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Article

Ageing in Urban Neighbourhoods: Exploring Place Insideness Amongst Older Adults in India, Brazil and the United Kingdom

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Abstract

The ageing in place agenda emphasises the importance of supporting older adults to age in their communities surrounded by the personal resources to age well. In exploring the relationship between older people and their environment, the concept of place insideness is seen as central to constructing feelings of identity, belonging and attachment in old age. Yet there has been little research exploring how older adults experience place insideness across different urban, social and cultural contexts which is an impediment to identifying effective interventions for age-friendly cities and communities. This article explores how place insideness is experienced amongst older adults across India, Brazil and the United Kingdom. The article presents qualitative findings from 294 semi-structured interviews collected across 9 cities and 27 neighbourhoods. The findings reveal that older adults cultivate their sense of place insideness in old age through dimensions of physical insideness (i.e., environmental competence in navigating and engaging in the community), social insideness (i.e., knowing others) and autobiographical insideness (i.e., shared place histories). In drawing on older people's understanding of their communities, this article explores the opportunities and challenges in developing a sense of place insideness to support ageing well. We identify implications for policy and practice in terms of how we can better design urban environments as age-friendly communities which support a greater sense of place for older people.

Keywords

Sense of place, place insideness, age-friendly communities, neighbourhood, older people

Increased ageing and urbanisation have brought about challenges and opportunities in terms of designing urban environments that support and promote healthy and active ageing (Buffel et al., 2019). In response to this, the ageing-in-place agenda has become focused on how older adults can be supported to live at home and in their community, where they can remain active, engaged, socially connected, and independent (Peace et al., 2011). Contemporary urban cities can be 'unfriendly' and 'hostile' to older adults, acting as a barrier to accessing social, economic and civic opportunities, and putting older adults at risk for isolation and loneliness (Scharf et al., 2005; Woolrych et al., 2019). In addressing this, interna-

tional policy and practice has focused on the creation of age-friendly cities and communities as environments to encourage active ageing through mobility, respect and social inclusion, transport, housing, safety, and security (Buffel et al., 2018). However, active ageing is difficult to maintain for older people, particularly in developing world countries, where access to health and social care services, public transport and outdoor spaces is compromised (Gorman et al., 2019). Moreover, urban transformations have had significant impact on older people as cities have undergone rapid socioeconomic change which has often undermined older people's attachment to their immediate community. This suggests that closer attention needs to be given to how urban environments can integrate a strong sense of place for older people, defined as the social, psychological and emotional bonds that people have with their environment and which are crucial to ageing in place (Makita et al., 2020). A strong sense of place results from having access to support for active participation, opportunities to build and sustain social networks, and assuming a meaningful role in the community (Seamon, 2013). In contrast, a feeling of displacement or 'placelessness' is associated with alienation, isolation and loneliness, often resulting in adverse health and well-being outcomes, particularly amongst vulnerable older adults (Lewicka, 2013). Notions of place are also socially and culturally situated in the norms, attitudes and perceptions attached to age, place and home (Sixsmith et al., 2014). Thus, it is important to determine how older adults negotiate place across different urban, social and cultural contexts.

Sense of Place

Phenomenological understandings of 'place' emerged in the late 20th century through the writings of Tuan, Buttimer, Relph and Seamon (Relph, 1976; Tuan, 1977; Buttimer & Seamon, 1980). This work defined the dualistic relationship between person and place, emphasising the symbiotic role between the individuals and the environments where they reside. Making a clear theoretical distinction, space was perceived as an abstract and undifferentiated environmental concept whilst place reflected the 'meaning' and 'significance' that an individual or group ascribe to their environment through prolonged, recurring, interpersonal exchanges and experience: 'Space becomes place when we get to know it better and endow it with value' (Tuan, 1977). In emphasising the experiential aspect of place, the term sense of place has been used to describe the interconnected physical, social and psychological relationships that people, and groups have with places (Cosgrove, 2000). Sense of place has been defined symbolically as 'the subjective meaning and impor-

tance that individual's give to where they reside' (Eyles & Williams, 2008), affectively to describe humans' 'affective ties with the material environment' (Tuan, 1977), and reflexively as 'a confluence of cognitions, emotions and actions organized around human agency' (Canter, 1991).

