the literature (Petriwskyj et al. 2017).

Serrat et al. (2017), reviewing the broader literature on barriers to civic participation by older people, proposed to classify the existing evidence into means-related barriers (e.g. health, civic skills, income or available time), motives-related barriers (e.g. lack of interest, disillusionment or a fear of a too demanding involvement) or opportunity context-related barriers (e.g. lack of information about opportunities or organisational problems). However, they highlighted that the type of activity and the context of participation have an important influence on individuals' perceptions of barriers, making it difficult to generalise results to different contexts. The present study specifically addresses barriers to older people's political participation in relation to seniors' interest organisations, a type of political participation which, to our knowledge, has been given very little attention in relation to such barriers.

Second, the literature on barriers matches a tendency in existing evidence to focus on attracting older people, rather than looking at what retains those who already participate. Most studies use samples of older people not involved in political activities (e.g. Gele & Harsløf 2012) or mixed samples of older people involved and not involved (e.g. Postle et al. 2005). They thus overlook the difference between barriers to inclusion and barriers to retention, which might relate to quite different factors. Yet, while both are important, as Serrat et al. (2017) note, understanding factors

that contribute to retention is even more important to political organisations which have invested in their active members. Their empirical study found that most members of a range of political organisations identified means-related barriers as a potential barrier to continued participation, particularly poor health. However, despite these findings, there is a lack of evidence specifically related to barriers to retention in seniors' interest organisations.

Further, although seniors' interest organisations may employ younger paid staff, they are frequently managed by older people themselves through a number of committees and subcommittees. Active members in responsible roles within these organisations make strategic decisions and are often directly responsible for the inclusion and support of new members. Thus, their views on what prevents others from participating are crucial, as they can affect the way they act as agents for their organisations. They are the experts in their organisations and thus best-placed to judge the hindrances that other older people may confront to become involved. On the contrary, their perceptions on the barriers for the inclusion of new members may contrast with their views on the barriers for their own retention, as their experience of participation may provide them with a more nuanced and deeper understanding of the specific barriers involved in these two processes. Therefore, this study seeks to identify not only what barriers active members of seniors' interest organisations perceive to their own retention (RQ1) but also what barriers they identify to the inclusion of others (RQ2). The third research question is designed to compare findings across the two contexts (RQ3), which are now discussed.

Barriers to Political Participation in Australia and Spain

Given the nature of the type of political participation discussed here, socio-political context may be an important influence on members' beliefs and practice regarding barriers to inclusion and retention. Thus, our primary research question is explored across two diverse environments with quite distinct social, political and economic contexts. The rationale for this is that up until fairly recently, most literature on political participation emanated from the United States (e.g. Adler et al. 2007; Campbell 2002, 2003), with more recent studies focussed on other parts of the world with

quite different political and cultural contexts. While there are some studies looking across countries of Europe (Goerres 2007; Melo & Stockemer 2014), most are single-nation studies, including countries such as Hong Kong (Cheung-Ming Chan & Cao 2015), Finland (Nygard & Jakobsson 2013) or the United Kingdom (Barnes et al. 2011). This body of literature generates interesting findings, which highlight the crucial importance of understanding context when interpreting ageing and political participation. A strong rationale for this is provided by social origins theory of Salamon and Anheier (1998), which highlights how the non-profit sector is shaped by different cultural and political contexts. However, almost no studies compare findings across two quite different countries. In the present paper, we seek to contribute to this emerging body of literature by presenting a comparative study across two diverse countries, Spain and Australia.

These two countries experience a growing ageing population. It is expected that the proportion of Australians and Spaniards over 65 will represent 24.5% and 35.6%, respectively, of the population by 2060 (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2013; Instituto de Mayores y Servicios Sociales 2017). They also share a strong non-profit sector, which channels older people's political participation. However, older people across these two countries have quite different social and cultural backgrounds. These different socio-political experiences across the lifecycle are likely to impact on older people's approaches to political participation (Goerres 2009). While both are now western democratic countries, Australia has experienced a stable political context and long economic boom since the end of World War 2. In contrast, Spain is a much younger democracy, and its older people have experienced a dictatorial past under Franco's regime (Encarnación 2008), which provided little opportunities for their inclusion in civic participation. Although change occurred with democracy in the mid-1970s, those early experiences are likely to be very strong for older Spaniards. Furthermore, in recent years, Spain was deeply affected by the 2008 Global Financial Crisis. Unemployment grew steadily to reach almost 27% in 2013 (Instituto Nacional de Estadística 2018), and 29% of Spaniards were at risk of poverty or social exclusion in 2015 (European Commission 2016). The situation of the Spaniards has been aggravated by the politics of austerity encouraged by the European Union and put in place by the conservative government, which included cutbacks in social,

health and educational public services (León & Pavolini 2014). Older people have been particularly affected by some of these policies, such as increasing retirement age, implementing health co-payment or reducing social services (Deusdad et al. 2016; Legido-Quigley et al. 2013; Serrano et al. 2014). As a result, new social movements and political organisations have arisen as well as others reactivated, including those which are focussed on seniors' issues.

Australian 20th century history has been quite different. As a wage-earners' welfare state regime, Australian welfare state is sustained through wage regulation and welfare provided through employment (Warburton 2014). Australians have been provided with a government welfare safety net, whereas in Southern Europe, high levels of informal social relations may act to crowd out civic participation (Warburton & Jeppsson Grassman 2011). Moreover, Australian baby boomers have a high educational level compared to those of other OECD countries, including Spain (OECD 2017), and have experienced high employment levels during their working lives (Warburton & Jeppsson Grassman 2011).

The global financial crisis has left Australia relatively unscathed, although in recent decades there have been important changes in incomes, retirement saving and aged care arrangements (Warburton 2014). For example, retirement compulsory superannuation has been recently put in place, which leaves many individuals in a vulnerable position in front of economic crisis and inequitable employment. The ageing population is certainly impacting in government action, and older people in Australia confront a range of political issues. However, compared with their Spanish counterparts, Australian elders have benefited from a relatively secure economic and social background during their youth and adulthood. These experiences are likely to have a different impact on the perspectives of members of seniors' interest organisations in the two countries.

Australian and Spanish Seniors' Interest Organisations

Spain's associational landscape has been characterised as feeble, as its development did not take place until the death of Franco in 1975 (Montagut 2009). During Franco's dictatorship (1939–1975), there were severe impediments for population participation in civic and political affairs. Public welfare services were extremely limited, and the needs of

those in extreme poverty depended on catholic organisations that were clearly aligned with the regime (Monzón Campos et al. 2003). A modern welfare state started to be developed in the 1980s, but its construction took place against the background of a very weak civil society (Encarnación 2003). The return of democracy in 1976 supposed an opportunity for the development of new (or illegalised during the regime) civic and political organisations, such as political parties, trade unions, professional or students' associations (Nanetti & Holguin 2016). Seniors' interest organisations have played a relevant role in this new landscape and are indeed one of the types of organisations most commonly joined by older Spaniards (Rodríguez et al. 2013). Australia has experienced a much more stable associational life during the 20th century. Australian seniors participate at present in a wide range of organisations, including seniors' interest organisations (Warburton & Jeppsson Grassman 2011).

In both countries, seniors' organisations are very active at the local, state and national policy levels. These organisations tend to have broad agendas and advocate for a range of seniors-related issues such as work and pensions, transport, housing, health and social services, aged care, community services, education or elder abuse, among others. The activities that they undertake are also wide in scope, from offering services and direct support to affiliates, or carrying out lifestyle, educational or social activities, to forming partnerships for consultation and advice with government representatives, or lobbying and campaigning.

Seniors' interest organisations are managed by seniors themselves and have a diversity of governance structures, typically a management committee or board of directors, and a number of divisional subcommittees of specific issues-related subcommittees. Both in Australia and Spain, these organisations are membership-based and rely on external funding resources, including the one provided by government, which has often compromised organisations' sustainability (Warburton & Petriwskyj 2007).

Methods

Participants

Respondents were active members with designated responsible roles within nine Australian and five Spanish seniors' interest organisations. For the Australian sample, these included six advocacy organisations for

older people's rights, one local government advisory committee, one education organisation and one social and personal interests' organisation. All of these organisations include an advocacy role for seniors. For the Spanish sample, these included one political party for pensioners and four advocacy organisations for older people's rights.

The final sample included 52 participants from across these organisations: 26 from Australia and 26 from Spain. Mean age for the full sample was 73 (SD = 5.8); 65% were men and 35% women; and most were married (65%). Almost one in five reported primary studies or less, 17% had completed secondary education and 63% were university or post-school professional training graduates. Participants reported participating in the organisation for a mean of 11.3 years, and devoting an average of 9.3 hours per week to this participation. Australian participants were more educated and reported fewer years of participation and less hours devoted per week to this activity than Spanish respondents. Differences on educational attainment between samples are likely to reflect population-level differences (OECD 2017). Full socio-demographic characteristics and differences between samples are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Comparative profile of Spanish and Australian samples

Variable	Spanish sample (n = 26)	Australian sample (n = 26)	Total (N = 52)
Age	73.9 (SD = 6.2)	72.1 (SD = 5.3)	73.0 (SD = 5.8)
Gender			
Male	76.9%	53.8%	65.4%
Female	23.1%	46.2%	34.6%
Marital status			
Married or the facto partnership	61.5%	72.0%	65.4%
Widowed	15.4%	0.0%	7.8%
Single	7.7%	12.0%	9.8%
Separated or divorced	15.4%	16.0%	15.7%

(*Continued*)

Table 1. (*Continued*)

Variable	Spanish sample (n = 26)	Australian sample (n = 26)	Total (N = 52)
Education level			
No formal schooling	3.8%	0.0%	1.9%
Primary school education	34.6%	0.0%	17.3%
Secondary school education	34.6%	0.0%	17.3%
Certificate or professional training/ University degree	26.9%	100.0%	63.5%
General self-rated health			
Very poor/poor	3.8%	0.0%	1.9%
Fair	19.2%	11.5%	15.4%
Good/excellent	76.9%	88.5%	82.7%
Number of years participating	15.1	7.5	11.3
	(*SD* = 9.6)	(*SD* = 8.7)	(*SD* = 9.8)
Average hours committed per week	12.8	5.7	9.3
	(*SD* = 10.3)	(*SD* = 4.8)	(*SD* = 8.7)
Internal political efficacy			
Yes	38.5%	50.0%	45.1%
No	7.7%	11.5%	9.8%
I don't know	50.0%	38.5%	45.1%
Political interest	7.7	8.4	8.0
	(*SD* = 2.2)	(*SD* = 0.9)	(*SD* = 1.7)

Instruments

We applied a questionnaire originally designed for the Spanish sample by authors 1 and 4 (RS and FV), and translated for use in the Australian sample by authors 1, 2 and 3 (RS, JW and AP). The questionnaire comprised open-ended questions and incomplete sentences regarding political participation. Results reported here relate to a selection of questions regarding perceived barriers to participation in seniors' organisations. The questionnaire included the following sections:

- Socio-demographic variables: Age, gender, marital status, educational level and self-rated health.

- Participatory characteristics:
  - Number of years participating
  - Number of hours committed per week
  - Internal political efficacy ("Do you believe that your participation will result in changes in government policies?" with response categories "yes", "no" and "I am not sure")
  - Importance of participation ("On a scale where 1 means 'no interest at all' and 10 means 'very much interested', how would you rate your interest in politics?").
- Barriers for their own continued involvement: "If at some point in the future you decide to stop participating in your organisation, what could be the reason for this?"
- Barriers for others to become involved: "In your opinion, what are the reasons some people of your age do not get involved in organisations like yours?"

Due to the lack of survey frameworks designed to test the barriers for inclusion and retention of older people in seniors' interest organisations, we chose an exploratory approach using open-ended questions, which allowed us to capture respondents' opinions in their own words.

Procedure

The first author (RS) of the study collected data from the Spanish sample between February and October 2014, and then authors 1, 2 and 3 (RS, JW and AP, respectively) replicated the study in Australia between June and September 2015. Seniors' interest organisations in Catalonia (Spain) and in Queensland and Victoria (Australia) were approached by email and invited to take part in the study. Organisations which agreed to participate were then asked to distribute the questionnaire to active members through meeting the inclusion criteria for the study: (1) being a member of the board or a committee within the organisation, (2) having participated in the organisation for at least a year prior to data collection and (3) devoting at least 1 hour per week to this activity.

Information about the purpose of the study and the procedure for data collection, instructions to answer the survey, contact details for the researchers, confidentiality and statements of the right to withdraw were

provided through an information sheet. All participants gave informed consent. The ethics committees of The University of Barcelona and The University of Queensland approved the study. To ensure respondents' anonymity, a unique code was assigned to each participant. These codes (e.g. AUS03_67M), which appear in the results section after each quote, indicate participant's subsample (AUS for Australian, SPA for Spanish) and organisation number (assigned randomly), followed by participants' age and gender (M stands for man, W for woman).

Data Analysis

We applied content analysis to participants' answers, following a multi-stage process in which ideas or units or meaning were identified and then condensed into categories and sub-categories based on the repetition of ideas or similarity of meaning among units. The analysis was undertaken with the help of ATLAS.ti 7 qualitative analysis software. The process was conducted independently by two researchers to increase the trustworthiness of results. Once they had created a category system, the researchers compared the categories and sub-categories that each of them had identified and discussed their differences until a consensus was reached. Three main categories were identified through the analysis of barriers for continued involvement (retention) and perceived barriers for others to become involved (inclusion) in seniors' interest organisations, each of them including a number of sub-categories: practical and resources issues, beliefs and attitudes towards participation, and organisational and contextual issues.

Results

Findings are presented in two sections. The first section addresses the barriers to the retention of older participants in seniors' interest organisations (RQ1), and the second the barriers to the inclusion of new participants from the point of view of those who have responsible roles within these organisations (RQ2). Similarities and differences in responses across the Australian and Spanish data sets (RQ3) are commented on in each of the sections. The discussion then focusses on the broader aspects of these questions – what do these findings mean in relation to old age exclusion, particularly for the domain of political participation.

Barriers to Retention

Analysis of the barriers to continued involvement of participants in seniors' interest organisations identified three overarching categories: practical and resource issues, beliefs and attitudes towards participation, and organisational and contextual issues. These main categories comprised a number of sub-categories, which are detailed below. Some participants mentioned several types of barriers, so their answers were coded into more than one category or sub-category. Table 2 shows a summary of these categories and sub-categories, with their frequency of occurrence by sample, with examples from the two data sets.

Practical and resources issues. The first category related to practical issues or changes in personal resources that would influence participants' future commitment to their organisations. Among them, health or age-related issues appeared as a prevalent sub-category. This included comments such as "If I get too frail/ill" (AUS01_69F) or "… that my health or my age prevent me from participating" (SPA25_81M). Two other sub-categories across both Australian and Spanish data sets were related to family commitments, as in "if my family needs me" (SPA06_80M), or to changes in employment or location, as in "drastic changes in circumstances, such as a change in where I live" (AUS02_75F). However, these two sub-categories were far less commonly mentioned. Finally, one participant stated that the lack of available time would be an obstacle to continue participating in her organisation. Overall, these sub-categories reflect a decrease in means or resources, such as health or available time, or practical issues, such as a change in residential location, which would influence individuals' capacity to continue participating in their organisations.

