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ABSTRACT

Developing age-friendly cities and communities has become a key part of policies aimed at improving the quality of life of older people in urban areas. The World Health Organization has been especially important in driving the "age-friendly" agenda, notably through its global network of age-friendly cities and communities. Despite the expansion and achievements of the network, challenges remain in responding to the growth of inequality and the impact of economic austerity on aging policies. Against the background of these limitations, this article sets out a "manifesto for the age-friendly movement" aimed at raising the aspirations of what is now a worldwide movement. The areas covered in the manifesto are challenging social inequality, widening participation, coproducing and codesigning age-friendly communities, encouraging multisectoral and multidisciplinary collaboration, and integrating research with policy. The article concludes with a discussion on developing age-friendly work as a contribution to a new agenda for urban aging.

Introduction

Population aging is taking place across all countries of the world, raising major issues for the direction of social policy. The proportion of those aged 60 years and older in the Global North increased from 12% in 1950 to 23% in 2013 and is expected to reach 32% in 2050. In the Global South, the share of older persons increased slowly between 1950 and 2013, from 6% to 9%, but is expected to accelerate in the coming decades, reaching 19% in 2050 (United Nations, 2014a). Of equal importance has been the spread of urbanization, with more than half of the world's population (54%) now living in urban areas and an expected increase to around two-thirds by 2050 (United Nations, 2014b).

Soja and Kanai (2007, p. 68) note the extent to which "Dense and heterogeneous cities and city regions have become the driving forces of the global economy, generating enormous wealth as well as technological innovation and

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cultural creativity." Cities are regarded as central to economic development, attracting migrants and supporting new knowledge-based industries (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2015; Sudjic, 2016). The regeneration of many cities provides opportunities for innovations in housing and services suitable for a range of age and income groups. Cities produce many advantages for older people in the form of access to medical services, provision of cultural and leisure facilities, and necessities for daily living (Phillipson, 2010). At the same time, they may also create feelings of vulnerability and insecurity arising from high levels of population turnover, environmental problems, and reduced availability of low-cost or affordable housing (De Donder, Buffel, De Witte, Dury, & Verté, 2013; Smith, 2009).

The pressures on urban environments suggest significant challenges for policies seeking to reconcile population aging with urban development (Buffel & Phillipson, 2016). An emerging theme has concerned the need to create what has been termed "age-friendly cities and communities." Alley, Liebig, Pynoos, Banerjee, and Choi (2007, p. 4) define an age-friendly community as a "… place where older people are actively involved, valued, and supported with infrastructure and services that effectively accommodate their needs" (see also Beard & Montawi, 2015).

The period from the mid-2000s saw a substantial growth in interest in age-friendly issues, with a focus on problems facing older people living in urban environments (Steels, 2015). This initial period of development recorded a variety of achievements (documented below) that stimulated new approaches in areas such as the built environment, housing, and neighborhood design. However, a combination of widening inequalities within urban environments and the impact of austerity on local government budgets has raised questions about future progress in age-friendly and related activities. This article makes a contribution to the debate on the future of age-friendly programs by, first, reviewing the origins and development of activities in this area, with a focus on the work of the World Health Organization (WHO); second, considering the benefits and limitations of age-friendly work; third, examining the relationship between urban change and age-friendly cities; and fourth, setting out a manifesto for the age-friendly movement, focusing on social inequality, widening participation, coproducing and codesigning age-friendly communities, encouraging multisectoral and multidisciplinary collaboration, and integrating research with policy. The article uses the term "manifesto" to convey a key purpose of the work, namely, a "declaration of policy and aims" (Oxford English Dictionary) concerned with stimulating discussion about the future of the age-friendly movement. Finally, the issues highlighted are framed within a review linking age-friendly work with a number of debates on the nature of urban development.

The development of age-friendly cities and communities

The relationship between population aging and urban change has become the focus of various initiatives, for example, through the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP), the International Federation on Ageing, and AGE Platform Europe. The "age-friendly" perspective is especially associated with an initiative from the WHO exploring the experiences of older people living in urban environments. The main product of this work was a guide identifying the key characteristics of an age-friendly community in terms of *service provision* (e.g., health services, transportation), the *built environment* (e.g., housing, outdoor spaces, and buildings), and *social aspects* (e.g., civic and social participation; WHO, 2007). This guide has since become one of the most frequently used tools to assess levels of age-friendliness of cities and communities in contrasting environments across the world (Plouffe, Kalache, & Voelcker, 2016). Building on this work, the WHO launched the Global Network of Age-friendly Cities and Communities (GNAFCC) to encourage implementation of policy recommendations from the 2007 project. Since its launch in 2010, the GNAFCC has had a rapid increase in membership, reaching more than 500 cities and communities across the world by 2017.