Sense of place has often subsumed other key dimensions including place attachment, place identity, place dependence and place rootedness amongst others (Patterson & Williams, 2005). Place attachment is referred to as the emotional bond between people and places that exists at an individual, social and community level to describe the affective ties that individuals develop with their environment (Lewicka, 2011; Manzo & Devine-Wright, 2013). Place identity has been described as the strongly held values (personal, social, community) that people ascribe to places and the way in which places represent a fundamental aspect of the self (Proshansky, 1978; Casakin & Bernardo, 2012). Place dependence is conceptualised as the opportunities a setting provides for achieving goals focussing on the supportive qualities of environments that people rely on (White et al., 2008). Buttimer and Seamon (1980) defined place rootedness as the 'feeling of belonging to place' (p. 77), related to the fundamental ways in which a place makes one feel as if they are an 'insider'.

Place Insideness

In recognising the temporal component of place, sense of place is seen as fluid and dynamic, being impacted by lifetime events, circumstances and positional ties as people move in and across spaces. In doing so, sense of place can be disrupted, threatened and undergo processes of renegotiation. Relph (1976) defined the concept of insideness to refer to the extent of which people feel as if they belong in place. If a person feels 'inside a place' then they feel a sense of inclusion, security and safety which results in a stronger sense of identity. Conversely, a person can feel separated or alienated from place (placelessness) which can undermine well-being as it leads to exclusion, loneliness and isolation from community life (Relph, 1976). In this sense, place is both fluid (e.g., it is impacted over time and across the life course with changes in environmental circumstances) and transactional (e.g., people are continuously modifying, using and attributing meaning to their environments as they negotiate change in their everyday lives) (Cutchin et al., 2003).

Rowles' (1978, 1993) work integrated transactional aspects of place and built upon Relph's notion of placelessness to describe a form of 'insideness' to explore how environments shape identities in old age. Physical insideness is used to describe the physical attachment and familiarity that one has with place. Social insideness refers to the level of

integration with the community and neighbourhood (e.g., through forms of social participation and civic engagement). Autobiographical insideness describes sense of self in the context of memories and past experiences in relation to place. Underpinning this, Rowles (2008) described the importance of 'being in place' in old age exploring how our relationship with place is informed by past experiences and future opportunities and challenges. Golant (2003) presented a 'trajectory of change' approach to understanding place, where sense of place is dependent on the past (shaped by cultural and social experiences in relation to place) and ability to influence changes moving forward (to take an active role in shaping those environments).

Ageing and Place

Research has explored the way the physical environment supports or impedes the ability to 'age-in-place'. Much of the research has been driven by a model of person–environment congruence that compares the person's physical and mental capacity against environmental demands and how these impact the person's ability to perform everyday activities (Wahl & Weissman, 2003). More recent attention has been given to the experiential dimension of place and the way in which older adults engage and negotiate their everyday lives within the context of meaningful places. This has made specific the role of 'relationality' in understanding place in old age, particularly Peace's (2007) research, where place is seen as an outcome of the social, psychological and emotional interactions between person and place. Here, place is seen as a 'transaction' that is negotiated and constructed through an ongoing 'interaction' between the person and environment (Seamon, 2013) which includes perceptions, feelings, behaviours and outcomes developed as a response to the qualities or affordances (physical, social and cultural) that a place provides (Eyles & Williams, 2008). Sense of place, thus, describes a process of interpretation where an individual and/or group are involved in a dynamic and continuous process of negotiation with their environment (Jones & Evans, 2011).

In response to external threats (e.g., being forced to move home), older adults can and do initiate place-protective responses to preserve their sense of place (e.g., adapting to their environment in the event of changes to physical health and mobility and feelings of insecurity) (Fang et al., 2018). These responses (and resultant place outcomes) are influenced by the availability of place-based social interactions, environmental disruption, citizen participation and community response (Mihaylov & Perkins, 2014). Research has explored how older adults, for example, can positively respond to housing transitions in old age if the personal

and social resources are there to age well (Vasara, 2015). Thus, older adults are not 'passive' recipients to change but demonstrate agency (individual and collective) in response to external threats.