Beliefs and attitudes towards participation. The second main category related to certain beliefs and attitudes about participation. A common sub-category across both data sets related to a perception that their participation may at some point no longer have an impact in achieving significant changes. For example, an Australian participant said:

> if I found that despite best endeavour my participation made absolutely no difference or that the organisation simply gave lip service to advocating and pressing for change. (AUS13_76M)

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Table 2. Frequencies of responses to the question "If at some point in the future you decide to stop participating in your organisation, what could be the reason for this?" (By sample)

Categories	Example	Barriers to retention		
		Australians $(n = 26)^{a}$	Spaniards $(n = 26)^{a}$	Total $(N = 52)^{a}$
Practical and resource issues				
Health/age issues	That my health or my age prevents me from participating. SPA25_81M	12	18	30
Family commitments	Family commitments, for example, grandchildren. AUS04_70M	1	2	3
Changes in employment/location	Drastic change in circumstances, such as a change in where I live. AUS02_75F	3	0	3
General lack of time	Lack of time. AUS10_70F	1	0	1
Total		13	18	31
Beliefs and attitudes towards participation				
Lack of perceived impact	If I found that despite best endeavour my participation made absolutely no difference or that the organisation simply gave lip service to advocating and pressing for change. AUS13_76M	4	2	6
Getting tired/running out of ideas	As a result of just getting tired of all the work involved (supposed to be retired). AUS25_65M	3	2	5
Other priorities	The most likely would be to dedicate time to other activities. SPA12_74M	1	1	2
Total		8	5	13

(*Continued*)

Table 2. (*Continued*)

Categories	Example	Barriers to retention		
		Australians ($n = 26$)[a]	Spaniards ($n = 26$)[a]	Total ($N = 52$)[a]
Organisational and contextual issues				
Generational/ organisational replacement	*Generational renewal. SPA17_72M*	6	1	7
Undesirable organisational changes	*In-fighting and unpleasantness. AUS18_72F*	3	1	4
Total		9	2	11
Never stop participating	*I think I will never stop participating. SPA01_70M*	2	1	3
I don't know		1	0	1
Don't answer		1	1	2

[a]The sum of subordinate category values may sometimes be greater than the corresponding superordinate category value because some participants' answers included more than one barrier and, therefore, were coded into more than one subordinate category. Similarly, one specific response may include barriers related to practical/resource issues, beliefs and attitudes towards participation, and organisational and contextual issues.

and another stated:

> If nothing changes; if [organisation] does not get enough traction to make a difference; if older people continue to be seen as a "burden" by governments then I might consider leaving. The problem is where else could I go to try to influence outcomes? (AUS16_66F)

This was also evident in the Spanish data set, as in "the disappointment of not being able to carry out our projects. If that was the case, I would look for other organizations" (SPA18_74M).

A second related sub-category across both data sets was about getting tired of participating, or running out of useful ideas to contribute to their organisations. Thus, as a participant noted "[I would stop participating]… as a result of just getting tired of all the work involved [supposed to be retired]" (AUS25_65M), with another highlighting "… as a committee member, [I would stop] if I run out of ideas" (AUS01_69F). Finally, two participants stated that time commitments would be a possible reason to give up, as in "the most likely would be to dedicate time to other activities" (SPA12_74M).

Organisational and contextual issues. The third main category, organisational and contextual issues, was noted across both samples, although it was more frequently mentioned in the Australian data set than in the Spanish data set. The first sub-category related to generational replacement and to make room for other voices and points of view within the organisation. For example, an Australian participant stated "the risk of long term occupancy of a position is that change and new ideas are stifled. For me five years on the Board is enough" (AUS09_71M), while another said that the organisation "… needs new eyes" (AUS07_68F). The second sub-category related to experiencing undesirable organisational changes, such as shifts in the organisation's strategic direction or philosophy, or if "the organisation became too partisan political supporting a particular political party" (AUS13_76M), or in "petty politics within the organisation" (AUS25_65M). Overall, these barriers related to externally driven factors that may decrease individuals' opportunities for active involvement with the organisation. Barriers related to organisational and contextual issues were more reported by Australian participants than by Spanish participants.

Never stop participating. It should also be highlighted that three participants did not identify potential barriers, instead stating that they would

not stop participating in their organisations. For instance, an Australian participant said that she was "… not anticipating that [she] would" (AUS20_75F), while a Spanish participant stated that he "… will never stop participating" (SPA01_70M).

Barriers to Inclusion

With regard to the barriers to the inclusion of new participants, the analysis identified the same three overarching categories that were identified in the analysis of barriers to retention: practical and resource issues, beliefs and attitudes towards participation, and organisational and contextual issues. However, there were important differences in the frequency of mentioning these categories as well as in the sub-categories identified within each of them. Table 3 shows a summary of these categories and sub-categories, with their frequency of occurrence by sample, and examples from the two data sets.

Practical and resource issues. The first category related to the lack of personal resources and practical issues which act as potential barriers for older people to become involved in organisations. Participants across both data sets mentioned health and age-related problems as potential obstacles for other older people, as in "some are too old and tired" (AUS23_81M). Two other sub-categories, mentioned only by Australian respondents, were family commitments, as in "some are trapped in ongoing family caring roles (either grandchildren or very elderly frail parent/s)" (AUS12_65F) and general lack of time, as in "time poor" (AUS07_68F) or "demand of time will be too great" (AUS09_71M). A fourth sub-category identified across both data sets was lack of skills, as in "because they don't have the skills to do it" (SPA15_69M). Finally, one Australian participant stated that transportation would act as a potential barrier for some older people to become involved: "distance to travel – meeting place near public transport" (AUS04_70M).

Beliefs and attitudes towards participation. The second category, related to beliefs and attitudes towards participation, represented the strongest category across both sets of data. A first sub-category highlighted a perceived laziness and apathy among others as a barrier to becoming involved. This sub-category was much stronger in the Spanish data set than in the Australian data set. Spanish participants made comments

Table 3. Frequencies of responses to the question "In your opinion, what are the reasons some people of your age do not get involved in organisations like yours?" (By sample)

Categories	Example	Barriers to inclusion		
		Australians (n = 26)[a]	Spaniards (n = 26)[a]	Total (N = 52)[a]
Practical and resource issues				
Health/age issues	Health problems. SPA08_65M	3	2	5
Family commitments	People are devoting time to grandchildren. AUS16_66F	5	0	5
General lack of time	Time poor. AUS07_68F	4	0	4
Lack of skills	Because they don't have the skills to do it. SPA15_69M	1	2	3
Transportation issues	Distance to travel – meeting place near public transport. AUS04_70M	1	0	1
Total		11	4	15
Beliefs and attitudes towards participation				
Laziness/apathy	An attitude of "someone else will look after my interests" – apathy. AUS25_65M	5	12	17
Lack of interest	General lack of interest in participation. SPA05_70F	10	5	15
Disillusionment and lack of trust in organisations	Disillusion, disenchantment, credibility crisis of organisations. SPA20_66M	0	9	9
Fear of a too demanding involvement	Some do not want to take up specific responsibilities. AUS23_81M	7	2	9

(*Continued*)

Table 3. (*Continued*)

Categories	Example	Barriers to inclusion		
		Australians (n = 26)[a]	Spaniards (n = 26)[a]	Total (N = 52)[a]
Lack of self-confidence or self-worth	*Lack of self-confidence to tackle something new. AUS10_70F*	5	0	5
Lack of perceived impact	*People feel it's a waste of time because governments won't listen anyway. AUS16_66F*	4	0	4
Unawareness of the importance of participation	*Maybe they did not have the chance of realising the importance of receiving help from others. SPA21_77M*	3	1	4
Closed-mindedness	*Minds closed to opportunities for further learning. AUS02_75F*	1	1	2
Total		19	23	42
Organisational and contextual issues				
Lack of information about available opportunities	*Lack of information about available opportunities. SPA06_80M*	7	6	13
Generational/historical reasons	*It is because of the history of our country. SPA01_70M*	0	3	3
Total		7	9	16
I don't know		2	0	2
Don't answer		1	0	1

[a]The sum of subordinate category values may sometimes be greater than the corresponding superordinate category value because some participants' answers included more than one barrier and, therefore, were coded into more than one subordinate category. Similarly, one specific response may include barriers related to practical/resource issues, beliefs and attitudes towards participation, and organisational and contextual issues.

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such as "because they lack in character, and they like to waste their time doing other things" (SPA02_81F) or "laziness… disenchantment… they think that they have already participated, that they have done a lot, and now is their time to rest" (SPA19_70M). In addition, a few Australian participants also noted "an attitude of 'someone else will look after my interests' – apathy" (AUS25_65M).

A second sub-category, identified in both data sets, although more frequently mentioned by Australian respondents, related to the lack of interest among older people in actively participating seniors' organisations. A respondent noted "… [they are] just generally not interested in volunteering or they are not interested in meeting at branch levels" (AUS20_75F), while others highlighted that other interests would be more prevalent among older people, as in "… a lot of older people prefer to be involved in more activities that are for enjoyment" (AUS15_71F).

A third sub-category, which was only identified in the Spanish data set, viewed disillusionment and lack of trust in organisations as a barrier for others to become involved. For example, one respondent described it as "… disillusion… disenchantment… crisis of credibility in organisations" (SPA12_66M).

Fear of a too demanding role was also identified as a potential barrier across both data sets. For example, one participant suggested that "some are hesitant to be involved in case they need to be responsible or in a leadership role" (AUS04_70M) and another that "some do not want to take up specific responsibilities" (AUS23_81M).

The fifth and sixth sub-categories were only mentioned by respondents in the Australian data set. The first of these suggested that it was a lack of confidence or self-worth that stopped people, as in "lack of self-confidence to tackle something new" (AUS10_70F), or "many may underestimate their skills and knowledge" (AUS12_65F). The second sub-category proposed that some viewed advocacy through seniors' organisations as useless, as it fails to have a significant impact on governmental decision-making. For example, a participant stated that "people feel it's a waste of time because governments won't listen anyway" (AUS16_66F), and another that "they feel overwhelmed by the issues. They think it is the responsibility of the government and that they cannot change the way the government thinks and acts so why bother" (AUS13_76M).

Finally, participants across both data sets mentioned that some older people were unaware of the importance of advocating for older people's rights through seniors' organisations, as in "lack of awareness about the difference they could make" (AUS10_70F), and two participants highlighted closed-mindedness among older people as a barrier for volunteering for these organisations. One Australian noted that some had their "… minds closed to opportunities for further learning" (AUS02_75F), and a Spanish participant stated "they are closed-minded and it is really difficult to change their opinions" (SPA13_67M).

Organisational and contextual issues. The third main category, organisational and contextual issues, was noted across both samples. A sub-category related to the lack of information about available opportunities, as in "don't know of the organisation and opportunities available to participate" (AUS07_68F), or "some cannot see the connection or options for engagement" (AUS12_65F). A second sub-category, mentioned only by the Spanish respondents, related to generational and historical barriers, as in "it is because of the history of our country" (SPA01_70M), or "the reason is the education they have received" (SPA21_77M).

Discussion

This study aimed to explore the broad relationship between social exclusion and political participation from the perspective of those already holding responsible roles within seniors' organisations. In particular, we have presented data from two samples of politically active older individuals from two diverse socio-political contexts, Spain and Australia. The particular focus of this research is how these individuals view barriers both to their own continued participation as well as to the involvement of others in these organisations. The intent is to contribute to knowledge about perspectives on exclusion from political participation, as a largely unexplored, but important, dimension of old age exclusion.

Political participation in the form of advocacy provides older people with agency and work towards integration, with seniors' organisations working towards gaining a seat at the policy table (Warburton & Petriwskyj 2007). It is a critical aspect of redressing old age exclusion and thus is a domain of social exclusion that merits research attention as it is often neglected in favour of other domains such as community or

services (Walsh et al. 2017). As the population ages, it becomes increasingly important for governments and others to create spaces to hear the voices of older people and ensure that they are included in the democratic process (Barnes 2005; Fung & Wright 2001). Further, political participation is one dimension of civic participation with implications for older people remaining healthy, active and productive as they age (Anderson et al. 2014; Morrow-Howell et al. 2014). Despite the potential for this form of participation, there is a scarcity of studies addressing this topic (Doyle 2014) and, in particular, a scarcity of studies that look at the barriers (rather than the motivators) to any form of civic participation in later life (Serrat et al. 2017).

Thus, the first two research questions respond to this gap in knowledge by exploring the barriers perceived by active members of seniors' interest organisations to both their own continued involvement as well as the inclusion of new members for the organisation, and to analyse differences on their perceptions of these barriers. These findings are important as they speak to the viewpoints of those already involved in political participation, such as advocacy work, and who are often responsible for the recruitment of more members, ensuring the representativeness and sustainability of their organisations.

These perspectives are context-specific, determined by the political, social and cultural contexts in which they occur. We thus sought to explore these issues across two diverse countries with quite distinct socio-political contexts. This was because, with the exception of a few cross-European studies (Goerres 2009; Melo & Stockemer 2014), most prior studies in this field are either from the United States (e.g. Campbell 2002, 2003) or another single country (e.g. Barnes et al. 2011). Thus, our third research question aims to address a gap in the literature by adopting a cross-national dimension and exploring differences and similarities across two different contexts, Spain and Australia.

Participants in our study perceived a range of potential barriers for their own continued involvement in seniors' interest organisations (RQ1), as well as for the inclusion of new members in these organisations (RQ2). These related to practical and resource issues, beliefs and attitudes towards participation, and organisational and contextual issues. The first set of findings highlights practical and resource issues, which refer to the availability of resources that are deemed necessary to participate

in seniors' interest organisations, such as health, skills or available time, or practical matters that would affect older people's possibilities of participation, such as changes in employment or location, or transportation issues. There is logic to these aspects as clearly relying on basic personal resources and overcoming practical obstacles provides a common ground for older people both to start and to continue participating in civic life (Serrat et al. 2017).

However, findings show that this type of barrier was more frequently identified as a barrier for retention of existing members rather than a barrier for inclusion of new members. Interestingly, the responses for their own continued involvement was more singularly based on their own health or age issues with fewer other responses. Conversely, respondents noted that to include more members was complex, as responses were more spread across family commitments, lack of time, lack of skills or transport as well as health/age. Thus, it may be that those already active in organisations may have already managed some of these issues and know that they are able to do the work. These findings suggest that if seniors' organisations are to recruit new members, they will need multiple, and demonstrated flexible, approaches to involvement to counter some of these potential concerns.

In particular, seniors' interest organisations seeking to represent older people's voices need to be aware of the diversity of seniors and provide opportunities for participation addressed to individuals with different life-circumstances and skills (Warburton et al. 2007). For example, allowing less time-consuming forms of participation may help to include and retain those with family, work, and other commitments. Organisations need to be socially inclusive, and show how their roles are flexible and achievable, and can involve those who have health issues or are much older. Finally, ride-share opportunities as well as virtual or home-based participation may help to retain those with transportation issues or even those who have changed location. It becomes clear that organisational flexibility is a must in order to overcome participants' practical and resource issues barriers.

The second group of findings suggested that personal beliefs and attitudes towards participation were seen as potential barriers both for retention and recruitment of members in seniors' interest organisations. Here, however, important differences were identified. Failure to achieve

outcomes or have an impact was common barriers to both recruitment and retention, while other barriers were quite different across these contexts. In terms of retention, participants mentioned that getting tired of the work involved or a change in their personal priorities would stop their involvement. On the contrary, respondents were quite judgemental in terms of why others do not get involved, proposing attitudes and beliefs such as apathy, laziness, lack of interest, lack of self-confidence or closed-mindedness as the main reasons for non-involvement. There were some interesting differences relating to inclusion across the two countries, with Australian respondents more likely to identify a range of different attitudes and beliefs, and the Spanish respondents more likely to identify apathy or disillusionment as the main barriers to inclusion.

Such beliefs and attitudes were seen as being of less significance to retention of active members, who see changes outside their control as the only foreseeable reason to stop. This suggests that attention needs to be paid by organisations for ensuring that existing members perceive that they are making an impact or producing outcomes. However, including new members is more complex and means paying attention to a range of issues, which relate to personal agency and empowerment. From the perspective of participants, these include the need to overcome perceptions of apathy, lack of interest, trust or perceived impact, fear of involvement being too demanding, or that it will be too difficult. While there were differences in responses across the two countries, which we will discuss further below, these data suggest that there is a need for organisations to promote themselves as worthy of involvement, by demonstrating the change they have achieved and showing that involvement is manageable, feasible and worthwhile.