The growth in popularity of the age-friendly movement has contributed to the development of multiple age-friendly frameworks and initiatives worldwide. These can be found under a variety of terms in the literature: age-friendly, aging-friendly, liveable, and lifetime neighborhoods/communities/cities/environments (Fitzgerald & Caro, 2014; Scharlach & Lehning, 2013; Steels, 2015). The differences reflect the range of approaches to, and organizations involved in, creating age-friendly environments. Lui et al. (2009) developed a typology for categorizing these, with models ranging from emphasis on the physical versus social environment on the one hand, and from top-down to bottom-up governance on the other. Some models focus on adapting the physical infrastructure, for example, through providing access to green spaces, promoting home adaptations, and enabling mobility and walkability (Atlanta Regional Commission, 2009), while others pay more attention to social aspects of the environment by promoting inclusion, participation, and social support (Lui et al., 2009). The "village movement" in the United States is an example of the latter approach (i.e., a grassroots initiative aimed at promoting older people's access to affordable services and reducing social isolation through efforts to transform social relationships at a community level (Greenfield, Oberlink, Scharlach, Neal, & Stafford, 2015).

Governance is another important theme discussed in the age-friendly movement (Lui et al., 2009). Warth (2016, pp. 39–40) makes the point that the age-friendly cities and communities process "recommends a highly participatory approach that engages not only older people in a meaningful way throughout the process, but also seeks alliances across government and with key stakeholders

across all sectors of society." Some models, such as the age-friendly programs in Manchester (United Kingdom) and Quebec (Canada), have placed considerable emphasis on empowering and involving older people as the main actors in developing age-friendly communities. The program in Quebec uses a participatory or bottom-up approach, one that recognizes that older people themselves "are in a better position to help discern solutions to their problems, often more effectively than these predefined by experts who are detached from their reality" (Garon, Paris, Beaulieu, Veil, & Laliberte, 2014, p. 75). The Manchester approach prioritizes the development of neighborhood-level initiatives, piloting innovative projects within local communities that recognize the centrality of older people as active citizens in developing the age-friendly approach (McGarry & Morris, 2011). In doing so, Manchester combines a top-down approach with a bottom-up one, with strong leadership from the City Council allowing for, and stimulating, the active participation of older people and grassroots organizations in developing the age-friendly agenda through a community development program, an older people's board, a wider forum of older people's groups, and a small grants scheme aimed at developing these groups (McGarry, 2018).

A key feature of these age-friendly frameworks and models concerns the role of partnerships, including community participation and stakeholder involvement (Steels, 2015). Drawing on the example of Portland in the United States, Neal, DeLaTorre, and Carder (2014, p. 96) cite "existing relationships between the university and local city planning and other government agencies" as an important strength of the age-friendly program developed in the city. In New York City, local authorities, police, and community organizations worked closely with older people to identify improvements that would increase their quality of daily life. This partnership resulted in older residents feeling safer and more engaged with their community (Steels, 2015). One study comparing the age-friendly models developed in Brussels and Manchester, two cities that pioneered the adoption of the WHO approach, also highlighted the importance of building partnerships with multiple stakeholders, including public, private, and third-sector and nongovernmental organizations (Buffel et al., 2014).

Benefits and limitations of age-friendly work

The WHO GNAFCC has recorded a variety of achievements since its launch that have been reviewed in Fitzgerald and Caro (2016), Plouffe et al. (2016), and WHO (2015a,). The main areas of success include, first, greater recognition in urban planning of the implications of population aging, especially in regard to redesigning outdoor spaces and improving transportation (Buffel, Handler & Phillipson, 2015); second, the involvement of organizations and networks within the European Union and North America and encouragement of age-friendly initiatives at national, regional, and local government levels; and third, interventions

supporting the empowerment of older people within low-income neighborhoods, for example, in projects tackling social isolation, advice on heating and health care, and widening access to cultural resources (Buffel, Handler & Phillipson, 2018; Lehning, Smith, & Kyeongmo, 2017; Tinker & Ginn, 2015).

