Smart housing and the question of care/risk management versus respect: towards information and advice and acts of kindness

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What we will cover…

- The 'problem' of ageing and population trends
- An overview of 'smart home' technology and its rationale for people deemed vulnerable
- The benefits of 'smart' technology
- Problematising 'smart home' technology
- Information and advice
- Minor acts of kindness, urban repair and the centrality of the person

Ageing?
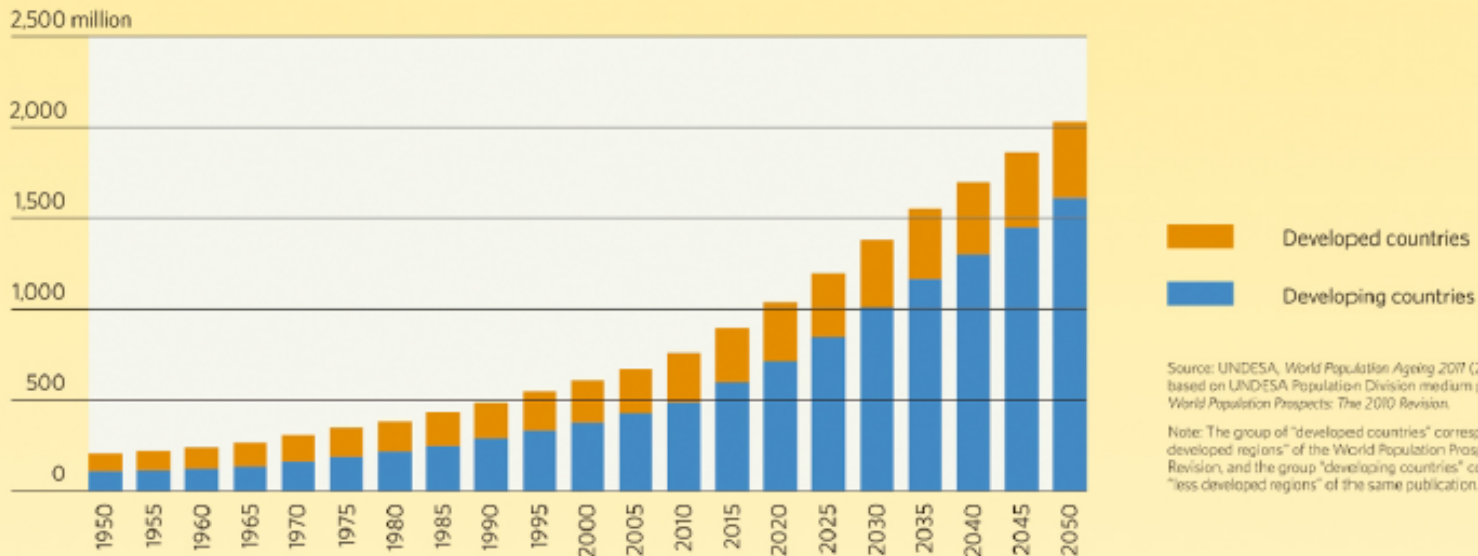
Contested and performative

Ageing as a *practice*

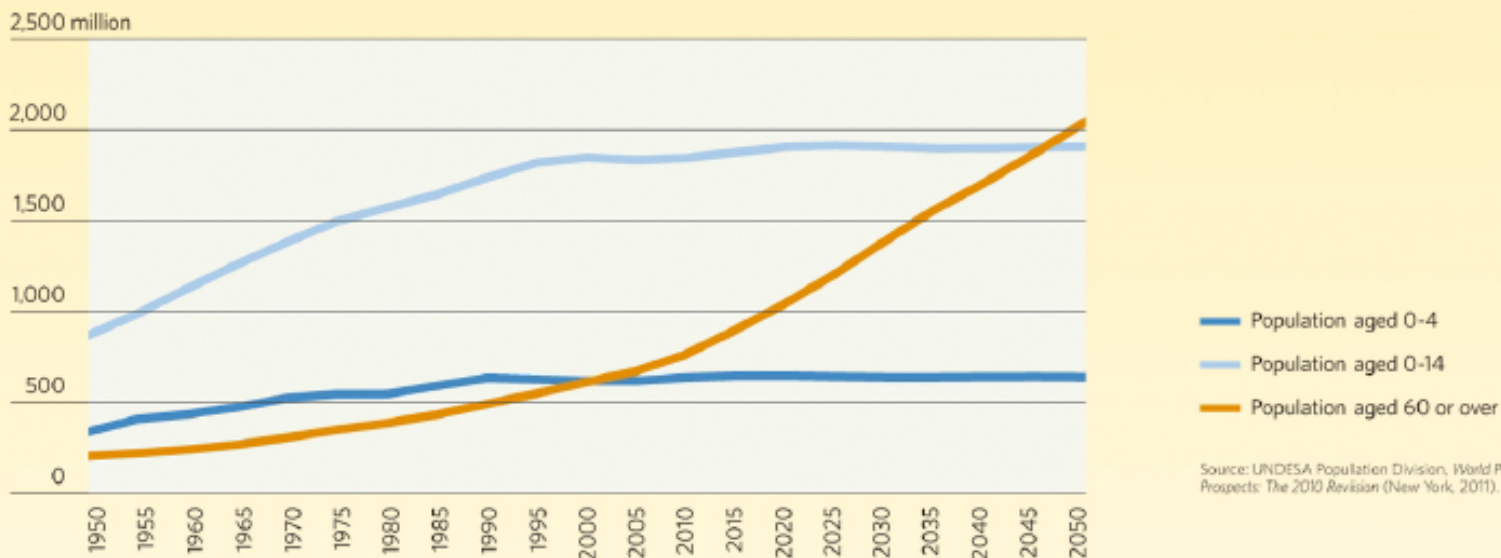*Social divisions and social variables determine experiences*

See Parker and Ashencaen Crabtree, 2014)

The context of our ageing populations

Number of people aged 60 or over: World, developed and developing countries, 1950-2050

Developed countries

Developing countries

Source: UNDESA, *World Population Ageing 2011* (2012; forthcoming), based on UNDESA Population Division medium projection scenario, *World Population Prospects: The 2010 Revision*.

Note: The group of "developed countries" corresponds to the "more developed regions" of the World Population Prospects: The 2010 Revision, and the group "developing countries" corresponds to the "less developed regions" of the same publication.

Population aged 0-4, 0-14 and aged 60 or over, 1950-2050

Population aged 0-4

Population aged 0-14

Population aged 60 or over

Source: UNDESA Population Division, *World Population Prospects: The 2010 Revision* (New York, 2011).

Over 15 years of smart technology in homes

- Affluence, computer literacy

- Assisted living – over 15 years

Smart homes – automated, connected and communicative

Assumptions:

- Monitored environment – keeping safe and secure
- Automated tasks
- Alerts to warn others
- Enabling, empowering, rehabilitative

CUSTODIAN – EU funded project
Empower, designers, providers, installers