Furthermore, it may be that such perceptions on behalf of those involved are less than helpful in terms of inclusion of a broader and more diverse group of active members. Members need to consider reaching out beyond rather judgemental attitudes and beliefs in order to ensure that seniors' organisations include the views of other, less politically aware or committed individuals and ensure that broad views are included in policy advocacy and organisational processes. Involving a diversity of older people in governance and decision-making has been identified as critical if seniors' organisations are to advocate for issues of real concern for older people. This was initially modelled through a national stakeholder

group, Partnerships for Older People, in the United Kingdom in the late 1990s, and is now increasingly being recognised in the Age-Friendly Community movement (Scharlach & Lehning 2013). While many of these global initiatives have implications for redressing aspects of social exclusion, there are a few which involve political participation. Some examples include programmes such as the Portland Age-Friendly Cities Project, which have successfully involved a diverse group of older people in the development and rollout of the initiative (Scharlach & Lehning 2013).

The third group of barriers to either retaining or recruiting new members in the present study included organisational and contextual issues. Generally, there were less responses in this category than in the other two categories for both new and existing members, although there were some particular nuanced differences across the two groups. First, in relation to retention, there were issues related to the fit with the organisation, particularly if there is change within the organisation. Second, in attempting to include new members, there was an identified need to address the lack of information about opportunities for getting involved. This is important to ensure new members are well informed about the organisation and potential for their involvement. This suggests that if old age exclusion is to be addressed in relation to political participation, it means that a broader group of individuals needs to be educated and informed about the intent and focus of these organisations, and their potential role in them.

There were also some differences in findings between the two samples, which suggested the impact of socio-political context, particularly the experience of a dictatorial past by Spanish elders, which may still have effects on their beliefs and attitudes towards political activism. Thus, for example, a few Spanish participants noted generational and historical reasons as a possible barrier for recruitment. Further, findings show that more Australian participants (50% compared with 38%) expressed political efficacy, and hence believed that their participation would impact changes to government policy. This suggests that Australian participants are more likely to have agency and feel that their work can make a difference. They were more likely to suggest that they would give up if they felt that they did not have an impact or experienced undesirable changes. They also suggested that those not involved were unaware that they could in fact make a change through political participation. Spanish respondents, on the contrary, were more

likely to suggest that disillusionment or lack of trust in organisations might discourage new members. Further, a few Spanish respondents spoke directly of the difficulties of political participation due to the historical context of their country. These findings provide some important indicators of difference in terms of participants' differing perceptions of advocacy and how it can impact policy change. They suggest that somewhat different strategies are required if new members are to be sought in either Australia or Spain. They suggest, for example, that Spanish organisations need to build and demonstrate opportunities for trust to counter disillusionment and apathy, and it may be that this needs to start with existing members, who, while clearly tenacious, need to feel that they can indeed make a difference. Australian organisations, on the contrary, need to promote their outcomes, and clearly demonstrate the importance of involvement and participation, showing how it is in the interests of all to participate. They also need to work to retain their current active members. Across both countries, perceptions of apathy are a concern and need to be countered.

Finally, perceptions of barriers to new members relating to negative beliefs and attitudes deserve special attention both by advocacy organisations and by governments in an ageing world. Policy is undoubtedly much improved if those impacted are allowed a voice and a role in governance and decision-making (Petriwskyj et al. 2012). As noted, there have been some good examples of where this has been attempted. Seniors' organisations such as the ones in this study are critical in promoting and advocating such involvement. In particular, active members in seniors' organisations play a key role as gatekeepers and facilitators for the inclusion of new members. Overcoming their negative perceptions towards those who are not involved may be a first step to help them to build a broader sense of personal agency and empowerment. Existing members have a clear role here if seniors' organisations are to appeal to a broader group of members, specifically by demonstrating the positive aspects of active involvement, as well as enacting positive social inclusionary processes.

To ensure that active political participation can redresses old age exclusion, it is critical that new, more active and positive strategies are adopted to counter feelings that most older people are apathetic and simply do not care or are lazy, as this can lead to gatekeepers who unintentionally devalue or stigmatise those who are unable or do not wish to

participate (Lui et al. 2011). The inclusion of more diverse groups of older people within organisations can help build organisational sustainability and ensure representativeness of the organisation. Furthermore, older people's activism and agency needs to be encouraged if suitable policy outcomes are to be developed that include older people's perspectives and meet their needs. There is potential for positive political participation through the growing Age-Friendly Movement, suggesting that some aspects of old age exclusion can be effectively reduced if more older people are encouraged and supported to participate politically.

Conclusions

This study has aimed to make a contribution to one particular domain of social exclusion (i.e. civic participation, and specifically, political participation). By exploring the perceptions of active members of seniors' organisations across two diverse contexts, it is possible to extend our understanding of this particular concept of old age exclusion. The study has produced interesting and nuanced findings relating to members' views of both retention of existing members as well as the recruitment of new members, highlighting the complexity associated with building diversity and representativeness in organisations that represent seniors' views in the policy process. Social exclusion here requires attention if such processes are to be truly democratic and effective in an ageing world.

This study has intended to address gaps in knowledge relating to a little researched but important area of old age exclusion. However, it must be acknowledged that this is just one small cross-sectional study comprising 26 participants from diverse seniors' organisations in both the countries. The data represent the perspectives of those who are already active members and their responses are somewhat hypothetical. There is a need now to understand what the actual reasons for these individuals to leave might be, just as it is important to know how those outside these organisations view their own participation. Many of course will be active participants as volunteers, community members or grandparents, and this form of civic participation is also important in an ageing society. Despite this, due to the open-ended methodology, these findings give us insight into important opinions from individuals active in their policy process.

There is a need for further research to build on this study, particularly as findings suggest differences between including new members and retaining existing ones, as well as differences that exist in contrasting socio-political contexts. Seniors' interest organisations are important in the contemporary ageing context across the world, both in ensuring an ageing voice on issues that impact older people as well as promoting healthy, active and productive ageing. Ensuring capacity to manage this process and being involved in policy directions is core to building sustainable and effective seniors' interest organisations.

Acknowledgments

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Negotiating informal elder care, migration and exclusion: the case of a Turkish immigrant community in Belgium

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Abstract

In this article, we analyse the role exclusion plays in three theories explaining the provision of informal care for the elderly: norms and roles (sociological institutionalism), the availability and accessibility of formal care (rational choice institutionalism) and concerns about balancing time and money (rational choice theory). Feeding into the discussion on agency in old-age exclusion literature, we argue that exclusion shapes informal care provision in all three theories: social exclusion enforces norms, civic exclusion hinders appropriate formal care provision and economic exclusion reduces the opportunity costs of informal care. Hence, exclusion structures positions and power relations in care negotiation processes. The study shows that exclusion should not only be analysed as an outcome but also as a force shaping the life conditions of older people. The argument is supported using data from qualitative interviews with stakeholders in informal elder care in a Turkish immigrant community in Belgium. Intersections of gender, generation and migration status are taken into account.

Keywords: elder care, migration, exclusion, gender, generations.

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In the current age of political austerity, there has been a trend towards the re-familialisation of elder care, meaning that the responsibility for care is increasingly being shifted back to the family (Bywaters et al. 2018; Leitner 2003; Tõnurist & De Tavernier 2017). In Flanders (Belgium) as elsewhere, the government has set out to encourage informal caregiving to older individuals. These policy decisions seem to negate the findings of many studies about the detrimental consequences for informal carers, known as informal caregiver burden (Chiao et al. 2015). Moreover, whereas informal care is often presented as a matter of social inclusion (e.g. Koops & Kwekkeboom 2005; see also the Active Ageing Index, in which care to older adults is considered "participation in society", UNECE 2017), we argue in this article that it is deeply rooted in inequality and systems of exclusion. Hence, through shifting care responsibilities to the family, policymakers in fact use and exacerbate existing inequalities and forms of exclusion.

Inequality and exclusion have been the topic of several studies in the field of elder care. Typically, they focus on inclusion and exclusion as *outcomes* of care, with good care having the potential to promote the inclusion of older individuals in society (Dahlberg & McKee 2016; Gregory et al. 2017; Poscia et al. 2018), yet at the same time informal care can create inequalities and lead to the exclusion of caregivers (Greenwood et al. 2018; Sutcliffe et al. 2017; Van Houtven et al. 2013). Rather than looking at how care affects exclusion, this article explores the reverse relationship: which role does exclusion, particularly of (potential) caregivers, play in the phase when decisions about elder care need to be negotiated? Accordingly, this article feeds into literature dealing with the structural aspects affecting the gendered division of labour, as well as the unequal gender norms they are rooted in. However, we aim to go beyond the general discussion on gender inequalities and care and argue that exclusion is a core mechanism through which informal care can be organised or even guaranteed. By combining three theories commonly used in social policy literature to explain informal care, with insights from literature on old-age exclusion, we show how the exclusion of older individuals and their caregivers, or the threat thereof, paradoxically seems to contribute to individuals taking up elder care responsibilities. We consider this paradoxical, because caregiving is typically considered a form of inclusion,

not exclusion (*supra*). However, as Walsh and colleagues (2017) point out, more than being about contact, exclusion is about being denied agency (Saunders 2008; Walsh et al. 2017; Warburton et al. 2013). Hence, this study shows how exclusion in some areas limits agency in caregiving.

The argument is illustrated using data from a qualitative study on elder care in a Turkish community in Belgium. Because social, civic and economic exclusion in old age are particularly pronounced in immigrant communities (e.g. Lee et al. 2014), these communities offer an ideal opportunity to examine the relationship between exclusion and informal care. Hence, the article also aims to contribute to literature concerning elder care in immigrant communities by linking the three theories discussed to characteristics prevalent in immigrant communities. In particular, we investigate how social and economic positions, cultural dispositions and civic participation of the members of the community affect the organisation of elder care within the community.

The three theories are linked though the perspective of *negotiating care*. Rather than affecting elder care outcomes directly, as the theories would assume, we maintain that each of them affects individuals' positions and power within negotiations. Given this focus on positions and power, an intersectional approach (Crenshaw 1989; de Vries 2015) is essential in this study. Different categories are paid attention to in the analysis, notably the intersections of gender, generations, migration status and economic position.

Case Study

This article is based on a qualitative case study of the Turkish community in the town of Genk, Belgium (Flanders). Genk offers an interesting case for a number of reasons. As a former mining town, 55% of the population in the town is of foreign origin; 18% of inhabitants are of Turkish descent (Stad Genk 2018). Because "guest workers" were assumed to eventually return to their home countries, little or no effort was made to integrate first-generation immigrants, for instance through language courses. Moreover, given the large local Turkish community in Genk and the fact that Turkey has one common national language, learning the local language was not essential in daily life,

particularly for women, who rarely worked outside the household. Mining as an activity also shaped the community: many men of the first generation passed away relatively early from mining-related illnesses, resulting in an older generation with a disproportionate share of widowed women (Stad Genk 2018). After the closure of the mines in 1987, the town suffered another economic blow when a large car manufacturing plant employing around 6000 individuals was closed in 2014, a year before the interviews for this study were carried out, causing a spike in local unemployment. The town of Genk is also known for its elder care policies. Being awarded the title of "care-friendly municipality" (Middelbos 2010), the local government promotes elder care, in particular informal care, with supportive services for caregivers and supplementary care benefits.

Between April and December 2015, we interviewed 22 individuals involved in the organisation of informal elder care in Genk, and two external key individuals, using semi-structured interviews guided by a topic list. After transcription of all the interviews, we systematically brought together quotes dealing with the same themes in a coding scheme. Coding was further refined through supplementary labelling. Initially we searched for stakeholders involved in the organisation of informal care in the Turkish community through purposive sampling, after which we looked for further potential interviewees through snowball sampling. In Genk, we interviewed 18 women and four men. Ten of them, all of Turkish descent (nine women and one man), were informal carers for parents. They combined a professional occupation with informal caregiving activities, except for one woman who was unemployed. Interviewees were engaged in a wide range of professions, such as medical doctors (4), nurses (5), policymakers (2) and civil servants or social welfare workers (7). The interviews with policymakers, civil servants or social welfare workers, all professionally active in Genk, were necessary to obtain information about the specific local social policies that could be relevant in the organisation of elder care. We did not interview older individuals of the first generation. Even though it was initially part of the research design, it quickly became clear that it was an unreasonable expectation. Given their limited knowledge of the Dutch language, an interpreter would have been

necessary during these interviews. Several interviewees told us that the first generation would either refuse to talk to us or would paint an idealised picture of elder care in the Turkish community out of distrust and a feeling of being controlled, exacerbated by the presence of an interpreter. We therefore decided to focus only on the perspective of caregivers and of stakeholders who could contribute to or facilitate informal care negotiations.

Informal Elder Care, Migration and Exclusion: Constructing a Theory

In social policy literature, informal elder care outcomes have been explained from three different perspectives. In one theoretical framework, generally described as *sociological institutionalism*, informal elder care is seen as the result of cultural factors, especially norms and roles about the gendered division of labour (Pfau-Effinger 2005; Pfau-Effinger & Rostgaard 2011). A second strand of research, *rational choice institutionalism*, understands informal elder care as the outcome of policies, in particular related to the availability and accessibility of formal care. As rational actors, individuals set policies that are of benefit to them and make use of these policies in a rational way (Peters 2012). Whereas both institutionalisms try to bridge the macro and micro level, the third theory, *rational choice theory*, remains at the micro level. Here, individuals are utility maximisers, basing their decisions on balancing time and money. Informal elder care, then, is the result of considerations of costs and the opportunity costs of formal and informal care (Blau et al. 2010: 89; Hakim 2000). However, in many concrete instances, we could expect different outcomes based on these three theories. Moreover, tensions may emerge within theories, because norms are not uniformly shared in society (Pfau-Effinger & Rostgaard 2011). An additional perspective is therefore required that can mediate the effects of these three theories on informal care delivery. The *negotiating care* perspective (Conlon et al. 2014; McGraw & Walker 2004; Zechner & Valokivi 2012) offers this possibility. We accordingly argue that rational choice theory and the two institutionalisms do not impact informal care directly but that they instead affect the positions and power relations in the negotiations about care.

Our goal is threefold. Firstly, we aim to present an integrated account of all three theories stemming from social policy literature, by bringing in the negotiating care perspective. Secondly, we argue that exclusion is at the very core of all three theories, although in different domains (Walsh et al. 2017), and thus it is a central concept in the analysis of informal care. Thirdly, we set out to theorise elder care in immigrant communities by linking specific characteristics of these communities to the theories presented, accordingly illustrating the role exclusion plays in informal care decisions. A schematic overview of how immigrant communities are linked to care theories is presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Schematic overview of the proposed theoretical framework.
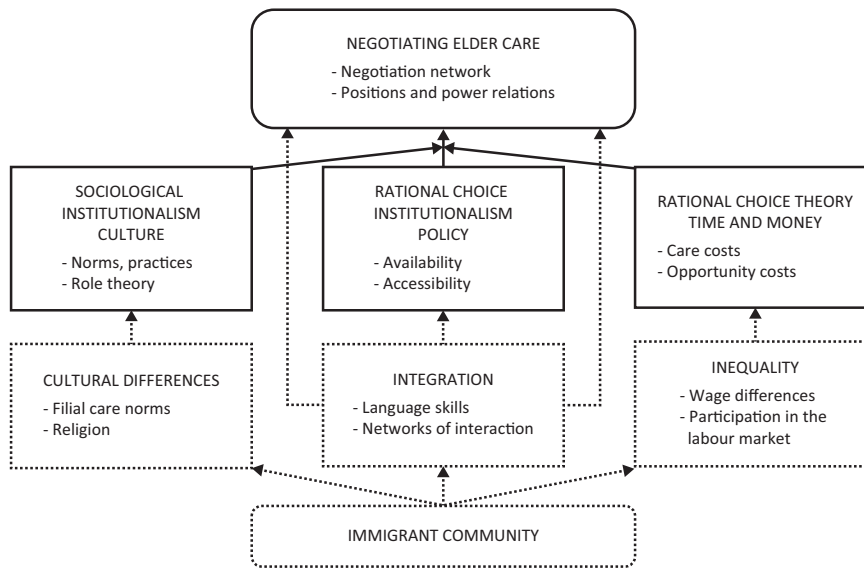
Note: the solid lines refer to the integration of existing elder care theories; the dotted lines indicate how they are related to realities in immigrant communities.