At the same time, the limitations of age-friendly policies must also be acknowledged, including the prevalence of ageist attitudes and stereotypes, political barriers, and pressures arising from the impact of economic austerity. The first of these may contribute to various forms of exclusion in later life and may undermine the work of age-friendly programs in promoting social participation. Older people may, for example, remain excluded from policy-making processes due to prejudices and stereotypes that label them as "care-dependent" (Buffel et al., 2014). A study in Brussels, Belgium, demonstrated that while older people do have a voice in shaping care-related policies, particularly those relating to health care and social services, they are often neglected when it comes to developing housing and urban design strategies (Vanmechelen et al., 2012). Similarly, research in the United Kingdom has suggested that urban regeneration policies could greatly benefit from the skills and experience of older people and the attachments they bring to their communities (Simpson, 2010). Yet the evidence is that they often tend to be "invisible" in the implementation of such programs.

A second set of issues relates to political barriers facing age-friendly initiatives. Programs are invariably reliant on political patronage in some form or another. However, local leadership, along with the balance of political forces, may downgrade priorities for age-friendly work (Fitzgerald & Caro, 2014). In urban centers such as New York, Brussels, Melbourne, Sao Paulo, and Toronto, the idea of age-friendliness competes with wider objectives associated with economic growth and development and may in consequence appear marginal to both (Buffel et al., 2014). Age-friendly networks within cities may have limited access to key committees to influence decision making; budgets may be restricted and vulnerable to cuts in periods of austerity (see further below). These problems are likely to be compounded by the relatively recent introduction of age-friendly programs in most cities, a factor increasing their vulnerability at a time of financial stringency (see further below). Moreover, while the "age-friendly" brand may be attractive to cities concerned with demonstrating their commitment to supporting older people, the reality on the ground—in the absence of a sustained injection of resources—may be continued restrictions on the quality of daily life.

Third, age-friendly initiatives have run parallel with the implementation of policies that have substantially reduced the scale and development of aging programs (Walsh, 2015). Many cities in the WHO network have faced reductions in services assisting older people, examples being the closure or cessation of senior centers, adult education provision, leisure facilities, and home-based care (Buffel & Phillipson, 2016). Cuts to these services have been detrimental to improving the quality of life within neighborhoods, having a significant impact on older people who are likely to spend around 80% of

their time within the home and immediate locality (Wahl & Oswald, 2010). Walsh (2015, p. 93) summarizes the consequences of austerity as follows:

> … limited resources [for implementing age-friendly programs], staff shortages in public stakeholder partner organizations (due to employment moratoriums) and, consequently, difficulties in securing commitment from stakeholder partners. Such challenges signify the realities of implementing such community-based programmes on a cost-neutral basis in difficult economic conditions. … It also raises concerns about how the age-friendly programme, through a combination of its cost-neutral approach and its active aging focus, may end up unintentionally supporting policies that effectively reduce state involvement in aging communities.

The above limitations raise important concerns about the effectiveness and sustainability of age-friendly programs. The vulnerability of such programs, faced with economic austerity, has been further compounded by pressures associated with urban change affecting global as well as deindustrializing cities (Bridge & Watson, 2011). This aspect is reviewed in the next section.

Urban change and age-friendly cities

The relationship between environmental issues and aging has emerged as an important area of research and policy within gerontology (Wahl, Iwarsson, & Oswald, 2012). This has been most clearly demonstrated in ecological theories of aging, first developed in the work of Lawton (1982) and subsequently extended in different ways by researchers such as Moore (2014) and Wahl and Oswald (2010). This theoretical approach has highlighted the importance of physical contexts in promoting or restricting quality of life in older age. Ecological theories have also been influential in promoting "aging in place" as an important component of policies to support older people (Wiles et al., 2011). This approach is seen to meet the aspirations of people to remain in their own homes for as long as possible as well as to assist in delaying entry to expensive forms of institutional care.

