A. Older Adults’ Participation in Society
   ✦ Civic Engagement
   ✦ Potential Barriers to Civic Engagement of Older Adults

B. Older Adults’ Participation in Housing Settings
   ✦ Older Adults’ Participation in Residential Care
   ✦ Older Adults’ Participation in Housing Policies

C. Older Adults’ Participation in Research
   ✦ Community-Based Participatory Research with Older Adults
Two Distinct Spheres of Civic Engagement

✧ Social engagement

- Characterized by actions that connect individuals to others and that relate to care and development.
- Acting as a member of, donating, volunteering for an individual, association, or non-profit organization.

✧ Political engagement

- Behaviors that influence the legislative, electoral or judicial process, including decision making and resource distribution at the local, state, and national levels.

(McBride, 2006)
Potential Barriers to Civic Engagement of OA (1)

- The need to work longer;
- Caregiving;
- Belonging to an excluded group;
- Living with mobility and health challenges

‘Democracy demands representation, and for civic opportunities to be inaccessible to members of what will be the nation’s largest segment of the population represents and injustice.’ (p.67) (McBride, 2006)
Potential Barriers to Civic Engagement of OA (2)

✧ Influences of Neo-Liberalism

- Influence of neo-liberal advocacy of market solutions and individual responsibility.

- The risks of economic, physical and social dependency associated with ageing are now onto the shoulders of families and individual older people.

‘Individuals who are dependent on the state for financial support become the targets of policy and political rhetoric that aims to manage self-reliance and engagement in a productive activity.’ (p.391)  

(Conway & Crawshaw, 2009)
Older Adults’ Participation in Society

Potential Barriers to Civic Engagement of OA (3)

✧ Anti-Ageing Society and the ‘Walt Disney Factor’

- Fear of death and promotion of the youthfulness;
- Walt Disney Factor: children are more attractive than elderly people;
- Promoting the participation of the ‘Healthy Senior Citizen’ - an active, autonomous and responsible senior citizen;
- Excluding the participation of the ‘Flawed Senior Citizenship’ - a dependent, infirm and passive senior citizen.

(Conway & Crawshaw, 2009)
Potential Barriers to Civic Engagement of OA (4)

- Government Participation Policy promotes this dichotomy by:
  
  - Excluding organizations who asking for increased resources or redistributive policies, social and economic equity;
  
  - A participatory process and policy context difficult to understand for the citizen with physical decline, lack of social capital or ‘confidence’;
  
  - Absence of culturally sensitive public services, racism and sexism;
  
  - Tokenism: consultation process but little opportunities to challenge expert authority;

(Conway & Crawshaw, 2009)
Potential Barriers to Civic Engagement of OA (5)

‘The core characteristics of current modes of governmentality – including self-government, civil renewal and participation in the governing process – are often beyond the full capabilities of many people as they age further into old age. The healthy senior citizens ideal (...) can be understood as implicitly anti-ageing because it debars full consideration of physical decline and mortality from governmental agendas.’ (p.396)

(Conway & Crawshaw, 2009)
According to the authors, the implementation of a new “participatory” governance for older adult have led to the creation of a “Healthy Senior Citizenship” – an active, autonomous and responsible senior citizen – in opposition to a “Flawed Senior Citizenship” – a dependent, infirm and passive senior citizen. In your opinion, how can we as gerontologist avoid this dichotomy in our researches/practices with older adults?
B. OLDER ADULTS’ PARTICIPATION IN HOUSING SETTINGS

1. Older Adults’ Participation in Residential Care

2. Older Adults’ Participation in Housing Policies
1. Consumerist Approach

- Improve the quality of services by making them responsive to the needs and preferences of those who use them.
- Involvement is often consultation to gather people’s views to inform service decisions about what to do in the future in order to become more profitable or effective.