Sociological Institutionalist Perspective and Exclusion

From a *sociological institutionalist* perspective (Hall & Taylor 1996, 2007), individuals are rule-followers in that their actions are determined by shared ideas in the community. Here, the term *institutions* refers to informal institutions, such as norms, values and shared beliefs and practices that shape individuals' actions. Sociological institutionalism revolves around the concept of *appropriateness*: individuals decide how to act based on ideas about which behaviours are considered appropriate or "the normal thing to do" for a specific person in a specific situation (March & Olsen 1989, 2006). Norms entail these informal rules about which behaviour is considered appropriate. Rule-following can result from internalisation of these norms through socialisation processes, in which case the individual will voluntarily follow the norm because he or she considers this the appropriate thing to do.

Ideas about the motivation for informal elder care in the Turkish immigrant community were discussed during each interview, depending on the specific position of the interviewee. We find numerous examples of this perspective, stating that individuals are rule-followers in that their actions are determined by shared ideas in the community. Quite a few interviewees considered taking responsibility for informal elder care to be a moral obligation, but several cited different arguments to explain why this was the case:[1]

> Something that plays an important role is the moral obligation to look after your parents. Whereas it would be wrong to say that this obligation doesn't exist in Flanders, it has been more loosely interpreted over the last 20 to 30 years. (I11)

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[1] Interviewees were assigned a number so that it is clear whether or not quotes come from the same or different individuals. To ensure anonymity, we limit the information about interviewees cited to the following: (I1) medical doctor, man, Belgian origin; (I2) medical doctor and informal carer, woman, Turkish origin; (I3) external key interviewee regarding Turkish elder care, woman, Turkish origin; (I4) social welfare worker and informal carer, woman, Turkish origin; (I5) nurse, woman, Turkish origin; (I6) nurse and informal carer, woman, Turkish origin; (I7) social welfare worker and informal carer, woman, Turkish origin; (I8) nurse, woman, Belgian origin; (I9) informal carer, woman, Turkish origin; (I10) woman, non-Belgian and non-Turkish origin; (I11) social welfare worker, woman, Belgian origin; (I12) social welfare worker and informal carer, woman, Turkish origin.

Sometimes that responsibility was inspired by the idea of reciprocity:

> Well, our parents looked after us for so long; now it is our turn to do the same for them. That is the feeling experienced very strongly by the children, actually: "It is our duty, we need to look after our parents as well as we can, we need to do more than our very best." […] Yes, your parents look after you the whole of their lives, and after a while the roles are reversed, aren't they? (I2)

On other occasions, interviewees argued that the obligation was rooted in religion or culture:

> It is partly inspired by culture, partly by religion, and our faith dictates that we must continue to look after our parents until the end. (I3)

> For example, when a parent – how can I put it – is unhappy, not satisfied with the care and the love you give, then God can punish you for it. So that is something we need to take into account. It is also a matter of respect in our culture. After all, your father has worked hard for you, fed you, given you a roof over your head and protected you. Your mother carried you for nine months and raised you, so it is only normal that we show them respect. That is what they learned from their parents and we have learned it from them. (I4)

These quotes illustrate strong care norms of children towards their parents: children have a responsibility to care for their dependent parents, whether this responsibility stems from religion, culture or reciprocity. These norms are strongly gendered, confirming that informal elder care is rooted in "filial care norms": the expectation that daughters deliver care to their parents (Lowenstein et al. 2004; Pfau-Effinger 2005). Studies find some notable differences in these filial care norms between natives and non-Western immigrants in Western Europe, the latter having more pronounced expectations towards their daughters to take up care responsibilities when they become dependent (de Graaf & Francke 2003; de Graaf et al. 2012). The strongly gendered nature of care expectations also came to the fore during the interviews:

> Where are the sons then, in this story? Well, they are only there for the financial side of things. Sons will also come and help when there is administrative work, or something that needs to be arranged. (I5)

Yes, having a cleaner was a luxury, because after all, I was always expected to clean my parents' home, from top to bottom, including all the windows. Every week, every month, with an in-depth clean every three months. All of it used to be my job. They never asked a cleaner to do it, they did not want a cleaner to do it because they used to say: "I have a daughter. Why should I ask someone else to do it when I have children?" (I4)

But I think that my brothers would have struggled with looking after my mum, that is true. My mother never used to like it either, to have a male carer. "It is a man, I don't want that man. Get a woman instead for me." (I4)

However, when the norms and values of an individual do not correspond to those of others in the community, individuals can be forced to follow the rule anyway through sanctioning. Typically, *social exclusion* (Walsh et al. 2017) is the sanctioning mechanism though which norm-following is enforced: individuals breaking the rules are stigmatised and pushed into marginalised social positions by the others in the community, inflicting feelings of shame (Durkheim 1964). Accordingly, the community not only penalises the individual, but also sets an example to others that such rule breaking will not be tolerated (Berger & Luckmann 1966: 80). In conclusion, social norms are, to the extent that they have not been internalised, upheld through social exclusion or the fear thereof, which generates social pressure to follow the rules.

The social pressure to meet care norms appears to be very strong. Sometimes explicitly, sometimes implied, it was mentioned that people are very conscious of the Turkish community "looking over their shoulder". The internal social control appears to be significant, and there is little scope for deviation from the expectations, even if informal care is no longer a tenable option, for example, if parents suffer from dementia.

Regarding how children feel when they cannot fulfil the care expectations:

Embarrassed about it, because the neighbourhood can see it as well, of course. And very sad because of this. (I8)

The feeling of guilt goes much deeper than one would think at first. Often the children leave here crying […] because they are being confronted. And the confrontation often is not that unconscious, because the parents often want to rub in how well he or she

> cared for their children and that they had expected the children would care for them as well. (I3)

> Yes, because everyone came round to offer their condolences. "How did she die? Did she die at home?" Then one woman said: "No, no, they simply put her somewhere; they abandoned her in a care home, where she died all alone". That "alone", the word "alone" really upset me and it will always stay with me. It was not "alone", I mean, I was there every day for her; I also used to do her laundry in the beginning, and afterwards, it became very difficult, when her dementia became worse, there was no longer any conversation. […] Yes, when you have a parent in a home, the community treats you like an outcast. We also have a female friend who put her father in a home, and she was given a very rough time. […] So it is still somewhat of a taboo to place your parents in an old people's home. (I4)

The social pressure experienced, and the feelings of shame and guilt when not being able to fulfil the expectations, can be so immense that they cause health problems:

> I had a lot of stress back then. I even took antidepressants for a period of six months. I went to the GP and told him that I could no longer handle it. He asked me if he needed to give me a prescription and I broke down and cried. (I6)

Even health professionals are exposed to the social pressure. Nurses told us certain patients would ask them not to tell anyone that the nurses wash them, out of shame for the children not doing so themselves. One nurse even said she had been put under pressure to not even declare her services on the health insurance for this reason. General practitioners told us that some of their patients of Turkish origin would not even dare to tell them during a visit that they worry about not being able to cope with the care tasks for fear of the community finding out.

Interestingly, these care norms do not stem from socialisation through exposure of the second-generation Turkish migrants to elder care at a young age. As pointed out by several interviewees, the second generation, born in Belgium, grew up in a community without older individuals. That means that there were no examples of elder care around them in their youth. As a result, the first generation's image of "Turkish" elder care is based on the experience they had with elder care in Turkey before they migrated to Belgium in the 1960s and 1970s; and the second generation only learned about what this "Turkish" elder care is like through the

stories of their parents. In other words, the first generation got to define the norms, despite these norms being out of date in Turkey today, according to some of our interviewees.

> It forms part of the culture, the age-old tradition, that children look after their parents. It has changed by now in Turkey, but we continue to hold on to that culture. (I7)

Rather than affecting informal care directly, we argue in the following that norms shape power positions in elder care negotiations. These care norms give power particularly to the first-generation Turkish immigrants in need of care, mainly at the expense of second-generation women, through social pressure and the risk of being shamed or isolated within the community when not following these rules – that is, through social exclusion based on gender norms.

Rational Choice Institutionalism and Exclusion

In *rational choice institutionalism* (Hall & Taylor 1996, 2007; March & Olsen 1989, 2006), rational, calculating and utility-maximising individuals collectively decide on the introduction of laws and policies in instances where collective action allows individuals to achieve something they cannot do on their own. Here, the concept of institutions is usually employed with regard to formal institutions, particularly laws and policies. If we combine this perspective with sociological institutionalism, it could be argued that norms in the community shape individuals' preferences, which they would then try to pursue through policymaking (De Tavernier 2016). This process of collective action influencing policies and law, however, requires political participation, as non-participating individuals will not have their concerns taken into account. This means that a social group with diverging preferences resulting from different normative frameworks will not see its concerns reflected in policies if it does not actively participate in the political process. Furthermore, the calculating individuals in rational choice institutionalism – such as the ones in rational choice theory – also use these policies in a rational way in order to fulfil their preferences.

Two aspects of policies are important in this regard: are policies available that allow individuals to pursue their preferences, and are they accessible? A key assumption in relation to availability is full information

(Pfau-Effinger 2005): a person cannot make use of a policy they do not know about. For an individual to also make use of the policy, moreover, it should be accessible to that individual. Exclusion is present in both the policymaking and the policy-using phase of rational choice institutionalism, which has repercussions for the supply of informal care.

Civic exclusion (Walsh et al. 2017) entails the under-representation of certain social groups in political processes. Despite the municipality making an effort to boost citizen participation and the co-creation of services, individuals from the Turkish community – in particular those of the first generation – tend to be absent from these initiatives. A civic platform debating local challenges, for instance, was joined by 450 citizens of the municipality, yet according to one civil servant we interviewed, none of the participants was a first-generation immigrant.

Especially when social groups have diverging preferences, policies will not or insufficiently take their concerns into account. Therefore, the policies agreed on will be of less use to them. The lack of involvement in political processes can also result in having less information about the policies, harming the assumption of full information on which the availability aspect of policies is based. Hence, *civic exclusion* results in *exclusion from services* (Walsh et al. 2017).

What this means for elder care becomes very clear when including data about immigrants. Because of lower political participation of these groups (Aleksynska 2011; Just et al. 2014), little attention is paid to their concerns in relation to elder care. Accordingly, the regulations in place and the professional elder care on offer do not cater to the specific needs of this group of elderly and do not properly match what they consider to be appropriate care. For example, alterations to homes so as to accommodate three-generation households, common in the Turkish community once older individuals are in need of care (Luyten et al. 2016), often conflict with regulations concerning spatial planning. Several interviewees indicated that they had asked for permission to adapt their homes to that end but were not granted permission to do so.

> Then we proposed to build a bedroom, shower and toilet in our home, but we did not get permission from the municipality. The bathroom was particularly a problem. […] There are people who do want to care for their parents, but they inhibit this. (I6)

Indeed, several studies indicate that policies often ignore the religious demands or cultural norms of minority groups (Ahmad & Atkin 1996; de Graaf & Francke 2003; Hootsen et al. 2013; Lindblad & Mølgaard 1995: 73). The consequences of migration itself might also contribute to immigrants making less use of their social rights, such as professional care services. Many immigrants have difficulties speaking the host society's language (Burger 2008; de Graaf & Francke 2003; de Graaf et al. 2012; Yerden 2013: 54) and have social networks that are largely confined to other immigrants (Heath & Demireva 2015; Ministeriet for Flygtninge, Indvandrere og Integration 2007; Muttarak 2015), resulting in them lacking the social resources to exercise their rights (Torres 2012). Limited language skills and networks contribute to immigrants on average being less aware of elder care benefits and services and their entitlement to them (de Graaf et al. 2012). The lack of knowledge about policies and limited language skills hamper both the availability and accessibility of elder care services. Insufficient access to adequate professional care is likely to result in a stronger reliance on informal care.

The interviews contain numerous examples to illustrate this account of rational choice institutionalism and the exclusion of older people with migrant backgrounds. Reference was made in particular to ignorance about the available range of support services or options for professional care at home, including problems arising from the language barrier: for example, not being able to read leaflets or newsletters, an inability to take part in Dutch questionnaires over the Internet, barely attending any activities at service centres and so on. While policymakers lamented "we have really tried everything we could to reach them, but with little success", interviewees from the immigrant community pointed out that one cannot expect older immigrants to complete an online questionnaire in Dutch. Both assuming that they can speak Dutch and that they are able to use the Internet is wrong, in their opinion. Further, they also indicated that the Flemish legislation obliging local authorities to communicate in Dutch does not make things easier for municipalities with large immigrant communities.

At the same time, several interviewees referred to the combination of language, linguistic subtleties, complex eligibility conditions for carer's allowances and occasionally complicated forms as the reason why the

help on offer is underused. People are far too keen to consider all the obstacles to be language related.

> Don't get me wrong, a large proportion of the immigrant population understand the language, but sometimes not in sufficient detail to pick up the finer details and to make a difference. It is all very fragmented and so different, and dependent on the carer's income and on the older person's degree of dependency. (I8)

It is clear in any case that available financial allowances or support services are not always taken up. A striking example, an interviewee told us, is that in 2015, less than 20 people of Turkish origin submitted an application for the €50 monthly informal carer's allowance available from the city of Genk, out of a total of approximately 570 case files, whereas the proportion of informal carers of Turkish origin is far greater (Luyten et al. 2016). Local initiatives to fight loneliness and inform senior citizens often remain inaccessible because of the language barrier. Furthermore, citizens of Turkish origin also remain absent from the meetings for informal carers organised by the city. Several years ago, the city organised these meetings specifically for people of foreign origin, but the initiative was discontinued because of the very limited interest shown.

In sum, much like norms, policies set the boundaries within which care negotiations take place. Because of a lack of representation, the voices of immigrant communities are often not heard when developing care policies. As the resulting policies might be culturally inappropriate, immigrant communities are left to their own devices to deliver care. Furthermore, knowledge and language barriers hamper access to existing services: because people are not aware of the services or are not aware that they are entitled to them, or because they have difficulties communicating their needs to the service providers. Hence, civic exclusion and exclusion from services in immigrant communities in general, and in particular among first generation immigrants, generate a stronger dependence on informal care.

Rational Choice Theory and Exclusion

The third theory, *rational choice theory*, takes the same rational and calculating individual as its starting point as rational choice institutionalism.

Whereas the latter concerns the relationship between individual decisions and external regulations, rational choice theory concerns the individual, and how considerations of income and time use play a role in decisions about elder care. Within this framework, we can expect that people in economically precarious circumstances, such as the unemployed or those on a very low wage, will be more inclined to take up care duties, particularly if professional care is expensive. After all, the opportunity cost of providing care (lost wages) is low for them. Exclusion from the economy can therefore lead to a greater provision of informal care.

The theory states that calculating individuals maximise their utility by balancing considerations of time outside (paid) work and income (Hakim 2000). From this perspective, individuals outside the labour market or low-income earners can decide to give informal care, as the "opportunity cost" for doing so is low; that is, if the difference between abandoned labour income and saved professional care expenses is small (Blau et al. 2010: 89). Hence, to a large extent the accessibility of policies is determined by their affordability: the lower the cost of professional care, the less likely that it will make sense economically to leave paid work in order to take up informal care. Here, *economic exclusion* (Walsh et al. 2017) would lead to increased engagement in informal elder care: the opportunity cost of giving informal care is lower for those who are not in employment or are in low-paid jobs. Indeed, several studies find that women with higher earnings potential are more likely to choose to be in paid work rather than taking up a primary role as an unpaid carer (Attanasio, Low & Sánchez-Marcos 2008; Blau & Kahn 2007; Cloïn et al. 2011; James 1992). Given the lower employment rates and wages among immigrants in general and immigrant women in particular – for a number of cultural, practical and discriminatory reasons (Cheung 2015) – it might seem rational for immigrant women to choose to become an informal carer as a result of economic exclusion.

