

Does “Civic Engagement” work?

**Civic engagement of older people and
their ‘embeddedness’ in a society
in the United Kingdom**

Eime Tobar

April 2011

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A thesis is submitted in partial fulfilment of the
requirements of the University of Greenwich for
the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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DECLARATION

I certify that this work has not been accepted in substance for any degree, and is not concurrently being submitted for any degree other than that of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy being studied at the University of Greenwich. I also declare that this work is the result of my own investigations except where otherwise identified by references and that I have not plagiarised another's work.

Eime Tobar

30th April 2011

Supervisor:

Prof. Thomas Acton

30th April 2011

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I personally owe all my friends for their support and encouragement as well as hard work for proofreading. It was not easy to be a student for such a long time. I sometimes doubted the value of PhD work. Some of my friends reminded me that it would be a great achievement for myself if I succeeded, and that how valuable my work would be was a

secondary question.

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates how UK policies and initiatives promoting civic engagement of older people impact their ‘embeddedness.’ ‘Embeddedness,’ which has been my research theme continuously for the past ten years, describes intricate dynamic relationships between an individual and his/her physical and socio-cultural environments. The four research objectives were: 1) to define the concept of civic engagement in relation to ‘embeddedness’; 2) to review and analyse UK policies and initiatives promoting civic engagement of older people; 3) to analyse older people’s perceptions and experiences of civic engagement in civic engagement practices; 4) to examine the effectiveness of UK civic engagement initiatives on older people’s perceptions and experiences of civic engagement and their ‘embeddedness’ by discussing differences and overlaps between the concept, policies and initiatives and perceptions and experiences of civic engagement. I also discuss how this study links Sociology and Architecture around the theme of the ‘embeddedness.’

By means of literature reviews, semi-structured informant interviews and participant observation, the subject is tackled both theoretically and empirically. The study analyses the reality of civic engagement focusing on the London Borough of Greenwich as a case study using ‘civic engagement’ as a multi-dimensional and multi-layered concept involving civil, political, social and cultural rights and responsibilities. The study suggests key values for civic engagement and ‘embeddedness’ and discusses them to speculate on the future of civic engagement and the ‘embeddedness’ of older people. The study argues that although in reality classic bureaucratic tendencies may undermine an organisation’s own policies promoting civic engagement, as happened in Greenwich, this is not inevitable if all the parties can understand the dynamic and transactional interaction mechanisms as and when individuals build up social networks within and beyond such organisations.

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CHAPTER ONE

1. 'EMBEDDEDNESS' AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

This chapter, as the introduction to this thesis, commences with a history of how my research projects have developed. They started in 1997 in Japan. I started my research on older people's living environment in Architectural Planning, as part of the Architecture department, in Japan. This first study led to another question, that of relationships between older people and their community. I conducted a five-year study trying to understand the relationships between older people and their community from an individual older person's perspectives. I started to use the term 'embeddedness' to describe intricate dynamic relationships between an individual and his/her environments including physical and socio-cultural elements. The findings of the five years research were first compiled as my master's thesis after two years and then as my first PhD thesis after another three years. This first PhD thesis proposed diagrammatic models which enable us to understand and analyse the 'embeddedness' of older people or indeed any individual in their environments from multiple perspectives.

However, like any other research, it left some questions, which this research that I present as my second PhD thesis addresses. The understanding of individual older people's 'embeddedness' can help to identify existing problems or potential improvements. Yet it is merely a start to making changes in reality because it became apparent that 'embeddedness' involves socio-cultural, and not just individual, elements. The researcher therefore deemed that in order to enhance the understanding of 'embeddedness' of older people, a shift of perspectives from that of individuals to that of a society was required.

In 2003, I came to the UK to conduct research on older people's 'embeddedness' from sociological perspectives and started a PhD programme in the department of Sociology at the University of Greenwich. There were two main reasons for choosing Sociology rather than continuing my research under the discipline of Architecture or moving to any other disciplines. First, I strongly felt that the discussion of the 'embeddedness' of older people

needed to involve socio-cultural elements in addition to behavioural and spatial elements. After all, 'embeddedness' is a social concept that is expressed in behaviours and spatially. Without a society, it is not only meaningless but also impossible. The discussion of 'embeddedness' must involve the analysis of relevant socio-cultural elements which enable feelings of belonging to social groups.

Secondly, as mentioned above, understanding individuals' 'embeddedness' is one thing while making changes to them is another. As much as 'embeddedness' involves socio-cultural elements, it is dependant on socio-cultural conditions. Social policies and their implementation can make a difference to such conditions and therefore to people's 'embeddedness.' I thought it was necessary to review and analyse social policies and their implementation as well as spatial elements to understand older people's 'embeddedness' fully.

As soon as I started the PhD programme in the UK, I was by coincidence given a great opportunity for a research project on the civic engagement of older people in the London Borough of Greenwich. Although the meaning of civic engagement was somewhat conceptually abstract, I believed that it was strongly related to 'embeddedness.' Therefore I worked on this joint research project with the council as a main investigator for almost a year and half, which consequently helped consolidate my research questions and objectives.

My experience in this project revealed that what civic engagement means differs between individuals, between sectors, between strategic levels and implementation levels and between perspectives and experiences depending on whom and in which context you ask. And some, or most, of those were different from what I thought civic engagement could be in relation to 'embeddedness' from societal perspectives. Although none of them contradicts each other, the gap between how civic engagement was defined and implemented in government initiatives and how it was expected to be and experienced by lay older people was evident and seemed problematic. It seems to me that the government's initiatives promoting civic engagement have little to contribute to enhancing the 'embeddedness' of older people even though civic engagement could in principle be a dynamic approach to improve the 'embeddedness' of older people.

Therefore this study aims to investigate how the UK policies and initiatives promoting civic engagement of older people impact their ‘embeddedness.’ For this purpose, I will discuss what civic engagement is from three different perspectives: strategic, operational and perceptual. Firstly I will introduce what I think civic engagement is based on my previous research and other preceding discourses. Then I will analyse how it is seen and implemented in the government initiatives. It will be followed by the analysis of how it is perceived and exercised by older people in their daily life. Finally I will discuss differences between those three perspectives in relation to ‘embeddedness.’ I hope the conclusions of this thesis can give us a clearer and more integrated view of the concept of civic engagement and its relation to ‘embeddedness,’ which is meaningful in sociological debates as well as in our daily life. I also intend this discussion should bridge the gap between Architecture and Sociology, which I believe have significant overlaps of interest, through use of the concepts of civic engagement and ‘embeddedness.’

1.1 Older people and their living environment

In 1990s the ageing of the population in Japan was already well advanced, with the ratio of the population of 65 years old and above to the national population well over 16%. Some researchers in various fields started to advocate homecare-based social care systems in the expectation of rising demand for social care and a decline of the younger population, leading to a smaller workforce and diminishing financial resources to support increasing social care demand (e.g. Wang 2001, Tachibana 1999, c.f. Tobari 2003). Social welfare systems in Scandinavian countries, especially Sweden and Finland, were introduced as models to follow. In those countries, respect for privacy and dignity of older people were already embedded in their social care systems and implemented in everyday life. The homecare systems enabled older people to live in their own homes until they became in need of intensive medical treatments. In nursing homes and group homes for older people with dementia or Alzheimer’s Disease, older people had private rooms where they could feel as if in their own home.

In contrast, the Japanese government’s strategy on social care systems for older people still focused on so-called ‘institutional care’ systems, in which the nursing home plays a central role in the provision of nursing, personal and domestic care for older people. Although it was

acknowledged that the physical quality of nursing homes should be further improved, there was no clear vision on how this should be done apart from increasing the minimum standard for the size of bedrooms per resident.

Meanwhile, I was in the final year at the Tokyo Metropolitan University studying Architecture and preparing for a final dissertation. I was specialised in Architectural Planning, which deals with planning of various building types from schools to hospitals. Reflecting the social conditions I described above, nursing homes for older people were one of the main topics in the field of Architectural Planning. Some researchers had argued the quality of bedrooms depended on their size (e.g. Tachibana et al 1998, 1999). There was also a crucial running debate over how many beds in a room would be ideal in relation to privacy, economic performance and care staff efficiency. Some other studies discussed the spatial layout of bedroom clusters either from staff or residents' perspectives. Some researchers proposed to create some semi-private spaces between bedrooms and common spaces such as a dining room for a fewer number of residents to socialise with each other (e.g. Ishii et al 1999, Inoue et al 1997, 1998).

I chose a nursing home near my university to study for my final dissertation. There was probably a link between my interest in older people's living environment and the fact that I lived with my own grandmother at that time. It seemed also more interesting and challenging to deal with such accommodation rather than hospitals or schools whose expected functions were more focused and explicit. I conducted observations at the nursing home in Tokyo and collected data tracing the movements of nine residents with different mental and physical abilities and the layouts of their bedrooms.

I was surprised by the variety of the ways, and the extent to which, residents adapt and exploit the given spaces themselves in a nursing home. Based on close observations, I described different levels of 'personalisation' expressed in space use and in arrangements of their own spaces in bedrooms. Some residents were quite proactive, using a variety of spaces including the gym in another floor and/or decorating their bedrooms with personal belongings. Some others, however, were almost inactive staying at the same place until care staff moved them

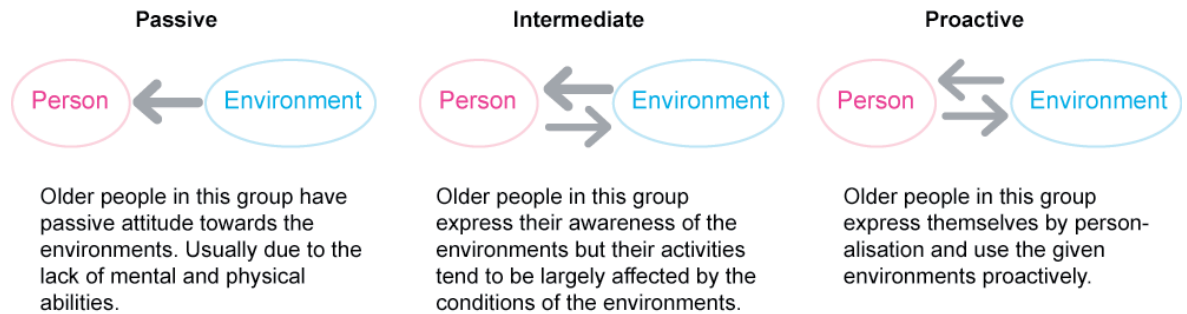
and there was hardly anything personal in their bedrooms.

The observed behaviour of older people in the nursing home was analysed using a 'person-in-environment' model, which had been largely developed in line with transactionalism in the field of Environmental Behaviour and Environmental Psychology (Wapner 1987). I will leave the detailed explanation of the person-in-environment model and transactionalism to later chapters. The essential idea is that analyses of the behaviour of a human being and his/her environments are inseparable and should be analysed as an entity. This underlies the whole series of my research from the study on older people in nursing homes to the latest one that I present in this thesis. The model suggests that existence of other people and socio-cultural environments as well as physical environments affect human behaviour and vice versa. Likewise, personal elements such as mental state, personality, mood, physical appearance, physical ability, social status and cultural background, also affect human behaviour and vice versa.

Based on this idea that all of those elements affect human behaviour, I analysed behaviour and physical feature of bedrooms of older people in a nursing home. I identified three groups of older people in the nursing home in relation to their relationships with their environments (figure 1.1). The analysis of the variety in the level of personalisation and activities of older people in the nursing home suggested that there was something else other than immediate physical environments that created the variation between individuals. Although it was difficult to categorise all individuals into those three groups of passive, intermediate and proactive, it was obvious that there were differences between individuals ranging between the two extremes, passive and proactive, despite the same physical conditions they lived in. It would have been easy to claim that it depended on individuals' physical and mental ability. However, personal abilities and their level of personalisation and activities did not necessarily correlate. Some residents with a high mental and physical ability expressed their feeling of isolation and lack of interactions with the outside world. It was obvious that poor physical conditions of the nursing home were one of those factors that made residents less active and more dependent, which then creates an inhumane environment where residents' lives were confined within. However, there were also other fundamental issues including

lack of contact with the outside world and lack of choices in every aspect of their life.

Figure 1.1 Variety of the relationships between older people and their environments in nursing homes



The original diagram is in Tobari (1998), in Japanese. Translated into English by the author. The diagrams demonstrate three different types of relationship between a person and his/her environment. Three types are different in terms of control and influence.

Without clearly identifying relational issues, an improvement of the standard for physical environment alone would not save residents from isolation or encourage their independent lives with dignity. If we are to keep nursing homes as part of social welfare systems, there is no doubt that we would need to improve the quality of nursing homes. It seemed clear that contact with the outside world is one of the significant issues and the design of nursing homes would be able to impact on it. However, there was no guideline or discussion on how design should be to facilitate continuous relationships between residents and the outside world. It was generally accepted that older people's lives would be confined in nursing homes once they were admitted. The immobility of nursing home residents was claimed to justify the lack of efforts to assist them to get up and go outside the buildings. The lack of discussions on relationships between older people living in nursing homes and the outside world was partly because the significance of the issue was not yet seriously recognised but also because there was little knowledge on how older people were related to the outside world. After those observations and analyses, naturally the relationship between older people and their environments in a wider context became my next research question, which I tackled in my research during the postgraduate course.

1.2 ‘Embeddedness’ of older people’s lives in their local communities

I continued my study on older people’s living environment in the postgraduate course at the same university. The research was conducted over five years through my master’s course and doctoral course between 1998 and 2003. I set the purposes of my research project as to investigate: how older people living in their own home are embedded in their local communities; and how their relationships with their local communities change over years. Dynamic relationships between individual older people and their local communities are perceived and analysed based on a person-in-environment approach regarding each older person’s relationships as an entity. I described such relationships as ‘Chien’ in Japanese, ‘embeddedness’ in English.

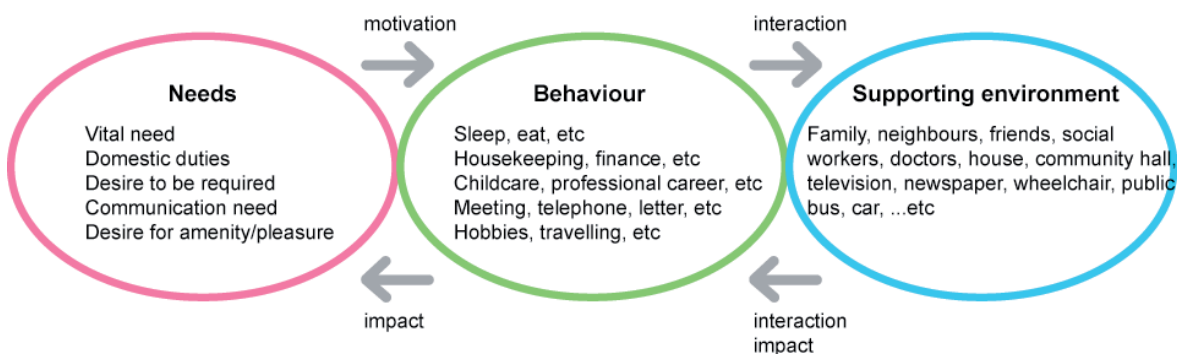
Fortunately I had been given an opportunity to conduct interviews with older people living in their own home in a rural area in Tohoku region, northeast Japan at the beginning of my research project. It was a year before the Japanese government was going to enforce a new social care insurance system, by which older people would be obliged to pay up to 10% of the cost for the social care services they use. The new system was to be introduced as an alternative to the existing system, in which most of the social care services were provided for free. This was on the verge of collapse due to the rapid increase of the proportion of older people in the population and the consequently increasing demand for the social care services. Although basic structures of the system were designed by the central government, local governments had rights and responsibilities for its implementation. As part of the preparations, local governments were required to conduct their own surveys to understand the living conditions of older people and perceptions of social care services of the population aged 45 and over. I was involved in helping a coalition of four towns in a rural area in Tohoku region to design questionnaires for those purposes. Not only was I allowed to use the data of those questionnaires for my research but also the coalition helped me to arrange some interviews with older people living in their own home in the area.

Within the first two years, I conducted semi-structured interviews with 18 older people living in their own home in the area. The interviewees were carefully chosen to have variations in gender, age, household types and health conditions. The interviews were conducted

three times for each interviewee over two years through which I had gradually established relationships with the interviewees and had acquired their trust. Such relationships were essential to obtain as much and as honest information as possible in the interviews. The questions ranged from those about their daily activities to their social networks. I analysed the comprehensive data from those interviews to understand each one's relationships with his/her local communities focusing on locations and frequency of each activity and on who is involved in each activity. I summarised findings from those analysis and proposed those analytical methods as a generally applicable methodology to understand and evaluate the 'embeddedness' of an individual older person in my master's thesis in 2000.

Figure 1.2 shows the model demonstrating the relationships between one's psychology, behaviour and environments that I proposed in my master's thesis. Older people's daily activities and social networks were analysed based on this model focusing on their locations and frequency. The environments that an older person had interactions with were named 'supporting environment' to emphasise their involvement in his/her life.

Figure 1.2 Needs-Behaviour-Supporting environment model



The original diagram is in Tobari (2001), translated into English by the author. The diagram illustrates the relationship between needs, behaviour and supporting environments of human beings.

