

Session Identifier: D.1

Session Theme: Deconstructing Aging in Place

Friday, June 17, 2016

11:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

A Critical Analysis of Aging in Place: Educational Implications

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Population aging has been escalating since 2011 when the baby boomers began turning age 65. Over the years policy makers and professionals who provide services to older adults have conceptualized aging in place as an attainable and worthwhile goal that will help to alleviate some of the challenges of an expanding older population. Research on aging in place includes topics such housing, environment, health, and technology. The purpose and method of this presentation is to raise critical perspectives about current definitions, purposes, research and policy on aging in place. The objectives are to: 1. Argue that aging in place conceptualizes competing goals for community care, care by the community including family, friends, neighbours and other volunteers, and cost containment. 2. Stimulate discussion about aging in place by older adults, particularly women 85 years and older. Findings: We will highlight how, where, and why aging in place may be attainable and worthwhile for some older adults, such as those with live daily life with good health, family support, and financial resources. Yet the concept may be unattainable and not worthwhile for others, such as those who are aging with daily life challenges, including low income, isolation, abuse, contaminated water or food, immigration struggles, mental health issues and physical or cognitive disabilities. Discussion will consider issues of equity, empowerment, public and private goals to address the escalating aging population in Canada, especially women 85 and older. From an educational perspective, what might older adults learn and teach societies about aging in place?

Aging in LGBTQ Intentional Communities: The EU as a Model

Dr. Liesl L. Gambold, Dalhousie University

Over the past twenty years western governments have increasingly pursued policy agendas that reflect several characteristics of neoliberalism including a “normative privileging of the individual” and a preference for privately funded and delivered care (Teghtsoonian 2009: 28). Many intentional communities were originally developed around environmental values, economic values, community values or religion. In my research I have focused on intentional retirement communities developed by members of the LGBTQ community. Older LGBTQ persons find that there are very few options for them in terms of aging in place amongst people who are also gay or who are at least open and accepting. “Standard” retirement communities may not advertise as *uniquely* heterosexual, but for LGBTQ people who arrive they soon find that they have to keep their sexual identity to themselves and thus are unable to share stories about their youth, their relationships and their families—biological or chosen—in effect, they are forced to hide their true identities in their later years. Compounded with economic stress and the wide array of physical and mental declines that accompany aging, it is no surprise that aging gay and lesbian individuals are seeking alternatives, and in fact require them. Based on over 30 in-

depth qualitative interviews with retirees and service providers in Germany, France and Sweden in 2010, 2014 and 2015, research results show that with little to no government support or initiatives, members of the LGBTQ community have taken the work upon themselves and created safe, sustainable and supportive aging communities. Individuals were interviewed in both permanent retirement and nursing homes as well as intentional communities.

Lessons from the Housing Poverty Experiences of Middle-Aged and Older Women

Janet McClain, Mount Saint Vincent University

Whether we indeed have a housing policy in Canada has been debated since the 1970s and 1980s. In *Women & Housing: Changing needs and the failure of policy* (McClain & Doyle, 1983), it was argued that women faced significant challenges as both renters and homeowners. If these challenges were left unresolved, women would fall through the cracks leading to housing poverty. Unfortunately this prediction reflects many of the challenges middle-aged and older women still face today. Housing remains a visible element in economic and employment policies which have overshadowed the more diffuse elements of housing policy appended to provincial and federal social policies. Housing status and security of tenure are directly related to socio-economic status and to older women's health status. For middle-aged and older women on the lower-ends of the income scale, many of whom fall below the low-income cut-offs, housing status is a burden which adds to their life challenges and to poverty. This paper will provide a new conceptualization of housing poverty using feminist political economy and gender-based analysis examining social class and income status, health and ability status, marital status, locational deprivations and family relationships with caring responsibilities. Scenarios of living arrangements and housing needs drawn from narratives and observations will illustrate how commodification and privatization result in the mismatch of policies and the remaining government assistance programs without serving older women who are renters and homeowners. Scenarios will be problem-decision sets for needs assessments and policy development in the Atlantic region and across Canada.