Despite the resurgence of interest in environmental issues and aging, limited integration has been achieved with debates in urban geography, sociology, and associated disciplines, notably around research on structural changes affecting urban communities. Examples relevant to the age-friendly debate include the rise of so-called global cities (Sassen, 2012) widening economic and social inequalities within cities driven by rapid industrialization in some cases and deindustrialization in others (UN-Habitat, 2016); and the impact of rural migration on urban environments (Lloyd-Sherlock, Barrientos, & Mase, 2012).

These changes raise significant challenges for the creation of age-friendly cities. Golant (2014, p. 13) argues that it is important to "… ask whether communities have acquired the structural capacity—that is, resources and opportunities—to accommodate the needs and goals of their aging populations and to help improve their physical and psychological well-being." This argument may be especially relevant for communities affected by the impact

of economic recession combined with the changes associated with deindustrialization (Bridge & Watson, 2011). In these cases, successful implementation of age-friendly policies may require substantial initial investment both in community infrastructure (e.g., in the quality of the built environment, transportation, and access to a wide range of local resources) and in improving the economic well-being of residents (e.g., through targeted income support programs; Scharlach & Lehning, 2013). But making the case for financing new infrastructure may raise issues in terms of resistance from local taxpayers and limited interest from older people themselves. Scharlach (2016, p. 324) observes here that "The lack of strong consumer demand for age-friendly infrastructure improvements suggests the need for consumer engagement and empowerment (i.e., 'consciousness raising'), as well as greater attention from media and governmental entities not only regarding existing options but also alternative possibilities, including age-friendly interventions that are being implemented throughout the world."

Another issue concerns problems arising from urban regeneration, where private developers have a dominant position influencing urban planning and design (Dyckhoff, 2017). The result, according to Harvey (2008, p. 31), is that the "quality of urban life has become a commodity, as has the city itself, in a world where consumerism, tourism, [and] cultural and knowledge-based industries have become major aspects of the urban political economy." Blokland and Rae (2008, p. 38) argue that such processes are leading to a different type of urbanism, one that is confirming rather than challenging inequalities, with the creation of gentrified neighborhoods at one end and areas of concentrated poverty at the other.

In response to the challenges arising from increasing inequality and economic pressures, the next section sets out a "Manifesto for the age-friendly movement." The challenges identified underline the need for new principles to develop age-friendly work. To date, age-friendly activity has developed in the absence of a critical perspective on the way in which urban societies are changing. Indeed, the movement has left unchallenged the impact of widening social and economic differences and the problems facing low-income communities in their attempt to build age-friendly environments. In addition, the movement—in the next phase of its development—must develop ways of ensuring its future, given what is likely to be a hostile economic environment. The argument of this article is that this can only be done through developing new forms of empowerment in work with older people and more effective partnerships with key stakeholders at local, regional, and national levels.

Following this, the areas covered in the manifesto are as follows:

- Challenging social inequality
- Widening participation
- Coproducing age-friendly communities

- Codesigning age-friendly environments
- Encouraging multisectorial and multidisciplinary collaboration
- Integrating research with policy

A manifesto for the age-friendly movement

Challenging social inequality

The age-friendly policy debate carries with it a strong normative message about maintaining older people's active engagement in society (Kalache, 2016). However, limited attention has been paid to the inequalities associated with achieving what has been termed "active aging" (Ilinca, Rodrigues, Schmidt, & Zolyomi, 2016). The experience of aging not only differs between older women and older men, between those with more versus fewer financial resources, and between different class and ethnic groups; it also differs because of the unequal impact of life events and the accumulation of advantages versus disadvantages over the life course (Phillipson, 2013; Dannefer, 2003).

In 2015, the WHO (2015b, p. 16) put forward the notion of "equity" as a guiding principle in assessing the age-friendliness of cities, placing emphasis on ensuring "the absence of systematic disparities in health (or in the major social determinants of health) between social groups who have different levels of underlying social disadvantage or disadvantage." Increasingly, it is acknowledged that a key task for future age-friendly policies will be to increase equity of access to the basic necessities and decision-making processes of urban life, explicitly addressing persisting gender, social class, ethnic, and other inequalities in the older population. As well as identifying and analyzing inequities between different groups of older people and across various neighborhoods, there is also a need to identify viable and effective strategies, interventions, and actions to tackle such disparities. The potential of age-friendly policies to reduce health and social inequalities at the local level has been highlighted by Kendig and Phillipson (2014). However, systematic monitoring and evaluation are necessary to determine which response strategies are most effective given widespread inequalities across and within neighborhoods and cities.