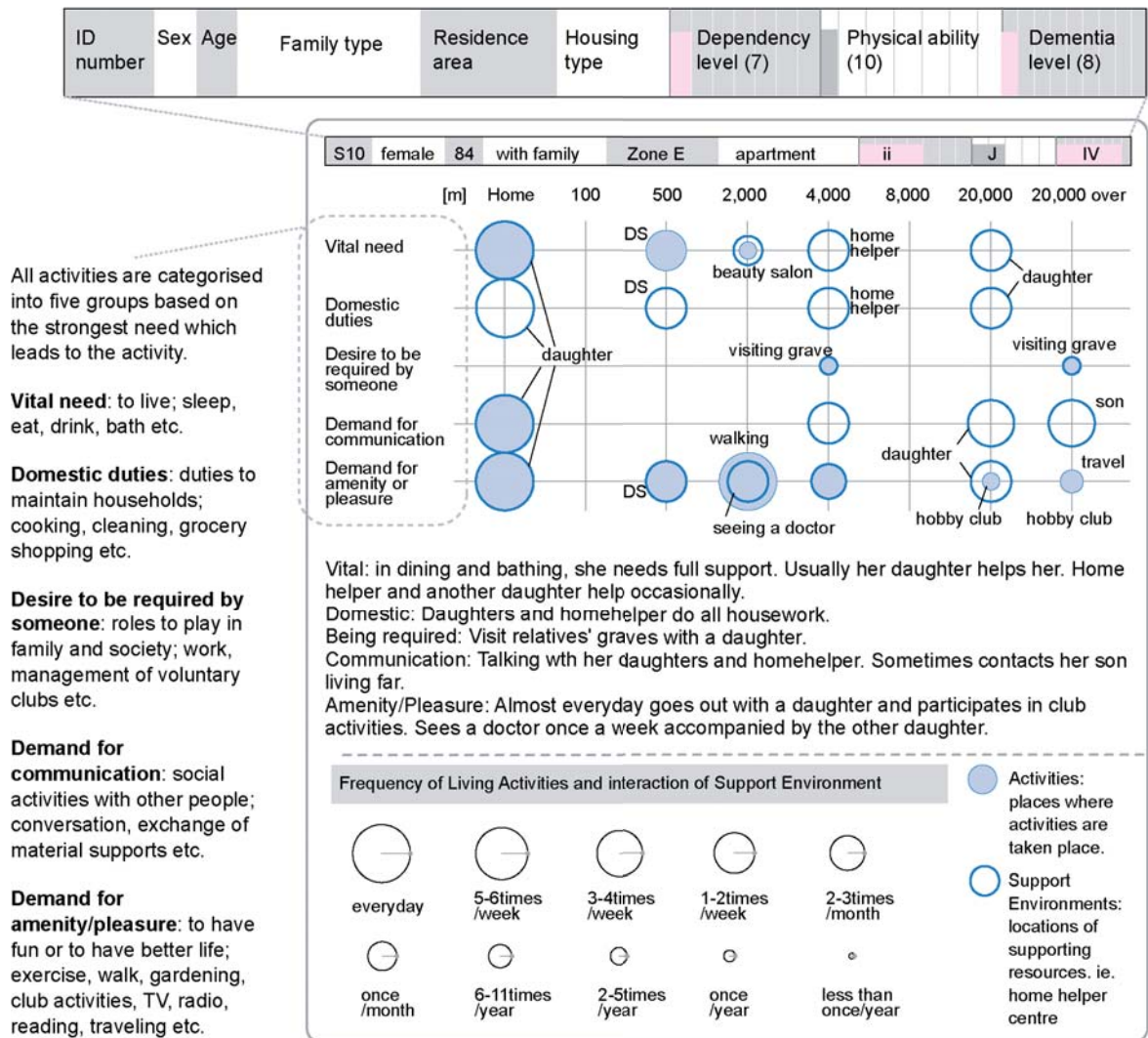
The next steps were to check the validity of such methodology by involving more interviewees from another area with different socio-geographical characteristics and to seek methods to analyse transformation of the 'embeddedness' of older people over years. As well as revisiting the same interviewees annually, I conducted the same type of interviews with 30 older people in a metropolitan district, Sughinami-ku, in Tokyo as an example of an urban

area. The additional data of older people's life and social networks demonstrated a further diversity of the 'embeddedness' in terms of the size and the way of the area that their lives and social networks extended. It was also confirmed that the methodology was applicable to the analysis of data from different socio-geographical contexts and capable of comparing such data.

The figure on the next page (figure 1.3) demonstrates one of the methods to describe and analyse the 'embeddedness' of an individual. Activities of older people were categorised into five groups based on psychological needs. Those groups include: vital need, domestic duties, desire to be needed by someone, demand for communication and demand for amenity/pleasure. The horizontal axis indicates the proximity of the location of activities while the size of circles indicates frequency of activities. Solid circles are for activities of the individual and transparent circles indicate the locations of people or other elements supporting their activities in the same categories, which I called supporting environments. This chart enables us to grasp an individual's 'embeddedness,' which is complex and multidimensional, focusing on proximity and frequency of their activities and those of the relationships with their supporting environments.

The analysis of individuals' 'embeddedness' using such diagrams clearly showed how different supporting environments were spread in space reflecting the diversity between individuals as well as the variety of spatial structures of towns and cities where they live. For example, older people with some personal care needs in a rural area may have to rely on resources in a town centre, which could be 5 km away from home whereas those with the similar needs in an urban area would have all necessary resources within 2 km because of the density of services. Either way, the analysis also indicated the importance of neighbourhood and local areas for the 'embeddedness.' The 'embeddedness' is a concept that puts an emphasis on people's activities besides their perceptions. Older people's activities generally have more density in local areas although the size of such areas depends on individuals and the spatial configuration of the area they live. As a consequence, the nearer the support environments to one's home the more affects his/her 'embeddedness.'

Figure 1.3 An individual's 'embeddedness'



The original diagram is in Tobari (2003), translated into English by the author. On the left, there are five needs of an individual including vital need, domestic duties, desire to be required by someone, demand for communication and demand for amenity or pleasure. All activities were categorised into those five groups according to their driving needs. The horizontal axis indicates the location of activities as a distance from home. The size of the circles indicate frequency of each activity. Filled circles are the individual's activity and transparent ones are the location of support environments and resources. By visualising frequency and distance of activities and supports, which enable those activities, the diagram demonstrates how an individual's life extend in time and space, which is essentially his/her 'embeddedness.'

I also analysed how the 'embeddedness' of older people was transformed over years. Some interviewees experienced various changes in their lives during my repeated visits, including loss of family members or friends, decline of physical abilities, moving house, the start of using social care services and so on. Those were identified as factors that impact their 'embeddedness.' Some changes enhance the 'embeddedness' while some reduced it. It was revealed that some people cope with changes in their lives by getting alternative sources of support or by adjusting expectations to maintain the level of 'embeddedness' while some other people fail to do so and accept the reduction of 'embeddedness' as inevitable.

To summarise, in my previous research, I have described, analysed and evaluated comprehensively the ‘embeddedness’ of older people in their living environments and its transformations while proposing innovative methods to do so based on a person-in-environment model. The research shed light on the diversity of the ‘embeddedness’ of older people and on the importance of their local environments, which would need to be acknowledged by anybody who were involved in their lives, such as social workers, carers and family members, and who were involved in designing their living environments, social or physical, such as governments and architects. It was also suggested that the methods proposed in my research would be useful for those people to understand individually unique ‘embeddedness’ from older people’s perspectives and to identify potential needs.

Although the study offered the methods to better understand individuals’ ‘embeddedness,’ which could be immediately used to improve the ‘embeddedness’ of individual older people, it focused on immediate ‘embeddedness’ predominantly described by daily activities and did not yet deal with the ‘embeddedness’ at a societal level. How are older people embedded in a society on the whole? Whether and how can we describe such an overall ‘embeddedness’? Can certain social systems enhance or reduce the ‘embeddedness’ of older people in a society? To answer those questions, socio-cultural elements of the ‘embeddedness’ would need to be further explored. The next section explains how those questions have been developed into the research questions for this thesis.

1.3 Civic engagement and older people

My PhD programme in Sociology at the University of Greenwich thus tackled questions emerging from my previous research. As I mentioned earlier, there were two main reasons for choosing Sociology rather than continuing my research under the discipline of Architecture or moving to any other discipline. First, I strongly felt that the discussion of the ‘embeddedness’ of older people needed to involve socio-cultural elements in addition to behavioural and spatial elements. After all, ‘embeddedness’ is a social concept that is expressed in behaviour and spatially. Without a society, ‘embeddedness’ is not only meaningless but also impossible. The discussion of ‘embeddedness’ must involve the analysis of relevant socio-cultural elements such as feelings of belonging and social groups. Secondly, understanding

individuals' 'embeddedness' is one thing while making changes to them is another. As much as the 'embeddedness' involves socio-cultural elements, the 'embeddedness' is dependant on socio-cultural conditions. Social policies and their implementation can make a difference to such conditions and therefore to people's 'embeddedness.' I thought it was necessary to review and analyse social policies and their implementation as well as spatial elements to understand older people's 'embeddedness' fully. The bridge I wanted to build between Architecture and Sociology depended upon shedding light on social elements in the 'embeddedness' on the basis of the 'embeddedness' models that emphasize behavioural and spatial elements.

Although I did not realise it then, the advocacy of such policies had been at the heart of one side of classical sociology's theory of social change ever since Durkheim (1984, originally 1893) wrote about the nature of social solidarity. He suggested that in the transition from rural agricultural society to urban industrial society, the solidarity was endangered. In agricultural society, solidarity had been automatic, (which is traditionally translated from French as "mechanical,") because everyone knew one another's business and circumstances, and could empathise. In industrial society the increasing division of labour meant that society became very complex, and unless people were well educated they would fail to understand or appreciate the roles and needs of others. Thus in this complex modern society people had to be educated, informed and involved in order to make sense of society and not to become "anomic" or normless and disoriented. He called this deliberately created complex solidarity "organic solidarity." He made an analogy between the social solidarity which is maintained by individuals with different skills and roles somehow working together to sustain the unity of the society and the cohesion of a complex organism like a mammal which has many different organs with many different functions carried out for the organism to survive. In order to promote "organic solidarity" Durkheim, himself a professor of pedagogy, suggested that civic education was an essential part of the curriculum to prevent the fragmentation of society.

Perhaps the most prominent contemporary embodiment of the Durkheimian vision is Anthony Giddens. His theories of structuration and book "The Third Way" (Giddens 1984, 2000) explicitly provided an intellectual rationale for the Blair Government's policies of

social inclusion and civic engagement which created the political environment for the case study on the Better Government for Older People (BGOP) project that this thesis examines. I will explain more about the project later this chapter.

It is beyond the scope of this thesis to locate the theory of civic engagement elaborated here within every twist and turn of the history of sociological thought from Durkheim, through Parsons to Giddens. Nonetheless the author has come to realise that it tackles a dilemma that has been with sociology for a century, between the optimism of Durkheim and the pessimism of the other great nineteenth century academic sociologist, Max Weber. Weber (1978 originally 1922) suggested that in practice complex societies would be co-ordinated not by everybody understanding and feeling good about each other, but by efficient, rational bureaucracies, in which people got on with their own job and their own specialisation and did what they were told though they would covertly follow their own interests when they could get away with it. Understanding and empathising for each other, which were foundation of Durkheim's automatic solidarity, are regarded as irrelevant. In Weber's view, the prime interest of organisations especially political parties, bureaucracies and alike was, in fact, the maintenance of their own power rather than the pursuit of the public interest, which Durkheim's "ethical socialism" suggested. Organisations embody the self-sustaining mechanisms in which individuals only play their roles and conduct the given tasks.

This thesis is of course not the first to tackle the dilemma. Parsons (1937) is one of the most important figures in pre-modern Sociology after Weber and Durkheim, and his attempt to reconcile them is the impetus, whether acknowledged or not, behind the struggles of most of his successors down to Giddens' (1984) discussion of "agency and structure." Although he does not use the same term, his view of interrelationships between human behaviours and their contextual environments has a common ground with a person-in-environment model (Parsons, 1937). However, my attempt to tackle with the dilemma differs from Parsons' largely because my view of human-society relations are based on social network theory, in which bureaucratic institutions are seen as part of a network system while Parsons still focuses on social structure. In other words, the idea of civic engagement, which is proposed in this thesis, embeds Weber's view of bureaucracy in Durkheim's view of organic social

systems, whereas Parsons, in my view, grafts Durkheim's functionalism onto a Weberian view of the history of society.

The main empirical case study of this thesis might be seen as an instance where the bureaucracy in its policy adopts theories of promoting greater civic engagement and solidarity, but in its practice strangles them at birth due to the nature of its rational, bureaucratic system. But that does not mean that I am suggesting this was always inevitable. As I will further discuss in chapter three, such bureaucratic systems that Weber saw through the late 19th century to the early 20th century are now forced to change the way they work in the face of the highly individualised society in the 21st century. Also as Giddens suggest, the more we (that is everyone, officials and lay people), understand about the structures of government, the greater the chance that our actions can change them. But that understanding has to be complex and dynamic, and this thesis, along with offering a provisional model for increasing social engagement, will demonstrate those complexities.

At the beginning, although I had those questions in regard to the 'embeddedness' of older people in my mind, they were not yet concrete as research questions. During my brainstorming period, I was informed about a possible research opportunity on civic engagement of older people in the London Borough of Greenwich working with Greenwich Council. The joint research project was brought to the University of Greenwich by the Social Inclusion and Justice division in the council, who had aspired to take an initiative in fostering the Better Government for Older People (BGOP) programme in the borough. The national government had launched the BGOP programme promoting civic engagement of older people in 1998 in accordance with its umbrella programme, the Modernising Government Agenda. It was Greenwich Council's immediate response to the national programme to set up an action research on civic engagement in order to identify relevant issues in the borough and to find a way to get older people involved in public affairs.

Although the concept of civic engagement was not defined clearly, it was not difficult to associate it with 'embeddedness,' which was the centre of my research interests. Being engaged in public affairs certainly seemed one of the many possible ways to be embedded

in a society and especially the one related to socio-cultural aspects of the ‘embeddedness,’ which I wanted to explore more. It also seemed that the concept of civic engagement went beyond the relationships between an individual and his/her environments and involves the dynamism between people and a society. Convinced by its relevance to the concept of the ‘embeddedness’ of older people, I took the opportunity to work as a main investigator in the joint research project with Greenwich Council to explore the theme of civic engagement of older people.

In the first year and a half of my PhD programme, I primarily concentrated on the BGOP research project working with Greenwich Council. The steering group of the BGOP was constituted by two council members from Chief Executive’s Department and four university members including two of my PhD supervisors, Prof. Acton and Dr. Campbell, and myself as its members. The objectives of the first stage of the project were: to investigate what civic engagement means to older people in the borough; to identify good practices of civic engagement in the borough; and to propose social systems that foster civic engagement of older people in the borough. In addition, although the project was initially funded only for a year, we expected to continue further to implement our ideas on new schemes to foster civic engagement of older people in the borough and monitor their effects.

To achieve those objectives, I first conducted fieldwork to investigate people’s perceptions of civic engagement and to understand how it is experienced by older people. The fieldwork comprised semi-structured interviews with 17 people who work with or for older people mainly in the borough in public and voluntary sector and participant observations in three schemes including the National Pensioners Parliament, a local lunch club and a day centre. In parallel to the fieldwork, I also conducted a literature search to grasp a general overview on civic engagement in the UK and to identify good practices of civic engagement.

I shall save the details of findings of the research for the later chapters to keep the introduction concise. In summary, it highlighted a gap between what is regarded as civic engagement in the public sector and how it is perceived in the voluntary sector and a gap between what is implemented as a civic engagement practised by the public sector and how older people

experience civic engagement in their daily life. While observed civic engagement practices seemed to be playing an essential role in embedding older people in their society, the contribution of the initiatives led by the national and local governments to the ‘embeddedness’ of older people seemed questionable. The observation identified a wide range of elements that impact on the state of civic engagement in the borough as well as for individual older people. Those elements included how informal communications, such as socialising at a lunch club, improve older people’s ‘embeddedness’ by engaging them in a wider society. On the other hand, the interviews revealed the lack of communication between different divisions within the public sector and between different sectors, which resulted in the lack of a multi-disciplinary approach towards civic engagement of older people that can involve all the various elements.

Those findings were presented at a community event which the Greenwich BGOP steering group had organised. More than 100 older residents in the borough were invited along with local councillors, and public sector and voluntary sector workers. We also arranged workshops at the event in which attendees with different backgrounds were mixed and divided into small groups of six to eight people to discuss various issues regarding civic engagement. The event was designed to offer an opportunity for everyone to learn others’ perspectives as one of the implementations of what emerged as a starting point for the development of civic engagement. The event seemed a remarkable success and all the outcomes of the research and the event were compiled into the final report, which was published at the end of one and half years of the project.

However, rather to our disappointment, the project had to come to an end due to financial reasons. The outcomes of the project were not well appreciated by the funding body, the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit (NRU) in the London Borough of Greenwich. The funding for the Greenwich BGOP project was largely from the NRU in the borough, which has its own budget supported directly by the national government rather than by Greenwich Council. The Greenwich NRU was responsible for reporting back to the national government on their performances. What the Greenwich BGOP project had achieved simply did not fit in with any of the criteria with which the NRU should assess their annual performances and

therefore was disregarded.

Despite my disappointment, this incident has encouraged me forward to carry on my own investigation on civic engagement of older people. It confirmed the dysfunctional social system which caused the unwelcome ending of the Greenwich BGOP project despite its importance acknowledged by older people in the borough and by those who were involved. It revealed problems existing in the bureaucracy and the sectionalism which would make the strategies of the government or the council meaningless. It finally provided me with a focused research question as to whether the government's initiatives on civic engagement of older people are effective especially in relation to the 'embeddedness' of older people.

After the end of the Greenwich BGOP project, I continued to attend seminars and meetings with regards to the BGOP at the national and the regional level for my own research. There were two regular meetings that I attended: the Older Persons Action Learning Sets and London BGOP Network. The former was set up by the national government as learning groups for better public services for older people at a local level. The latter was organised by the Greater London Assembly and the national BGOP office for BGOP groups in London boroughs to exchange their knowledge and experiences. Those activities allowed me to gather relevant information at the national level and enable me to argue for the validity of the case study in the London Borough of Greenwich in a wider context.

In the course of my research, there was another rather unexpected input to the research. In 2007, I did an internship at an architectural and urban design consulting company, Space Syntax Limited, and became a full-time consultant almost a year later. Its unique and world-leading spatial analysis methodology has been developed by Hillier and his colleagues at The Bartlett, University College London (Hillier, 2004). My encounter with Space Syntax Limited was inspiring and progressed the theoretical development of my research.

Space syntax theory and methodology can be greatly helped by graph theory. Hillier and his colleagues identified a parallel between the way we understand spaces and the way

we understand language (Hillier, 2004). Using graph theory, they established methods to analyse configurational qualities of spaces. While space syntax analysis is one of the spatial applications of graph theory, one of the sociometric applications is social network analysis. Learning space syntax theory and methodology for my professional career led me to graph theory and then social network theory, which helped my understanding and analysis of civic engagement at a macro level. In addition, the idea of configuration that Hillier and his colleague developed also contributed to a crucial way forward in shifting perspectives from individuals to a macro level. I shall explain more detail of each theory and its influence on my research in the following chapter as part of methodology.

1.4 Purpose and objectives

1.4.1 Purpose of the research

As explained above, while the Better Government for Older People project in the London Borough of Greenwich made a great deal of contribution to my own research project especially at the data collection stage, it was ironically the failure of the Greenwich BGOP project that clarified research questions for my own project. The initial purpose of this study is to investigate how the UK policies and initiatives promoting civic engagement of older people impact their ‘embeddedness.’

As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, I also intend to make bridges between Architecture and Sociology with this study. My previous research project on older people’s ‘embeddedness’ in Architecture identified two pairs of areas that need to be linked in order to obtain a complete figure of ‘embeddedness.’ One bridge is to be built between behavioural and spatial elements and socio-cultural elements in the concept of the ‘embeddedness.’ My previous study in Architecture naturally focused behavioural and spatial elements with a consideration of psychological elements. At the end, it revealed that the significance and relevance of socio-cultural elements to the further understanding of the ‘embeddedness.’ This study will shed light on socio-cultural elements of ‘embeddedness’ with the help of theories and ideas developed in Sociology.

The other bridge is between understanding of individual older people’s lives and their

‘embeddedness’ and social policies and their implementations that affect their lives and ‘embeddedness.’ What I investigated was the ‘embeddedness’ that was perceived and experienced by older people. Social policies and their implementations affect older people’s experiences of civic engagement and therefore their ‘embeddedness.’ Examinations of civic engagement policies and practices will enable us to speculate how to make a difference in older people’s experiences and perceptions by changing social policies and practices. This study will therefore examine civic engagement policies, initiatives and practices. I hope that this study will demonstrate the interrelationships between Architecture and Sociology as academic fields by creating those two bridges.

