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Climate Change and Tropical Ageing in Place

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INTRODUCTION

- The proportion of Australia's population in older age groups continues to increase (Commonwealth of Australia, 2008).
- The 65+ age group is projected to make up over one-fifth of Australia's population in 2031, compared with just 12 percent in 2001 (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2010).
- In Queensland, the number of people aged 65+ will triple over a period of 30 years, from 400,000 in 2001 to 1.2 million in 2031 (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2010).

INTRODUCTION

- To respond to the rapidly ageing population, the Australian Government has reiterated a commitment to a healthy ageing Australia.
- Healthy ageing is defined as the development and maintenance of optimal physical, social and mental wellbeing for Australian people throughout their lives (Commonwealth of Australia, 2001).
- To achieve the goal of healthy ageing, the Australian Aged Care Reform Package 2012 aims at providing \$955.4 million over five years to help older people to stay at home (Commonwealth of Australia, 2012), namely ageing in place (AiP).

INTRODUCTION

- AiP refers primarily to people remaining living at home into older age.
- AiP as a philosophy of care also means that older people are supported to remain in the home environment as their care needs increase (Commonwealth of Australia, 2002).
- AiP thus positively contributes to an increase in wellbeing, independence, social participation and healthy ageing (Bookman, 2008).

INTRODUCTION

- A literature review on AiP nationally and internationally identifies a number of research gaps. This research project aims at addressing these research gaps.
 - AiP research in Australia primarily focuses on older Australians who live in metropolitan centres (Davis & Barlett, 2008). Little research has focused on AiP in regional and rural areas.
 - Cultural variations of AiP have been neglected in the literature (Li, 2013; Peace, Holland, & Hellaher, 2011).

INTRODUCTION

- Research gaps (Cont.)
 - AiP research mainly focuses on housing design and conditions (Jones, de Jonge, & Phillips, 2008), home ownership (Schofield, Davey, Keeling, & Parsons, 2006), living preferences (de Jonge, Jones, Phillips, & Chung, 2011) and social environments (e.g., social support) (de Jonge, et al., 2011). Little attention has been paid to the impact of climate change on AiP.
 - The trends towards population ageing and climate change are predictable in the short- and medium-run, yet they remain uncertain in the long run. While we are familiar with a range of issues in climate change and various spheres of social life, we remain largely uncertain how future climate change will affect the social, economic and political environment in which AiP will take place.

INTRODUCTION

The primary objective of this paper is to:

- Explore subjective AiP experiences among three different cultural groups: Anglo Australians, Indigenous Australians and migrant Australians

METHODS: PARTICIPANTS

- Three households
 - Anglo Australian: A 60ish female
 - Aboriginal Australian: A 60ish female
 - Refugee Australian: A 60ish couple (Husband : 68 yrs old, wife: 61 yrs old)

METHODS: PROCEDURE

- Ethical approval from the Human Research Committee, JCU
- Semi-structured interviewing using the Facet of Life Wheel