In comparison with the other two theories, the interviews provided fewer explicit examples in line with rational choice theory. There is also a risk of social desirability bias: some probably do not consider it appropriate to mention time and money when discussing care for their parents. However, a few of the statements indicated that the cost of professional care is weighed off against the opportunity cost for the informal carer:

> We would also like the help of a cleaner. […] Life has become far more expensive. Everything costs a lot of money; I also need help for myself. Service vouchers have become more expensive: 10 euro. Work it out: three hours of cleaning already adds up to 30 euro. Granted, you get a small tax refund, but it isn't much, is it? (I9)

> Who takes up care for the parents? Yes, it is the daughters who are housewives. And who then actually also have most time for this. […] The one who is free throughout the day does the daily tasks, the ones who work throughout the day still go to the parents in the evenings. (I10)

> That happens everywhere, also with the Belgians: if either of the two is temporarily unemployed, that person is expected to do the housework, so it also applies to them. If they're at home, they are also expected to help out more. (I11)

What makes the situation even harder is that the first generation needs help at a relatively early stage: the men because of the work they did in the mines, whereas obesity and diabetes are rife among older women in the Turkish community according to the health professionals interviewed. This means that informal elder care coincides with childcare. One interviewee indicated she felt stuck between her financial obligations for her children's studies and having to take a career break (a system of care leave on a relatively low replacement income) to look after her parents:

> But I also have two children in the education system, so you cannot keep it [the career break] up forever. […] Then my oldest sister came over from Turkey to look after my parents for three months. […] But when her visa expired, she was forced to go home. (I6)

The assumption that individual action is fundamentally rooted in rationality, the basis of rational choice theory, does not always match reality. Rather than unemployment increasing the likelihood of becoming an informal caregiver, one interviewee talked about how stress related to losing a job actually had the opposite effect: after the closure of a car production plant, some people could no longer cope with the same care demands as they did before, because of the stress resulting from increased insecurity.

> People bought their home, carried out alterations to it. The mortgage is still running, the loans carry on. Well, then – all of a sudden – the factory shuts down. […] people no longer knew how they were supposed to get by. They were panicking: "How on earth are we supposed to manage?" […] in addition, they have parents who need looking

after. What choices do they have? It comes as a shock for them. For years, they managed on their own and adjusted their lives around it. (I7)

Conflicting Expectations and Negotiating Care

As stated before, these three theories can lead to conflicting expectations about informal elder care. For instance, individuals might forego a particular social right if they perceive it as being in conflict with their normative framework. Moreover, the normative frameworks of individuals can also conflict, for instance if the care receiver and (potential) caregiver have incongruent expectations of how the care should be given. Hence, rather than using these theories to explain concrete care outcomes, it would make more sense to conceive of these theories as factors determining the positions and power relations in the processes of *negotiating care*.

Because care by definition involves at the very least two people, a caregiver and a care receiver, care decisions are made together, requiring negotiation (Zechner & Valokivi 2012). In these negotiations, the considerations following from the three other theoretical approaches come together. Earlier studies have already used the "negotiating care" framework to explain outcomes from the three different strands of research separately: McGraw and Walker (2004) discuss it from a cultural perspective, in which negotiation is based on the norms and values of mothers and daughters; Zechner and Valokivi (2012) take the policy perspective, in which eligibility to services is the topic of negotiation; and Conlon and colleagues (2014) go deeper into how socio-economic differences affect elder care negotiations, showing how Irish middle- and upper-class women have more "wiggle room" in negotiating elder care, whereas working-class women do not have this opportunity. However, we contend that the negotiation framework is particularly useful to tie together the three theoretical traditions in policy studies on elder care.

Cultural norms influence who is involved in elder care negotiations, which positions they take in these negotiations and the power relations between the negotiating partners, ultimately affecting elder care decisions. Culture itself becomes a topic of negotiation (Ahmad 1996; Mørck 1998). Because the norms of second-generation immigrants are closer to those of the host society they grew up in (de Valk & Schans 2008; Kucukcan 1998; Mørck 1998), a daughter's self-perceived role of income

earner may conflict with her role of caregiver as perceived by her parents (de Graaf & Francke 2003; de Graaf et al. 2012; Heath & Demireva 2015; Yerden 2013: 32).

Norms set the playing field and contribute to the allocation of power positions in these negotiations: norms reduce options and shape power relations in the negotiations on how care should be organised. An important factor here is the extent to which specific norms are spread in the community, and the willingness of the latter to sanction those not complying with them. In the Turkish community studied, norms give parents in need of care a strong negotiating position. Lacking a generation of older people in the immigrant community before them, the first generation set the norm of family care as "good" care, and their children – and in particular daughters – may feel social pressure to conform to this norm. Hence, social exclusion or the fear thereof weakens the bargaining position of second-generation women.

As knowledge about and access to professional care services is more limited in the community, families with immigrant backgrounds are in a weaker position to negotiate with professional care providers. Limited language skills among first-generation immigrants and their reliance on their children as intermediaries between them and the state or professional care providers (Ahmad 1996; Burger 2008; de Graaf & Francke 2003; de Graaf et al. 2012; Lindblad & Mølgaard 1995: 72; Yerden 2013: 54), exacerbated by language laws prohibiting civil servants to communicate in any language other than Dutch, give more negotiating power to the children taking up this role.

Lastly, employment and income can also be a source of power: in situations with multiple possible caregivers, the relative size of the opportunity costs of giving care for each of them is likely to be taken into account. Hence, wealthier siblings or those with a higher income will have more power to avoid assuming the responsibility for care. It is clear from the interviews with various interviewees that each one of the three aforementioned theoretical perspectives is insufficient to describe the reality of "negotiated care" on its own but that aspects of the three form part of the negotiated care in a complex manner. These negotiations are therefore not solely about care but also about issues of employment and income.

> All of us are working full-time. So my parents have 10 people, which is 5 children plus our 5 partners, which is 10 people, in fact, who can look after them when they need care. However, none of those 10 people is free; we are all working full-time. [...] So one of us would need to take a career break, in that case. Well, I cannot really see it happening. (I12)

> Everyone has their own financial problems. I also have a family. Sometimes it is really difficult. My mum also has financial problems. And I am also not always able to arrange these things. That is sometimes somewhat difficult. (I9)

> There were five children and that woman was thinking: "Why should we do that?" So the daughter-in-law didn't want to, but then he [her husband] really banged on the table with his fist and told her that he would not abandon his mother. So in the end it happened anyway. (I6)

The interviewee who gave the former example also indicated that she ended up taking the main responsibility for the elder care through a process of elimination, despite the fact that she was in paid employment. On the one hand, there is a cultural expectation that daughters – not sons – will provide elder care, and on the other hand the interviewee says that she cannot put pressure on her sister, who is struggling with mental health issues.

> I cannot expect that my brothers will do it [take a career break] because both of them have their own family, so they need to work; well, that is our culture, after all. My youngest sister had depression years ago, so I cannot put her under pressure, either. [...] It means that I am the only one left. (I6)

Accordingly, difficult considerations have to be made, balancing cultural and economic concerns and therefore also different risks of exclusion: social and economic. In a community with strong familial care norms, children – and in particular daughters – could be faced with the choice between securing their income and possibly facing rejection by the community on the one hand, and supplying informal care at the cost of economic marginalisation on the other.

We did not interview any first-generation immigrants, which means that an important voice is missing in this story of "negotiated care". However, negotiations not only take place between parent and child but also

between the different children and their partners about the care to be provided.

> And Daddy wanted to arrange things so that we could go live there, but my husband didn't really want that, because we also have our own life. (I6)

> And then a very big fight emerged. My sister has a husband; she does not have two children. I have no husband, but I do have two children I have to care for. So she is able to take care of mom. Hello, I work full-time. "But you don't have a husband", she said. (I4)

> Often there is always one person who does less, one person who does more, yes, and after a while that leads to clashes: "Look, they are parents of the both of us; I am responsible for so much, why don't you do it?" Or someone who doesn't do anything, who stays aloof, that causes a lot of stress between the children. (I2)

Once again, this case demonstrates that the decision on whether to provide informal care can be a choice between social and economic exclusion: are you prepared to lose a major part of your income in order to comply with the social norms?

Another example concerns the seemingly contradictory messages from the government. The government's plea – phrased in gender-neutral terms – to allow parents to live at home for as long as possible with the support of informal carers may impact the labour market position of women. The government conducts a policy of labour market activation and it strongly believes in emancipation and integration by means of labour market participation. At the same time, the government's appeal to take up informal care duties can take a foothold in the conviction, present in the immigrant community, that wives and daughters have a particular duty to take on informal care. Because labour market participation in the public realm generates a better social status than informal care in the private realm, the decision to provide informal care not only weakens the financial and economic position of women but also their social position.

Discussion and Conclusion

In this article, we have explored the role exclusion plays in the emergence of informal caregiving. In all three theories commonly used in social policy literature to explain informal care outcomes, exclusion turns out to be

an important cause of informal care taking place. In particular, exclusion or the risk thereof shapes power relations, revealing a complex picture of intersectionality between migration background, gender, generations and economic status. Social exclusion is the social sanctioning mechanism applied if individuals do not live up to the shared norms within the community. Hence, it serves as an instrument to guarantee that children, particularly daughters, take up informal care responsibilities in a community with strong filial care norms. These norms strengthen the bargaining power of first-generation immigrants in need of care, often at the expense of second-generation women: the risk of social exclusion may be a motivation to take responsibility for one's parents' care needs.

Immigrants' civic exclusion, particularly for the first generation, leads to a lack of available professional care services they consider appropriate. Moreover, a lack of knowledge about and inability to communicate with professional care providers contribute to the exclusion of the first generation from service use. Both knowledge and political participation is concentrated at the core of the community studied here, a core consisting mainly of men. Information might not reach those more in the periphery of the community, disproportionately women, and their voices might not reach policymakers. Hence, within the rational choice institutionalist framework, the exclusion of individuals with a migration background, and in particular women and first-generation immigrants, makes them more reliant on family care.

Lastly, economic exclusion, particularly exclusion from the labour market or by working in low income jobs, affects informal care from a rational choice perspective, because economic exclusion lowers the opportunity cost of engaging in caregiving. From our interviews, this mechanism particularly seems to shape power relations between siblings. Indeed, it is easier for higher-income individuals to escape responsibility. Bringing all three mechanisms together, in the immigrant community studied, family care strongly relies on daughters or daughters-in-law. Daughters who are not employed or in precarious employment in particular feel pressured by their environment to take up the lion's share of care responsibilities towards their parents. Hence, informal care takes place within relations of exclusion, and women are most likely to take up informal care, because they are most at risk of different types of exclusion, whether this is social exclusion when not living up to norms or economic exclusion through

precarious positions in the labour market. Both of these risks of exclusion are more pronounced within immigrant communities.

Even though we find some support for the rational choice theory, the study points to two important problems with its basic assumptions when applying it to informal care supply. Firstly, not all individuals might respond to unemployment by taking up informal care tasks as the theory prescribes: financial insecurity linked to unemployment can cause problems in coping with informal care. Moreover, the interviews contain many references to emotion: fear, warmth, uncertainty, gratefulness, guilt, dignity, shame, love, a desire for recognition, being misunderstood, being put under pressure, indignation and so on. People were also talking in an emotional way, sometimes fiercely, sometimes with ambiguity, in relation to their own parents, siblings, the migrant community and the "host community". It became abundantly clear from our research that negotiations about how to organise the care for older relatives occur in a less rational way than the theories make it out to be.

Secondly, the relational nature of care does not match well with the atomic social view of rational choice theory, and by presenting caregiving as a "choice" or a "decision", the negotiating aspect of care is negated. Even when care is given by those with the lowest "opportunity costs" for doing so – those with little or no income from employment, as rational choice theory would suggest – these individuals may have been pressured into caregiving by their environment. Hence, words such as "choice" and "decision" hide the underlying power relations and pressure that may have contributed to the outcome. Accordingly, the study is a clear illustration that informal care cannot be examined without an intersectional approach analysing the complex network of power relationships at play.

This does not mean that there is little agency involved in informal elder care supply. Quite the opposite. We interviewed engaged individuals actively looking for solutions to meet the care needs of their parents and trying to find out how they would contribute to caring, as well as professionals trying to circumvent restrictive language laws and searching for ways to organise care, acceptable to all parties involved. Indeed, agency is at the core of any negotiation process in which different concerns are

balanced. However, it is clear how social positions and the power relations between them shape the framework within which negotiations take place. Because the regulatory framework is far from the only concern taken into account in these negotiations, it might prove difficult for governments to shape informal elder care outcomes. Instead, governments can play an important role as a facilitator, offering options and mitigating the negative effects of informal care provision by supplying economic and social support for informal caregivers, so as to avoid caregiving further exacerbating inequalities.

In this article, we argue that exclusion plays an important role in informal caregiving. However, we could go one step further and argue that exclusion, or at least inequality, is a *necessity* for care, at least if the state provides little support. Providing care is a very time-consuming activity, and it is therefore expensive: either in direct costs or in opportunity costs. Hence, unless the state funds care, its provision requires either strong economic inequalities, so that rich people can bring in low-wage care workers, or strong social inequalities. Gender norms play a crucial role in the latter case. By making it a moral obligation for women to take up informal care, with non-compliance possibly sanctioned by social exclusion, the community guarantees care provision by circumventing the problem of the high cost of care. Accordingly, inequality effectively becomes a *resource* for care. Even though this logic would in principle apply to all settings within which informal care takes place, this would be particularly the case in immigrant communities, where the processes of exclusion are much more pronounced.

Whether exclusion is a necessity for (informal) care, or "merely" a mechanism triggering informal care supply, this article is a warning for policymakers seeking to push elder care responsibilities back to the family. For this strategy to be successful, inequalities will have to be exacerbated, be they social, civic or economic inequalities. Only if policymakers take up their responsibility by offering full and particularly fair maintenance of care provision can elder care be supplied in a less excluding way. However, we are aware that community-embedded norms and values may remain a troublesome hurdle. It is up to future research to explore the relationship between exclusion and care further, and in particular the thesis regarding "inequality as resource for care".

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The welsh Welsh – Y Cymry cymreig: A study of cultural exclusion among rural-dwelling older people using a critical human ecological framework

By Bethan Winter & Vanessa Burholt

Abstract

Research on cultural exclusion has not kept apace with transformations to rural populations, economy, family structures and community relationships. Cultural exclusion refers to the extent to which people are able or willing to conform to cultural norms and values. We theorise cultural exclusion using the critical human ecological framework and social comparison theory, taking into account period effects, area effects and cohort and/or lifecourse effects. Qualitative case studies in three rural areas of South Wales (United Kingdom) synthesise data from life-history interviews, life-history calendars, documentary sources and focus groups (n = 56). Our findings suggest that cultural exclusion is an issue for rural-dwelling older people, which they describe by temporal self-comparison and group comparisons. The critical human ecological framework provides new insight into the drivers (industrial decline, policy and population change, a shift from collectivism to individualism), and outcomes (sense of belonging, community cohesion) of cultural exclusion experienced by rural-dwelling older people.

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Keywords: rurality, cultural exclusion, social comparison, critical human ecology, collectivism, individualism.

Introduction

This article focusses on the experience of cultural exclusion of older people living in rural areas of South Wales. Social exclusion is a complex concept that has four common features: it is multidimensional, relational, dynamic and influenced by human agency (Walsh et al. 2017). Walsh et al. (2017) note that:

> varying in form and degree across the older adult life course, its complexity, impact and prevalence is amplified by old-age vulnerabilities, accumulated disadvantage for some groups, and constrained opportunities to ameliorate exclusion. (p. 93)

Social exclusion is a significant issue for rural-dwelling older people (Scharf & Bartlam 2006; Walsh et al. 2012a). Research has indicated that older people in rural areas experience exclusion across a number of life domains, including social resources (Gray 2009), neighbourhood amenities and services (Dwyer & Hardill 2011), material resources (Doheny & Milbourne 2014), civic participation (Curry et al. 2014) and culture. Cultural exclusion is arguably the most under-explored domain of social exclusion (Lysgard 2006). In order to address this gap in knowledge, this article focusses on the following questions:

- How does cultural exclusion manifest itself among older people originating from, and currently living in rural areas of South Wales?
- What are the drivers that contribute to cultural exclusion for this group of older people?
- What are the outcomes of cultural exclusion?
- What theoretical and practical contributions to knowledge can be made by using a critical human ecological approach to understanding cultural exclusion?