1.4.2 Research questions

Through my initial involvement in the Greenwich BGOP project, I identified the following five guiding questions, which would help achieve the research goal. Those questions also guide the structure of this thesis, which I will explain in the next section.

- 1) Why civic engagement and ‘embeddedness’?
- 2) How do I define the concept of civic engagement?
- 3) How is civic engagement perceived and treated at strategic levels (i.e. UK policies and nationwide initiatives)?
- 4) How is the idea implemented at local levels?
- 5) How is civic engagement perceived and experienced by individual older people?

Civic engagement and ‘embeddedness’ in a contemporary society

Before I go into the discussion of civic engagement, I will discuss the social context in which civic engagement of older people emerged in the policy discourses in the UK. Why are there many initiatives targeting at civic engagement of older people in and around the UK? Is there a reason for more attention to the topic now than before?

To answer these questions, I examined fundamental characteristics of the relationships between individuals and a society. Some characteristics of such relationships in contemporary society are found to be highly relevant to the question as to why it is important to discuss

civic engagement and ‘embeddedness’ at present. I will discuss such characteristics at the following three levels: societal level, community level and individual level. At a societal level, I will discuss how organisations and networks of people are formed and maintained. Then I will zoom in to one of the organisations or networks of people and discuss how and what for people are related to each other within it. Finally I will further zoom in and focus on an individual’s life. From an individual’s perspectives, I will discuss how an individual is related to multiple organisations.

Concept of civic engagement

First of all, the term civic engagement and its various conceptualisations require clarification. In reality, the term is found being used in a wide variety of meanings in different documents such as the BGOP strategy and by different individuals. Often it is used as almost equivalent to ‘citizen participation’ or sometimes as ‘citizen empowerment,’ which are rather formal and political concepts. Although I have no objection to admit that they are part of what civic engagement entails, they do not fully explain what ‘civic engagement’ means. It seems to me that the concept of civic engagement is to do with broader spheres as opposed to being confined within the political sphere and is strongly related to ‘embeddedness.’ Therefore, before I start examining how the term ‘civic engagement’ is used and perceived by public bodies and by individual older persons, I would like to clarify what civic engagement means in relation to ‘embeddedness’ by exploring academic discourses in various fields.

The exploration of the concept of civic engagement takes three steps. The first step is to examine what is ‘civic.’ The meanings given in dictionaries are not obviously the answer in this study. I found that the examination of the concept of citizenship offers better understanding of a concept of ‘civic’ that is contextual rather than literal. Therefore I will explore the concept of citizenship from that of ancient Greece to the modern concept.

The second step is to describe what is ‘engagement.’ Simply speaking, there are two types of ‘engagement’: one is social and the other is physical. Those two are also inevitably interrelated but not the same. I will first discuss what is engagement from an individual’s perspectives on the foundation of the idea of transactionalism and in relation to ‘embeddedness.’ While the concept of engagement from an individual’s perspectives can be discussed referring to my

previous research on ‘embeddedness,’ in this study I also need to discuss engagement at a societal level. I found some communication theories helpful to understand how an individual can be related to a group of people and to a society through groups he/she belongs.

Finally on the basis of the preceding two steps, I will outline the concept of civic engagement as a whole and in relation to ‘embeddedness.’ I will discuss what I understand as civic engagement focusing on the following issues: who are those engaged; different domains of civic engagement; different levels of engagement; and different means of collective engagement.

Policies and initiatives of civic engagement in the UK

As mentioned earlier, there are a number of policies and initiatives that are designed to promote civic engagement in the UK and internationally. Yet they present no clear concept or understanding of what civic engagement should involve. Although it may be clear that those policies and initiatives are ultimately designed to improve public services for citizens or at least for certain groups of people, the impact of each policy or initiative cannot be evaluated or assessed without a clear understanding of the fundamental concept of civic engagement. That was precisely what the BGOP project in the London Borough of Greenwich demonstrated.

At an operational level implementing those policies and initiatives, it is even less clear what elements have to do with civic engagement. While some people who are involved in one of those initiatives may have their own ideas of what is civic engagement to some extent, they are yet uncertain about what to do to promote it further besides their regular tasks and routines. Some people who appear to be already involved in civic engagement practices are not always aware of the notion of civic engagement.

Therefore, I will examine two levels of civic engagement in relation to policies and initiatives of the national and local governments: at the strategic level and at the operational level. I will review strategies and public services, not only the ones which are clearly linked to the notion

of civic engagement but also those whose relevance to civic engagement are less explicit. I will analyse those policies and initiatives using criteria which emerged from the exploration of the concept of civic engagement. It will help us to see the perceptions of those who are involved in designing policies and initiatives and their implementations in a wider picture.

My survey of the literature and policy documents identifying relevant practices at different scales from neighbourhood to international provides a context for analysing the interviews that I conducted in relation to the BGOP project in the London Borough of Greenwich, which also provided an insight into perceptions of ‘civic engagement’ by those who are involved in a broad range of civic engagement practices in the London Borough of Greenwich. In addition, my continuous involvement in discussions on civic engagement at the national and the regional level offered better understanding of various perceptions on civic engagement in public bodies.

Older people’s perceptions and experiences of civic engagement in their daily life

The third objective of this study is to investigate how civic engagement is perceived and experienced by older people in their daily life in order to understand civic engagement from their perspectives. Through my initial fieldwork in the Greenwich BGOP project, it was revealed that there were gaps between what the governments intended to offer as civic engagement opportunities (intentions) and what older people expected to receive from those initiatives (expectations) and between what the governments set as civic engagement practices (implementations) and what older people experience as civic engagement (experiences).

From older people’s perspectives, the notion of civic engagement is strongly related to their ‘embeddedness’ in their society. As I mentioned earlier, in my previous PhD thesis, I examined individual older people’s ‘embeddedness’ in their local communities at a behavioural level. The research revealed that the ‘embeddedness’ was not only about how people were related to their local communities at a behavioural level but also how they felt about their relationships with their local communities and with a wider society and how they are related to a wider society emotionally and socio-culturally as well as behaviourally. The inseparability of the three elements of perceptions, behaviours and culture was studied and

discussed in depth by Hall (1966) whose cross-disciplinary studies had a significant impact on a foundation of transactionalism. These three elements are interrelated and experienced as a whole by individual older persons and contribute to their 'embeddedness.' On the basis of this principle, further to my previous research project, I extend my examination in this study to include older people's perceptions in addition to their behaviours, and socio-cultural elements in addition to local communities in a spatial sense.

Thus, I will analyse civic engagement in older people's experiences at a perceptual level, at a behavioural level and a societal level. It is a challenge, because how civic engagement is perceived by older people themselves is less obvious and open than the perceptions of those who are involved in initiatives at a strategic level or at a level of implementation. It requires multiple approaches to extract older people's perceptions on civic engagement when they are not necessarily aware of the notion of civic engagement. Some case studies of civic engagement practices offered me opportunities to observe how civic engagement was experienced by older people. Interpretations of observed behaviour were supported by the interviews with older people and those who are closely working with them. Those interviews provided an insight of what they expect from the governments' initiatives promoting civic engagement.

The government's initiatives and older people's experience of civic engagement

Finally I attempt to get a complete picture of civic engagement of older people to answer the question as to how the UK policies and initiatives promoting civic engagement of older people impact their 'embeddedness.' While the other three objectives are to investigate civic engagement from three different perspectives individually, the final objective is to understand civic engagement as a single concept as well as a social experience in the context of reality from all the three perspectives. The answer to the research question is found in the relations between all of the three, which include the definition of civic engagement, policies and initiatives of civic engagement and older people's experiences and perceptions of civic engagement.

I will argue how different the government's intentions in civic engagement policies

and initiatives are from older people's expectations for it and how different the way the government's initiatives work and the way those initiatives are related to and experienced in older people's everyday life. Then I will speculate on the reasons behind those gaps and what they mean in relation to the 'embeddedness' of older people.

My previous research already suggested that 'embeddedness' was behaviourally expressed differently and perceived differently between individuals. Based on such implications, I assume how a civic engagement initiative impacts older people's 'embeddedness' behaviourally and perceptively would be different between individuals. However, the purpose of this study is not to discuss differences between individuals by comparing them. Instead, I will discuss how differences between individuals are dealt with in the existing practices under the existing policies and initiatives.

1.4.3 Structure of the study

Those research objectives introduced above have determined the structure of this study. The thesis consists of nine chapters including this introductory chapter.

The data collection methodologies, which make this thesis original and credible, are introduced in the following chapter (chapter two). Chapter two begins with the introduction of an ontological philosophy of human-environment relations underlying the series of my researches, which has been developed based on transactionalism. I will also discuss the multi-disciplinary character of my developing research, which requires a holistic approach. The second half of chapter two is dedicated to explaining the research methods including document survey, interviews and participant observations.

How such data were analysed is discussed in the chapter three. I will discuss how I analysed the data to tackle each of five research questions.

To answer the first question, I undertake an overview of current social conditions as the background to the discussion of civic engagement in chapter four. I will argue why it is

important to consider the ‘embeddedness’ of older people by revealing some social factors which might cause disembedding of older people from their communities. Such factors are identified in the discussions on three different but interrelated aspects of relationships between people and a contemporary society. Those aspects include: the individual and global society, community, and personal identity and lifestyle. I will also discuss how older people are defined in relation to the concept of ageing. I intend to clarify why my study pursues the ‘embeddedness’ in relation to older people in particular.

In chapter five, I attempt to answer the second question as to what is ‘civic engagement’. As mentioned earlier, I will break down the question into three parts. First I will discuss the concept of citizenship to clarify what ‘civic’ means. I will then argue what ‘engagement’ is and how physical and social elements are interrelated and complement each other. Based on understanding of those two terms, I will then establish my views on what civic engagement is.

Chapter six is an exploration of civic engagement at a strategic level corresponding to the third question: to investigate how the perception of civic engagement is expressed in the national and local governments’ policies and initiatives. I will review relevant policies and initiatives at various levels from local to international and across different sectors from health to housing. I will analyse how those initiatives are related (or not related) between different levels and different sectors, which reveal systematic and structural problems with regard to the promotion of civic engagement.

Chapter seven then explores civic engagement at an operational level corresponding to the fourth question. In order to investigate how the concept of civic engagement is implemented, I will take the London Borough of Greenwich as a case study and examine all relevant initiatives and practices identified. As well as analysing each of the practices, I will analyse how they all work in the social system of the London Borough of Greenwich.

Chapter eight further investigates civic engagement in older people’s experiences to answer

the fifth question with five case studies of how older people experience civic engagement and what they expect from it are analysed. I will review those five case studies in relation to a wider context. I will investigate how policies, local government's strategies and other practices are related to each of them.

In chapter nine, having gone through all of the five questions, I will discuss interrelationships of different aspects of civic engagement. I will examine the gaps between the government's perspectives and older people's expectations for civic engagement and the gaps between the government's initiatives and older people's experiences.

Finally, chapter ten draws conclusions on how the UK government's initiatives promoting civic engagement of older people impact their 'embeddedness'. I will argue how those gaps identified in the previous chapter are created, what can be done to fill those gaps in and what impacts the improvements of civic engagement in the UK are expected to bring in our daily life and in change of values. Finally, I will discuss the value of my research in relation to various areas of interests including architecture and social policy.

CHAPTER TWO

2. METHODOLOGY

Chapter two introduces the data collection methodologies used for this study. The first part of this introduction discusses philosophical assumptions that underlie the whole argument in this study regarding civic engagement and ‘embeddedness’. These assumptions embody distinctive perspectives towards human-environment relations, which define the attitude and the area of this study and make this study unique. The second part details research methods that allow us to analyse and understand human-environment relations from multiple angles. The research methods used in this study are designed upon the basis of the philosophical assumptions, and as such their plausibility or otherwise is a test of the credibility of those assumptions.

2.1 Theoretical background

In relation to the methodologies for this study, I discuss two major sets of philosophical assumptions.

One set of assumptions provides a view on how to see human-environment relations, which is a major subject of discourse in many fields in social science. My series of research projects have been based on a ‘person-in-environment’ model, which conceptualises principal perspectives towards human-environment relations in a transactional theory. This study, as part of my continuing research projects, is also primarily based on the same perspectives in the analysis of relationships between older people and a society. A person-in-environment model can be, however, further developed to shift its focus from individuals to society. In the following sections, I will discuss some principal perspectives towards human-environment relations, in particular relation to the concept of ‘embeddedness,’ which I proposed in my previous PhD research.

The other set of assumptions offers principles of approaches in social science. In relation to

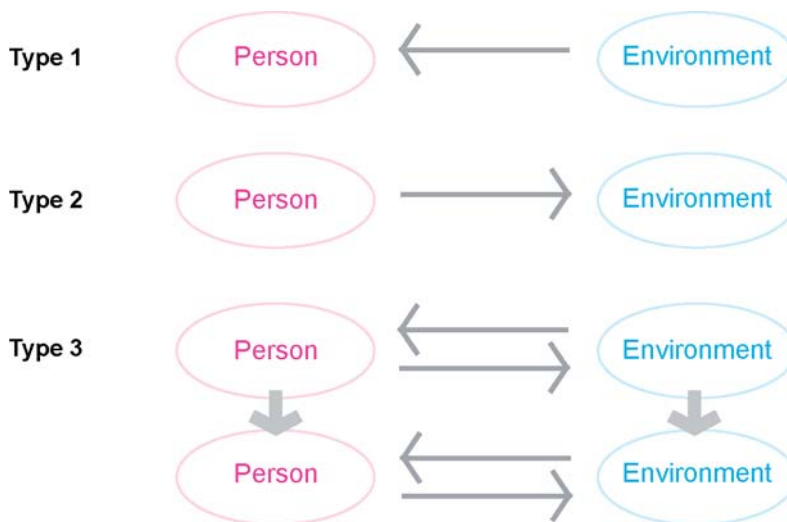
the first set of assumptions set by a person-in-environment model, I insist on the importance of a holistic approach. I will discuss the nature of social science research and the nature of human beings as research objects. I will argue why a holistic approach is particularly necessary in this study on civic engagement and suggest that the holistic approach is one thing that makes this study unique and credible.

These two sets of philosophical assumptions were fed into the design of research methods. The latter half of this chapter will introduce each of the research methods employed in relation to the sequence of this study. As mentioned briefly in the previous chapter, a large part of this study overlapped with the Better Government for Older People (BGOP) project in the London Borough of Greenwich. As this study owes much to the joint project with Greenwich Council, the research methods were partly determined by the project. It was also my research experience in the Greenwich BGOP project that made me set a clear research question for my own research. Unlike many PhD students, I entered into fieldwork at the deep end before completing my theoretical investigations, which consequently bear the marks of that experience. The BGOP project was a large part of my fieldwork for my own research project, as well as a preparation period for the establishment of theoretical foundations. Therefore, the research methods of this study have to be explained in relation to the BGOP project and within the sequence of events.

2.1.1 Ontological philosophy: Transactional theory

First and most importantly, this study uses the perspective on fundamental human-environment relations provided by transactional theory, which has been developed in interdisciplinary fields across psychology, anthropology, sociology and architecture (see for example, Wapner, 1987). The theory provides a set of perspectives on relations between a person and his/her surroundings concerning various dimensions from psychological, physical and socio-cultural aspects. It proposes a very complex conceptual model, which illustrates dynamic relations between a person and his/her environments, including physical and socio-cultural elements with a focus on details of internal transactions within an individual and with recognition of inseparability of physical and socio-cultural environments. Figure 2.1 introduces a variety of models that attempt to explain conceptions of human-environment relations.

Figure 2.1 Various perspectives on human-environments relations



Each of the three diagrams represents three different models of relationships between a person and environment. The first one (type 1) is a passive model, in which a person is influenced by the environment. The second one (type 2) is the opposite, where a person influences the environment. The third one (type 3) is a transactional model, in which a person and the environment influence each other and progressively change.

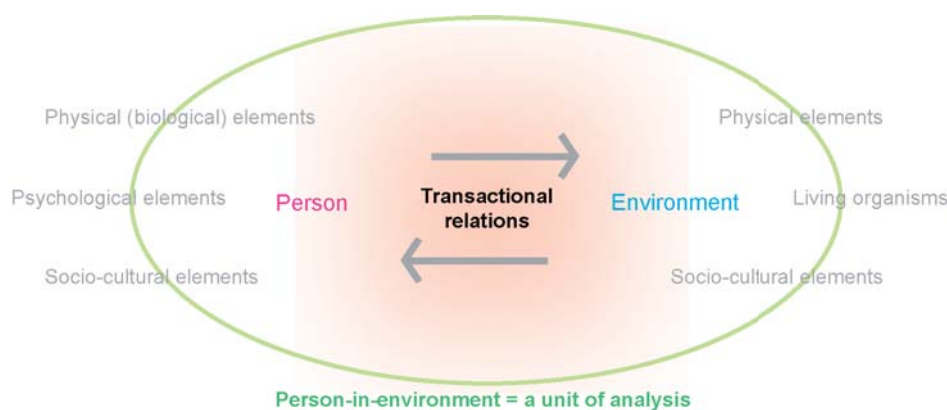
Transactional theory has its roots in psychology. Among various theories on human-environment relations, as shown in figure 2.1, behaviourism and architectural determinism (or often just determinism) played important roles in the establishment of a transactional theory. Behaviourism, which has been famously developed by psychologists including Watson and Skinner, in early twentieth century, contributed to the establishment of a transactional theory by acknowledging the significance of behaviour in the analysis of psychological activities in human beings (Baum, 2005). Not until the emergence of behaviourism was the interrelatedness between psychological elements and behaviour realised and built into the assumptions of mainstream psychology. Architectural determinism, on the other hand, focuses on behaviour-built environment relations and insists that the environment determines people's behaviour and not vice versa (Canter, 1985). Although determinism, unlike transactional theory, does not acknowledge the interactive relations between behaviour and environments, it does make a significant contribution to the development of a transactional theory by recognising the capability of built environments to cause, limit and support human behaviour.

A person-in-environment model

Transactional theory suggests that the relationships between human behaviour and the

environment are transactional rather than one-way relations (Japan Architecture Association, 1997). Through transactions between behaviour and the environment, situations keep shifting from one stage to another and never stay the same. One of the prominent proponents of transactional theory, Wapner (1987), proposed a person-in-environment model as a unit of human-environment analysis (figure 2.2). This model demonstrates transactional relationships between a person and his/her environments involving three dimensions. Three dimensions of a unit of a person-in-environment provide three groups of elements on each side of an individual and his/her environments that influence his/her behaviour. On the individual's side, there are three sets of elements, comprising; psychological/mental elements, physical elements and socio-cultural elements, all of which are interrelated and influence his/her behaviour. On his/her environments' side, there are also three sets of elements, comprising; organisms, physical environments and socio-cultural environments, which are again interrelated and influence his/her behaviour. An individual is influenced by his/her environments and also influences his/her environments through his/her behaviours. In other words, an individual's behaviour is an expression of his/her internal transactions to his/her external world and experience of external transactions in his/her external world. A person-in-environment model embraces two major perspectives on human-environment systems mentioned earlier; behaviourist and determinist perspectives, by demonstrating both internal transactional relationships between psychological states and behaviour, and external transactions between behaviour and environments.

