NEW ZEALAND ASSOCIATION OF GERONTOLOGY & AGE CONCERN NEW ZEALAND CONFERENCE 2009 - LIVING IN AN AGEING SOCIETY: SHAPING TOMORROW TODAY
WELLINGTON
7 - 9 OCTOBER 2009

"I WANT TO HAVE MY OWN SMALL HOME": AGEING IN PLACE OF OLDER CHINESE IMMIGRANTS

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- All older people who participated in this research
- CRESA: Sponsoring this conference trip
- Associate Professor Elsie Ho & Associate Professor Darrin Hodgetts
- New Zealand Top Achiever Doctoral Scholarship
- The Trust Waikato Student Community Grants 2007

PRESENTATION OUTLINES

- Chinese ageing population in New Zealand
- Policy responses to ageing and ethnic issues
- Literature Review: place and ageing
- The research
- Policy implications

CHINESE AGEING POPULATION IN NEW ZEALAND

Table 1. Older Chinese Demographics

	Chinese population (%)	New Zealand population (%)
People over 65	6.3	12.3
People over 65 born overseas	91.1	25.5
People over 65 born overseas living in NZ less than 10 yrs	49.8	11.9

Table 2. Location of older Chinese people

Locations	%
Auckland, Total	67.2
Wellington, Total	10.4
Christchurch City	6.5
Hamilton City	2.6
Elsewhere	13.3

Auckland consists of North Shore City, Waitakere City, Auckland City and Manukau City

Wellington consists of Porirua City, Lower Hutt, Upper Hutt City and Wellington City

POLICY RESPONSES TO AGEING AND ETHNIC ISSUES

- *The New Zealand Positive Ageing Strategy:* "where people can age positively, where older people are highly valued and where they are recognised as an integral part of families and communities" (Ministry of Social Policy, 2001, p. 13).
- Ageing in Place: "people's ability to make choices in later life about where to live, and receive the support to do so" (Ministry of Social Policy, 2001, p. 10).
- *The Health of Older People Strategy :* Calls for health-related services to be coordinated with housing services (Associate Minister of Health and Minister for Disability Issues, 2002) .
- *The New Zealand Housing Strategy :* formulates goals in relation to older people's living arrangements (Housing New Zealand Corporation, 2005) .

POLICY RESPONSES TO AGEING AND ETHNIC ISSUES (CONT.)

- "Ageing in place" policies have a limited ability to moderate the effects of an ethnic ageing population.
- "Ageing in place" policies over-idealise older people from ethnic communities which can lead to an over-emphasis on the family as "the saviour" of older adults.

"Chinese family look after their own" ???

"Chinese families are tightly knit" ????

LITERATURE REVIEW: PLACE AND AGEING

- Place as Social and Cultural Construct
- Place as Marker of Experiences
- Place as Process Reflecting Evolving and Embodied Identity
- Place as Intersection of Self, Others and Environment

The only human can be humans is to be “in place” (Relph 1976) .

“To age” is “to age in place”.

THE RESEARCH: METHODS

- A narrative approach
  - Narrative interview and analysis
  - Visual narrative ("Go-Along" interview)
- Participant observation
- Use of language
  - Interviewing: Mandarin & Cantonese
  - Transcribing: Chinese
  - Analysing: Chinese
  - Reporting: English

THE RESEARCH: METHODS

- Participants:
  - resident in New Zealand with permanent residency or New Zealand citizenship
  - born overseas and entered New Zealand under an immigration programme
  - self-identify as Chinese and are 65 and over years of age
  - live in New Zealand for less than 15 years

THE RESEARCH: METHODS

- 21 households, a total of 32 individual participants
- Age ranged from 62 years old to 77 years old, mean age is 69.8 years old
- Gender: 14 male and 18 female
- Duration of residence in NZ in the first interviews ranged from 4 months to 12 years and 6 months, mean duration is 7 years and 8 months

THE RESEARCH: METHODS

- Living arrangements: 22 living with spouse only or living alone, 10 participants living with their adult children
- Previous work positions : 11 senior professionals, 11 professionals, 9 managers and 1 factory worker
- Highest qualifications: 1 Masters , 15 Bachelors, 13 diplomas and certificates, and 3 high school qualifications
- Incomes: 31 ranging from NZ$200 to NZ$300 per week, 1 $NZ100 per week

HOME IS THE HERE AND THERE

FINDINGS: LIVING ARRANGEMENTS, CONCEPTUALISING AGEING IN PLACE

- Reasons of Moving to New Zealand

Looking after grandchildren	50%
Enjoying retired life in NZ	31%
Reunifying with children	19%

FINDINGS: LIVING ARRANGEMENTS, CONCEPTUALISING AGEING IN PLACE (CONT.)

- Where to Live

New Zealand	Public Housing	41%
	Retired Village	9%
	Private Renting	9%
	Children buy a house for them	9%
	Nursing Home	3%
	Living with children	3%
China	Living in their own houses	25%
Other Countries	Where children live	3%
No Idea		6%

FINDINGS: LIVING ARRANGEMENTS, CONCEPTUALISING AGEING IN PLACE (CONT.)

- Ageing in Place:
  - *Privacy: Searching for Personal Space*
  - *Independence: Coping with Language Barriers and without a Car*
  - *Mobility: Good Health*
  - *Safe Home: Home Repairs and Maintenance*
  - *Good Neighbours: Place Making the Neighbourhood*

FINDINGS: RECIPROCALLY DOMESTIC, COMMUNITY AND SOCIETAL EXCHANGE

- The Existing Patterns of Family Support for Aged Care
  - Spouse as Primary Carer
  - Reciprocal Parent-Child Exchange
- Community Support
  - Community English Programmes VS Institutional Porgrammes
  - Chinese Community Organisations
  - Religious Support
  - Social Services

FINDINGS: RECIPROCALLY DOMESTIC, COMMUNITY AND SOCIETAL EXCHANGE (CONT.)

- Policy Support
  - Financial Support: Special Needs Grant and New Zealand Superannuation
  - Health System: Free Hospitalisation
  - Transportation Support: Free Bus Initiative
  - Lack of Knowledge of Entitlements

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- Understand the need of public housing among older Chinese immigrants (**"I want to have my own small home"**)
- Employ more Chinese staff in Government agencies to meet older Chinese immigrants' language needs, especially outside Auckland
- Provide more financial support to community organisations which assist older Chinese adults to age in place in New Zealand
- Invest more into community English programmes instead of Institutional English programmes