The suggestion that 'place' can help and support individual and community well-being and, therefore, support or impede the ability to age well has been a consistent theme in the literature on neighbourhoods and communities (Scharf et al., 2003). At an individual level, sense of place can be a source of positive well-being, providing feelings of safety, control and autonomy which are important in achieving personal goals and positive fulfilment and, therefore, has a central role to play in supporting healthy and active ageing (Atkinson et al., 2012). At a social level, a strong sense of place is reflected in opportunities for the development of social capital, and the provision of informal support that can provide a coping mechanism, particularly for older adults (Prieto-Flores et al., 2011). At a community level, sense of place is reinforced through opportunities for meaningful participation and involvement in neighbourhood decision-making (Mihaylov & Perkins, 2014).

Research also indicates that neighbourhood and community are important places to age (Scharlach & Lehning, 2016). Older people are often more acutely impacted by changes at the local level where they depend on place-based support (Scharf et al., 2003). Moreover, research on changing communities (e.g., areas of urban regeneration and gentrification) also suggests that physical transformation can impede or challenge sense of place in old age (e.g., by undermining a sense of place familiarity, creating a form of estrangement in the context of place) (Phillips et al., 2011).

Given the policy and practice importance, the gaps in respect of understanding sense of place in old age and the importance of cross-national research on ageing-in-place across different urban, social and cultural contexts, this paper makes a unique contribution. With a particular focus on place insideness (autobiographical, physical and social), the paper brings together experiences of older adults across different national contexts to discuss the place experiences of older adults and identify implications for the age-friendly cities and community agenda.

Method

The study undertook a cross-national case study approach in India, Brazil and the United Kingdom to capture the experiences of older adults

ageing in place. The focus was on employing sense of place as a conceptual construct to guide the exploration of older adults' experiences across a range of urban settings. The research design utilised multiple qualitative research methods, including face-to-face semi-structured interviews, go-along interviews and photo diaries. In this paper, we present findings from the semi-structured interviews component of the work gathered in India, Brazil and United Kingdom.

A collaborative approach to research design was undertaken, developing tools and methods through cross-national workshops among the academic team members with representation from 12 academic institutions (across India, Brazil and the United Kingdom) and multiple disciplines including gerontology, psychology, health studies, architecture and urban planning. In the cross-national workshops, there was an emphasis on trans-disciplinary working to extend theoretical development in the area of place and ageing, achieve methodological innovation, and to enhance opportunities for co-production (Sixsmith et al., 2017; Woolrych & Sixsmith, 2017).

We selected a total of 9 case study cities from India (Kolkata, Delhi and Hyderabad), Brazil (Pelotas, Belo Horizonte and Brasilia) and the United Kingdom (Edinburgh, Manchester and Glasgow) to represent a diversity of urban areas in terms of population ageing, urban densities and planning and policy frameworks. Within each case study city, we further selected three neighbourhoods as our study sites, forming a total of 27 neighbourhoods across the three countries. These case study neighbourhoods were chosen to reflect a broad spectrum of communities in terms of urban development (varying levels of physical transformation and change), demography (mixed tenures by age) and levels of inequality (high-, medium- and low-income groups).

An initial desk-based mapping exercise was undertaken for each neighbourhood to identify service providers and community organisations supporting older adults. This was supplemented by researcher visits to the case study neighbourhoods to identify key community organisations and groups. Recruitment strategies varied across the case study neighbourhoods and included presentations for older adult groups, flyers and leaflets distributed in the local community and recruitment via an initial phase of door to door surveys. To be included in the research, older adults needed to be at least 60 years of age and to reside in the neighbourhood. A common interview agenda was developed across the three countries, reflecting cultural sensitivities and exploring experiences of ageing in place, sense of place, challenges and barriers to living

in the community and reflection on the key domains of the age-friendly city. To promote maximum comfort and convenience, participants were given the choice of location for the interview with the majority of interviews being conducted at home. A total of 294 semi-structured interviews were undertaken with older adults in India (n = 90), Brazil (n = 100) and the United Kingdom (n = 104) with a mean age of 70.9 (age range 60–94). Interviews were digitally recorded with the permission of participants and lasted between 32 and 160 minutes. All audio was fully transcribed in the language it was conducted in and prepared for full data analysis. To enable shared analysis, transcripts in India and Brazil were translated into English.