Figure 2.2 Person-in-environment model



The diagram was originally published in Tobari (2003) and translated into English by the author. It demonstrates transactional relationships between a person and his/her environment, which is regarded as a unit of analysis called 'person-in-environment.' There are three elements on each side of a person and the environment, which are all interrelated and influence this transactional relationship.

A person-in-environment system, in which one's behaviour works as a node connecting all six elements, enables us to analyse one's activity without separating it from its contexts. The inseparability of all six elements is considered to be essential for in-depth analyses of human behaviour in social science, since 'context provides meanings' of behaviour (Canter, 2000: 199). From the viewpoint of social science research all activities have no intrinsic meaning unless they have social contexts: meanings are generated in social relations. Therefore, social interpretations of behaviour require the analysis of its contexts, which are all the environmental elements relevant to the behaviour in question and their configuration in a wider context. As Saegert (1990) points out, a person-in-environment system simultaneously has both stability and flexibility as an entity, and a person-in-environment model demonstrates the configuration of one's behaviour at a certain point in time and space while implying the dynamism of the configuration itself.

Transactional theory at a macro level

While a person-in-environment model offers a view on individual-environment relations, the key perception offered by transactional theory - that relationships between individuals and environments are transactional - is not confined within a micro level but also applicable at a macro level. The dynamism of individual-environment relations and the interconnectivity of different elements are recognised by researchers in social science.

For example, Stokols (2000) recognises the inseparability of social and physical environments and the impact of such interrelated environments on people's behaviour and psychology. He employs the term 'sociophysical environment' to emphasise the interrelationships between social and physical environments, insisting the prominence and potential of 'sociophysical environment' to influence people's behaviour and well-being on a daily basis. As he suggests, all places and objects have 'symbolic qualities' (Stokols, 2000: 272), which are generated through transactions between an individual and a society and interpreted through inner transactions within an individual.

Giuliani (2003) deals with multiple variables in individual-environment relations in her exploration of the concept of attachment with a particular focus on 'place attachment.'

Attachment is summarised as a positive psychological process that can impact one's personal identity and can be expressed in one's attitude and behaviour. 'Place attachment' is, she argues, a psychological process that has places as targets. In her discussions, a place is seen as a social product rather than simply as a physical environment within certain boundaries at a certain geographic location. She discusses 'place attachment' in relation to a sense of community and territoriality, which are both concepts embracing physical and social aspects of space, and considers 'place attachment' as a source of group identity, which is related to a socio-cultural aspect of individuals. Although the mechanism of generating 'place attachment' is a personal internal process, the concept of 'place attachment' is also discussed as a social process influencing social relations between individuals.

A person-in-environment model and 'embeddedness'

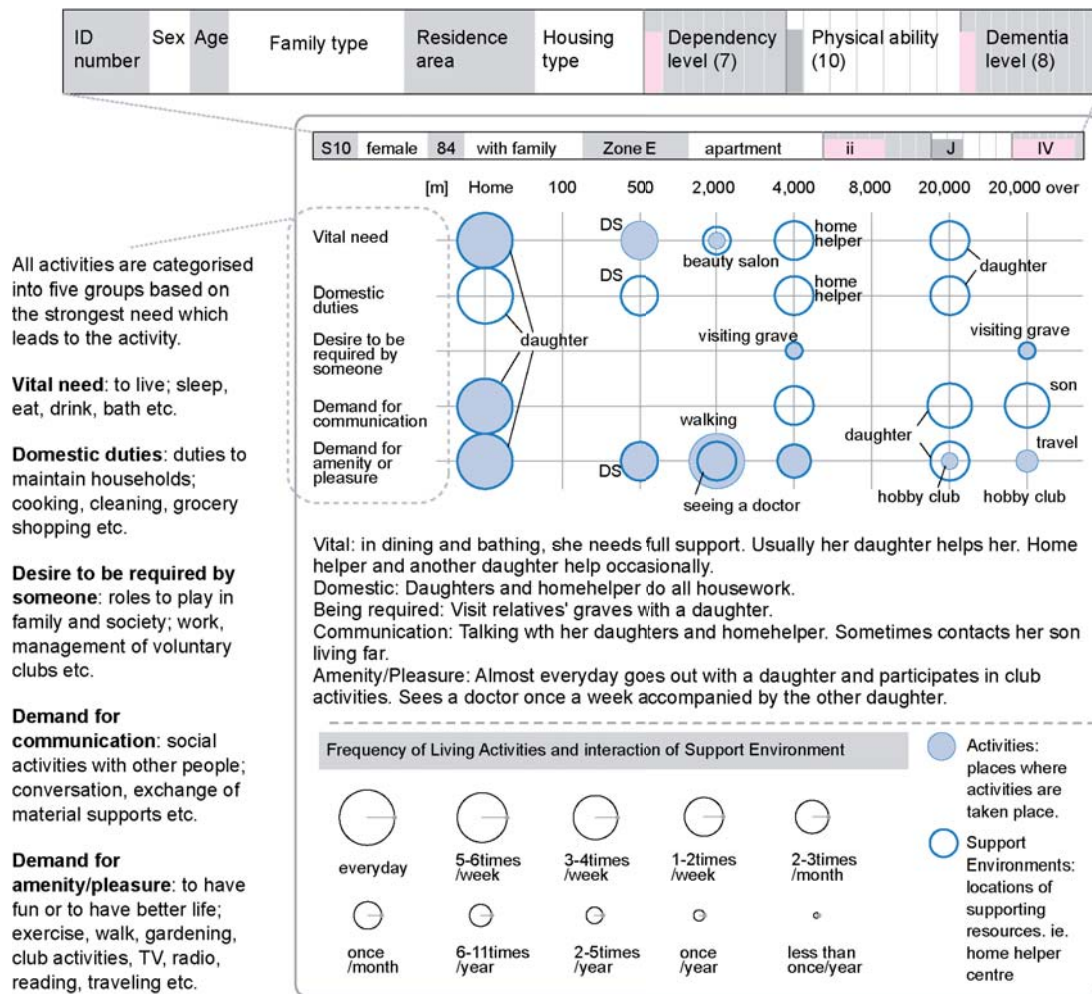
In my previous research published in *Architectural Planning*, I used a person-in-environment model to analyse the 'embeddedness' of older people in Japan (Tobari, 2002a, 2002b and 2003). An individual's 'embeddedness' is defined as a set of intricate dynamic relationships between an individual and his/her environments. In accordance with a person-in-environment model, the environments include organismic, physical and socio-cultural elements in the concept of 'embeddedness.' The five year long research project was aimed at proposing a model of the 'embeddedness' of older people that would help us understand and analyse interrelationships between older people and their local communities through their daily activities and social networks, and the chronological changes of such interrelationships.

In the series of studies, I dealt with individuals' psychological elements by coupling them with behaviour according to conscious and subconscious motivations of behaviours. Behaviours were grouped according to their primary psychological drivers and named 'needs-based behaviours'. I identified five 'needs-based behaviour' groups based on five major psychological drivers of behaviour, comprising; vital need, domestic duties, desire to be needed or required by someone, demand for communications and demand for amenity/pleasure. Based on comprehensive data on individuals' life history, daily activities and social networks, which were obtained through in-depth interviews and close observations of informants, their daily activities were categorised into those five 'needs-based behaviour'

groups according to the primary psychological drive of each activity. With those 'needs-based behaviour' groups, older people's daily activities, as well as their social networks involved in those activities, were analysed in relation to frequency and spatial distribution in their local areas.

Figure 2.3 shows an example of such analyses. The analysis of the frequency of different behaviour groups illustrates a variety of life patterns, while the analysis of the spatial aspect of those behaviour groups demonstrates a variety of spatial configurations of their home and other places that are relevant to their activities. Local demographics, transportation systems and public services were also analysed as part of their socio-cultural environment. After five years of continuous research, I proposed some diagrammatical models to illustrate changes of individuals' life patterns and spatial configurations of their daily activities and social networks. To summarise, my previous studies proposed models of individuals' 'embeddedness' based upon a person-in-environment model, which allows us to analyse individuals' relationships with their environments. The 'embeddedness' is described by temporal and spatial patterns of activities and social networks. While the model of 'embeddedness' is a tool for description, the concept of 'embeddedness' itself offers understanding of fundamental relationships between individuals and their environments that are transactional both internally and externally, with behaviour as the joining point of interaction.

Figure 2.3 Individuals' 'embeddedness' (see fig 1.3)



As explained previously, the original diagram is from Tobarí (2003), translated into English by the author. The diagram shows the distribution of one's activity and social networks in space and time by activity type. The horizontal axis represents the spatial distribution, while the size of circles represents that of time. Activity is categorised into five groups, which are listed vertically. On the left, there are five needs of an individual, comprising vital need, domestic duties, desire to be required by someone, demand for communication and demand for amenity or pleasure. All activities were categorised into those five groups according to their driving needs. The horizontal axis indicates the location of activities as a distance from home. The size of the circles indicates the frequency of each activity. Filled circles are the individual's activity and transparent ones are the location of support environments and resources. By visualising frequency and distance of activities and supports that enable those activities, the diagram demonstrates how an individual's life extends in time and space, which is essentially his/her 'embeddedness'.

My previous studies left a few questions requiring further investigation in relation to the concept of 'embeddedness.' Although those studies provided methods to better understand individuals' 'embeddedness', which could be immediately used to improve the 'embeddedness' of individual older people, they focused on immediate 'embeddedness' predominantly described by daily activities and did not address 'embeddedness' at a societal level in depth. How are older people embedded in a society on the whole? How can we describe such an overall 'embeddedness' if at all? Can certain social systems enhance or

reduce ‘embeddedness’ of older people in a society? To answer those questions, socio-cultural elements of ‘embeddedness’ would need to be further explored.

To summarise, transactional theory plays an important role in this study for the following three reasons. Firstly, it provides a fundamental view on dynamic relationships between individuals and environments, which underlies the whole series of my research. The idea of transactional relationships between individuals and environments complies with an understanding of the dynamism of networked society. As will be discussed in chapter four, in our contemporary society the way people relate to each other is highly network oriented and therefore dynamic and flexible.

Secondly, a person-in-environment model, which was established based upon transactional theory, demonstrates the inseparability of all elements involved, including an individual’s psychological, physical and socio-cultural elements and physical, socio-cultural and organismic elements of his/her environments and insists the importance of dealing with all of those elements as an entity. The model identifies behaviour as expressions of internal transactions between three elements and experience of external transactions between three elements. In the analysis of behaviour, all of those elements should therefore be taken into account as they provide context. One of the challenges of this study, however, is to analyse such individual-society relations at a macro level without losing the sensitivity and complexity that a person-in-environment model offers.

Finally, it is also an essential point for this study that the model works as a reminder of the importance of physical environments. Even though information technologies allow us to share a real time between remote places, and therefore change the meaning of space, in the experience of time-sharing a person is not free from his/her physical environments that allow his/her action of sharing. Technology has compressed time and space in one’s perceptions, but does not free individuals from their body and physical environments. Social networks can expand globally, but they are also dependent on physical environments one way or another. As seen in following chapters, the significance of local communities, proximity and co-presence are discussed in relation to civic engagement and ‘embeddedness.’

2.1.2 A Theoretical and Empirical Approach

The second set of assumptions is related to principles of approaches in social science. In accordance with the discussions on transactional theory, I would like to discuss the importance of a holistic approach in this study.

This study examines the concept of civic engagement from three different perspectives. One of the perspectives is theoretical and the other two are empirical. A duality of approaches, which includes both the theoretical and the empirical, is required by the idea that theories and practices are complementary to each other. Theories, which are established based upon observations of social phenomena, provide contingent truths. In the overall series of my studies, a combination of the transactional theory, the concept of ‘embeddedness’ and empirical data provided a contingent truth that relationships between individuals and their environments are transactional. The concept of transactional theory and ‘embeddedness’ has been tested in my previous research to build models representing transactional relationships between individuals and their environments. In this study, these theories are further developed to build more models representing relationships between social agencies and social factors. These models are then tested against empirical data.

In elaborating concepts and theory, I use a number of diagrammatic models in my studies. Haggett (1965) summarises reasons for using models in social science studies. According to him, model building is: inevitable as a technique to express our beliefs; economical as a means to pass general information in a compressed form; and stimulating as a system to reveal problems in theories and assumptions on which models are based. I agree with all four of the advantages he claims for models as part of the research process. Use of diagrammatic models in theory increases the level of articulation and provides a means of self-analysis in academic discussions. Such methods are particularly useful in social science where researchers deal with highly complex social phenomena, which are dynamic and relational.

Despite those advantages, it is also important to review some critiques of social scientific theories and modelling. Admittedly, theories and models deal with universals rather than specifics and express themselves in a compressed way. In the process of generalisation and

compression, details of specifics and exceptions are eliminated and often discounted. As such the nature of theories and models does not immediately make them insignificant but suggests that there is a methodological limit within them. They do not explain everything, as conveyed in the expression “in theory,” which is often used to talk about exceptions. A contrast is often made between approaches that start by using theories and models, and approaches that start by using empirical methods to gather information on specifics, regularities and exceptions, allegedly without theoretical preconceptions. Empirical research methods include statistical research, fieldwork and experiments. While statistical research is effective in grasping overall figures, fieldwork by means of interview or observational surveys has the advantage of gathering detailed information and relations between each piece of information. Sato (1992) summarises views on the advantages and disadvantages of various research methods based upon consultation of some other studies on research methods, such as Brewer (1989) and Denzin (1978). Table 2.1 is a comparison of four major research methods, which clearly demonstrates that all of four methods are complementary and none of them is self-sufficient (Sato, 1992).

Table 2.1 Comparison of major research methods in social science

	Fieldwork (especially participant observation surveys)	Large scale surveys	Experiments	Indirect methods
Consideration for the complexity of reality	Excellent	Insufficient	Insufficient	Problematic
Intimacy of researcher to social reality	Excellent	Insufficient	Insufficient	Insufficient
The Number of samples/cases	Insufficient	Excellent	Insufficient	Good
Clear Understanding of relations between causes and results	Problematic	Insufficient	Excellent	Insufficient
Capability of long-term studies	Problematic	Problematic	Insufficient	Excellent
Capability of avoiding interference by researchers	Insufficient	Problematic	Insufficient	Excellent
Flexibility of research designs	Excellent	Insufficient	Insufficient	Insufficient

Four levels: Excellent, Good, Problematic, Insufficient

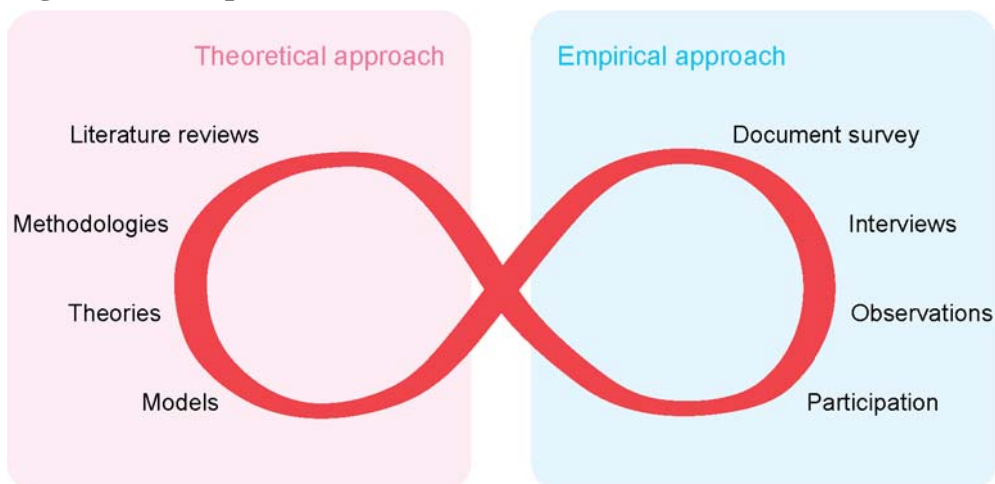
Source: Sato (1992) p.116, Translated from Japanese into English by the author

In this study, I employ various research methods, each of which presupposes a theoretical approach that is linked to an empirical approach. I triangulate my research subject using a

combination of different empirical methods, including document survey, semi-structured informant interviews and participant observations. A document or literature survey is necessary at the beginning of a research project to learn a wide range of background information and to identify where to find detailed information. Semi-structured informant interviews were conducted to identify civic engagement practices as well as interviewees' perceptions of civic engagement. Participant observations were conducted to understand civic engagement practices in their contexts and extract perceptions and experiences of civic engagement expressed in behaviours rather than verbally.

The data gathered by means of the combination of various methods portray a social phenomenon from multiple angles while complementing one another. Such multi-dimensional data can be used to test theories and models, while theories and models can also help interpretations and digestion of data. In this study, a person-in-environment model and the concept of 'embeddedness' are constantly tested against the empirical data, as well as used to understand what is perceived and experienced as civic engagement practices. The process of using such dual approaches is, however, not simple. Merely using two different approaches does not necessarily mean they complement each other. In order to achieve a complementary outcome, theories and practices are examined closely and critically. Building up models and learning from social realms needs to be an interwoven process, as illustrated in figure 2.4.

Figure 2.4 Two pillars of research methods



The diagram shows two pillars of approaches: theoretical and empirical. The research process involves various research methods using both of these two approaches.

Although a holistic approach is generally useful in any social science research, it is particularly essential in this study on civic engagement. First of all, this is an exploratory research seeking a definition of the concept of civic engagement. Conceptual understanding of civic engagement is sought in academic discourses as well as in perceptions and experiences of people who are somehow relevant to the concept. Although a definition is proposed primarily based upon theoretical explorations of the concept, it is critically tested against the empirical data on perceptions and experiences of people who are involved in civic engagement practices. Secondly, civic engagement is considered as a multidimensional concept involving psychological and behavioural aspects of human-environments relations. That is, civic engagement is seen as a behavioural process of being involved in social activities and also as a psychological process of feeling involved in a social group, an organisation or a society. For these two reasons, I employ a holistic approach with a variety of research methods involving theoretical and empirical methodologies.

2.2 Research Process

So far in this chapter I have discussed two key issues, which form my philosophical assumptions for this study. Based on those assumptions, I have analysed civic engagement from multiple angles using various research methods to develop arguments on civic engagement and ‘embeddedness.’ Before explaining the details of each research method however, I would like to outline the process of the Better Government for Older People (BGOP) project in Greenwich, a joint research project between the University of Greenwich and the London Borough of Greenwich. I will discuss the history and impact of this project in relation to the design and methods of my own research project, as they shared many research objectives and started at approximately the same time.