Software *'to ensure that the needs of individual end users are sensitively met in a way that reflects their social circumstance, care, medical and institutional needs and resource constraints'*

Edge and Groves (2000)

Benefits of smart technology and the future (Morris et al., 2013)

- Systematic and critical review of 21 papers from 1877 published on smart-home technology

- Smart-home technology – promote independence, health, wellbeing, quality of life in older people

- Aids physical mobility, independence

and function

- Gaming and dementia (Cutler, PhD)

Problematising smart technology 1

- Studies report concerns about privacy which are associated with acceptance
- Focus of research concerns services and organisations, those with power
- Individual excluded
- R.K.Merton (1936):
  - Lack of adequate knowledge about impact
  - Errors in judgement
  - Short-termism rather than long-term planning
  - Fundamentalist values regardless of consequences
  - Prediction of future behaviours changes the conditions

PROTECT FREEDOM
...by taking it away

Problematising smart technology 2

- Governmentality – technologies of self and technologies of state – potential exclusion of older people

- Surveillance society - resistance

The importance of information and advice giving – recent research and gaps

- Marketisation – consumer choice + cost effectiveness – telephone advice on housing choices (Harding – PhD with Parker, Hemingway & Hean)

- Rational choice theory, economics

- Leaves out agency and individual's concerns

- Bringing back the person allows them to shape the information and advice and to make personalised choices

- This may or may not include 'smart' technology

Minor acts of kindness as urban repair and good living

- Minor acts of kindness – minor acts of urban repair

- Micro practices – urban patrols, social services (Hall and Smith, 2015; Parker, Harding & Cutts, forthcoming)

Focus on small acts of kindness – social repair, human satisfaction, health, interdependence and quality of life

Whither to?

Automation   Symbiotic compliance   Human agency

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