The data analysis process was informed by a rigorous approach to cross-national analysis involving all team members. The analysis was undertaken using the six steps adapted from Braun et al. (2019). Initially, the transcripts were read and re-read by researchers and investigators within the national teams. The emphasis here was on understanding how older adults talked about living in the community, the challenges of ageing in place and the meanings they ascribe to the places which made up their everyday life context. After reading the transcripts, the second step was to individually code a number (n = 8) of the transcripts to identify areas of meaning and importance. Each national team then held a series of meetings to discuss the initial set of codings, to resolve any disagreements and to organise the related codings into a set of tentative themes. A thematic framework began to emerge within each of the national contexts. The process was then repeated until all of the transcripts had been analysed. The national teams then each met through analysis workshops to jointly analyse data and agree a shared thematic framework to organise, rename and collapse some of the themes. A cross-national analysis workshop was then held to examine the thematic frameworks for each of the countries and identify and discuss the similarities, differences and areas of 'shared silence'. After reviewing the frameworks, the concept of place insideness was identified as a theme that crosscut older adult's sense of place stories in all three countries.

The research was subject to full ethical approval through the respective lead university's (in India, Brazil and the United Kingdom) ethics committees. Informed consent was gained from all participants in advance of conducting the research. Written information sheets and consent forms were clearly communicated to older adults with particular care taken for those with low levels of literacy. All older adults were made fully aware of the aims and objectives of the research and how the

data would be collected, stored and processed. All participants were informed of the right to withdraw from the study at any time.

Findings

The findings highlighted how place insideness was constructed amongst older adults living in neighbourhoods in Brazil, India and the United Kingdom. Under the crosscutting theme of place insideness, three key subthemes were identified: Autobiographical Insideness (shared memories and home), Physical Insideness (environmental competence and navigating community) and Social Insideness (connecting with others). The themes were supported with key quotations from older adults, denoted by city and neighbourhood (low income (LI), medium income (MI), high income (HI)).

Autobiographical Insideness: Shared Memories and Home

There was a clear sense of place attachment in all case study neighbourhoods arising from a sense of autobiographical insideness within the community. Many older adults were bound to home and communities by shared memories, meanings and experiences (positive and negative) within the context of place. This was often reflected through a sense of place solidarity, civic participation and coming together in the evolvement of the community:

> In 1962, we were the first residents of this building, my father was the first one to enter that building, and then came the entrance where we are, the two of us came from the third floor and my neighbour is next door and we have almost like a fraternity, we were raised here so the neighbours all know us since we were little, that's a lot of family… this neighbour of mine next door has been my neighbour for 54 years. (Female, 65, Brasilia (HI), Brazil)

Experiencing a sense of insideness did not always require personal contribution and investment in the development of the community. Sometimes, just being present in the neighbourhood over a number of years and 'coping' with the changes was enough to form a sense of emotional attachment:

> I am emotionally attached to this community. Though I lived here for many years, I have not personally contributed anything here… We have coped with the changes in the community. (Female, 70, Behala (MI), Kolkata, India)

Even when the community was not seen as age friendly (e.g., obstacles to getting around or poor quality neighbourly relations), it was the sense of autobiographical insideness that still connected people to community. A strong aspect of those experiences in the lower-income communities of India and Brazil was a sense of connection to home and community despite the everyday issues people experienced:

> I was born and brought up here. Where people are born they have strong connections and feel attracted to their place. Even if neighbours are not pleasant we still feel belongingness as they are part of our neighbourhood. (Male, 72, Mehrauli (LI), Delhi, India)

> We have a water shortage. We have to wait 5 or 6 days for water availability and then we have supply for just one hour… However, we are the citizens of this place, even our ancestors belonged here, we cannot think of leaving this area. (Male, 77, Mehrauli (LI), Delhi, India)

A sense of insideness was also experienced through perceptions of rootedness to the community reflected through long standing bonds to the neighbourhood. A number of older adults, even when they had spent a considerable amount of time outside of the area, reported a strong desire to return to their community in old age:

> I was always in love with Pelotas, I lived in Porto Alegre, I did not like it. I lived in Parana, I do not like it. I came back here. My place is Pelotas. (Female, 76, Pelotas (MI), Brazil)

> A common theme is to come full circle. I use the expression coming full circle, and I've heard that before from quite a lot of older people that when you get to a certain stage of your life you want to come back to your roots. (Female, 82, Glasgow (HI), United Kingdom)

A sense of autobiographical insideness was also experienced through a set of shared community codes and principles. Many older adults reflected on the norms, values and attitudes which had traditionally orientated people to the community (e.g., knowing each other, common

respect, looking out for one another). These values were increasingly being challenged, changing the way that older adults perceived their community and undermining attachment to place:

> Well everybody knew everybody else. Not anymore. Not the same. No sense of community. Definitely not. It starts to change the way you see the place, yet know, it's not that same sense of connection that we all have. You used to know where you were. You felt centred if you know what I mean. I'm not sure communities know where they are from anymore. (Female, 81, Manchester (MI), Manchester)

In India, strong familial and intergenerational ties were being challenged by changing societal values and role of the family. To many, having a set of shared cultural values across generations was an importance source of societal well-being. Yet, changing social structures and institutions were compromising older adults' sense of purpose and value in old age:

> We have noticed that the mindset has changed… my sons and daughters have become more self-centred and are forgetting our culture, tradition and history. (Male, 76, Kolkata (MI), India)

> Nowadays many people are not interested to know about their relatives. They are busy. For our generation knowing everyone in the family was common… But now, in the city, there is no scope to know about the family. (Female, 70, Hyderabad (HI), India)

Notions of autobiographical insideness were also strongly felt within the context of home. Home was seen as a place of emotional connection and psychological attachment. To many, this was grounded in autobiographical components of place–shared memories, meanings and experiences (positive and negative) that were central to understandings of both home and community. For many, the home was a place to project a sense of self and connection to others:

> I've been here 43 years {I don't want to move}. It's important to me because it's the family home. That's how my daughter sees it when she comes back. That makes me feel good. It's the positive and negative over the years. Negative things are a part of life, how you overcome them. Other memories that have enlightened your life. That is home. (Male, 66, Edinburgh (LI), United Kingdom)

A strong sense of connection to home acted as a disincentive to moving in old age, associating loss of home with threats to their place identity in old age. Whilst the home had the potential to be a vulnerable environment in old age, a place through which social isolation and loneliness are often experienced, many older adults wanted to remain at home. Home was a place that people 'wanted to return to', an environment where social connections were sustained and where personal freedoms could be enjoyed:

> I was born and brought up here and feel attached with the people and this place. I can go out for some time but at the end of the day I want to come back here only. At this stage it is difficult to go to some new place and making new friends would not be easy. (Male, 72, Delhi (LI), India)

> I do not intend to leave… I like it very much here, I do not think I would get used to somewhere else, here you come home the time you want, you leave the time you want, it's all quiet, you know everyone, it is very good. (Male, 65, Brasilia (MI), Brazil)

In summary, a sense of autobiographical insideness was fundamental to a sense of belonging and connection to community across India, Brazil and the United Kingdom, created through shared memories and values bound together by a common association to place. Older adults often used the home and community as a place to project a strong sense of personal identity and self as well as a sense of commonality experienced through being part of a community. This form of insideness was felt despite some of the difficulties and challenges older adults experienced within the community.

Physical Insideness: Environmental Competency and Navigating Community

A sense of physical insideness was reflected through a strong sense of familiarity that older adults had in relation to their environment. The use of everyday places within the community had the potential to create a sense of connection to the community. Yet, developing these forms of attachment was dependent upon having the competency and mastery to navigate outdoor spaces. For many, it was difficult to move around urban

spaces, creating a sense of fear and anxiety in leaving the home, and compromising access to health and well-being supports for older people:

> …her life is taken up by getting to medical appointments for different things. So she'll have to go down the road towards Manchester to the hospital. She'll have to go, until very recently anyway, every Tuesday to the anticoagulation clinic down in Withington. And then go a different way to her podiatry appointment. And then somewhere else to her GP. Weeks can go passed when she's got an appointment like four days out of five maybe. And that basically takes up the whole day for her getting somewhere and getting back. (Female, 65, Manchester (MI), United Kingdom)

The threat of physical barriers and impediments to getting around undermined older adults' sense of competence in terms of moving around the community. In all countries, a sense of physical insideness was compromised by a lack of basic physical infrastructure within the community (e.g., complete absence of pavements and sidewalks through which to move around):

> When one walks they stumble on the roads continuously since there are many rugged areas, gaps and holes in the roads. That is a great challenge indeed. (Male, 75, Kolkata (MI), India)

> There are a lot of holes, a walking accident, there's no signage, there's nothing. A person with a little difficulty, which was the case with my brother in a wheelchair, then access is very terrible. Very bad. Then you are walking there and the root of the tree is raised. For an older person this is dangerous. And an old man falling, people, you have no idea how bad it is. (Male, 61, Belo Horizonte (HI), Brazil)

> Yes they {the pavements} are not smooth at all. I have fell three times on the main road because of the pavements. The council don't do anything. They tend to forget we are there. (Female, 72, Manchester (LI), United Kingdom)

A number of older adults did not feel visible within the local neighbourhood which compromised their perceived right to move around public spaces. As a result, some undertook conscious decisions to remain visible within the community in order to validate a sense of 'self in place' even when this was stigmatising to the older person:

> A lady in the community now has had to buy herself a high visibility vest to cross the road because she's terrified that the traffic won't see her. It's stigmatising isn't it? And buses tend to not stop for her either if they don't see her. So that's why she does it as well. To remain heard and seen. (Female, 65, Manchester (MI), United Kingdom)

The ability to develop a sense of physical insideness was also compromised by barriers to accessing public transportation. This included difficulties in connecting to different forms of transport, lack of shelter at bus stops and inaccessible transport nodes. There was a lack of seamless transportation options for older adults which resulted in older adults having to take longer and more arduous journeys to get to their destination:

> We do not have a metro station in Behala, if we need to travel by metro then we have to go to Tollygunge or Kalighat metro station which takes more than half an hour, this is quite challenging for us… the journey becomes quite hectic at least for older people like us. (Male, 64, Kolkata (MI), India)

Even when public transport could be accessed, the journeys themselves were often precarious. Many reported experiences of fall events, lacking access to suitable seating and insensitivity from transport providers:

> The buses are often full and it's difficult to find a seat. I stand on the bus. I do not know if I have a right to ask them to move from their seat. (Female, 63, Hyderabad (HI), India)

> I use a lot of public transportation… Not angry, but annoyed, because the elderly are increasing, and the buses have decided to reduce the seats that are reserved for the elderly. But I think you need to train the drivers more. For example, when braking sometimes… I see many seniors complaining that they do not wait for the elderly to sit down and they pull away. When they see an elderly group, sometimes the bus just goes straight by. (Female, 78, Belo Horizonte (HI), Brazil)

> It's terrible on the buses. I have to say to them 'will you let me sit down please' before you move. I don't use the buses now, although I've got my bus pass. I'm frightened now of falling again, you know, especially the buses when they jerk and there's people behind you and they push you. (Female, 92, Manchester (LI), United Kingdom)

A sense of place insideness was also compromised by lack of access to basic amenities while planning journeys. Many communities lacked accessible public washrooms which made it complex navigating the community. There was a sense of discomfort, stigma and injustice in having to approach service providers to use toilets, which reinforced perceptions of being 'old' and 'dependent':

> If you do feel like peeing, what do you do? If I feel like doing it and I'm in the middle of the street here, and then what? Am I going to beg at the gas station? It's a bad situation right? In the Liberdade square, there was a bathroom there, closed it right. I think people spoil everything. (Female, 61, Belo Horizonte (MI), Brazil)

These vulnerabilities (and feelings of place outsideness) were further compounded by feelings of insecurity in terms of fear of crime. Older adults across a number of neighbourhoods in India, Brazil and the United Kingdom reported high levels of perceived crime, identifying a discomfort when using public space. Whilst outdoor spaces were often safe during the daytime, they were consciously avoided in the evening:

> We do not go out on the street anymore because we are afraid… we are totally insecure with fear of violence. (Female, 67, Pelotas (MI), Pelotas)

> No, I do not go out at night. I'm afraid. I do not go out at night. I'm afraid of violence. We are already old and do not go out at night. It was seven o'clock, eight o'clock, I'm already inside my house, stuck, the doors closed, alone. I am alone. (Female, 79, Belo Horizonte (LI), Brazil)

> Yes, I stopped going out at night. {…} Well, the streets are not safe. {…} No, they're not safe. I mean, they look at me and think, oh…but you see, the thing is you've not got the same confidence. (Male, 86, Edinburgh (HI), United Kingdom)

Those who expressed confidence in moving around public spaces reported feeling more secure. This was linked to environmental mastery in knowing when, where and how to navigate safer spaces:

> We walk here at night, one o'clock in the morning, at midnight, I'm always walking here, without any danger, quiet and every day I go down with her at midnight. I'll be there until midnight and then I'll leave. (Male, 65, Brasilia (MI), Brazil)

Broader transformational changes in the community (e.g., urban regeneration programmes) also had an impact on ageing in place. Rapidly transforming urban environments had the potential to create a sense of disconnection from place, undermining their sense of stability and creating a form of place estrangement for older people:

> It seems they want to build. The business is to build… this neighbourhood of ours. I saw the transformation of this neighbourhood. So I began to feel that it was no longer the Belo Horizonte that I wanted. (Female, 60, Belo Horizonte (HI), Brazil)

> A lot of other cities have done this, it has regenerated the city centre, spent a lot of money in creating a glossy, shiny, trendy, busy city centre and that has been successful in the sense that it brings tourists in… all that busy, glitzy city centre I think scares older people off. (Male, 66, Manchester (HI), United Kingdom)

In summary, a sense of place insideness was felt when older adults were able to master their immediate community settings which resulted from feeling a sense of familiarity when navigating outdoor environments. This was compromised by physical barriers including poorly maintained sidewalks and a lack of public washrooms which created anxiety about leaving home and fear of using public space. Similarly, transport interventions were often unreliable which disrupted travel arrangements for older adults and compromised the ability to get to their destination safely.

Social Insideness: Connecting with Others

For a number of older adults, knowing your neighbours, passing civilities and the familiarity of knowing others were important aspects of developing a sense of social insideness in the community. This sense of familiarity was created through regular contact with people (exchanging everyday pleasantries) and feelings of intimacy and closeness to others. The feeling of 'being known' and recognised at a street level created a sense of belongingness:

> I'm not always in the house of other people, but it's a good morning and a good afternoon, how are you, type of friendship. (Male, 81, Brasilia (LI), Brazil)

> I know each and everyone here. They're very close to me. So, I definitely bear a different kind of emotional attachment with the locality and people of the locality. Everybody is known. Every face is known. (Male, 75, Kolkata (MI), India)

> Yes, I don't want to go far from here now. I would know nobody. I know neighbours, I know the women in the next building. Her mother was my neighbour the last house I lived in. So I know that girl, we say hello to each other, things like that. It's the people you know that you miss, just seeing familiar faces, that's what it's all about, seeing the familiar faces. (Female, 86, Glasgow (LI), United Kingdom)

Place belonging was articulated through shared experiences 'with others' which took place within 'specific places' in the community and which was bound people to place. Such settings acted as the material environments where people lived and conducted their daily routines providing them with a sense of security and comfort linked to friendliness and feeling 'at homeness'. This collective sense of identify afforded feelings of inclusion and feeling 'a part of' something:

> I try to take part in the choir because it is very important, the group likes it very much… otherwise there are people who retire and they sometimes stay home alone. (Male, 75, Pelotas (HI), Brazil)

> They know everybody. You see that's the good thing about the club is when the club started up yes certain people knew certain people. But they didn't know the other ones. They know everybody now. So if you go into a place and everybody that's sitting there, say 30 people sitting there for talking's sake, and you know everybody, and everybody knows you, you don't feel left out. You feel part of it. You're one of them. You're not who's that, who's this? (Male, 61, Edinburgh (LI), United Kingdom)