The BGOP project in the London Borough of Greenwich (often cited as the Greenwich BGOP project for convenience) came to an end after a year and half, and while it provided a large part of the empirical data that I use in this thesis, my experience of working for the project and of its failure provided me with a clearer research purpose and objectives. Through involvement in the Greenwich BGOP project I became acquainted with the national BGOP programme, and continued participant observations in seminars and meetings. Those

participant observations provided a large amount of information that was useful for my own research continued beyond the Greenwich BGOP project. The impacts of the Greenwich BGOP on my own research were unexpected and crucial. Hence, I believe it is worth introducing what happened to the Greenwich BGOP project and how it affected my own research project.

In October 2003, the London Borough of Greenwich commissioned the University of Greenwich to investigate, through action research, issues under the national Better Government for Older People programme within the borough. Members of the Chief Executive's department first approached my supervisor, Prof. Acton, and four members of the University including Prof. Acton and myself became members of the joint team for the Greenwich BGOP. In the joint team, I acted as a main researcher and conducted all of the fieldwork and data analyses. The overall purpose of the research project and research objectives were proposed by members of the Social Inclusion and Justice division and agreed by the joint team of the Greenwich BGOP project. The main purpose was to develop best practice models to facilitate civic engagement of older people. In accordance with this project purpose, the following four objectives were set.

- 1) A review of current good practice and models for engaging with older people across the borough, with a comparative evaluation of activity in two or three neighbourhoods in particular.
- 2) From this review, to develop good practice guidance and training strategies around engaging with older people, including; guidance on reaching black and minority ethnic elders, addressing the varying needs of different age ranges and exploring ways of engaging with people with dementia and those with disabilities.
- 3) To develop proposals for models to engage older people in policy making within public services.
- 4) To test and evaluate the hypothesis, through the models developed, that a citizen-centred approach could contribute to the objectives of other relevant nationwide and borough-wide initiatives.

An initial design of the research was tentatively proposed by the council members, but it was agreed that this would be monitored and amended during the project in order to achieve the purposes and objectives. The initial plan of the research included interviews with key players in the public sector within the borough regarding civic engagement of older people, and an event involving older people from the borough as an implementation of the idea of civic engagement for later in the project. I began by interviewing the originally proposed individuals, including the head of Social Services in the council and a manager in the Greenwich Primary Care Trust. More key players relevant to civic engagement were identified in those interviews and eventually the number of interviews amounted to seventeen in total. The interviewees included people working at a larger scale, such as the manager of Age Concern London and the then chairman of the National Pensioners' Convention. Based on the information obtained through the interviews, I suggested conducting participant observations at local civic engagement practices to investigate civic engagement mechanisms and understand the experiences of civic engagement from individuals' perspectives. Three practices were chosen for the observations, which accompanied supportive informant interviews with managers of these practices.

Meanwhile, we set up an official steering group for the Greenwich BGOP project, which constituted the original members of the joint research as well as a few more members recruited from a wider sphere. An advisory group, composed of key players in public and community sectors involved in civic engagement, was also established in accordance with examples of BGOP projects across the country, introduced as a reference by the national BGOP office.

By this point, major civic engagement practices were identified and mapped as organisational networks within the borough. General perceptions and concerns regarding civic engagement expressed in the interviews and observations were summarised. It was revealed that lack of information due to lack of communications between different expertises and different sectors was one of the major problems preventing the development of civic engagement in the borough. It was specifically suggested that there was no feedback to older people after consultation events organised by the council. As an implementation of key principles of civic engagement identified through our research, we organised a community event to provide feedback for the

interim findings of the research project to interviewees and a wider audience. The event was successful with over 150 attendees, including older people from different ethnic backgrounds, council officers and staff of public and community organisations. We presented our interim findings as feedback and also provided an opportunity for communication between people from different backgrounds.

At the end of 2004, we published a final report containing all research outcomes, including analyses of all fieldwork and the community event, which was intended to fulfil the fourth objective. It was envisaged that the project would continue, as there was not enough time to implement civic engagement models in practice, except for the launch of the advisory group and the community event. Despite the overall success of the Greenwich BGOP project within its first year, the main funding source, the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit, withdrew continuation funding. At short notice, we were obliged to seek alternative funding, but we failed to do so. Therefore, after a year and half, the Greenwich BGOP project came to an end.

This rather abrupt termination of the Greenwich BGOP project forced me to rethink my own research project. Originally I was hoping to be involved in the ongoing Greenwich BGOP project for at least a few years, which would have thus also been an action research to further explore the concept of civic engagement for my own research project. While this turned out to be unrealistic, nevertheless this unexpected incident provided me with two important opportunities.

Firstly, I discovered and managed to maintain wider networks with people involved in BGOP projects both locally and nationally. I continued to attend regular meetings of the London BGOP Network and a series of meetings called Older Persons Action Learning Sets, organised by the national BGOP office. The Action Learning Sets consisted of five learning groups under five themes with the purpose of improving public services for older people at a local level. I attended several meetings over two years in one of the five groups with the learning theme of civic engagement. Within the learning group, most members came from local governments, PCTs (Primary Care Trusts) or the voluntary sector, such as Age Concern,

with some guest speakers occasionally invited from other areas, including academia and national government. The London BGOP Network is a network of all London boroughs exchanging information on local BGOP projects to share experiences and knowledge.

What my continuing attendance at those meetings provided can be by and large summarised in the following two points. Firstly, the most up-to-date information on public policies and government initiatives were obtained through those meetings, especially the Action Learning Set meetings. I was, as a participant, engaged in a process of information dissemination. Secondly, the observations of attendees provided insight into how older people and local council staff are involved in a wider agenda and how they make, or do not make, a difference. I was also involved in discussions on relevant issues in which the attendees expressed their opinions and addressed problems and difficulties they experienced in local implementations of civic engagement of older people. Such information was precious and enriched my understanding of the concept of civic engagement as well as my actual experiences of civic engagement practices.

The other opportunity that arose from the termination of the Greenwich BGOP project was to clarify a hypothesis of my own research. As mentioned in section 1.3 in the previous chapter, the Greenwich BGOP project starkly revealed the structural and systematic problems regarding civic engagement practices within the borough. In addition, the one and a half year project had already provided me with the data gathered by means of document surveys, semi-structured interviews and participant observations. The data constitutes more than half of the empirical data used in this study.

The process of data gathering and setting up research questions was outlined above. Hopefully it is clear that the explorative character of this study is partly due to this unexpected incident. In the following section, each of the research methods employed in this study is introduced in detail.

2.3 Research Methods

A number of research methods were employed to investigate the question of whether the UK government's initiatives on civic engagement can contribute to older people's 'embeddedness.' These methods included literature reviews, document surveys, semi-structured informant interviews and participant observations, each of which is explained in detail in this order. Literature reviews were primarily for establishing theoretical foundations for the concept of civic engagement in relation to 'embeddedness.' Theories and discourses in a variety of relevant fields, including sociology, anthropology and architecture were examined. Document surveys were for collection of general information on government policies, strategies and civic engagement practices across the country and of demographic data. Interviewees often recommended which documents to review in relation to civic engagement practices. Semi-structured informant interviews were for gathering information on civic engagement practices and for understanding interviewees' perceptions of civic engagement of older people. Finally, participant observations were for understanding older people's perceptions of civic engagement, which were expressed in their behaviours and/or represented by interviewees and their experiences of civic engagement in reality.

Due to the nature of the research question, this study relies on a qualitative data analysis. The exploration of a concept in social science is a qualitative process. Unlike a political decision in a democratic society, a concept cannot be defined by the number of people who agree. However, a disadvantage of qualitative research is that it normally takes a long time to obtain enough data to realise tendencies and general issues in social phenomena. Advantages and disadvantages of a qualitative approach are discussed in section 2.3.3.

2.3.1 Literature Reviews

As mentioned in section 2.1.2, theorising is one of the two columns which support the whole structure of the thesis and literature is the main source of ideas and concepts for theorisation. The literature reviews in this study have two main purposes: to gather a wide range of ideas and concepts, which form essential foundations for establishment of theoretical frames; and critically to examine existing theories and assumptions, which is also important for building up and properly locating one's own theories.

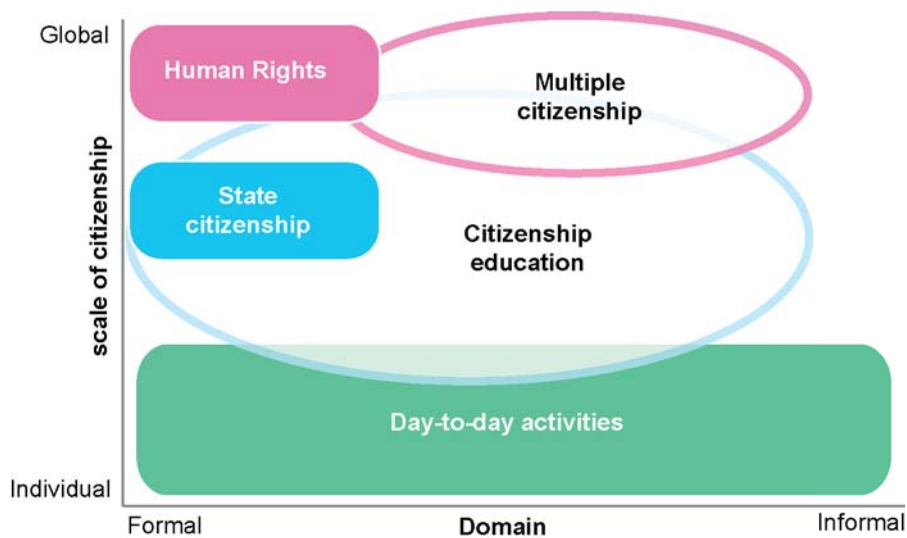
In this study, literature reviews play two significant roles in addition to establishing the methodologies. Firstly, I conducted broad literature reviews on individual-society relations to understand the concept of civic engagement in the context of contemporary society. As discussed in chapter four, three sets of discourses, which were identified in a wide range of literature reviews, propose certain perspectives on individual-society relations that characterise a contemporary society and have significant impacts on the concept of civic engagement in its contexts. The three key concepts at the centre of discourses reviewed include network society, transformation of community and personal identity and lifestyle. These three concepts reflect the impacts of certain aspects of a contemporary society on individual-society relations, and more precisely on ‘embeddedness,’ at three different levels. The examination of those concepts provides social contexts for the analysis of civic engagement and ‘embeddedness’ by revealing fundamental social conditions on individual-society relations.

The second major role of the literature reviews in this study is naturally to explore the concept of civic engagement. I first examined the concept of ‘civic’ and that of ‘engagement’ separately before considering the concept of civic engagement as a whole.

For the purpose of understanding the concept of ‘civic,’ I explored literature on citizens and citizenship. Citizenship is one of the major components of governance and therefore often discussed in regard to people-state relations, with great emphasis on the political aspect. On the other hand, from individuals’ perspectives, citizenship concerns the rights and responsibilities to form a society, which are exercised on a day-to-day basis. Such daily exercises are not necessarily confined within a political domain. There are other activities that are relevant to the maintenance of a society in public and private domains. For example, consumptions, which appear to be very private activities, are also important social activities, which maintain and shape a society. Importantly, the exercising of rights and responsibilities involved in a citizenship are not confined to a single state. Through globally extended networks one’s exercise of citizenship is variously affected by, and has effects upon, a wider society.

It was revealed in the literature reviews that the concept of citizenship has multiple aspects and is complex. However, I identified two axes, which delineate varieties of concepts of citizenship. The variations of concepts of citizenship are presented in figure 2.5. The vertical axis represents the scale of citizenship from individual to global, while the horizontal axis represents a wide range of domains from public to private. Among the variations in the figure, state citizenship is the most formal and the least problematic to define because it is legitimised by each state and therefore relatively well expounded. Yet, as we shall see in chapter five, the perspective of a state on citizenship is more expanded than its official definitions. In a society where social relations are network oriented and globally expanded, new concepts of citizenship emerge as citizenship in a global community. The other end of the variations is a concept of citizenship from individuals' perspectives, which concerns all aspects of their life.

Figure 2.5 Citizenship and relevant areas



The diagram identifies different types of citizenship concepts and relevant areas onto the two axes: the scale of citizenship and the domain ranging between formal and informal.

Initially I intended to examine the variety of concepts of citizenship to extract the concept of 'civic'. However, it turned out that the concept of citizenship also had direct implications on the concept of civic engagement and 'embeddedness.' Citizenship was identified as a dynamic concept rather than a status granted to individuals by default. This is even more pronounced in the context of a highly networked, reflexive and individualised society.

Furthermore, citizenship provides a sense of belonging, which contributes to individuals' 'embeddedness'. Due to such high relevance to civic engagement and 'embeddedness', the concept of citizenship is discussed thoroughly in chapter five.

The concept of 'engagement' - the other half of 'civic engagement' - was also explored in a wide range of literature. Just as with citizenship, the literature reviews revealed that the concept of 'engagement' was also multidimensional and identified various terms that were relevant to or often confused with the concept of 'engagement', including transaction, involvement, participation and empowerment. All of these terms represent to some extent social interactions of individuals. Examination of these terms helped in delineating the concept of 'engagement' and consequently that of 'civic engagement'.

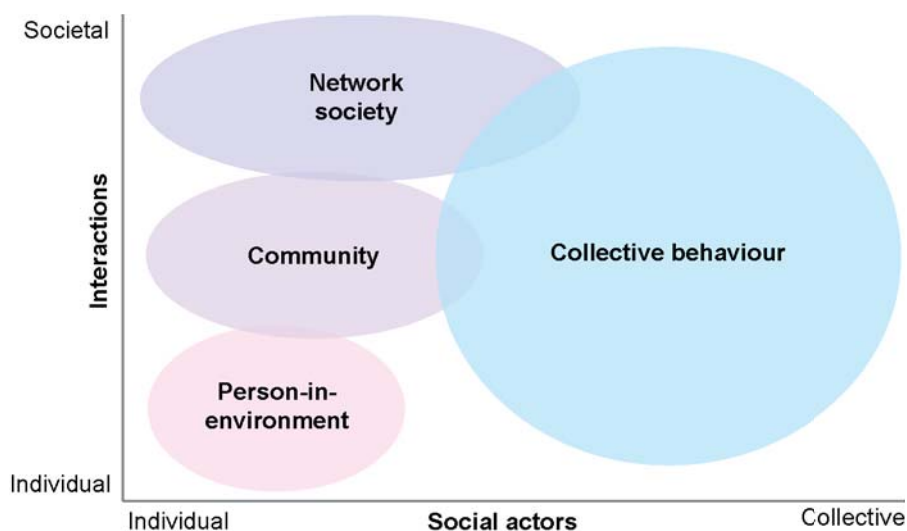
The literature reviews identified different levels at which the concept of 'engagement' can be discussed. There is an engagement of individuals with their immediate environments on one hand. On the other hand, there is an engagement of individuals with a society, which can be extended globally via networks.

Apart from those different levels, different mechanisms of 'engagement' were also identified. As indicated by a person-in-environment model that underlies this study as a way of understanding fundamental individual-society relations, individuals' engagement with a wider society can be seen from individuals' perspectives. Conversely, there is a collective engagement, whose mechanisms cannot simply be explained by a person-in-environment model.

Figure 2.6 summarises the relationships between these different levels and different mechanisms of 'engagement' and delineates a variety of perspectives with regard to the concept of 'engagement'. Individuals' engagement with their immediate environments is discussed from anthropological perspectives using a person-in-environment model. The discussions on individuals' engagement at a micro level are then developed in two directions. As shown in the figure, one direction looks at their engagement at a macro level and the other

looks at a collective engagement. Mechanisms of a collective behaviour were explored in order to understand a collective aspect of civic engagement.

Figure 2.6 Variety of perspectives on interactions between two social actors



The diagram shows various perspectives on ‘engagement’ between two social actors in relation to two axes: the scale of interactions ranging between individual and societal and the type of social actors ranging between individual and collective. This study attempts to investigate the relationships between those different perspectives and to understand civic engagement from a wider perspective.

Fundamental issues concerning individual-society relations at these different levels are discussed in chapter four as a context of civic engagement. In chapter five, those discussions are revisited specifically in relation to the concept of civic engagement. Theoretical frames established in these chapters are then used as a support tool to understand social phenomena and also tested against the empirical data gathered by the methods explained below.

2.3.2 Document Surveys

Document surveys, including electronic and internet data searches, are similar to literature reviews in the sense that both are indirect methods (see table 2.1) and deal with various forms of publications. However, in this study the document survey is treated as a separate research method from the literature review. Document surveys were conducted for the purpose of collecting data on: public policies and strategies relevant to citizenship and civic engagement; civic engagement practices across the world and local authorities in the UK; and socio demographic data in relation to older people and ageing. While document surveys do not provide information on individuals and are not interactive, this method has the advantage

of being capable of dealing with a large number of samples compared with interviews and observations. A list of all documents that were reviewed is provided in Appendix 1.

Documents on policies and strategies at the international level, such as those published or compiled by the United Nations (UN) and the World Health Organisation (WHO), and at the national level, such as those by the UK government, were collected and analysed mainly from two perspectives. Primarily, those documents provide information on policies and strategies that are relevant to civic engagement of older people and its promotion. In addition, how the concept of civic engagement is perceived by those who were involved in the processes of generating these policies and strategies can also be revealed by examining the texts, focusing particularly on relevant terms, including civic, citizen, citizenship, involvement, participation and empowerment, as well as civic engagement. These terms that appear in documents on policies and strategies need to be analysed within their contexts to understand their explicit and implicit meanings. In other words, the actual use and misuse of these terms has a constant feedback on their connotations and/or reflection on their perception. In chapter five, the use of these terms is therefore critically analysed in comparison to the theoretical understanding of the concepts that emerged. The method of analysis will be explained in the following chapter in further detail.

The analysis of documents on civic engagement practices has a duality similar to the analysis of policies and strategies. Descriptions of civic engagement practices not only inform how older people are engaged in a wider society through such practices, but also indicate how the concept of civic engagement is perceived. The document surveys for civic engagement practices are also used to identify a range of civic engagement practices as a preparation for further investigations by means of interviews and observations.

Another challenge in document surveys on policies, strategies and practices for civic engagement of older people is that reference to the concept of civic engagement is not always explicit. Contents of those documents need to be examined carefully to understand what implicit type of civic engagement of older people is proposed and how the concept of civic engagement is perceived, regardless of whether there is direct reference to civic engagement

or not.

Document surveys for socio demographic data is more straightforward. The data dealt with in such document surveys are more factual and quantitative than conceptual or qualitative. Socio demographic data on older people in the UK was mainly directly gathered from the Office for National Statistics website, while some of the socio demographic data on older people in the London Borough of Greenwich was obtained from Greenwich Council. Although the data that derives from the census is dated 2001, I tried to use the most updated data when possible.

To summarise, the document survey may be considered as part of the empirical data collection, as opposed to theoretical explorations which are done by literature reviews. Document surveys have the advantage of dealing with a larger number of samples than is possible from interviews and observations carried out for one PhD project. By means of document surveys, I gathered information on a wide range of civic engagement practices at strategic and provisional levels. I also analysed how the perceptions of the concept of civic engagement appeared in these documents. Document surveys also served as a preparatory search for further investigations into civic engagement practices by means of semi-structured informant interviews and participant observations, whose details are explained in the following sections.