METHODS: PROCEDURE

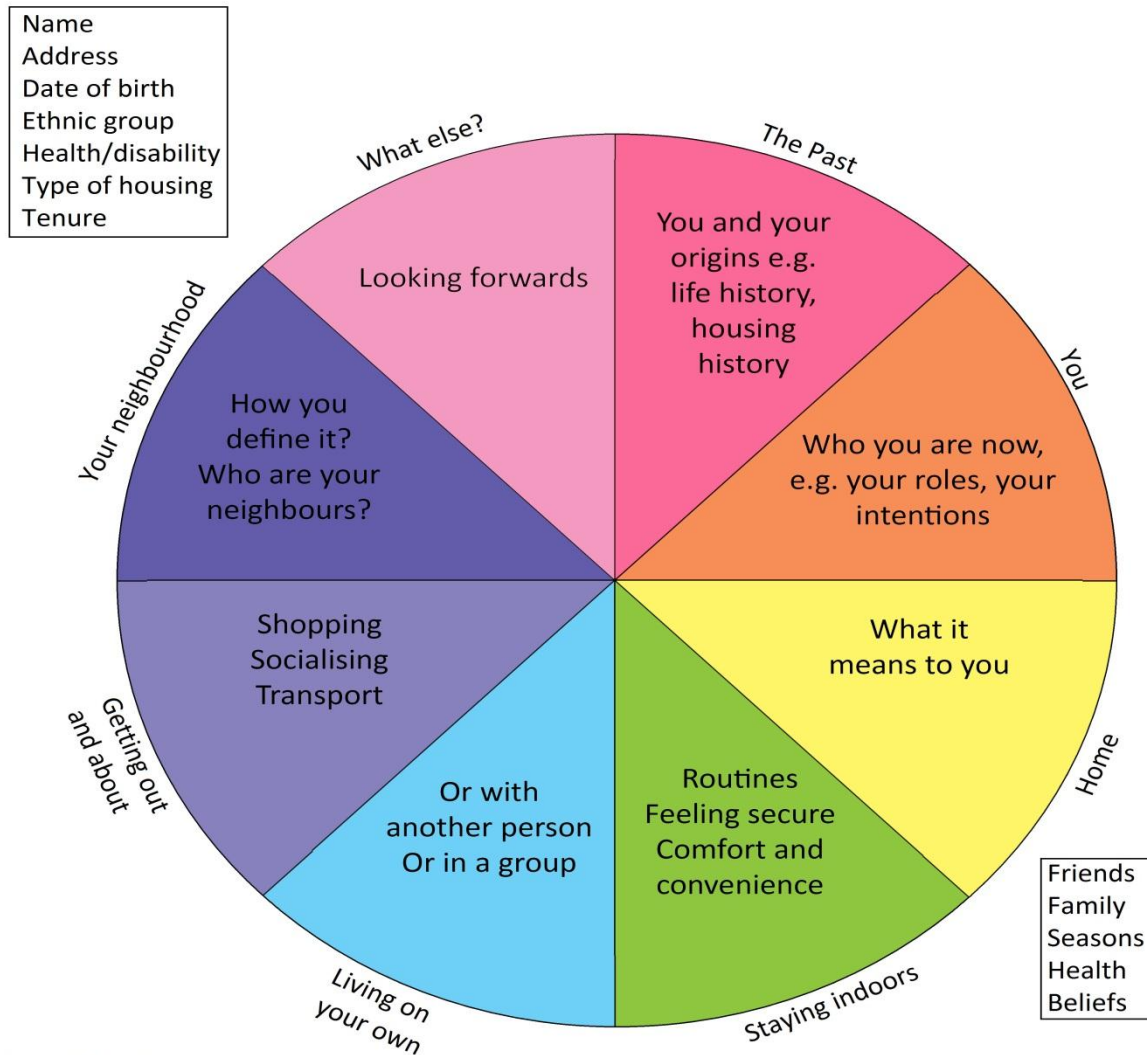


Figure 2. The 'Facets of Life Wheel'.
Source: Peace, Holland and Kellaheer (2006: 26)

RESULTS: IMPRESSIONS OF THE PARTICIPANTS

- Anglo Australian
 - Retired
 - Lots of laughing throughout the interview
- Aboriginal Australian
 - Still working
 - Lots of laughing throughout the interview
- Refugee Australian
 - Unemployed since arriving in Townsville
 - Depressed, worries, lonely, loss in place

RESULTS: HOME OWNERSHIP

- Anglo Australian
 - Rental from Housing Commission
- Aboriginal Australian
 - Owner of the home
- Refugee Australian
 - Rental from Housing Commission

RESULTS: REASONS OF MOVING TO TOWNSVILLE

- Anglo Australian
 - Need to live in a warmer place because the husband has osteoporosis
- Aboriginal Australian
 - Want to move out from a mining town
- Refugee Australian
 - Under the Government's regional resettlement policy

RESULTS: MEANING OF HOME

- Anglo Australian
 - A hub of everything
 - Everybody comes together
 - Your own place to call yours and to be able to do anything you want to do
- Aboriginal Australian
 - Safe heaven
 - Where I can relax and do what I want to do
 - Having my family coming together
- Refugee Australian
 - Where the family comes together
 - Where we can relax and rest

RESULTS: MEANING OF COMMUNITY

- Anglo Australian
 - Sewing group, church
 - Where a lot of people get on together, pitch in and generally make life peaceful
- Aboriginal Australian
 - Scrapbooking group, watch football with friends but stopped after her son died two years ago
 - Where people live and enjoy whatever facilities available
 - Where people look out for each other, a safe heaven
 - Where people have responsibilities for the maintenance and welfare of the community
- Refugee Australian
 - The only visit is the Karen community and a church due to limited English skills and abilities.
 - Visiting parks on their own.
 - Community is a building, a relationship towards inner peace.

RESULTS: COPING WITH THE CLIMATE – HUMIDITY AND HEAT

- **Anglo Australian**
 - It is fine in the house as we have the air conditioning system covering the entire house.
 - Outside is a problem. For example, I do gardening less in summer.
- **Aboriginal Australian**
 - I had swollen feet when I first moved here but no anymore now.
 - I am now immune to the heat.
- **Refugee Australian**
 - The heat affects our emotions. We only have fans in our house.
 - We would like to move to other states. But we were told we would not be able to access resources in other states because of the regional resettlement arrangement. It is very confusing for us.

RESULTS: COPING WITH THE CLIMATE – CYCLONES

- Anglo Australian
 - Yasi: my backyard was flooding. I was sitting on the middle of my bed, just petrified.
 - I feel safe now as I know my house is strong enough.
- Aboriginal Australian
 - Yasi: I did not feel safe because it was the worse I had been in and I did not know what to expect. I feel safe now as I have experiences it.
 - People coming together to help each other
- Refugee Australian
 - Yasi: Some of my friends came to my house. It was very dangerous.
 - Are there any groups would come to evacuate for life saving?
 - Are there any organizations that help to rebuild?

DISCUSSION

- While many aspects of older age are shared, issues of culture, social class and ethnicity clearly shape people's ageing experiences (Li, 2013).
- People from different cultures age in place differently (Li, 2013).
- Refugee Australians experience higher levels of vulnerability to heat waves and tropical cyclones due to their lower social economic status and restricted access to aged care services (Atwell, Correa-Velez, & Gifford, 2007; Mercer, Kelman, Taranis, & Suchet-Pearson, 2009).
- More information, instrumental and social support is needed for older people from refugee background.

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