One way of tracking the benefits of age-friendly policies would be to conduct regular audits, organized in partnership with universities, documenting citywide trends in areas such as the health status of the older population, living standards, and the quality of the built environment. Such documentation could be distributed in an accessible (large print, etc.) format to encourage discussion across organizations engaged in age-friendly activities. Such audits could also be used to develop partnerships and action plans with key departments in local and regional government, for example, those responsible for public health, education, transport, and health and social care.

Widening participation

An important issue for the age-friendly movement concerns evidence suggesting that some groups are systematically excluded from participating in decision-making processes within urban environments (Zukin, 2010). Although the age-friendly project has placed older people at the center of various initiatives, the movement has tended to ignore the full diversity of aging experiences. Examples include the marginalization of Black and minority ethnic groups and those within the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) community. Lehning et al. (2017, p. 53) express concern about the extent to which age-friendly initiatives are "failing to address the specific needs of racial and ethnic minorities or those with low incomes; this is of particular concern, given these subgroups of older adults are likely to live in particularly un-aging-friendly, under-resourced neighborhoods." More generally, the social exclusion experienced by many groups in urban areas—notably migrants, refugees, and those living in communities with high levels of deprivation—has been neglected in discussions about the development of age-friendly policies.

Acknowledging social and ethnic diversity is thus an important issue for the age-friendly movement to address (Gonyea & Hudson, 2015). The implications are wide-ranging, including responding to different cultural interpretations of what "age-friendliness" might mean; shaping policies around the needs of particular groups with contrasting migration histories and life course experiences; recognizing distinctive forms of inequality experienced by particular ethnic groups, notably in areas such health, income, and housing; and understanding the impact of racism in communities and the challenge this presents for the achievement of successful age-friendly work.

Variation in the health of older people is another issue: Do age-friendly initiatives reach out to people with all types of health conditions, or are they focused predominantly on the "healthy," that is, those involved in different forms of "active aging" (Golant, 2014)? To date, it is the latter who appear to have dominated the development of the movement (Moulaert, Boudiny, & Paris, 2016). But this raises questions about whether the goal is to create *inclusive* rather than *exclusive* communities (Gonyea & Hudson, 2015). If the former is desired, then age-friendly initiatives must have the capacity to support people considered "frail" or those with dementia and associated conditions (Grenier, 2007). This would argue against the trend of developing separate "dementia-friendly communities" or similar (Keady et al., 2012). Rather, the approach should acknowledge the variety of groups for whom age-friendly issues are relevant and the need to build environments that support and reflect the diversity that characterizes an aging world.

In responding to the challenge of widening participation, a key task will be to develop partnerships with groups that may be disengaged from age-friendly issues. To date, the movement has—in many urban areas—drawn

upon organizations already involved in campaigns on issues affecting older people, such as voluntary bodies working on behalf of older people, pensioner action groups, and carers' organizations (Steels, 2015). But these may have limited connections to organizations representing Black and minority ethnic groups, the LGBTQ community, women' groups, and faith-based organizations. Each of these will be affected by age-related issues in different ways: Their involvement could make a substantial contribution to creating a more inclusive and representative age-friendly movement.

Coproducing age-friendly communities

The variety of groups within the older population is likely to mean that the process of developing age-friendly communities will involve reconciling conflicting interests and concerns (Moulaert & Garon, 2015). Following this, there is a need for methods of community engagement that will work with the range of concerns within and between different age groups. An example of such an approach is that of coproduction (Buffel, Skyrme & Phillipson 2017). This builds on a partnership among older people, their families, communities, and statutory and nonstatutory organizations working together to develop research and a shared understanding as well as to design, develop, and deliver opportunities, projects, and solutions promoting social and political change (Sanz, Ferrer, Figueroa, Ferrandis, & Rigia, 2015). The goal here is to facilitate community empowerment and to allow individuals and groups to organize and mobilize themselves toward social action.