2.3.3 Semi-structured informant interviews

Semi-structured informant interviews were conducted mainly for the following two purposes: to gather information on civic engagement practices and relevant policies, strategies and initiatives in the UK with the main focus on the London Borough of Greenwich; and to uncover perceptions of civic engagement from individuals who are somehow involved in practices of civic engagement of older people.

Gathering information on civic engagement practices is partly done by means of document surveys as explained in section 2.3.2 above. However, interviews were also used to

complement the findings of document surveys. Approaching civic engagement practices from two directions is significant for two reasons. Firstly, as the concept of civic engagement is not always explicitly expressed in documents, a more interactive method, such as interviews, is required to identify civic engagement practices that are not widely recognised as such. Secondly, interviews are used to collect local or expert knowledge as part of an exploratory process of seeking information that could be useful in identifying civic engagement practices. Consequently, the process of organising interviews was rather spontaneous. I began with a few interviewees as suggested by the council members in the steering group of the Greenwich BGOP project, who then recommended or introduced other relevant informants.

All together, seventeen interviewees were selected from nationwide organisations, London-wide organisations, Greenwich council and local voluntary organisations. Interviews were intended to cover civic engagement practices at various levels from local to national, and in various areas from healthcare to pensions. As McCracken (1988) insists, the purpose of qualitative interviews is not to obtain general information on a population by using a sample which represents the whole population of a wider world. Rather, it is 'to gain one culture construes the world' (McCracken, 1988: 17). Therefore the seventeen interviewees were chosen, not to represent all possible types of perceptions, but to give perceptions of some individuals concerned with the concept of civic engagement in different ways from one another. In this thesis, some of the organisations are given pseudonyms for ethical reasons.

All interviews were conducted following a semi-structured form, which is provided in Appendix 2. As the whole process was designed to be exploratory, the set of questions needed to be as un-constraining and un-manipulative as possible so that interviewees could explore their thoughts to areas, which I might not have associated with civic engagement. In addition, as 'civic engagement' is such a broad and ambiguous concept, it was also necessary to steer conversations such that they remained within a range of relevance.

Each interview was composed of four major parts: a brief introduction of myself as an interviewer, the national BGOP programme and the BGOP project in the London Borough of Greenwich; questions about the organisation of the interviewee, including its strategies and

practices in relation to civic engagement of older people; questions about the interviewee's perception of the concept of civic engagement of older people; and questions about other civic engagement practices and other possible informants that they knew. The form was adjusted each time according to characteristics of the organisations the interviewees worked for and their positions within the organisations.

All interviews were recorded on tape, with the exception of one interview in which an interviewee rejected my request for recording. Regardless, interviewees' comments were recorded as interview notes. Although McCracken (1988) condemns taking notes, regarding it as a dangerous distraction, I would argue that it is not always the case. Admittedly, I agree that there is a danger that an interviewer might miss some information as he/she concentrates on note taking too much while an interviewee keeps talking. However, I would suggest there is danger in relying solely on tape recording. There is more information expressed by subtle tones of voice or by facial expressions than what can be recorded on tapes. Considering these advantages and disadvantages, I used note taking as a supportive method, taking utmost caution not to be distracted from ongoing conversations.

In any form of interviews introductions are important, resulting in significant differences in interviewees' attitude and responses. First of all, the Greenwich BGOP project was outlined at the beginning of each interview. This helped to make interviewees feel comfortably well informed and enable them to make their own strategies for the interviews. Lack of acknowledgement of the purpose of the interview is more likely to cause unnecessary anxiety for interviewees and make them overprotective.

How to introduce oneself as an interviewer is also crucial. In most cases, I introduced myself openly as a researcher who had just started to work on the project on civic engagement of older people and was expecting to learn from interviewees. Compared with a case in which an interviewer acts as a professional and an expert, there are advantages of being open about one's lack of knowledge. Interviewees feel confident about what they say and talk openly because they tend to think that they are the experts on the topic. Nevertheless, it is also essential to assert that an interviewer has professional interests in the topic rather

than personal interests. It needs to be demonstrated that an interviewer has a decent capacity for understanding what the interviewees say and has a good understanding of confidentiality issues that may arise. No interviewee would feel comfortable with interviews unless he/she can expect the interviewer to understand him/her and is assured that information is dealt with in a professional manner.

As part of my preparation, prior to interviews I tried to gather information on the organisations that interviewees worked for and their positions and tasks within them by doing document surveys. It was essential to respect interviewees' time, which was normally within working hours, and to avoid any repetitions or inefficiency. Document surveys can also be used to identify what can be and what cannot be asked of particular interviewees. Interviews can be also seen as opportunities to check the validity of the data gathered by document surveys: sometimes information in documents is not up to date. In most of the cases, I used a phrase 'as I understood, your organisation's role is...' to leave a space for interviewees to correct if necessary.

The last set of questions in the interviews was rather open ended. Some of the interviewees were well connected and provided a list of organisations and contact persons to explore civic engagement practices further, whereas some had little information on other practices or individuals. The information provided by some interviewees was essential to identify locations of other useful information, as well as to understand how well connected the interviewees' organisations were. I summarised the information of connections between interviewees and other organisations in a diagram, which showed social relations between individuals and organisations relating to civic engagement of older people. The data obtained by the interviews also guided me to decide which civic engagement practices to choose as case studies for observations.

2.3.4 Participant Observation

Participant observations were conducted to obtain in-depth and multi-angle information on civic engagement practices. They were aimed at: understanding older people's perceptions of, and expectations for, civic engagement by their activities; and understanding older people's

experiences of civic engagement from their perspectives. Although the semi-structured interview is capable of reaching useful information to capture a reality from multiple angles, such as local or expert knowledge and an insight into people's perceptions, they are 'not the only realities with which the social scientist must contend' (Trow, 1957: 35; cited in McCracken 1988, p.28). There are certain types of information that can only be obtained through observations or participant observations in particular. As Hall (1956) points out, often people's behaviour, including physical expressions and attitudes, speaks more and more precisely than their verbal and literary expressions. Behaviour, whether intended or unintended, often expresses unarticulated thoughts, which are not necessarily less important than articulated thoughts. On the contrary, they can be more trustworthy than articulated thoughts because what a person says can be adjusted or even fabricated, while adjustment and fabrication of bodily expressions are less likely to be successful as they are intricately interrelated with others' behaviour and activities in a situation.

However, just as in other qualitative research methods, there is a danger of misinterpretation of data obtained by observations. One's behaviour is, as a person-in-environment model embodies, inseparable from socio-cultural and situational contexts. Without a good understanding of those contexts, an observed behaviour does not convey as meaningful information as it could otherwise. To increase the level of understanding of socio-cultural background for each civic engagement practice in this study, the following two arrangements were taken into account. Firstly, just as with the semi-structured informant interview, information on each civic engagement practice to be observed was accumulated prior to actual observations. In addition to document surveys, supportive interviews of people with an overview of practices were conducted. Those supportive interviews were seen as opportunities to introduce myself as an observer and the Greenwich BGOP project, and to learn general information on practices. Secondly, the participant observation method was adopted to enable an observer to be part of the situation being observed, so that an observer could obtain a good insight of the situation. In a similar way to how anthropologists go into an unfamiliar culture and learn about it through his/her experiences, participant observation enables observers to experience situations through which they learn the complexity of situations composed of various social factors interrelating one another. Participant observation also allows observers

to have interviews with other people in a situation as a form of casual conversation: that is, observers can obtain relatively uncontrolled information from research targets without a formal arrangement that could make them cautious or nervous about what they say.

In participant observation, the distance between an observer and those being observed is a major issue, which a researcher has to resolve according to the purposes of the research and the characteristics of particular observed situations. One of the purposes of usage of a participative method is to reduce the distance between the researcher and research targets. Therefore, the introduction of researchers to all research targets needs to assure those who are being observed that researchers are willing to communicate with them and are available for interactions. At the same time, it is also important to observe situations with objective eyes so that observers do not fail to understand whole contexts. Keeping the right amount of distance from targeted situations in participant observations normally requires complex processes of balancing the two roles of observing and participating.

In order to retain objectivity of observations, behaviour mapping was employed as a data recording method in some cases. By prioritising observed behaviours over researchers' impressions, behaviour mapping methods can be used to increase the objectivity of participant observations. Behaviours and positions of everyone who is involved in observable situations were observed and recorded on floor plans at regular intervals. In addition, notable events between those regular mappings were also recorded.

At a larger scale event, it is not possible for an observer to conduct behaviour mapping of the whole event. In this study, large scale events were observed by more than one observer. Instead of recording behaviours and positions of a large number of people regularly, behaviours and positions of people in particular situations were recorded as snapshots. Snapshots were taken when situations were considered to be describing characteristics of the whole event. In addition to those snapshots, observers took notes on people's behaviours and comments. To avoid misinterpretation of these data collected by different observers, the contexts and meanings of the data were discussed in meetings between all observers before the analysis. Just as in the semi-structured informant interviews, there is a danger in these

recording methods of missing important information expressed in ongoing events while observers concentrate on recording instead of observing. This can be solved by introduction of alternative recording methods, such as video recording. However, in this study, due to the sensitivity of the targets of observations and the characteristics of the research project (the involvement of a local council), I did not use such an alternative method. Instead, recording was conducted with careful attention to ongoing events.

There were two main sets of participant observations conducted in this research. The first set contains four observations designed and conducted as part of the Greenwich BGOP project. Three civic engagement practices were identified in the informant interviews, while the other was the community event that we, as members of the steering group of the Greenwich BGOP, organised as part of the implementation of the concept of civic engagement. The second set of participant observations is my attendance at a series of seminars and meetings in relation to the national programme of the BGOP at national and regional levels.

As for the first set of the observations, based on the information gathered through document surveys and interviews, six practices were chosen as case studies. Among those practices, which ranged from national level to neighbourhood level, participant observations were finally conducted in four practices. For two practices, Age Concern London and Greenwich Community College, opportunities for observations did not arise. The other four practices, in which I conducted participant observations, included the National Pensioners Convention, a local lunch club, two day centres (at the same site) and a community event organised as part of the Greenwich BGOP project.

In the second set of the observations, I, as a researcher, attended a series of seminars and meetings in relation to the BGOP programme at national and regional levels. There were two main regular meetings, which were identified in some of the informant interviews. Both of them were civic engagement practices, although older people themselves were hardly involved. One was a series of meetings of Action Learning Sets in which local officers and other staff in the public sector from across the country learn together how to improve their local public services through seminars and discussions. There were five groups under five

different themes and I attended one of them which pursued the theme of civic engagement. The other regular meeting was a London BGOP network for local officers and service providers who were involved in the BGOP projects in London Boroughs. Similarly to the learning groups at the national level, the London BGOP network also sought to learn how to develop their projects better through seminars and discussions. In both cases, I initially joined as a representative of the BGOP project in the London Borough of Greenwich. After the end of the project, I remained on the members' lists and attended meetings as a research student investigating civic engagement of older people in the UK.

The main purposes of participant observations at these meetings were to understand the mechanisms of civic engagement from a local level to the national level, and to learn about civic engagement practices across the country. A secondary benefit was that through nationwide and London-wide networks, information on relevant policies and strategies was constantly updated. In particular, the Action Learning Sets meetings provided opportunities to investigate how strategic decisions are made at the national level and how they impact locally. To achieve these purposes I set three clear objectives for participant observations. They were: to identify who were involved in those practices; to understand how they were involved; to investigate how those initiatives were embedded in a larger context.

Observations were conducted at all meetings and seminars that I attended and data were recorded in the style of general meeting notes with extensive details. Minutes of the meetings and handouts distributed among attendees provided supporting information. The lists of attendees to the meetings were also useful to understand the structures of the nationwide networks through which a local officer in a local council is connected to other local officers from across the country, and positions him/herself in the network of information dissemination and knowledge exchange. My involvement in these observed situations was more proactive than in other observations at the day centres and the lunch club. I was involved in table discussions and workshops. So as not to influence the observed situation excessively, I expressed my opinions only to the extent which I considered to be adequate to establish that I was a participant. The right balance between active participation to facilitate fruitful debates and objective observation of the existing situations was sought.

Participation in the meetings as an attendee provided me with opportunities to understand the perspectives of attendees through my own experiences of attendance and through discussions with other attendees. The distance between those in observed situations and myself was undoubtedly reduced. Although this distance needs to be at a certain degree, and was treated with a great caution, intimacy with other attendees benefited this study. In the case of these meetings, intimacy was also increased by the fact that my research theme - the civic engagement of older people - matched their main interest. By sharing the primary theme and learning processes, we created an environment where everyone was considered to be equally a learner and participated in the exchange of knowledge voluntarily. In a sense, I managed to demonstrate the importance and effectiveness of a shared motivation in better communications.

By way of summary, I now list the essential points of the methodology of this research project. First and foremost, this research develops arguments on the basis of theoretical understandings of individual-environment relations, which largely originate in transactional theory. A person-in-environment model is adopted as a model of an individual's transactions with his/her environments, composed of physical environments, socio-cultural environments and people. The model also highlights the complex internal elements of an individual, comprising psychological, physical and socio-cultural elements. In short, the employment of a person-in-environment model seeks to guarantee that all of those elements, including the environments' side and an individual's side are taken into account in analyses and the whole system of an individual-environments relations is seen as an inseparable entity. Secondly, it is also important to emphasise that the research project was carried out in a complex process, which interweaves theories and empirical data. Theories were used to interpret, critically analyse empirical data and locate it in a larger picture, while empirical data were used to confirm and test theories as well as provide details for them. Four different types of research methods, comprising literature reviews, document surveys, semi-structured informant interviews and participant observations were applied to achieve the research purpose by a holistic approach. Qualitative research methods, such as informant interviews and participant observations, were conducted with great caution in order to maximise the benefits of qualitative methods and minimise the risks.

All data obtained through the methods described above were analysed together with the methods, which can be regarded as varieties of content analysis. In the analysis, the data were examined and extracted key concepts were grouped and categorised. Diagrams were often used to analyse relationships between different concepts, which came from various data collection methods. The cross-analysis of all these data revealed perceptions of the concept of civic engagement and experiences of civic engagement practices from multiple angles. The details of the methods of analysis are explained in the next chapter.

CHAPTER THREE

3. METHODS OF ANALYSIS

As mentioned in the previous chapter, this study takes an approach in which empirical and theoretical data are used in a complementary way. Theories provided frameworks for thoughts, while empirical data were used to test them. At the same time, empirical data raised questions and guided the direction of exploration of theories. Hence the data analysis, which is primarily qualitative, involves both inductive and deductive thinking. In the following sections in this chapter I will explain how the data were analysed to answer the research questions. To remind ourselves, here are the five research questions.

- 1) Why civic engagement and ‘embeddedness’ of older people?
- 2) How do I define civic engagement, especially in relation to the ‘embeddedness’?
- 3) What are the UK policies and initiatives promoting civic engagement of older people?
How do they work?
- 4) How is civic engagement experienced by individuals?
- 5) How do UK policies and initiatives impact on older people’s perception and experience of civic engagement and on their ‘embeddedness’?

In this chapter I will focus on the analysis for the first four questions. The fifth question was answered by analysing all key findings from the analysis for the other four questions altogether.

3.1 Why civic engagement and why ‘embeddedness’?

I sought answers to this question in the literature. I identified three areas of discourses in relation to the question as to why we should discuss civic engagement and ‘embeddedness’ in the context of our contemporary society. Discussions on the questions in those three areas are summarised in chapter four.

First of all, the question addresses the way individuals relate to a wider society in a contemporary society. Why are terms such as ‘civic engagement’ and ‘citizens’ involvement’ frequently used in relation to many government initiatives and policies? Are we particularly disengaged from a wider society compared with other societies in history? In order to understand the nature of our relationships with a wider society in a contemporary society, I started my exploration from Giddens’ Structuration Theory, Bauman’s Liquid Modernity and Castells’ network society, all of which support a notion that our relationships with a wider society are transactional, highly flexible and fluid. I will start the next chapter with discussions on such a picture of the nature of individual-society relationships in contemporary society.

While some such concept of the nature of individual-society relationships is essential to understand how individuals relate to a wider society today, their characteristics also needed to be understood from individuals’ perspectives to further understand why civic engagement has become an important topic. How can it be translated into individuals’ relationships with their neighbours, friends and other groups of people? Has the notion of community really been diminished as Bauman (2001a) suggested? I will discuss the notion of community and its transition, challenging the idea that the importance of space has been undermined as modern technology has developed.

Finally, how is the nature of individual-society relationships expressed in one’s everyday life? How does a highly flexible society impact everyone’s way of life? How does it affect individuals’ ‘embeddedness’? I identified two main discourses that would help understand the impact of flexibility in society on everyday life. One is Chaney’s discourse on lifestyle (1996) and the other is Giddens’ idea of a reflexive project (1991). I will argue that one has to constantly make a choice from a range of choices, which are more varied in a highly flexible society, and that making a choice is one’s responsibility. I will also explain how that is related to civic engagement and one’s ‘embeddedness’.

3.2 Definition of civic engagement

The question as to what civic engagement is will be explored in chapter five. Initially this question can be rephrased as ‘how can the term civic engagement be defined theoretically or

in an academic context?’ However, like any of the other analyses in this thesis, the analysis of theories has not been done in isolation from the empirical data analysis. Especially in this study, as I explained in section 2.1, some fieldwork was conducted ahead of some of the literature reviews. Thus, the contribution of fieldwork to the formation of fundamental ideas was significant.

The fieldwork, the interviews and participant observations, informed me that the concept of civic engagement could be understood in a broader context than merely a political one, which the term civic might generally imply. Literature reviews were conducted to examine this hypothesis. As such, the area of literature that I reviewed covers a broad range of fields from citizenship discourses to social behaviour discourses.

One might argue that it should be or at least could be the other way around. If a concept of civic engagement is generally understood as a political one, the concept should be defined as a limited concept and anything beyond that concept can be defined as something else.

However, I identified the inclusiveness of concepts of civic engagement is indeed key for UK policies and initiatives to be effective, as I shall explain further in chapters seven and eight. As one of my research objectives is to assess the effect of UK policies and initiatives, the definition of civic engagement should be realistic and practical as well as logical. Thus, I set a priority on the definition of civic engagement being pragmatic rather than narrowing the definition for the sake of academic rigor.

The question as to what civic engagement is seemed to be related to many areas of knowledge. It seemed that any area alone would not give me a perfect answer. Thus, I first broke it down into two sub questions: what is civic?; and what is engagement?

Initially I began by exploring concepts of citizenship to investigate what the term ‘civic’ may imply. However, it turned out that examination of the concept of citizenship provided not only ideas about what the term ‘civic’ might indicate, but also frames with which a concept

of ‘civic engagement’ can be explored and civic engagement practices can be assessed. I shall discuss this further in chapter five.