The remainder of this introductory section will provide an overview of key definitions, concepts, literature and research relating to cultural exclusion which has informed the study on which this article is based.

Culture

Culture is a contested concept which has been defined and interpreted differently, often depending on political or ideological stance or academic disciplinary focus. There is consensus about certain properties, that is, it is learnt and not inherited, it is derived from the social environment (and can be perceived differently by individuals) and is subject to change over time (Zelinsky 1973). Culture consists of a set of norms, beliefs, values, customs and traditions that are shared by a group, community or society. It can be transmitted through language, rituals, religion, institutions, art, music and literature and passed from one generation to another (Kroeber & Kluckhohn 1952). Culture has both universal (etic) and distinctive (emic) elements (Avruch 1998) and is "an image of the world, of oneself and one's community" (Zelinsky 1973: 70). Thus, cultures are manifested differently at national, regional, community or group levels (Hume & Pryce 1986).

Cultural Difference

Variations in culture are typically found between more and less highly developed societies (Inglehart & Baker 2000) and urban and rural sectors of society (Durkheim [1893] 1997; Tönnies 1957). Cultural differences are assumed to be related to demographic transition and disparities between traditional and modern norms, beliefs, values, customs and traditions.

Generally, traditional societies are described as bound together by territorial tribalism, economic interdependence and family solidarity and are often termed collectivist cultures. A collectivist culture gives primacy to the needs of a kinship group, family or community over the individual. In collectivist cultures, community cohesion is important and religiosity is high. Community cohesion is maintained through social control: standards are enforced because sanctions are applied to those that deviate (Durkheim [1893] 1997; Triandis 1995). On the other hand, modern, industrialised societies are characterised by diffused ties, geographic separation and independence of nuclear units across generations and are often described as individualistic cultures (Goode 1970). An individualistic culture is one in which the needs of the individual (self-expression, subjective well-being and quality of life) assume primacy, rather than the

common good (Inglehart & Baker 2000). In modern societies, survival is taken for granted and religion is less important than in traditional societies. This has an influence on how society functions (Durkheim [1893] 1997; Triandis 1995).

While the shift from traditional collectivist to modern individualist society is a gross oversimplification of cultural shifts, data from the World Values Survey for 65 countries suggest that cultural change follows a roughly predictable direction (Inglehart & Baker 2000). However, changes are not linear: different societies follow different trajectories and cultures are complex, dynamic and diverse. Authors have argued that modernisation theory fails to take into account power differentials, the persistence of some traditional values despite economic and political change (DiMaggio 1994) and how situation-specific factors shape cultural development (Inglehart & Baker 2000).

Cultural Exclusion

At the local, regional or national level, individual differences can be observed in the degree to which people adopt cultures (Avruch 1998). For example, the adoption of local culture may be related to personal factors such as age or generation (Higgs & Gilleard 2010; Keating et al. 2015). The adoption of a particular culture may be down to personal choice or cultural exclusion, the latter referring to a situation when an individual is unable to put into practice the norms, beliefs, values, customs and traditions that he or she relates to. Thus, cultural exclusion is defined as the extent to which people are able or willing to conform to prevailing cultural trends (Winter 2017).

Various authors have developed different conceptualisations of social exclusion. A recent review of the literature (Walsh et al. 2017) identified six conceptual frameworks of relevance to older populations (Table 1): four were specifically focussed on the social exclusion of older people (Barnes et al. 2006; Guberman & Lavoie 2004; Jehoel-Gijsbers & Vrooman 2008; Kneale 2012; Walsh et al. 2017); and two related to the exclusion of rural-dwelling older people (Scharf & Bartlam 2008; Walsh et al. 2012a). Similarities and differences were observed in the domains of exclusion included in each of the models. For example, although four frameworks

Table 1. Conceptual frameworks and the domains of social exclusion

Social Exclusion Domain:	Frameworks for:					
	Older People				Older People and Rural Areas	
	Jehoel-Gijsbers and Vrooman (2008)	Barnes et al. (2006); Kneale (2012)	Guberman and Lavoie (2004)	Walsh et al. (2017)	Scharf and Bartlam (2008)	Walsh et al (2012a)
Material resources	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Social relations	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Services and amenities	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Civic participation		✓	✓	✓		
Culture	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Neighbourhood		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Source: Adapted from Walsh et al. 2017.

included culture as a domain, the two frameworks used in rural contexts did not refer to this domain. A growing body of evidence emphasises the impact of community and structural transformations in rural areas upon social exclusion (Keating et al. 2013; Walsh et al. 2012a). In all six frameworks, exclusion from amenities and services is conceptualised as a domain distinct from culture, and in five frameworks neighbourhood exclusion is also conceived as a separate domain. This article will extend work on rural social exclusion by focussing on the domain of cultural exclusion and its relationship with other domains of exclusion.

In order to understand cultural exclusion, one needs to be able to identify "a culture" as an entity. It has been argued that the conceptualisation of culture as a universe of shared meaning within "a tribe", "a nation" or "a people" rarely resonates with 21st century society

(Gupta & Ferguson 2001). This has led many authors to focus on regional or local connectedness, thereby denying the anthropological idea of culture.

More recently, there has been an increasing interest in the study of place attachment, place identity, geographies of belonging and sense of place which is informed by multiple research traditions with different epistemologies. The phenomenological approach to belonging suggests that it is an innate desire to connect oneself to things and place (Mee & Wright 2009). On the other hand, the symbolic interactionist perspective considers belonging to be a product of the construction of self-identity in relation to the social world (e.g. Scannell & Gifford 2010). Other conceptualisations of place attachment (e.g. place memory [Lewicka 2008]; autobiographical insideness [Rowles 1983]) take into account autobiographical memories (e.g. childhood, or the location of significant life events) or sociobiographical memories (family lineage, ethnic or cultural identity and territorial identity). Place attachment and identity is also concerned with aesthetic attachment, social attachment (more closely aligned with the domain of exclusion from social relations) and amenity/environmental attachment (more closely aligned to services/ neighbourhood domains of exclusion) (Burholt et al. 2014). Although cultural identity and cultural exclusion are relevant to place attachment and place identity, they are not synonymous concepts. Indeed, implicit in cross-cultural studies is the conceptualisation of the world as a "mosaic" of cultures comprising a complex array of beliefs, attitudes, norms and values that can be studied as entities and contrasted with each other, rather than a manifestation of regional or national place connectivity (Gupta & Ferguson 2001).

Studies exploring cultural exclusion often focus on cross-cultural comparisons, for example, by comparing indigenous populations and transnational migrants or ethnic minority groups (Burholt et al. 2016; Torres 2006, 2012). In this respect, cultural exclusion is assumed to be associated with acculturative demands (Berry 2006) and intersects with gender, social status and other structural factors.

Another body of evidence on cultural differences contrasts rural and urban societies. For many years, the concept of "rural idyll" has dominated literary and academic studies (Curry et al. 2014). Culturally, rural areas were described as pleasant, prosperous, safe environments that

were beneficial to health and well-being. People living in rural areas were depicted as holding certain values relating to hard work, nationalism, cohesion and resistance to welfare support (Cloke & Little 1997). The romanticising of rural communities has been referred to as "cultural invisibility" (Commins 2004: 62) and has been criticised for failing to recognise disadvantage, exclusion and differences between rural areas and rural inhabitants (Milne et al. 2007).

Presently, rurality is viewed as a socially constructed phenomenon (Halfacree 1993) and a symbolic lens for moral and cultural values which can vary between groups of people (intersecting with gender, social status) as well as across time and location (Boyle & Halfacree 1998). However, traditional and hegemonic cultural discourses have marginalised a host of "other" groups in rural society. In particular, they have ignored the heterogeneity of older people and rural areas (Milne et al. 2007). The myths and misconceptions concerning rural culture have contributed to the veiling of old-age cultural exclusion in rural areas.

Cultural Change

While comparisons between societies, ethnicities or regions provide evidence of cultural variation, there is very little contemporary social science research that considers how "national cultures" change over time in particular places and how these dynamics may contribute to exclusion. Personal decision-making and structural changes such as policy initiatives influence the pace of diffusion and changes in norms, beliefs, values, customs and traditions. For example, improved communication links, mass media and similarity in social structural positions accelerate the rates of cultural diffusion (Rudel & Hooper 2005). Under these circumstances, disparities between rural and urban populations should decline (Critchfield 1994). However, indigenous cultural values often leave their imprint on subsequent generations, long after the material conditions responsible for those values have altered.

Industrial regional developments and/or policy initiatives that directly influence the mobility and composition of populations impact on cultural norms. For example, political apparatus can be used to select aspects of modernisation or industrialisation to "import" to countries, or regions within countries, to accelerate desired change and decrease differences

between or within countries (Rudel & Hooper 2005). In areas of rapid change, older people may hold norms, beliefs, values, customs and traditions that endure from an earlier period as research suggests that individual basic "values" are fixed by adulthood (Inglehart & Baker 2000). Consequently, one way of examining cultural exclusion is to examine difference in cultural values between generations (e.g. Sun & Wang 2010). Another possibility is to examine cultural change and/or exclusion across the lifecourse of an older generation. The latter approach is taken in this article, and provides us with the opportunity to examine the influence that societal structures and the life course have upon the experience, drivers and outcomes of cultural exclusion among rural-dwelling older people.

Background: Culture of Wales

In this article, we focus on three rural areas in South Wales to examine the process of cultural exclusion for older people. Wales is a region in the United Kingdom with a population of 3.11 million people. Wales has devolved powers across a wide range of areas (including health, education and social care), and was granted powers for limited primary legislation in 2006.

The nation has a complex culture with distinctive regional components. The dominant characteristics of Wales' culture include nonconformity (religious denominations such as Calvinist Methodists, Congregationalists, Baptists and Wesleyans), the chapel (emphasising the difference between the Church of England and Anglicanism), literary tradition such as the *Eisteddfod* (a Welsh festival of literature, poetry and music) and language (Cloke & Milbourne 1992). The Welsh language is one of the most important elements of cultural heritage and historically has been noted as "the indispensable medium for expressing Welsh cultural values" (Jones 1952: 16–17). Wales is a bilingual nation with both English and Welsh afforded equal status by the Welsh Government. However, Wales has experienced a gradual decline in the proportion of Welsh speakers from around half of the population at the beginning of the 20th century to approximately one-fifth (19%) in 2011. There are currently 562,000 Welsh speakers in Wales (Welsh Government 2012).

Early research on culture in Wales was grounded in social anthropology (Rees 1950). Community studies portrayed rural culture as vibrant

and stable with inhabitants bound together by strong shared values, social reciprocity and a common world view (Day 2002). These studies tended to present a positive view of communal existence described as "the completeness of traditional rural society" (Rees 1950: 170) and failed to examine internal contradictions or tensions.

On the whole, when conflict was acknowledged in rural community studies, the focus was upon the Welsh/English cultural divide. For example, Bowen (1959) classified a cultural geography of Wales comprising *Inner Wales* and *Outer Wales*. Inner Wales fostered Welsh cultural traits with inhabitants popularly known as the *Cymru Gymraeg* (Welsh-speaking Wales). Outer Wales, with external (English) influences, was less homogeneous in terms of language and culture and was referred to as *Cymru ddi-Gymraeg* (non-Welsh-speaking Wales). Other authors have described Welsh culture in terms of cliques, referred to as *buchedd* ("way of life"). These cliques served a social control function by enforcing standards of behaviour within the community, especially relating to religious participation, economic behaviours and consumption of alcoholic beverages, with one group regarded as more pious and "respectable" than the other (Day & Fitton 1975; Jenkins 1960). In addition to rifts between Welsh indigenous and English non-indigenous people, studies by Frankenberg (1957) and Emmett (1964) emphasised divisions and rivalries based on gender and age.

Community studies undertaken in Wales in the last century have been criticised for failing to account for the diversity of rural life (Day 2002). Contemporary Wales has been influenced by modern social and economic trends and rural areas have undergone significant changes in recent decades which are likely to have implications for culture and cultural exclusion. These transformations include demographic changes associated with increased population mobility, such as outward migration of younger people, counter-urbanisation and other inward migration flows. The cultural construction of rurality and/or Welsh culture has been influenced by incomers, such as the middleclass reinvention of rural (Murdoch & Day 1998) or the "neo-triablism" of counter-urbanisers (Halfacree 1998). Similar reimaginings of "culture" have been observed within Irish island communities, where older people played a pivotal role in creating and sustaining islander identities, but perceptions of identity differed between migrants and non-migrants (Burholt et al. 2013).

Islanders with a "historical islander identity" held a circumspect view of community change, based on their perception of the transformation of the island community in the wake of modernisation. We may expect to find similarities in behaviour and perceptions of long-term rural inhabitants in Wales.

In addition to the impact that population turnover has had on culture in Wales, structural issues such as declining local economies, agricultural reform and neo-liberal transformations have also contributed to change (Day 1987). The demise of local rural industries and traditional farming has resulted in deprivation, high levels of unemployment, lack of affordable housing, poor public transport and closure of local amenities and services in many areas. Living in rural areas takes place in an increasingly dynamic cultural context (Walsh et al. 2012b). Over time there has been a steady erosion of Welsh culture and a decline in Welsh speaking: *buchedd* has been replaced by new socio-economic values (Day 2002).

The representation of "close-knit" Welsh-speaking rural communities may not reflect the current reality of rural living. The pre-industrial *gemeinschaft* (Tönnies 1957) is most likely no longer a valid representation of family life in South Wales. However, misconceptions about rural culture endure as older people tend to under-report exclusion. There has been a tendency for older people to buy into the "rural idyll" believing that living in aesthetically pleasant surroundings outweighs any exclusion from participation in society (Hennessy et al. 2014; Walsh et al. 2012b). Other contributory factors for under-reporting may be due to cultural identity: pride, stoicism or fear that such a revelation may result in shame and stigmatisation (Wenger 2001). In order to address the gap in knowledge about cultural exclusion, we examine the contribution that societal structures and the life course have upon the experience of cultural exclusion for older people who have originated from, and are currently living in rural areas of South Wales.

Theoretical Framework

We adopt a critical human ecological theoretical framework to examine the process of cultural exclusion for older people originating from, and presently living in, rural areas of South Wales (Keating & Phillips 2008).

We draw on four "systems" or levels within the ecological model to contextualise our findings. These are (1) the macrosystem, which incorporates structural issues including ideology, political landscape, norms, values and national policies; (2) the exosystem, which refers to structure and organisations that affect the immediate environment – that is, natural and physical elements of the environment, alongside services, amenities and employment opportunities in the local area; (3) the microsystem, which focusses upon individual characteristics or resources such as psychological traits, health, material resources and social resources; and (4) the chronosystem, which relates to the passage of time. In this article, we consider macro-time (period effects), exo-time (place effects) and micro-time (cohort and/or lifecourse effects) (Bronfenbrenner & Morris 2006) in relation to the drivers and outcomes of cultural exclusion. Micro-time, exo-time and macro-time have been used to study child development, but to our knowledge these concepts have not been applied to older people and cultural exclusion.

Within the ecological model, culture (norms, values and ideologies) is subsumed within the macrosystem. However, cultural exclusion can only be understood in relation to time and context. In this respect, we consider social comparison as a *process* relevant to the temporal and contextual experience of cultural exclusion (Festinger 1954). This theoretical approach will provide better understanding of the interaction between factors within the "four" systems that can illuminate how and why older people experience cultural exclusion in the rural areas of South Wales (Bronfenbrenner 2005).

Data and Method

A qualitative case-study methodology was selected to provide a means of understanding social phenomena from the perspective of those involved.

Sample Selection

Three rural case study areas were selected in South Wales. The selection was based on two criteria, that is, they (1) were classified as "rural wards" under the Welsh Government Rural Development Programme and (2) had experienced significant community change (e.g. regeneration, economic decline or population change).

Area A was located within Caerphilly Local Authority comprising two village settlements and a rural hinterland. Area B was the largest rural ward in Merthyr Tydfil Local Authority comprising eight villages. Area C was located within Swansea Local Authority approximately 16 km to the north of the city.