Promoting the participation of older people has been a key theme in the development of the age-friendly movement. Various approaches have been adopted to assess the "age-friendliness" of communities, ranging from consulting older residents (e.g., distributing surveys, conducting focus groups) to involving them in photo-voice activities, working groups, or steering committees (Novek & Menec, 2013; Rémillard-Boilard, Buffel & Phillipson, 2017). However, while such approaches encourage participants' input by asking for their ideas and experiences, they have been less successful in making older people *central* to the development of age-friendly activity (Buffel, 2015). "Coresearch" has been presented as a way forward in this regard, that is, research conducted *with* or *by* older adults rather than *to, about*, or *for* them as research subjects (Fudge, Wolfe, & McKevitt, 2007). This approach provides an opportunity for older people to take a leading role in research and contribute to the process of social change in various ways.

A study conducted in Manchester, United Kingdom (Buffel, 2015; Buffel, Skyrme & Phillipson, 2017) has demonstrated how older people can be involved as research partners to improve the age-friendliness of their neighborhood. Over a 2-year period, the project trained older people as coresearchers to lead a study aimed at improving the quality of life in low-income

areas. The coresearchers (aged between 58 and 74 years) took a leading role in the design and implementation of the study. They completed interviews with 68 older residents who were experiencing isolation or exclusion within their neighborhood and jointly developed solutions to the challenges they faced. The project led to tangible policy outcomes for the City Council to advance "age-friendly" communities (McGarry, 2018). It also led to benefits within the community, including the restoration of a bus service within one of the research neighborhoods (Buffel, Skyrme & Phillipson, 2017). Commenting on this project, the WHO (2015a, p. 222) suggested that coresearch with older people represents not only a "valuable exercise in community engagement" but also a "cost-effective mechanism for producing informed policy in times of austerity."

However, uncritical adoption of coproduction methods must also be avoided. They may, for example, create unrealistic expectations about the ability of groups to influence neighborhood planning and resources. Alternatively, co-option of this approach by statutory bodies may be used to divert responsibility for caring to community groups (as well as older people themselves) when services are being reduced during periods of financial restraint. At the same time, coproduction methods may be an important tool in challenging cuts to neighborhood services as well as developing new approaches to supporting people within the community.

Codesigning age-friendly environments

Integrating principles of coproduction in urban design strategies represents another key task for the age-friendly movement. Involving older people in the planning of public spaces will be especially important to ensure that "the natural and built environment anticipate[s] users with different capacities instead of designing for the mythical 'average' (i.e., young) person" (WHO, 2007, p. 72). However, Handler (2014, p. 86) argues that older people often remain "marginalised in processes of urban development" due to "an 'underlying ageism' that characterizes much of urban planning processes where older people are easily represented as passive victims of urban change."

Examples of good practice include students of architecture working with older people to redesign their neighborhood, aided by cooperation between housing associations and local authorities (White et al., 2013). Issues relating to aging populations are also receiving fuller acknowledgement in the frameworks developed by urban planners and institutions such as the engineering firm Arup and the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) (Arup, 2015; RIBA, 2013). But there is considerable scope to expand the coproduction dimension in age-friendly design practice, building on partnerships between socially engaged urban practitioners (e.g., architects, designers, artists) and older people (Handler, 2014).

An important element of coproduced design will be to support innovation in housing design and forms of ownership associated with developments such as collective housing. Tummers (2016, p. 2023) describes cohousing as a particularly "promising model for urban development," one that facilitates collaborative planning and cooperative housing property and finance and that can provide "pragmatic answers to societal needs such as everyday service, energy-, or cost-savings and accessibility" (p. 2036). "Senior cohousing" has been valued for its potential to develop new forms of neighborly support that can protect against social isolation and reduce or delay the need for residential care (Scanlon & Arrigoita, 2015). Examples from cohousing schemes created and managed by older people in Denmark have illustrated innovative ways of thinking about support and collective living, with implications for mainstream urban housing as well as specialized housing for older people (Bamford, 2005). This suggests that innovations in housing—both in financing and types of ownership—will need to be an important part of age-friendly policies within urban areas.

Encouraging multisectorial and multidisciplinary collaboration

Several age-friendly initiatives have demonstrated the importance of building partnerships and synergies among multiple stakeholders and sectors—professional, academic, governmental, and nongovernmental organizations—in developing new ways of researching and creating age-friendly environments *for, with*, and *by* older people (Garon et al., 2014; Neal et al., 2014; Buffel et al., 2014). The age-friendly cities and communities movement, in this respect, has a key role to play in breaking down silos by building on the assets and bringing together networks already present in cities, as well as creating new ones, in ways that benefit older people. Given the reality of economic austerity and competing demands for resources, strategic partnerships among local authorities, public health professionals, architects, housing providers, community organizations, universities, and older people may be especially crucial to achieving success. Mobilizing a range of stakeholders from different sectors and disciplines and providing both top-down and bottom-up input in order to maximize the added value for each of the partners will be essential for realizing the potential of the age-friendly movement.