3.3 Review of UK policies and initiatives promoting civic engagement of older people

The third set of questions is what are the UK policies and initiatives promoting civic engagement of older people and how they work? I review UK policies and initiatives relevant to civic engagement of older people in chapter six in order to answer the first part of the question. I examine their implementation to answer the second part of the question in chapter seven.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, data on UK policies and initiatives relevant to civic engagement of older people were mainly collected through document surveys in which documents were obtained either electronically online or in hard copy printed versions. The list of documents, including those relevant to international, national and local practices, is provided in Appendix 1. All documents were analysed in the way explained in the following paragraphs. In the following chapters, I will discuss a few selected practices (including policies and initiatives) at different levels including international, national and local, rather than going through the whole list. These examples were chosen to exemplify the whole range of possibilities, using the following selection process:

- 1) those for which sufficient information was provided by the document(s) to understand each practice in relation to the questions listed later this section (i.e. targets, contexts, methods) were selected;
- 2) all practices were sorted into groups according to the criteria listed later this section (i.e. financial independence, affiliation, etc); and
- 3) those which were the best documented thus embodied the widest range of possibilities to be introduced in this thesis.

It was difficult to define what was relevant to civic engagement while a definition of the term was still being sought in fieldwork in relation to existing civic engagement practices,

as well as in the literature. There was a danger that the selection of practices could limit or mislead the process of definition of civic engagement itself. Thus, a preliminary definition of the term was set out as including any practice aimed at facilitating a relationship between people and their social environment. Any group, organisation or institution concerned with such relationships was regarded as a potential civic engagement practice.

The names of some policies and initiatives were provided by a Greenwich BGOP project member from the London Borough of Greenwich. Thereafter, more policies and initiatives were identified at the interviews and participant observations as well as through my own research. In particular, Action Learning Sets meetings and London BGOP Network meetings provided me with a wide range of initiatives and practices from worldwide, nationwide and London-wide contexts.

I employed a content analysis method to examine the data. Content analysis is a systematic and objective way of reading texts and other communication materials (Berelson, 1952). Krippendorff (2004) provides a definition as “a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts (or other meaningful matter) to the contexts of their use (p.18).” As a technique, it involves grouping, categorising and finding relationships between texts. As Krippendorff explains, content analysis has evolved as a research technique since its emergence in the early 20th century. At present, it is used in various disciplines including sociology, psychology and anthropology (Krippendorff, 2004: 17).

In this particular study, content analysis was used to extract the following set of information on individual policies and initiatives:

- 1) whether the term ‘civic engagement’ is used or not: if not, which terms are used for similar meanings;
- 2) which social groups or individuals the targets are;
- 3) which context they are engaged with;
- 4) how they are engaged; and
- 5) how the policy/initiative impacts the ‘embeddedness’ of those involved.

These key criteria to assess civic engagement practices are mainly derived from the questions that emerged from exploration of the concept of citizenship and guided the exploration of the definitions of the term civic engagement, as we will see in chapter five. The actual process of the analysis involves highlighting relevant texts and marking which question they are relevant to. In the first instance I used NVivo software, which, as addressed by Bazeley (2007), allows one to manage data and ideas from multiple sources by classifying them, to query them, to examine relationships between them and to build models and matrices without retaining access to the context from which those data have come. In this study, the marked texts in the original data were sorted by relevant question and examined in relation to theoretical frames on those questions that emerged, which I will discuss in chapter five.

Content analysis of documents is empirical in nature rather than primarily theoretical as in literature reviews. Nonetheless, the contents have to be understood in their own context. Some of the contextual information, such as to whom they are written, may not be within the same document. Multiple sets of texts were often analysed to understand a single policy or initiative in context.

Once the information on each policy/initiative was analysed, the relationships between those policies and initiatives were analysed using network diagrams. The relationships between them were differentiated according to whether they were:

- affiliates sharing missions,
- peers sharing missions,
- financially dependent,
- dependent in terms of other resources (i.e. human resources), or
- in a legitimate and hierarchical relation.

The purpose of reviewing UK policies and initiatives relevant to civic engagement of older people is not to assess each policy or initiative according to a standardised score system of sorts. It is to understand qualitatively an overview of those policies and initiatives, which would become a context of individual civic engagement practices.

3.4 The implementation of civic engagement policies and strategies at a local level

In order to examine how those UK policies and initiatives are implemented, I chose the London Borough of Greenwich as a case study. Information on local strategies and practices relevant to civic engagement was gathered through different methods, including document surveys, semi-structured interviews and participant observations.

The data were analysed using the same content analysis method that was used to analyse the data on the UK policies and strategies. There were two main types of data, which were analysed to understand how each practice worked and how they related to one another. One is published text including printed and online material and the other is information gathered through the semi-structured interviews and participant observations recorded by the researcher.

By means of a content analysis, these data were examined to address the following points:

- 1) whether the term ‘civic engagement’ or its equivalents is used in the document or acknowledged by the interviewee and by his/her colleagues;
- 2) what their strategic aims or missions are;
- 3) what services are provided;
- 4) who their services are for, whether they are targeted specifically at older people, or whether there are some criteria for the eligibility of the services; and
- 5) how their organisations and their services are related to other organisations in and outside the borough.

Whether the term ‘civic engagement’ was acknowledged or not was not a direct implication of whether they were relevant to civic engagement. Instead, it suggests the position of the interviewee and his/her organisation in relation to a wider picture including the nationwide BGOP programme.

Answers to the other four questions (no.2 to no.5 above) are the actual indicators of how they are involved in civic engagement of older people. The responses were assessed to understand

with whom they engage, which aspects of civic engagement they are concerned with, and how their strategies or services were related to a wider society.

Once the information was sorted as a profile of each practice, relationships of those strategies and practices were analysed using two types of diagrams as part of the content analysis. One diagram was used to attempt to group and differentiate various civic engagement practices according to two measures: financial independence (i.e. funded by the national government or local government) and a scale of organisation (i.e. part of nationwide organisation, independent). The other diagram was a network diagram, which was used to analyse relationships between practices similar to the analysis of the UK policies and initiatives. In this diagram, each practice was depicted as a node and relationships between nodes were shown as lines. Further comments were added to each line to describe the relationship in terms of power balance, funding, responsibility and so on.

In chapter seven, to keep this thesis concise, I will introduce some of those practices as examples, instead of discussing all the practices that were analysed. The selected practices exemplify the key issues that emerged from the analysis, which I would like to discuss in this thesis.

3.5 Experience of civic engagement

Understanding of policies and initiatives at a national level and of strategies and practices at a local level provided an overall understanding of civic engagement of older people in the UK, layered with practices from a local level to a national level. The next question is how can an individual be engaged with a wider society in relation to various aspects of life?, and how do these policies, initiatives and practices play a part in this? Two approaches were taken to answer this question. The first was to review the existing data on the UK policies, initiatives and practices at various levels from individuals' perspectives at a macro level. The other was to analyse older people's behaviour at a micro level to examine relevant factors to individuals' civic engagement and their 'embeddedness' in reality.

Firstly, I re-examined the same data on the UK policies and initiatives and local strategies and practices using the same content analysis method to understand how they play a part in individuals' civic engagement with a wider society and their 'embeddedness'. From the discussions on the definition of civic engagement and the analyses of UK policies and local practices, two key dimensions of civic engagement from individuals' perspectives emerged. They are: 1) a range of levels between individuals and a nationwide network; and 2) various aspects of life including political, social and cultural.

The level of civic engagement practices varies, as we will discover in later chapters. Only few practices offer an opportunity to directly link individuals and a nationwide network, such as a nation. Even voting to decide the UK government is not direct, but through local elections. Generally individuals are related to a nationwide network through a chain of civic engagement practices rather than in a single practice. Thus, practices can somehow be located on a scale between individuals and nationwide networks.

Similarly, civic engagement practices concern various aspects of life. As I will discuss in chapter five, civic engagement concerns not only political aspects but also socio-cultural aspects of life. For an individual, being engaged with a wider society as a patient does not mean he or she is fully engaged with a wider society. As we will discuss in chapters six and seven, some practices are focused on themes. For example, initiatives and practices involving the NHS and Department of Health are generally concerned with health issues. Generally individuals' needs for multiple aspects of civic engagement are covered by a variety of practices rather than in a single practice. Thus, practices can be categorised according to different themes, from health, education and pensions to housing and general.

After these initial analyses, four civic engagement practices were selected as case studies from among the practices in the London Borough of Greenwich that were identified in order to further analyse civic engagement and relevant factors at a micro level from older people's perspectives. Those four practices were chosen to represent the variety of civic engagement practices in relation to the key dimensions discussed above. The example of the National Pensioners Convention (NPC) demonstrates the relationships between individuals and the

UK government through the practice. The examples of a lunch club (QLC) and a day centre (RDC) show individuals' engagement with their local community in Greenwich. Each of these was run by different types of organisation and had different foci. TLC was run by a community organisation and targeted at older people in the neighbourhood, while EDC was run by Social Services in Greenwich Council and targeted at more frail older people in the borough. The example of the Greenwich BGOP community event demonstrates relationships between individuals and the local government through the Greenwich BGOP project.

General information on each practice was gathered by means of document surveys and supportive informant interviews as background research, prior to the participant observation surveys. In the case of the NPC, the supportive informant interview was omitted as sufficient information was provided by the semi-structured interview with the head of the NPC. Background research was altogether omitted in case of the Greenwich BGOP community event, since I was a principal researcher for the Greenwich BGOP project and played a central role in organising the event. Similarly to the other data obtained through document surveys and semi-structured interviews, the information gathered through this background research was analysed using a content analysis method to understand how each of them worked. The analysis was guided by the following questions:

- 1) whether the term 'civic engagement' or its equivalents is acknowledged by those who run/manage the practice or by older people themselves;
- 2) what are their primary services;
- 3) who are those engaged;
- 4) what are the programmes for a day, a month and a year; and
- 5) how the practice relates to a wider society.

The information recorded on the map (i.e. observed behaviour and interactions) was analysed using a method similar to content analysis. As I will discuss in chapter five, any form of interactions including non-verbal ones as well as verbal ones are part of civic engagement at a micro level. Based on this idea, I extracted all relevant behaviour and interactions from the recorded scenes and examined them to understand the meaning of those interactions from

individuals' perspectives, particularly in relation to their 'embeddedness'. Each interaction was labelled according to the following criteria:

- 1) whether it is verbal or non-verbal;
- 2) who are involved (i.e. service users, service providers, event organisers, event participants etc);
- 3) how many people are involved;
- 4) which level it is, according to the four levels which I will discuss in chapter five;
- 5) which aspects of life it relates to; and
- 6) whether there is a single layer or multiple layers of interactions simultaneously.

I analysed those labelled behaviours applying a method similar to content analysis in order to understand how individuals were engaged in the practices and how those interactions contribute to their 'embeddedness'. Labelling the recorded behaviours and interactions enabled me to code and group them, and analyse them together with the other data obtained through document surveys and semi-structured interview surveys. While the background research on each practice provided understanding of the practice in relation to a wider society, the analysis of the observation data provided understanding of the practice in relation to individuals' civic engagement and their 'embeddedness'. The analysis of individuals' civic engagement within the practice and the analysis of how the practice related to a wider society together provided a wider picture of individuals' civic engagement with society through those civic engagement practices.

3.6 Summary

The analysis methods that were employed for this study are qualitative. However, that does not mean that the analysis cannot be systematic. Coding and grouping allows an objective and systematic way of handling pieces of information. Conceptualised information through coding and grouping was analysed using diagrams, which is best suited to analyse relationships between concepts.

Each step of such analysis was strongly guided by research questions. Those questions

played an important role in keeping the analysis focused and on the right track. The questions were, however, carefully set out so as not to lose objectivity or flexibility to explore relevant concepts. For example, “whether the term ‘civic engagement’ was used in the document” is obviously an initial question to help focus on the topic of ‘civic engagement’, but does not preclude exploring similar concepts which might be used in the same meaning.

In the following chapters, the discussions focus on findings rather than the process of analysis to avoid redundancy and to maintain a clear thread of narrative. Each of chapters between four and eight corresponds to one of the five research questions, which were listed at the beginning of this chapter. Each question somehow involved different types of data, including empirical and theoretical, published text and interview notes. Thus the process of the analysis was rather complicated. However, as was argued in the beginning of chapter two, the multiplicity of data types is one of the most important elements of this study. The challenge for this thesis is to overcome such complexity and create a new clear narrative thread.

CHAPTER FOUR

4. 'DISEMBEDDEDNESS' OF OLDER PEOPLE IN CONTEMPORARY SOCIETIES

This chapter examines the current social conditions with regard to the 'embeddedness' or 'disembeddedness' of older people in the UK in an attempt to demonstrate the validity and importance of this study. This examination will concentrate on the following two questions: why civic engagement is important in our contemporary society; and if that is the case then why it is so for older people.

Essentially, the object of the study is relationships between individuals and a particular society. As mentioned in previous chapters, the main purpose is to investigate how the UK government's initiatives on civic engagement impact older people's 'embeddedness,' that is, the intricate dynamic relationships between individuals and their environments. Although the concept of civic engagement is yet to be refined and elucidated, the first step is to assert that civic engagement concerns relationships between individuals and a society.

In this chapter, I will start with discussions on fundamental logic of individual-society relations in contemporary society from three different yet interrelated aspects. These three aspects include: individuals' relationships with a wider society at a global level, the concept of community and the concept of personal identity and lifestyle. The discussions illuminate characteristics of individual-society relations in contemporary society from multiple angles, which affect the 'embeddedness' of older people.

First, I will discuss how individuals are related each other at a global level. With a primary focus on Castells' concept of network society, I will argue that individuals' relations with contemporary society are flexible, reflexive and network-oriented rather than structured or closed. I will also examine social network theory, which indicates some logic of individual-society relations in a highly networked society. Next, I will discuss, based on such logic of

individual-society relations, how individuals are related with others at a local level. I will examine a variety of concepts of community referring to several sociologists' discourses. I will argue that the concept of community in contemporary society is detached from physical constraints and is flexible both in time and space, shifting from a traditional concept that is strongly linked to a local area delineated by geographical boundaries. Finally, I will discuss the impacts of the logic of individual-society at a micro level examining the concepts of personal identity and lifestyle in contemporary society.

Based on understanding of the fundamental logic of individual-society relations, I will then summarise some features of social systems and social structures in contemporary society that are relevant to civic engagement and 'embeddedness.' I will also provide an overview on social conditions that are relevant to older people's life in the UK including public services for older people and general perceptions on ageing.

4.1 Network society

A society is by definition formed by people and is a system in which people relate to each other one way or another. The way people relate to each other is reflected in structures and systems of societies while structures and systems of societies guide, regulate and constrain interpersonal relations. Relationships between individuals that reciprocally characterise a society are largely influenced by technologies. Technologies to store foods generated the imbalance of wealth and therefore power, which consequently created the foundations of politics and economics. Politics regulate the way power is owned and transferred. Economics regulate the way of value transactions. Technologies for writing realised exchanges of knowledge between remote places and passage of it from one generation to the next, which facilitated cultural development. More recently, technologies for communications and transportation enabled real time communications between remote locations and worldwide travel with lower cost (Stralder, 2006).

Individual-society relations in contemporary society are best described as individualised, flexible and network-oriented. The recent development of technologies for communications and transportations helped detach individuals' transactions from temporal and spatial

constraints and allowed individualisations of social networks and personal life. Globalised networks move individual-society relations towards two opposite directions: integrations at a global level and diversity at a local level. Those characteristics of individual-society relations can be seen at different levels, from an individual level to a global level, and in different domains including private and public. I will discuss the impacts of individualised, flexible and network-oriented individual-society relations at an individual level later in relation to community, personal identity and lifestyles. In this section, I will focus on such impacts at a global level referring to Castells' (2004) concept of network society and social network theory.

4.1.1 Transformation of power

Castells argues that in network society, networked enterprises dominate markets while states, whose power relies largely on economic growth rather than territorial expansion, no longer have sovereignty (Stalder, 2006). In traditional societies, economic activities were largely bound to social structures (Granovetter, 1985). However, in contemporary societies, economies are predominantly supported by enterprises with expanded networks internationally and globally. As a result, states are obliged to put themselves into global networks. In addition, there are a number of issues that the public became aware that international co-operation is necessary to seek solutions for, such as globally spread pandemics and the environmental pollution. Such awareness also prompts international collaboration at all levels from international and grassroots.

Castells observes the development of network society as a process of the transformation of power (Stalder, 2006). Along with the increased flexibility of society, power, which is held by social actors and determines relations between them, has become transferable between institutions and individuals through globalised and individualised networks. In the course of the transformation of power, states are not the only institutions whose power is undermined by the increased flexibility in society. In fact, any institutions, both as prominent organisations and as systems such as marriage, have less power than in the past. It is because not only is power possessed by various social actors in a new society but also it is owned differently.

In a society confined within a certain geographical area and a certain social and cultural context, institutions have power to control people's life because they are legitimated by higher institutions, ultimately states. They have power because they are what they are rather than how they work. The ultimate power is seized by the highest institutions as states, which legitimatise other institutions. In such a context, bureaucracy is highly efficient in theory as Weber suggested (1978). What is important for an institution is its relationship with higher institutions, which is an embedded structure in social systems rather than a dynamic social process itself. It is within such structures of institutions that the power to control people's lives has been kept and those structures provided people with the authority and reference for their actions. The power of those institutions not only imposes restrictions on individuals' lives but also provides security and sense of belonging. Institutions embed individuals in a society by providing a status whether they like it or not.

However, much of such power, which was held within structures of institutions, has been transferred from macro to micro (Bauman, 2000) and from institutions to networks. As Castells insists, in a society with highly developed networks, power remains within networks rather than being held by each social actor and is constantly negotiated between social actors through those networks (Stalder, 2006). Networks are systems and not embodied structures. Networks are flexible relations that connect social actors but not social actors themselves. Unlike institutions, networks exert their power not due to what they are but due to how they operate.

How networks operate is fundamentally determined through interactions between relevant social actors. Unlike institutions, networks offer flexible relations between social actors, which enable them to participate in defining and re-defining those networks to which they relate. Individuals' status in networks is based on what they do rather than who they are. Their status can only be maintained by constant transactions with others on networks.

Although networks allow flexible relations between social actors, networks are not absolutely open-ended systems without any rules or identities. That is, a network is not exactly the same as a random collection of individuals within blindly selected confines. To be part of a network

or to exert power through a network, one has to know and follow the rules that the network offers. What makes a network unique and distinctive is its language and set of norms, which Stalder (2006) calls 'protocol.' He suggests that protocol is the key concept in understanding how networks operate. Protocol is defined as 'any code of conventional or proper behaviour' (Simpson & Weiner, 1989) or 'the etiquette of autonomous agents' (Galloway, 2004: 75). Protocol provides some order in networks. Networks are not maintained without a protocol. Castells writes as below about power in networks:

In the world of networks, the ability to exercise control over others depends on two basic mechanisms: the ability to program/reprogram the network(s) in terms of the goals assigned to the network; and the ability to connect different networks to ensure their cooperation by sharing common goals and increasing resources (Castells, 2004: 32).