2. Citizen-Consumer Approach

- ‘Taking an active role in the management, the day-to-day running and the social life of the residential community where informants lived’ (p.328)

- Types of Participation
  - Social participation
  - Practical participation
  - Democratic participation

(Abbott, Fisk, & Forward, 2000; Andrews et al., 2004)
3. Democratic Approach

Definition of participation

Being involved implies older people being active participants in care planning rather than passive recipients, and they should be able to influence both the shape and choice of services (Beresford 1993 cited in Andrews et al., 2004)

Purpose of this approach

Expand the capacity of users to participate in decision making linked to the design, management and review of services. Transfer in power or control is the main aims of the democratic approach.

(Andrews et al., 2004)
Effective Participation

- Access and support for user involvement,
- Change, linked with and following user involvement, that achieves real improvement in users’ lives,
- Equality in involvement,
- Users being able to define their own criteria and outcomes for involvement.

(Andrews et al., 2004)
Question 2


The authors outlined three types of participation in residential settings for older adults: 1) social participation, 2) practical participation, and 3) democratic participation. In residential settings, how can staff support/stimulate resident’s participation?
Developing Housing Facilities that Promote Participation

1. Elder-friendly, livable, healthy, or life-long communities;
2. NORCs linked with supportive services (NORC-SSPs);
3. Elder villages
4. Cohousing communities
5. Cooperative Housing

(Williams, 2005; Dansereau & Baril, 2006; Glass, 2009; Golant, 2011; Greenfield et al., 2012)
Creation of a credible group of older adults: ‘The Housing Reference Group’ (based on CBPR project *House for Life*);

Space for consultation and partnerships between older adults and housing officers;

Open-minded individuals in local Housing Authority.

**Joseph Rowntree Foundation Report:** Older people 'getting things done': Involvement in policy and planning initiatives

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**Figure 3 A framework for involving older people in housing issues**

- An infrastructure for involving older people in policy and service planning
- Older people's housing strategy groups
- Willingness and openness in agencies to collaborate with service users in developing housing policy and planning services
- Outcomes that influence change

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The Housing for Older People Forum: a platform for partnership working between older people and housing officers

(Reed *et al.*, 2006)
Supporting and developing the involvement of older people in housing issues:

✧ Use effective communication strategies
  • *Language used is meaningful to all parties*
  • *Be ‘kept up to date with developments and the outcomes of their efforts’*

✧ Get the infrastructure right
  • *Support participation with professionals who are cognizant of OA’ special needs*

✧ Provide training for those taking part
  • *Experience and knowledge of OA need to be channelled appropriately for their message to have the greatest impact.*
  • *’They need to learn to ask the right questions of the right people, and to involve those people at the right time to be effective.’*

✧ Seek new, innovative ways to involve older people.

(Reed et al., 2006)
C. OLDER ADULTS’ PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH

Community-Based Participatory Research

‘If we knew what it was we were doing, it would not be called research, would it?’

- Albert Einstein
Definition

✧ ‘A participatory, democratic process concerned with developing practical knowing in the pursuit of worthwhile human purpose, grounded in a participatory worldview…[and bringing] together action and reflection, theory and practice, in participation with others in the pursuit of practical issues of concern to people, and more generally the flourishing of individual persons and communities.’

(Reason & Bradbury, 2006 cited in Kindon, Pain, & Kesby, 2007)
Definition (2)

Many labels to involve ‘laypeople in the research process’: collaborative action research, action inquiry, participatory action research, and community-based participatory research (CBPR).

**Ontology**: ‘Human beings are dynamic agents capable of reflexivity and self-change, and an epistemology that accommodates the reflexive capacities of human beings within the research process.