Within such joint efforts, political leadership and coordination by local authorities may be another critical factor in building age-friendly communities. In many of the cities that are members of the GNAFCC, local authorities take a leading role in developing collaborative strategies for creating age-friendly communities and ensuring a positive public policy context, one in which the needs of diverse groups of older people are recognized and acted on (Moulaert & Garon, 2016). Local government is in a unique position to initiate and advance age-friendly developments given responsibilities in domains such as health and community care services (Menec et al., 2011). At the same time, involvement of urban authorities

in this type of work is uneven, with financial constraints often limiting the scope of activities—even among those committed to this type of work (Buffel et al., 2014).

Linking age-friendliness to other priorities within cities, such as environmental issues, sustainable development, and accessible and affordable housing and public transport, may provide powerful synergies to help to shape the age-friendly agenda. A major challenge for future work will be to develop coproductive and collaborative models of governance that combine different forms of knowledge and expertise by promoting stakeholder involvement from different sectors, including older people themselves.

Integrating research with policy

The age-friendly movement has developed at a rapid rate, notably through the stimulus of the WHO GNAFCC and other international organizations. But this has occurred in the absence of research that tells us about the effectiveness and impact of such work (Golant, 2014; Scharlach, 2017): whether it benefits some groups rather than others, what contribution it makes to the well-being of older people, whether it leads to improvements in urban design, and whether it strengthens support networks within neighborhoods. Establishing answers to these questions will be vital if local authorities are to extend financial support to age-friendly programs. In addition to measuring the impact of interventions, there is also a need for building process evaluation activities into program implementation and using these to conduct continuous quality improvement efforts (Greenfield et al., 2015). Encouraging comparative studies examining the various approaches to building age-friendly communities in different social, political, and economic contexts should also be an important element of future work (Moulaert & Garon, 2016). There is an urgent need for research on building age-friendly communities in the Global South, recognizing distinctive pressures arising from rapid urbanization, migration, and the impact of climate change.

Following the above, a key task for the age-friendly movement will be to create stronger linkages with academic institutions and researchers from multiple disciplinary perspectives (Neal et al., 2014). One way forward could be through the development of an international research network, pioneering new research, technology, and solutions across a range of aging-related domains and supporting the research side of the GNAFCC's policy work. An important role for such a research network would be to bring together academics from existing research centers supporting age-friendly issues, encourage the development of early-career researchers specializing in age-friendly issues, develop work on specific themes (e.g., the impact of gentrification; issues affecting migrant groups), and develop new methodological approaches for evaluating the benefits or otherwise of age-friendly interventions. This will be especially important to justify future funding for

new age-friendly initiatives in times of austerity when the ability to demonstrate social and economic "impact" has become ever more important.

Finally, a key question for the future development of the age-friendly movement is not just how to *sustain* the GNAFCC but how to *expand* and *raise* the ambition of the age-friendly agenda in a difficult economic climate with limited funding and competing demands for resources. There is an urgent need to find creative ways to mobilize new resources in terms of knowledge, internal and external support, and funding to support the communities of practice developed through the GNAFCC. The limited resources currently available for managing and running the network raises important concerns about the effectiveness and sustainability of the movement in the long term, especially given the rapid rise of network members and related demands and pressures. One response to this issue would be to draw on the resources of the various groups linked to the network, notably WHO-affiliated programs such as the AARP Network of Age-Friendly Communities (United States), Age-Friendly Ireland, AGE Platform Europe, the International Federation on Ageing, and the UK Network of Age-friendly Cities. Combining and sharing the resources of these different organizations provides a platform for ensuring the long-term sustainability of the age-friendly movement.