Two samples of participants were drawn: one for life history interviews and one for focus groups. A purposive sampling strategy was adopted to recruit participants aged ≥60 years living. Ten older people in each of the three case study areas ($N = 30$) were recruited for life-history interviews. A majority were female ($n = 19$) and aged between 75 and 89 years ($n = 17$). Most were married or living with a partner ($n = 16$), and around one-third ($n = 11$) were widowed. A majority of participants ($n = 21$) spoke English as their first language; however, in Area C, most ($n = 8$) identified Welsh as their first language. A majority ($n = 20$) had always lived in the study areas; ten participants had originated from the area, but had moved away for some years, and then returned.

Older people who had not participated in the life-history interviews were recruited for focus groups in each of the case study areas ($N = 26$).

Data Collection

Stage 1: Life-history interviews. Interviews focussed upon hardship and prosperity. They were conducted face-to-face in participants' homes in English or Welsh, audio-recorded and transcribed. Participants were asked to share photographs documenting their life histories and changes in their communities.

Stage 2: Documentary analysis and focus groups. Documents about the communities were obtained from local historical groups and libraries. Relevant data about historical community change were extracted and organised into a community timeline. Focus group participants discussed the history of the area using the timeline as a prompt.

Stage 3: Repeat life-history interviews with life-history calendars. Each participant who had undertaken a life-history interview was re-interviewed. Participants were presented with a draft version of a personal life history calendar (LHC), which contained their lived experience in

chronological order extracted from the initial interviews. The LHC also contained the history of the area and national changes. Additional questions were asked to elucidate important area of participants' life histories.

Analysis

An Interpretive Phenomenological Analytical approach was used to analyse the data. The analysis was idiographic with a detailed analysis of one case (life-history interview or focus group transcript) undertaken before moving onto the next one. Firstly, detailed notes of relevant information that related to cultural exclusion were recorded chronologically. Secondly, superordinate (e.g. values) and sub-themes (e.g. specify types of values such as collectivism) were identified and nested using NVivo software (Version 10). The superordinate themes were organised into the respective systems of the human ecological model. The themes were coded by one researcher (PhD candidate), and interpretations were discussed with the supervisory team. Relationships *between* systems and, over time, *within* systems (e.g. micro-time) were noted.

Findings

The findings are organised under two main headings: (1) the manifestation of cultural exclusion and (2) the drivers and outcomes of cultural exclusion for older people originating from, and currently living in, rural areas of South Wales.

The Manifestation of Cultural Exclusion

Cultural exclusion was described as an issue for a majority of participants and was discussed in terms of comparisons with earlier times in their lives (temporal self-comparison) or in comparison with other groups. The micro-time descriptions served to demonstrate impacts from other systems during specific episodes of proximal processes of exclusion.

Temporal self-comparison. Cultural exclusion was framed as a contemporary personal comparison with historical experiences, that is, temporal

self-comparison. Participants expressed concern about the erosion of the cultural norms and values that had been prevalent within the communities in which they reside during earlier periods of their lives. Interviews contained descriptions of historical cultural experience, which was contrasted with the contemporary experience and outcomes for older people.

During participants' childhood, a traditional community culture was described. The need for material possessions was not described as essential by the participants. Instead, they alluded to placing greater value on strong family relations and close community bonds. A number of participants commented that despite hardship and poverty, most of the community were living in very similar circumstances and participants referred to this period as a happy time during which they were satisfied. For example,

> When you live in them conditions you don't know no different. It's like a bird in a cage – he doesn't know there's an outside world does he? Lovely childhood when you look back. We didn't have any money mind, but we enjoyed ourselves.
>
> (Area B, Male, 89 years)

Participants recollected shared values of mutual support and reciprocity during their childhood. They described a culture in which people supported one another, were respectful, courteous, polite and non-judgemental. As a result, participants explained that during that period they felt safe and secure and had a sense of pride in the collectivism of the close-knit communities. Participants contrasted this with the contemporary community in which they felt families were dispersed and relationships with neighbours had undergone much change. Many participants explained that they were neither familiar with nor had contact with people living in the area. Participants commented upon contemporary cultural norms which they felt demonstrated a decline in social bonds and an increase in a materialistic culture where people prioritised maximising personal incomes and possessions as opposed to focussing on the common good. For many participants this resulted in what they described as their perception of a decline in community cohesion. For example:

> You know I don't know half of them who live up here. I was looking the other day and from the top to the bottom of the road I only know five men. And I used to know everybody… and they don't talk or look out for you anymore. People look out for themselves much more.
>
> (Area B, Male, 87 years)

Participants described other historical and traditional normative beliefs, values, customs and traditions. Examples provided by participants included: families and households were larger, men went out to work while women remained at home and people remained living and working within the local community. On reaching adulthood, there was an expectation to meet and marry someone local, enter employment locally – often in the family profession – and to live within close proximity to the family. Consequently, when first married, often participants lived with relatives in overcrowded housing or lodged with families or neighbours.

> We moved into a house four doors up from my mother […]. We moved so close because it was the done thing.
>
> (Area B, Female, 65 years)

Participants contrasted this with the contemporary communities in which they felt it was more likely that both women and men were in paid employment. Emphasis was placed by participants upon the limited local work and housing opportunities that currently exist in their communities which they explained is resulting in family members moving away from the local area to live and work.

Another integral feature of the historical Welsh culture identified by participants centred on financial savings, thriftiness and indebtedness. Participants stressed the importance of saving money to purchase a home, household goods or holidays and not to accrue debt. Resourcefulness included growing food and making household items such as toys, clothes and furniture. As one participant commented:

> And of course we had allotments […]. We were self-sustaining. We always had a good table. I can never remember being hungry.
>
> (Area A, Male, 86 years)

In contrast, participants noted that resourcefulness was not a feature of contemporary culture. Participants explained that local people would drive to supermarkets to purchase food and household items. Furthermore, older participants expressed concern that there was generally a lack of regard for "living within one's means" and that obtaining credit and being in debt was a normal for many people.

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In the past, participants described how communities were bound together by similarities between the inhabitants in the use of Welsh language, going to chapel and employment (farming and mining). Participants explained that every local household was either involved in or had close relationships with someone involved in these activities. As one participant commented:

> It was a fairly tight community and everybody practically knew everybody else. We knew what was going on with most people and Welsh was largely spoken.
>
> (Area B, Female, 74 years)

In contemporary rural South Wales, participants noted how many of these cultural features had declined or disappeared, notably the demise of indigenous employment and a decline in the Welsh language. Participants were concerned that the absence of shared norms and customs was resulting in a lack of common ground for the community. In Area C, participants expressed disappointment that it was no longer the norm to speak Welsh in public spaces – even for Welsh speakers. A number of participants commented that they felt that these changes fostered a sense of conflict and division (see group comparisons below).

One participant explained how previously religion played a pivotal role in the communities and influenced the local culture:

> I think the chapels played a far greater role […] there was more of a community spirit. I can remember [grandmother] used to go to [chapel] and Mam used to go to chapel. My Dad used to go to [chapel name] and [Grandfather] used to go to [church name].
>
> (Area A, Female, 78 Years)

Participants described how chapel was an important source of education on Welsh heritage and Welsh language. One participant explained how the chapel had fostered not only religious faith but also a range of values such as caring, sharing and assisting others, which contributed to the sense of community, which however was not apparent in the contemporary community cultural values.

Group comparison. Participants discussed the manifestation of cultural exclusion by comparing the current situation for older people (or

themselves) with other groups. Comparisons were primarily made to younger cohorts and in-migrants to the rural areas.

Many participants expressed concern about a generational divide in beliefs, values, customs and traditions. Participants made a distinction between the norms and values of the older generation which remained collective and community-focussed, compared with the younger generation who participants felt were more individualistic and did not have a connection or commitment to the community. In particular, concern was expressed by participants about the lack of involvement of younger people in community activities, such as attending chapel or regeneration activities. Several participants made reference to the lack of respect from the younger generation, as well as a disregard for spending time building relationships. Furthermore, they noted that younger generations led more private lives and accepted debt as a normal part of life. These behaviours were, according to participants, contrary to prior Welsh cultural norms. As one participant commented:

> When we were engaged was we sat down and made a rug […]. You wouldn't see couples doing that now would you? They'd be playing games on the telly. But we made homes. Now they go out and buy things and it's a throw-away society.
>
> (Area A, Male, 80 years)

Participants were also critical of those who had migrated to the study areas, who they felt did not contribute to the community. Concern was expressed by a number of participants that many had bought homes as holiday lets or second homes but did not appear to integrate into the community. More specifically, participants' comments alluded to the fact that they believed that in-migrants did not want to embrace aspects of the Welsh culture such as the chapel and *Eisteddfod*. As a result, participants expressed concern that key Welsh traditions and the Welsh language were threatened.

> I don't mind people moving in but they must be part of the community, please. OK, they don't speak Welsh but they don't learn it. But it's our way that is changing, you see, not theirs. It's detrimental for the language and detrimental for the chapels.
>
> (Area C, Female, 79 years)

The Drivers and Outcomes of Cultural Exclusion

The drivers – macro-time (period effects), exo-time (place effects) and micro-time (cohort and/or lifecourse effects) – and outcomes of cultural exclusion were complex and interrelated. These are discussed within three time periods: pre-Second World War (1900–1939); post-Second World War Keynesian period (1945–1979); and the neo-liberal monetarist economic period (mid-1970s–current time).

Macro-time: Period effects. Period effects are historical events that affect an entire population at a specific time. The period before the Second World War (1900–1939) was regarded by participants as fostering cultural inclusion rather than exclusion. They described how mining and farming were dominant forms of employment, but were low-waged. Consequently, this period was characterised by material disadvantage. Participants explained how there was minimal state intervention and few educational opportunities.

Despite structural constraints, participants explained that cultural norms and values were inclusive. They described how people lived and worked together in mining or farming industries and how retail services were locally based. Low levels of population turnover meant that participants knew neighbours and long-standing friendships and relationships were developed. Welsh language and religion were described by participants as dominant features of the culture. Local people socialised together which fostered mutual support and reciprocity within a collectivist culture. One female participant commented:

> You were in it together and no household was different to the other. It didn't matter about your status, your income or anything like… because people lived in the valley and they stayed in the valleys. They didn't move out.
>
> (Area A, Female, 95 years)

The period immediately following the Second World War, the Keynesian period (1945–1979), was characterised by full employment and increased state intervention, in particular the establishment of the welfare state. A national house-building programme was mentioned by some participants as providing local affordable housing and services, and activities

were plentiful. A collectivist culture continued to dominate this period according to many participants. One commented:

> You had the library below the workman's hall and then you had the YMCA where they had dancing. We used to play records there and it was packed. When you think of what we did in this small community it was amazing. We haven't got that now.
>
> (Area A, Female, 71 Years)

While a collectivist culture was fostered, participants explained how certain structural-economic drivers began to contribute to a decline in some traditional norms. Although Welsh was spoken at home, through much of this period education was imparted through the medium of English. As one man explained:

> No they wouldn't leave you speak Welsh in school would they? It does make me sad that my generation never spoke Welsh. My father was Welsh speaking and we're in the gap aren't we?
>
> (Area C, Male, 69 Years)

Participants described how this had a detrimental impact on language, as a generation lost the ability to converse fluently in Welsh. It was not until the 1967 Welsh Language Act that teaching through the medium of Welsh was promoted.

By the 1970s, the prosperity of the Keynesian economic period began to decline culminating in an international oil crisis in 1973, a global recession and increasing levels of unemployment and poverty. Many participants commented that during this period there was a gradual shift from collectivist to individualistic cultural norms and values. By the 1970s, car ownership was widespread, resulting in a greater degree of mobility. The advent of supermarkets meant less reliance on the immediate community. As a participant explained:

> I think the introduction of the car is the downside because people go out of the valley to shop now to supermarkets and all that.
>
> (Area A, Female, 79 years)

Participants described how over time, new technologies and other developments began to transform aspects of the local culture. They

commented upon a decline in religiosity and associated values being reflected in the dwindling numbers attending the local chapels. Television and car ownership were regarded by participants as contributing to a decline in collective activities and social connectivity: more people travelled outside of the area or stayed at home watching television. As one participant explained:

> I think the coming of the television altered a lot of things […], activities like cinema and dancing declined.
>
> (Area A, Female, 78 Years)

Core features of the neo-liberal monetarist economic period (mid-1970s–present time) as described by participants included public sector cutbacks, promotion of the free market and privatisation of services. Simultaneously, there were increases in unemployment, under-employment, zero-hour contracts, low wages and the out-migration of people of working age. Globalisation and technological developments continued apace with multinational companies locating services in urban areas rather than in rural ones. Individualistic cultural norms and values dominated this period.

In terms of employment in the study areas, participants explained that the manufacturing base was severely depleted and farming suffered further decline and diversification. The latter was attributed to the introduction of milk quotas during the 1980s which limited the productivity of farms. The service industry became the dominant form of employment. Participants explained that historically people had lived and worked within the same community and this harnessed a sense of belonging and connection between groups of people and generations. However, significant agricultural and industrial decline meant a reduction in local or familial employment opportunities for the younger generation:

> Farming has changed completely and has been decimated. If you look at the land here now […] nobody is growing barley or wheat or potatoes or anything like that […]. The milk industry has gone with nobody producing milk anymore. Whereas before every farm would employ at least one person, none of them employ anyone now […]. You can go out in the spring and not hear the sound of a tractor anywhere, whereas before you could hear the noise of tractors going all the time.
>
> (Area C, Male, 67 Years)

Increasing population change during this period was perceived by participants to be a key driver of changing cultural norms and values of the areas (see above). All three case study areas continued to experience a decline in Welsh language. Whereas in the previous period the primary driver for decline was attributed to the education policy (which required all schools to teach through the medium of English), in this period the in-migration of non-Welsh-speaking residents further contributed to the decline. As one participant commented:

> Some of them try to contribute to the community but they want to turn everything into English. That's how I see it […].
>
> (Rural Area C, Male, 70 Years)

Exo-time: Place effects. While structural-economic drivers (period effects) influenced cultural exclusion, there were variations in the timing and scale of the impact. Participants explained that these can be largely attributed to place effects which focus upon the physical and environmental developments within the rural areas.

During the pre-Second World War period, participants explained that rapid industrialisation in Areas A and B meant that mining replaced farming as the dominant form of employment. This brought large-scale industry to the area and resulted in population growth. Terraced housing was built which transformed much of the rural landscape. Services and amenities were built around these developments. In contrast to Areas A and B, Area C was more affluent. Farming remained largely unmechanised during this period. Industrialisation was on a far smaller scale and large-scale meat and arable farms remained viable. Many of the mines that were developed in Area C were drift mines, which had less impact on the physical landscape than large underground mines elsewhere. These smaller mines employed fewer people and did not result in high levels of in-migration or house-building programmes. This meant that cultural norms and values were maintained to a greater extent in Area C with a greater proportion of the population speaking Welsh. As one participant commented:

> The community was definitely rural and all these cottages were here. There was a thriving farming community where all the farmers knew each other […]. We knew what was going on with most people and everyone spoke Welsh.
>
> (Area C, Male, 93 years)

During the post-war Keynesian economic period, while changes broadly mirrored the period effects, some area-based drivers resulted in minor variations between case study sites. In particular, during the 1950s, there were large-scale social housing developments in areas A and B, according to participants' recollections, resulting in increased levels of in-migration. In Area C, although farming was beginning to decline, participants explained that there were only small-scale social housing developments which had limited impact on the rural landscape and population movement. Thus, cultural norms and values were maintained in Area C to a greater extent than in the other areas.

During the neo-liberal monetarist economic period, all three areas experienced significant decline (see period effects). Some specific area-based drivers resulted in differences in the scale and intensity of cultural exclusion between the case study areas. The demise of indigenous industry in all areas resulted in out-migration of young people in search of employment. In Area C, this was compounded by the lack of affordable and accessible housing in the area due to gentrification, and a more limited house-building programme than in either of the other two case study areas. Subsequently, cultural exclusion was more pronounced in Area C which, until this period, had retained more of its cultural heritage.