To others, community and day care centres provided important environments where place attachment and insideness were cultivated. The following resident is reporting on how community facilities afforded formal and informal opportunities for sharing problems, engaging in pastimes and developing emotional supports:

> I go there (community day care centre) because I feel so relaxed. I have been coming here for six years as far as I can remember. This place means a lot to

> me, every day I come here, we do prayer, then sit and talk about any topic, any problem we can share with the people here. This place makes us happy, supports us emotionally, advises us when we need it, tries to solve our problems. This place is very much part of my life. Makes us happy as we can talk freely with each other with people of the same age. We can watch television and listen to old music. Thus I am attached with this place. (Female, 66, Kolkata (LI), India)

A sense of social insideness also created a feeling of being 'looked after' in times of adversity, creating a buffer to 'protect' individuals in old age:

> It's exactly this affection, this fraternity that lets you know that people live in isolation, so people visit when something is needed, everyone rushes to help you and that's very good. (Female, 65, Brasilia (HI), Brazil)

> In this locality, whenever we need someone, everyone is just one phone call away. We just call them and immediately they are here to help us in any situation. (Male, 75, Kolkata (MI), India)

> Community spirit wise… I have always lived here because I like, I feel safe, I feel if I needed something there is always somebody I can go to. (Male, 61, Edinburgh (LI), United Kingdom)

In summary, communities were central to feelings of social insideness amongst older adults across the three countries. Having spaces within the community which are non-judgemental and provide spaces for people to come together can provide an important source of support in the lives of older adults. If designed effectively, these can offer both formal and informal opportunities to share problems and address challenges in old age. However, the inability to navigate the community can compromise the ability to reach key destinations, thus, acting as a barrier to social participation.

Conclusion

Place insideness offers a conceptual framework through which we can understand the experiences of older adults. The experiences of older

adults across India, Brazil and the United Kingdom suggest that critical consideration needs to be given to the lived experience of older adults within and across urban, social and cultural contexts. Enabling optimum environments to age well requires that we support older adults to develop physical, social and emotional connections to their more immediate environments. Environmental competence was undermined for many older adults living across the case study cities, particularly those experiencing mobility problems in old age which in turn had an impact on their sense of familiarity and connection to community. The material context in some of the lower-income communities in India and Brazil was notably different from the United Kingdom, including the absence of basic physical infrastructure which created barriers to accessing key services and opportunities.

Changing lifestyles and familial supports are particularly undermining connections to place in India and Brazil, where traditional networks of support are being compromised by changing mobilities and where intergenerational supports are eroding a sense of belonging with the context of the family and community. Place identity for older adults is also being threatened within areas of urban regeneration and rapid physical transformation which is undermining a sense of connection to place within communities, while challenging some of the strong memories and values that older adults hold in terms of home and community. This suggests that age-friendly interventions need to be more clearly aimed at cultivating a sense of place insideness amongst older adults which preserves those values in their lives. Here, interventions aimed at the physical environment need to consider the ways in which older adults negotiate access to places and spaces in the community and develop a sense of belonging. While physical interventions like walkable communities are important, they also need to be seen in the broader context of the social, cultural and political attachments that are required to age well. For example, accessible communities provide opportunities to support everyday routines which enable communities to come together and are key ingredients for developing social networks, civic engagement and forms of neighbourhood participation.

There is also a need to see the ways in which physical, social and autobiographical forms of insideness are experienced and integrate these into age-friendly city interventions. Indeed, threats to physical insideness created feelings of estrangement and alienation to place which undermined both autobiographical insideness (deeply held memories and values in the context of community) and social insideness (opportu-

nities to develop social attachments and connections within the community). In negotiating place insideness, places are relationally connected (i.e., individuals ascribe meaning to people and place in their everyday practices but these need to be socially and cultural situated). Meanings of home and community are continually being renegotiated in the context of changing mobilities and urban transformations, and it's the relationality between these that needs to be better understood and designed within age-friendly city and community interventions. This is important if we are to create urban environments that are not only physically accessible, but which are also sensitive to social and cultural dimensions of ageing in place and provide the resources and support to age well.

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