Discussion: Age-friendly cities and communities and the new urban agenda

The previous section identified several principles for developing the age-friendly agenda. A further argument concerns the need to strengthen this work through collaboration with other movements campaigning to improve urban environments. These include, for example, activities around "smart cities," "healthy cities," "sustainable cities," and "inclusive cities," reflecting new forms of innovation and governance influencing the development of urban communities (Ramaswami, Russel, Culligan, Sharma, & Kumar, 2016; UN-Habitat, 2016). UN-Habitat (2016, p. 37) highlights the need for a "new urban agenda" that "needs to create conditions to support a paradigm shift towards a new model of urbanization that can better respond to … [challenges] … such as inequality, climate change, … job creation[,] and unsustainable forms of city growth." The argument of this article is that developing age-friendly cities and communities should form an essential part of such an agenda. On the one hand, the age-friendly movement has an important role in helping to create the conditions for a new model of urban development, one in which *social* issues drive *economic* development. Rather than see aging populations as a problem for urban growth, they can help harness additional cultural, economic, and social resources for the benefit of all urban citizens. On the other hand, debates around urbanization need closer integration with the age-friendly movement, helping the latter toward a more realistic view of

what can be achieved given rising inequalities within and between urban areas and dysfunctional forms of economic growth and development.

Drawing on the principles outlined in this manifesto, the key areas around which the age-friendly and urban agendas need to come together must include, first, making older people themselves central to the creation and development of urban policies and age-friendly initiatives. As argued in the manifesto, there is an urgent need for more experimentation to test and learn from participatory and collaborative approaches involving older people in the coproduction of community space. The ongoing development and experimentation with creative participatory methods in research, design, and policy work will be necessary to inspire new understandings and possibilities for involving older residents as key actors and leaders in developing the age-friendly agenda. The success of communities in becoming more age-friendly will, to a large extent, depend on whether older people, especially those facing social exclusion, will be involved as key actors in setting the agenda for future research and policies on age-friendly developments and urban policy more generally.

Second, age-friendly policies are unlikely to be successful unless embedded in interdisciplinary networks and approaches to policy leadership, education, urban design, community engagement, and evaluation. Understanding optimum environments for aging must be viewed as an enterprise that requires close integration of insights from a range of disciplines. Debates around age-friendly cities and communities are beginning to develop a substantial research literature; however, more attention must be given to the impact of powerful global and economic forces transforming the physical and social context of cities. Remedying this will require work across a range of disciplines, including urban sociology, economics, design, social policy, and human geography (Buffel & Phillipson, 2016).

Third, an issue of concern is the extent to which current age-friendly work tends to assimilate rather than contest various forms of discrimination within society. In the Global North, for example, the age-friendly brand has been adopted in various guises in many (mainly) White communities, but it is much less evident among Black and minority ethnic groups (Lehning et al., 2017). However, as has already been argued, it is precisely those groups who are living among the most disadvantaged and least age-friendly communities. It will be difficult to take age-friendly policies seriously unless they demonstrate closer engagement with those neighborhoods often left abandoned in the face of urban change.

Finally, an important challenge for age-friendly cities and communities resides in connecting this approach to broader strategies, such as those relating to sustainable development and reducing health and income inequalities. Rethinking the way in which people build, manage, negotiate, and live in cities

and communities requires cooperation at all levels of government as well as civil society and the private sector. Reflecting this, UN-Habitat (2016, p. 34) makes the point that "managing the changing dynamics of cities calls for new ideas, changes in the way we manage the development of cities and their economies, and new forms of urban governance that maximize a city's physical, social, cultural, and economic potential." The argument of this article is that building age-friendly environments depends on improved urban management and planning but can also make a vital contribution to this process.

Conclusions

This article has set out a manifesto for developing the age-friendly agenda, focusing on issues concerned with inequality and empowerment. Important progress has been achieved, as reflected in the expansion of communities committed to age-friendly initiatives, support from international organizations, and the establishment of specific policies, interventions, and programs of research and evaluation. However, as has been argued in this article, age-friendly work has been compromised by pressures arising from urban development and the impact of economic austerity. These have resulted in reductions in the scope of programs, restrictions in staffing, budget cuts, and increased inequalities within neighborhoods (Buffel & Phillipson, 2016).

Applying the principles discussed in this article will not in themselves resolve the problems facing older people subject to the economic and social changes identified. However, they do provide the basis of a program of action in which age-friendly activities can be an important part of campaigns to improve the communities in which people live and their control over the policies and decisions that affect their lives.

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