> The old community is dying and the community is changing and we are having in-migration in the village… I told them that they must ensure that local people, Welsh local people, have housing.
>
> (Area C, Female, 82 years)

Micro-time: Cohort and/or lifecourse effects. Cohort effects relate to the older population's exposure to cultural exclusion across the lifecourse (Ryder 1985). The cohort can be conceived as a structural category, whereby the unique circumstances and conditions through which cohorts emerge provide a record of social and structural change. The conditions (period effects, area effects) and lifecourse material and social conditions may uniquely shape the experience of cultural exclusion within an age cohort. In this respect, the cohort effects are the outcomes that cultural exclusion has upon participants but also comprise the actions that the cohort undertakes to ameliorate outcomes.

Many participants felt that cultural exclusion had a detrimental effect on their sense of belonging and perceptions of community cohesion. Taking a lifecourse perspective, it was apparent that a sense of belonging was related to length of residence in the area, especially sociobiographic and autobiographic histories (Rowles 1983). A historical sense of belonging was closely interwoven with the culture of the area (Burholt et al. 2013) and was ruptured by cultural changes. Participants associated a decline in community cohesion to population turnover. They commented on the way in which population change had a detrimental effect on social attachment and "social insideness" (Rowles 1983), hindering connections with family and neighbours and contributing to the demise of the close-knit community. A participant commented:

> I came to know everyone in the village and I could tell which house they were in. Everyone, I knew everyone right? But now I don't know those that live on this road here. That's the difference. People have moved in you see. Strangers and they don't [help].
> (Area C, Female, 81 years).

Cohort effects also comprised actions undertaken to ameliorate cultural exclusion. For instance, a few participants explained how they worked with other older, long-term residents to try and maintain a sense of community cohesion within their cohort. As one participant stated:

> There is a sense of community. Not so much in the new estates but in these old streets here we are very community orientated. We are here for everybody, we will help anybody. We won't go into people's houses but we are here and if somebody wants anything and we are all very chatty and talkative to one another, you know.
> (Area C, Female, 82 Years)

Some participants described how they attempted to sustain and foster community cohesion as well as rekindle a sense of belonging through historical groups that attempted to develop an appreciation and understanding of the area's rich heritage. For example, participants in Area C explained how a Heritage Museum was established and in Area B, the Chair of the local Historical Society edited books about local history. Participants articulated their passion and commitment to learn about, record and share information about the cultural history of the areas.

Discussion

Underpinned by a critical human ecological framework, this article has explored the manifestation of cultural exclusion among older people originating from, and currently living in, rural areas in South Wales. The framework has facilitated a description of the interactions between the drivers, experiences and outcomes of cultural exclusion, taking into account period, area, cohort and lifecourse effects. In this discussion, we return to the three research questions that guided our analysis.

Firstly, the findings suggest cultural exclusion to be an issue among older people in rural areas. Drawing on social comparison theory (Festinger 1954), participants' experiences of cultural exclusion were based on temporal self-comparison and group comparisons. The findings demonstrate the importance of relativity when considering cultural exclusion, that is, it can only be understood in relation to the time and context within which older people live.

Life-history interviews (referring to micro-time and the impact of proximal processes of exclusion) indicated that a collectivist culture based on mutual support and reciprocity was dominant during the childhood of older participants. Welsh language and religious participation were prevalent. These characteristics (cultural heritage) shaped the contemporary cultural identity of older people. However, as the collectivist culture was replaced by an individualist culture over time, participants felt excluded: their cultural identity was in conflict with prevailing norms, values and behaviours. In particular, differences in cultural identity were emphasised when compared to younger generations and in-migrants.

Our second research question was concerned with the drivers of cultural exclusion. In the macrosystem, the findings suggest that period effects that contributed to a shift from a collectivist to an individualistic culture included the demise of indigenous industry, policy developments (in particular educational policy) and population change. Other research has also identified that structural change has a pivotal role in explaining exclusion experienced by older rural residents (Scharf & Bartlam 2006; Williams & Doyle 2016). While period effects impacted upon cultural exclusion in all three case study areas, variations were evident in the extent of their impact, both in terms of timing and scale, which were explained by place effects (exosystem).

Collectivist cultural norms and values were retained for a longer period of time in rural Area C, which did not experience large-scale industrialisation, housing and population growth at the same time as Areas B and C. However, the eventual decline of farming and mining, out-migration of younger people and gentrification in Area C had a more profound impact on participants, as the change was more rapid than in the other areas. Thus, the speed of macro- and exo-time effects had an impact on cultural exclusion.

With regard to the third research question, the primary outcomes of cultural exclusion for participants' were a decline in a sense of belonging, safety, security, life satisfaction and community cohesion. The sense of belonging was associated with cohort and/or life course effects (micro-time), such as length of residence in an area, sociobiographic and autobiographic histories, but was simultaneously affected by other systems within the ecological model. The shift from collectivist to individualistic cultural norms had an impact on cultural exclusion and belonging as participants aged (Bengtson et al. 2012; Triandis 1995). The findings resonate with other research, indicating how population change can have a detrimental effect upon "social insideness" (Rowles 1983). Participants' historical sense of belonging was associated with the culture of the areas and resonates with other research (Burholt et al. 2013). In particular, it reveals how cultural heritage contributes to cultural identity, which when contrasted with contemporary cultural norms may decrease perceptions of belonging.

Older people were not necessarily passive "recipients" of cultural exclusion, as some were able to accept, reject or modify culture. By presenting symbols of cultural heritage, older people were attempting to reconstruct culture. Similar reimaginings of "culture" have been observed within Irish island communities (Burholt et al. 2013). Some authors have argued that culture is simply negotiated through interpersonal communication and can be easily changed by renegotiation (Bruner 1982). However, this approach does not take into account power and status which are associated with the ability to recast dominant discourses. There is very limited research on the role of agency in the process of cultural exclusion. Further research to determine the characteristics of older people that attempt to renegotiate culture (compared to those that do not) would be of benefit (Dewilde 2003).

The critical human ecological–theoretical framework has facilitated an exploration of the contribution that societal structures (micro-, meso- and macro-systems and time) have upon older people's experience of cultural exclusion in the rural areas of South Wales. The framework has provided the structure to understand the dynamic, relative, multilevel social construction of cultural exclusion. Macro-time in the South Wales communities could be described as a trajectory from collectivist values to individualist ones. Exo-time moved from population stability, local services and employment opportunities to population churn, remote services and few employment opportunities. Micro-time progressed from cultural identities in harmony with cultural norms, to cultural identities in conflict with cultural norms when compared to in-migrants and younger cohorts. Participants rejected new cultural norms and yearned for those from an earlier time. Feeling culturally excluded impacted on outcomes, decreasing the sense of belonging and perceptions of community cohesion, safety, security and life satisfaction in later life.

Limitations

This study was confined to rural South Wales' communities and it is not possible to generalise findings to other locations. The study of cultural exclusion, notably the shift from a collectivist to an individualistic culture and the decline in indigenous language and/or religious participation, could benefit from comparative research with other bilingual regions in Europe, for example, Catalonia or Basque region of Spain, Brittany (France) and Gaelic-speaking regions in Ireland or Scotland. Using a similar methodology and conceptual framework would establish whether there are similarities or differences in the process within different cultural and sociopolitical contexts.

The South Wales communities were classified as disadvantaged. Therefore, the study is unable to examine the ways in which cultural exclusion manifests itself across different types of communities. For example, the experience of cultural exclusion of a disadvantaged person/household within a predominantly affluent area requires further investigation. With a few exceptions (Keating et al. 2013; Walsh et al.

2012b), rural research has failed to recognise the diversity between and within different types of rural areas as well as the heterogeneity of older people who reside within these communities.

This study has relied on older people's recollections of Welsh culture. Despite historic descriptions of hardship, the assessments of community life in rural South Wales were positive, suggesting a cognitive bias towards judging the past disproportionately more positively than experienced. Psychologists have found that individuals have a tendency to rewrite the past in a favourable light (Mitchell et al. 1997). Therefore, cultural identity in later life may be wedded to a "rosy retrospective." However, in this study, the "rosy view" of cultural heritage was held collectively by older participants. Consequently, regardless of the degree of subjectivity, the dissonance between cultural expectations and contemporary experiences had a negative impact on outcomes.

Despite limitations, this article has highlighted the importance of taking the chronosystem into account in order within the ecological framework to be able to understand and explain cultural exclusion among older people. It has shown how prevailing cultural trends become embedded in cultural identities. As culture changes, disconnection with contemporary values may manifest over the lifecourse. This suggests that strategies that seek to address cultural exclusion must take into account the cultural identities of future as well as current generations of older people in rural areas.

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Sue Westwood (ed.) (2019). *Ageing, Diversity and Equality: Social Justice Perspectives.* Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 376 pp. ISBN: 978-0-415-78669-0 (hardback)

Reviewed by Rosita Dissels[1] & Ada Lui Gallassi[2]

This edited collection brings a comprehensive insight into inequality and diversity of ageing, exploring the concept of social justice in gender; sexualities; culture, ethnicity and religion; disabilities, long-term conditions and care; and spatiality. The understanding of ageing diversity in social gerontology scholarship is underdeveloped and information about minority groups in the older population is often placed in retrofitted sections. Therefore, the aim of this book is to make an important contribution to fill this gap. It consists of five parts, in which inequalities associated with ageing and diversity are centred within Nancy Fraser's theory of social justice (2013). In Chapter 1, Sue Westwood, the editor of this volume, introduces the book and presents a deeper notion of the concept of intersectionality in the field of socio-gerontology. She recognizes the importance to employ this concept, which refers to intertwined inequality in people's experiences of disadvantage and discrimination, in order to understand the heterogeneity and diversity of ageing, enabling to clarify the complexity of inequality in old age.

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Part I addresses the underrepresentation and lack of visibility (recognition) in research and social policy regarding gender diversity and older people, especially in relation to the fourth age, older trans/gender diverse individuals and childless older people, particularly regarding the experiences of men. Chapter 2 (by Athina Vlachantoni) argues for the need to incorporate a social justice perspective into the design of pension systems, and its outcome, in order to tackle income disadvantages connected to gender. Chapter 3 (by Laura Hurd Clarke) assesses how older persons progressively experience devaluation and exclusion through the body image in later life. Chapter 4 (by Chris Gilleard and Paul Higgs) highlights that resources, recognition and representation are lacking components in the fourth age (which is over-represented by women) and claims for anti-ageist social welfare policies within long-term care and in the performances of long-term care work. In chapter 5 (by Robin A. Hadley), a perspective on the implications of childlessness of older adults on material resources, health, social networks and care needs is considered in relation to gender. Chapter 6 (by Jenny-Anne Bishop and Sue Westwood) sheds light on the cumulative disadvantages experienced by older trans/gender-diverse people, expanding Fraser's notion of resources to not only material but also health, care and support.

In Part II, chapter 7 (by Jane Traies) the focus is on the underrepresentation of older lesbians who have been trapped for years in the intersectionality of homophobic and misogynist inequality. With regard to recognition and representation of older gay men, which is distinctively highlighted in chapter 8 (by Mark Hughes and Peter Robinson), reference can be made to Wight, Le Blanc, Meyer, and Harig (2015), who introduced the construct of "internalized gay ageism," denoting feelings of depreciation because of aging in the context of a gay male identity. Inequalities emerging from the intersection of ageism and homophobia not only within the wider society, but even more within the gay communities, should evoke the attention of researchers as well as policymakers. All authors in this part of the book address that the accumulation of inequality and health disparities for older lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans (LBGT) people and in particular for older bisexual older adults is greatly overlooked by researchers as well as policymakers, as mentioned in chapter 9 (by Sarah Jen). Chapter 10 (by Sue Westwood) clarifies how

heterosexuality as the norm in gerontological research, results in a lack of understanding regarding the lives of older LBGT people and calls for scholars to pursue an approach for studies on older LBGT that is not caught in the dominant frame of heterosexuality.

Part III stresses the need for increased understanding and recognition of culture, ethnic and religious diversity within research and social policies in order to tackle the disadvantages and exclusions in later life faced by minority groups. Chapter 11 (by Sandra Torres) critically approaches the ethno-gerontology scholarship, emphasising the need for research to focus on what practitioners and policymakers can do to tackle the injustices faced by this group. Social networks are considered in chapter 12 (by Shereen Hussein) as key sources of resources, recognition and representation among ageing migrants in host communities, but can yet deepen social exclusion within the external community. In chapter 13 (by Alistair Hunter), a transnational comparative analysis on inequalities of older persons with a migration background evaluates that disadvantage has different faces depending whether comparison is made with peers in the hosting country or in the place of origin. In this context, the importance in analysing diversity both between and within groups of older migrants is highlighted. Finally, regarding religion, chapter 14 (by Peter Kevern) shows that although recognition is considered a positive contributor to equality in later life, invisibility and misrecognition within religious institutions increase with age and with other aspects of diversity, such as gender, sexuality and ethnicity.

The premise for successful ageing and also for the restructuring of long-term care is that older people are able to maintain control over their lives and that self-reliance is important. However, older adults with limited resources are not able to meet these expectations. In Part IV of the book, reference is made to "forgotten" groups that are excluded from an active, healthy, disability-free lifestyle as predicted by "successful ageing." Chapter 15 (by Sue Westwood and Nicola Carey) and chapter 16 (by Karen Watchman) address that people with mental and physical disabilities and long-term health problems have faced disadvantages, discrimination and stigmatisation during their life. In later life, ageism is added to their inequality experiences, which results in major negative consequences for their recognition and representation. Thus, accumulation of inequality

and accumulation of disability is intersected with ageism, leading to special needs in old age, apart from the ageing process itself. In chapter 17 (by Dana Rosenfeld, Damien Ridge and Jose Catalan), the authors present the complexity of the intersectionality of inequality experienced by older people living with HIV. They state that because their representation is strongly politicised, it is at the basis of and might even form a threat to recognition, and in particular to resources. An important message from chapter 18 (by Jonathan Herring) is that older people in residential care settings are excluded from optimum quality of care as predicted by the neo-liberal long-term care policies, in particular in the western world.

In Part V, which regards spatial inequality, chapter 19 (by Martin Hyde) presents a global take, revealing that the extent to which older people experience inequality with regard to resources, recognition and representation varies internationally. In chapter 20 (by Vanessa Burholt, Paula Foscarini-Craggs and Bethan Winter), the authors stress that in the United Kingdom, older adults living in the most remote and deprived areas are greatly susceptible to inequalities and exclusion. They propose that in order to enhance citizenship for all, according to standards prevailing in the society, public policy for rural areas should receive high priority. In the social gerontology field, exclusion in the workplace mainly reflects on job losses, the problems for older adults to be re-hired, and the underestimation and undervaluation of older adults' qualities. Chapter 21 (by Anette Cox) argues that the basis of this is that older adults are not being heard and that they are misrepresented or not represented, which also affects their recognition. Although spatial inequality has received attention in gerontological research, older adults in "hidden spaces" are still under-represented in this field. In Chapter 22 (by Helen Codd), advocacy to consider the position of older adults in prison is encouraged because these older adults are under-resourced not only compared with younger people in prison but also with older people in general.

Although we agree that most researches on inequalities in later life prioritise socio-economic issues, this differs regarding old age social exclusion research. The latter involves interchanges between multi-level risk factors, leading to inequities in choice and control, resources and relationships, and power and rights (Walsh et al. 2016). Scholars of old age social

exclusion not only examine its impact and prevalence due to old-age vulnerabilities but also the accumulated disadvantage for specific groups, as illustrated in this book.

To conclude, this multidisciplinary collection forms a valuable contribution to social gerontology scholarship, broadening and deepening existing knowledge of inequalities and exclusion in old age. As it makes an allusion to various intersections and a comprehensive approach to the social justice framework established by Nancy Fraser, this knowledge can be employed by policymakers to alleviate the negative consequences of multiple intertwined inequalities, experienced by the "forgotten" sub-populations of older adults. In all five parts of the book, it was highlighted that further research and policy awareness are required to raise redistribution, recognition and representation of older people in relation to its various diversities. Further intersectionality within this field would be an important step forward in research and policymaking process to shed light on and provide improved measurements for equality into the various diversities of older people.

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