**Epistemology**: there is socially constructed reality within which multiple interpretations of a single phenomenon are possible:

- Feminism
- Poststructuralism
- Marxist critical theory

(Kindon, Pain, & Kesby, 2007; Doyle & Timonen, 2010)
Community-based participatory research (3)

Principles (1)

1) CBPR recognizes community as a unit of identity;

2) CBPR builds on strengths and resources within the community;

3) CBPR facilitates collaborative, equitable partnership in all research phases and involves and power-sharing process that attends to social inequalities;

4) CBPR promotes co-learning and capacity building among all partners;

5) CBPR integrates and achieves a balance between research and action for the mutual benefit of all partners;

(Israel, et al., 2008)
COMMUNITY-BASED PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH (4)

Principles (2)

6) CBPR emphasizes public health problems of local relevance and also ecological perspectives that recognize and attend to the multiple determinants of health and disease;

7) CBPR involves systems development through a cyclical and iterative process;

8) CBPR disseminates findings and knowledge gained to all partners and involves all partners in the dissemination process;

9) CBPR requires a long-term process and commitment to sustainability.

(Israel, et al., 2008)
Involvement of Older Adults in CBPR

- Can be viewed along a continuum – from service-user informant to research analyst or a continuum between consumerism and empowerment.

**CBPR Participation Continuum**

**CONSUMERISM**

- **Tokenistic Involvement**
  (OA as a research informant – interview or advisory panel)

**EMPOWERMENT**

- **Co-ownership of the research process**
  (OA as an actor and owner or the project)

(Walker, 2007; Doyle & Timonen, 2010)
‘CBPR seeks to empower participants by giving them (co)ownership or the research process. (…) the researchers act as facilitators, helping transform the participant from passive subjects of the research project to actors and owners of the project, determining their own agenda, designing the project, and analyzing the results.’

(Doyle & Timonen, 2010, p. 247)
Advantages of CBPR with Older Adults

- Ethical value of promoting autonomy and recognizing the abilities and skills of OA;
- Allows OA to assess the utility and relevance of particular projects and initiatives in the light of their needs;
- Strengthen community networks;
- Increases the utility and credibility of research findings;
- Creates the research-practice interface.

(Doyle & Timonen, 2010)
Characteristics of CBPR with Older Adults

✧ Empowering;
✧ Colearning process;
✧ Contributes to community building and system changes;
✧ Balance research and action;
✧ Involve a long term process and a commitment to sustainability.

(Blair & Minkler, 2009)
Why OA Get Involved in CBPR?

✧ The value of research and importance of gathering ‘evidence-based’ informations on local services;

✧ Development of close relationship with a number of service providers and policy makers;

✧ Hope of an official recognition of the significance of the research findings at the conclusion of the project;

✧ Furnishement of tangible benefits (e.g. acquire information on entitlements and age-specific services available in their area);

✧ Socialization.

(Doyle & Timonen, 2010)
Question 3


Consider this affirmation:

“It is important that the label *participatory* research is not hijacked as a catch-all mantra for any research that simply engages the research subjects. It is essential that, in line with the original intent [of CBPR], this model of research have the objective of extending co-ownership of the research to the people whom is concerns.”

In your opinion, what are the skills/values that a researcher needs to conduct this type of research?
Participatory Action Researchers are generally:

- Hybrids of scholar/activist where neither is privileged;
- Interdisciplinary;
- Mavericks/heretics;
- Patient;
- Optimistic, believing in possibility of change;
- Sociable and collaborative;

- Practical and concerned with achieving real outcomes with real people;
- Able to flexible and accommodate chaos, uncertainty and messiness – able to tolerate paradoxes and puzzles and sense their beauty and humor;
- Attracted to complex, multi-dimensional, intractable, dynamic problems that can only be partially addressed and partially resolved;
- Engaged in embodied and emotional intellectual practice.

(Kindon, Pain, & Kesby, 2007)
CONCLUSION

Participation, Participation, Participation…

• Participation of older adults in the society is possible if we fight ageism and promote inclusive participatory policies;
• Participation of older adults in housing settings is possible if we create spaces for involvement and empowerment;
• Participation of older adults in research is possible if we want to put the effort;
REFERENCES


THANK YOU!