The ability to exercise power through networks, in a sense, depends on the ability to understand or design protocols of networks well and to have and connect a variety of networks. Differences of levels of those abilities cause imbalance of power between individual social actors. However, the inequality of power between individual social actors in network systems has different attributes from that in structured systems. While the latter systems embody inequality in their structures of social statuses and organisational positions, the former systems allow any power to be relative. Although in network systems one person may be able to exercise power better than others, no one can obtain absolute power because of openness and flexibility of the systems. Network systems deny absolutes. Things are flexible and editable anytime on networks. Therefore it is beyond a single social actor's capability to control an entire network. A network acts as if it has its own will and more powerfully than any individual social actor can.

How powerful a network can be depends on how it operates or how its protocols are designed, its actors' skills in exercising power and how its relations to other networks are articulated. Nevertheless, it is social actors including individuals and institutional organisations and not networks who actually exercise power because obviously networks are merely systems maintained through transactions between social actors. In networked society, no single social

actor can have absolute power because power is in relations. Yet amongst different types of social actors, institutional organisations still tend to have a stronger influence than individuals or small organisations despite their reduced power. Even though states lose their sovereignty, still they have authority to govern their citizens through various social systems such as citizenship, education, legal, legislations, military, social security and taxation. Institutional organisations have hierarchical structures to operate internally while being obliged to be networked with other agencies externally. There are systematic problems in regard to the way those institutional organisations maintain their own structures and sufficiently function within networks.

Institutions including states are obliged to transform themselves into a new form that enables them to exercise their remaining power to influence other social actors in networks. As mentioned above, for efficient exercise of power, the design of protocols and a variety of networks do matter. However, prior to efficiency, it is first and foremost an essential principle to be networked. No social actor is self-sufficient no matter how powerful he/she or an organisation is. The UK Prime Minister Gordon Brown warned in a speech on foreign policy in Boston, the United States, that collaborative action between Europe and the US would be required to fight global terrorism and to tackle other global issues (Watt, 2008). Being networked is essential to being a social actor and to exercising power through networks. In network-oriented societies, the significance of being part of networks is enhanced as power lies within networks and is not obtainable by any single social actor.

A hierarchical structure is not the best form to obtain those abilities required in network society, such as better understanding of protocols and a variety of networks as mentioned earlier. Networks offer flexible and transparent systems through which social actors exercise and negotiate power relentlessly while hierarchies represent stable and organised structures within which social actors are given limited power and responsibilities according to their positions and roles. Institutions in network society are forced to live in the world between those two different principles. It is a challenge for those institutions to adapt themselves in a new network-oriented culture for the survival in network society.

4.1.2 Social networks

While Castells' concept of network society offers an overview on social structures and social systems of network society, social network theory offers better understanding of the logic of individual-society relations by highlighting principles and values in interpersonal relationships in networks. In social network theory, interpersonal relationships are represented by graphs, in which individuals are represented by nodes and their interrelationships by ties. To compensate the simplification of such representations, Granovetter differentiates interpersonal ties according to their 'strength' (1973: 1361). According to his definition, the strength of a tie is defined as a 'combination of the amount of time, the emotional intensity, the intimacy (mutual confiding), and the reciprocal services which characterize the tie' (Granovetter, 1973: 1361). Considering interrelationships between psychological elements and behaviours that a person-in-environment model suggests, the strength of ties can be described as the behavioural and perceptive density of interpersonal interactions.

One of the most well-known and influential hypotheses in social network studies is Granovetter's notion of 'the strength of weak ties' (Granovetter, 1973). Although his primary focus is on the importance of weak ties, as it was a significant discovery, he also argues that a combination of ties with different strength maximises the utility of social networks (Granovetter, 1984). Based on his own experiments and others' work testing his hypothesis, he infers that there is a 'division of labour between weak and strong ties (Granovetter, 1984: 219).' The strength of a weak tie is predominantly derived from its ability to bridge gaps between individuals. Weak ties are less likely to work as constraints on social interactions and instead allow high mobility of information flows between individuals. Strong ties, on the other hand, confine individuals and information within social structures. A group of people connected with strong ties by definition share experiences, interests and knowledge between them, and then develop a sense of belonging and mutual trust. Such strong ties, as Granovetter (1984) suggests, also tend to allow high transitivity of decision-making. It suggests strong ties are more influential on choices that individuals make.

Gravenotter's idea of strong ties and weak ties playing different roles in information flows was further developed and explained in a less academic manner by a journalist Malcom

Gladwell (2000). In his famous book, 'The Tipping Point,' he introduces three key sets of skills that need to be involved in spreading out social knowledge, which are identified by some experiments. According to him, the success of information flows depends on the following three types of people. Those are: connectors, who have skills to develop 'weak ties' and link people; mavens, who have skills to obtain updated knowledge and share with others; and salesman, who make the information looks more attractive (Gladwell, 2000). Since people of such types have significantly influential roles in social networks in relation to information flows, other individuals' relationships with those types of people affect their access to information.

This idea of weak ties and strong ties has significant implications for 'embeddedness' in network society. As argued above, contemporary society is highly individualised, flexible and network-oriented. The 'embeddedness' in such society is inevitably individualised and network-oriented. Individuals' 'embeddedness' can, however be re-shaped as they develop their integration in a highly individualised and network-oriented society. Ties in social networks are transactions at behavioural and perceptual levels between an individual and others in a person-in-environment model. The significance of a balance between weak ties and strong ties in one's social networks suggests that the 'embeddedness' also requires a variety of relationships of different types and of different quality.

4.1.3 Transactional relationships in network society

To summarise, in network society, individual-society relations are individualised, flexible and network-oriented. In such society, individuals' 'embeddedness' can be re-shaped as they are integrated in different ways in social networks. One's status in a network is dynamic and defined more by what one does rather than by who one is. In order to maintain one's position in a network and to exercise power in the network, one needs to be aware of 'protocols,' which provide some degree of order in the network. However, protocols are not embedded in structures but in social relations and therefore not obvious. Networks offer flexibility of individual-society relations in exchange for constant interactions. A problem that institutional organisations are facing in network society is that they tend to find themselves in an awkward position between hierarchical internal structures and globally

expanded networks. Hierarchical structures may offer stability, but may also offer resistance to flexibility. Challenges for those organisations are how to allow smooth information flows internally and how to increase external transparency of their organisations.

The ‘embeddedness’ of social actors in such a network society depends on both weak ties and strong ties. While strong ties provide security and a sense of belonging, weak ties support development of social networks. Without weak ties, a group of people connected through strong ties is isolated from the rest of the world. Without strong ties, an individual is floating without sharing his/her experiences or knowledge with others.

4.2 Transformation of community

While increased flexibility offered a new set of logic of individual-society relations generally, it has brought a notable change in the conceptualisation of ‘community’ and in the way people actually relate to each other at local level. ‘Community’ is a concept that is hard to define and visualise. Community is often seen as an illusion or a product of the imagination. Bauman (2001a) describes community as an illusion which brings people a good feeling of security, confidence and trust, while Mullard (2003) claims that ‘there is no community of shared lived experiences but only imagined communities (p.94).’

In a community in a traditional sense, people share materials, routines, norms, knowledge, customs, cultures, history, identity and trust. Members of a community form a structure in which shared materials, routines, norms and knowledge are passed from generation to generation and in which common properties such as customs, cultures, history and identity are created, reproduced and maintained. Trust is established amongst those who share a community identity on the basis that they live in the same spatially and socially delineated area. The term ‘community’ in this sense indeed implies a certain territoriality as well as social definition. A community provides its members with a sense of belonging and security.

Such a sense of community used to be well represented in the form of “the” local community. One was born as a member of a community whether or not one wished. One was given a position

in a community, as a child and then as a full member from whom specific contributions to the community were expected. Maintaining a community was a shared goal for all the members. As far as you are a member of a community, you have the full support of the community. We can always count on community members' good will and mutual understandings. As long as you play a role given by a community, your status in the community is secured. A community was a safe guard of its members' lives and a stage for a play performed by its members. What the local community did not offer to their members were liberty, freedom, options and flexibility. As Bauman puts it 'missing community means missing security; gaining community, if it happens, would soon mean missing freedom' (Bauman, 2001a: 4). In addition, a community places individuals' identities below a community identity. A concept of community in this sense is associated with unity as opposed to individuality, durability as opposed to temporality, security as opposed to risk, predictability as opposed to unpredictability, and confinement as opposed to open-endedness.

The idea that such communities have been lost or declined with the progress of urbanisation, industrialisation, globalisation and individualisation is argued by a number of thinkers. Bauman (2001b) suggests that communities transformed by those social changes are now fragile and temporary, failing to offer stable and structured relationships between individuals within them.

Day, in his discussion on community, introduces a quote from Zorbaugh (1929:271, cited in Day, 2005) who actually made a similar argument to Bauman more than eighty years earlier:

“The community is gradually disappearing. And its disappearance is the result of the fundamental processes of the city's growth – mobility, centralization, succession, and the consequent breakdown of culture and public opinion within local areas, the rise of social distances, and the organization of sentiment and interest on the basis of vocational activity rather than contiguity of residence.”

The argument of this thesis, however, is that it seems to make more sense that community is transformed into a new concept in accordance with social changes instead of disappearing.

Day (2005: 20), drawing on Raymond Williams' as well as Zygmunt Bauman, summarises this alternative vision: "not that community will disappear completely, but that it will be transformed into new kinds of awareness, increasingly detached from the limitations of particular places, neighbourhoods, and experiences."

In a society where flexibility is increased, people are detached from such local communities and more generally from places. Immensely increased mobility enables us to move around across countries and continents, while new communication technologies enable us to exchange information remotely and instantly. Place has become an object of individuals' choices rather than a field granted to them without a question. Consequently, a demand to redefine a concept of community has emerged as people are extricated from physical places. Two aspects of a concept of community, spatial and social confinements, which were bound together in a traditional local community, are separated. People gather to share their interests and form a community of interest, which does not necessarily have a special boundary. Various communities on the Internet are a good example demonstrating that communities no longer require physical space. Rules and norms are created through and for members' interactions. Within shared interests, rules and norms, a community binds people together and provides them with a shared identity and the feeling of belongingness.

In the language of social networks, a community can be depicted almost as a clique, which differentiates itself from others on networks and which internally offers some degree of coherence and similarities. Members of communities are bonded with strong ties, which offer a group identity, security, stability and transitivity. Externally, as Granovetter (1973) suggests, communities are connected through weak ties. It is almost contradictory but the existence of those weak ties unites members of a community together by differentiating them from others.

In contrast to a pre-modern society where community meant nothing other than a local community that was ascribed to individuals on their birth, contemporary society with individualised networks offers various communities as options and allows people to have various communities to belong to. A community is not a given, fixed and stable social

grouping that purveys the feeling of security and a social status but a system of social groups in networks, which is chosen, dynamic and flexible. Individuals are allowed to belong to several communities, which may not overlap or even have anything in common.

Although individuals' relationships with communities are based on choice rather than fate, a community needs to be distinguished from a random group of people. A concept of community assumes a certain degree of continuity, which is maintained through interactions between members. The degree to which a community is distinctive and stable depends on the strength of strong ties within members and on how exposed it is to the outside world. In a community that is open to networks, its rules and norms can be more easily affected by transactions through weak ties than others that are relatively closed.

As people are detached from places, they are no longer bound with local communities. The degree to which individuals are involved in their local communities depends on their choices and what those local communities offer. Some local communities are more united than others. Yet, in our network-oriented society, local communities are exposed to the outside world, which in return reduces the strength of ties between members in a local community. Day mentions an example of a neglectful local community where 'a single mother and her young son were found to be living a life of almost total social isolation in a well-to-do British suburban village' (Day, 2006: ix). Sharing a certain spatial territory does not mean sharing other elements of life such as ethnicity, social status, economic status, beliefs and lifestyles. Especially in a highly developed urban city like London, people can live anonymously and have shallow relationships with their local community by their choice.

The significance of local communities in individuals' lives has been reduced while the number of communities, which are detached from particular places and now parts of networks, has been remarkably increased. Nevertheless, the significance of place has not subsided. We cannot entirely escape from places or physical space. Castells (2005: 141) points out that "people, as long as they are physical beings, cannot but live and act in space, and the spaces they create reflect and shape social life in its totality", Physical space and place are still prominent in individual-environments relations. We may have a variety of options of places

to be but we do not have an option not to be in a place. It is also notable that in a globalised society, a perception of place is also expanded to a global scale in parallel to the expansion of social networks. We are bound to be a member of a global community, which shares the earth as a place. Global warming and environmental pollutions, the issues we share in a global community, perhaps most strikingly remind us the physicality of our living environments.

It seems that the potential of local communities tends to be neglected and underestimated. Although individuals' social networks and activities may be extended globally, their neighbourhoods are their social and physical immediate environments. Although people are no longer constrained within local communities, proximity provides them resources and reasons to establish strong ties between them. Especially for older people the potential of local communities is worth exploiting.

4.3 Personal identity and lifestyle

While the logic of individual-society relations emerging from network society were discussed at a macro level in the previous two sections, in this section I will discuss logic of individual-society relations from individuals' perspectives. I will examine discourses on two concepts, personal identity and lifestyle, both of which have emerged from our highly individualised, flexible and network-oriented society. Personal identity is a concept, whose importance has increased as that of group identities, such as nationality and ethnicity, have been undermined in increasingly individualised, flexible and network-oriented societies. Lifestyle is a new concept, which has emerged reflecting individualised life patterns that are uprooted from social relations within a particular local community or society. In the following, those two concepts are discussed in order to refine further the logics of individual-society relations particularly in relation to 'embeddedness.'

4.3.1 Reflexive society and personal identity

One may trace a common vision of contemporary society, in which interpersonal and inter-organisational relations are detached from particular places and gained high flexibility, which is described as 'network society' by Castells (2004), 'liquid modernity' by Bauman (2000) and 'reflexive society' by Giddens (1991). What Giddens intends to encapsulate in the term

'reflexivity' is, as he emphasises, not the same as "the reflexive monitoring of action intrinsic to all human activity" (Giddens, 1991: 20). Instead, he applies the term to describe the susceptibility of all social actions involving physical environments, which are disembedded from particular places and social structures because of the social shift towards network-oriented systems. Furthermore, he continues to explore the idea of reflexivity and connect it with the idea of personal identity. According to him, this phenomenal flexibility has made 'self' and 'society' 'interrelated in a global milieu (Giddens, 1991: 20).'

What this highly flexible society has brought to the building-up processes of individuals' personal identity is dynamics. We build up our personal identities as we grow up through a series of social interactions with others and society. We learn social norms, rules of nature and about ourselves from social relations, which are increasingly based on networks rather than restricted by social structures in contemporary society. Reflecting the diversity and dynamics of networks, individuals' paths of social interactions are different from one another and consequently the process of development of personal identity is also diverse between individuals. More importantly, the development of personal identity is an ongoing process as it is part of dynamic interactions between individuals and society.

This dynamic process of the development of personal identity is termed a 'reflexive project' by Giddens (1991: 32). The concept of 'reflexive project' implies two aspects of personal identity in contemporary society. Firstly, it casts light on the susceptibility of personal identity developed upon individual-society relations in network society. The undermining of authorities and the increasing autonomy of institutions because of the emergence of network society means lack of direction and orientation for development of personal identity. Personal identity, detached from particular social structures and cultures that determine social relations, is unpredictable and complex. Secondly, the concept of 'reflexive project' also illuminates the individuality of the process of the development of personal identity. Collective identities such as nationality, ethnicity and religions are no longer dominant elements in personal identity although they are still significant and need to be integrated with the rest of elements. Likewise, local community identities are also reduced or even diminished. Instead, one has as many sources for directories and orientations as the number of communities he/she relates

to. While the development of personal identity is free from constraints of social structures and systems, the responsibility for the development falls down to individuals.

The person-in-environment model suggests that personal identity is strongly related to the 'embeddedness' while 'embeddedness,' the dynamic relationships between individuals and their environments, is an expression of personal identity as well as its source. As personal identity is detached from local communities and social structures, 'embeddedness' is also uprooted from certain places and certain societies. Both personal identity and 'embeddedness' are ongoing projects in network society, for which no one other than individuals themselves are responsible.

4.3.2 Choice and lifestyle

The other concept, which emerged from network society in relation to individual-society relations, is lifestyle. Chaney (1996) asserts that lifestyle is a product of a modern society, particularly of consumerism. He argues that the concept of lifestyle was born as a result of increased choices. Lifestyle offers references and standards that make sense in certain contexts as alternatives of social norms and customs that were associated with and supported by social structures. The concept of lifestyle illuminates two tendencies of individual-society relations in contemporary society towards completely opposite directions. Lifestyle is universal in a sense that it is free from geographical, social and cultural boundaries thanks to globalised information networks. On the other hand, lifestyle is an individual's choice. That is, lifestyle is a global movement, which can be only exercised individually.

Lifestyles as modes of living in contemporary society

The term 'lifestyle' may be commonly acknowledged but it remains difficult to define from a social science perspective. In general, the term is used to describe preferences of food, fashion or vacations that are commonly acknowledged as styles rather than individual preferences. Chaney introduces a definition by Sobel that a lifestyle is 'any distinctive, and therefore recognisable, mode of living' (1981 cited in Chaney, 1996: 11) and adds 'the mode is usually shared by a reasonable number of people' (Chaney, 1996: 11). Lifestyles only make sense when they are acknowledged and exercised by a number of people. As Chaney points out,

the definition of lifestyle is not far from that of culture. The difference is that lifestyles are shared and maintained through networks while cultures are developed and confined within certain communities and societies.

Lifestyles are therefore more flexible than culture. They are exercised by people who are only connected to each other by sharing lifestyles. Although those who share a lifestyle do not necessarily encounter or even acknowledge, they still share a collective identity that the lifestyle provides. Those who share a lifestyle are members of a virtual community that offers certain norms and guidance as well as a collective identity. Such a community is open-ended and people can be part of it on their own choices.

Although lifestyles are by and large associated with and driven by consumption activities, they are not only concerned in private sphere but also in political sphere. A lifestyle is a mode of living designed by individuals as a consequence of innumerable choices on everyday issues. And in reality many of those issues have politically debatable. Giddens (1991) discusses the connection between lifestyles and politics by employing a term 'life politics.' He expounds that life politics is 'a politics of lifestyle' and 'a politics of life decisions' (Giddens, 1991: 214-215). Environmental issues and issues on organic foods, for example, indicate close relations between lifestyles and politics.

Lifestyles work as life models that help individuals to make decisions over a series of actions and events, which eventually influence personal identity, in a society which presents overwhelmingly rich choices. Such life models can be detached from their origins and spread broadly across the continents through globally connected networks. Choices for lifestyles are uprooted from particular places. However, despite such a broad geographical range of choices, choices are not necessarily available to all. Despite the freedom from physical constraints, the availability is constrained by other factors, which differentiate ranges of choices between individuals. Those factors are essentially financial resources and the number and types of channels or ties. The former is related to individuals' economic status, which is a predominant determinant of social status, while the latter is related to individuals' social network skills.

Inequality of choice

As variety of choice is primarily explored in consumption activities in fashion, food and leisure fields, it comes as no surprise that financial resources restrict availability of choices for individuals. Which type of cars to buy, which brand to buy and where to go on holiday, for all of those, the more money you have, the better and more options you can have. The power of social structures that embed economic status in social relations is undermined in network society. As power has shifted from social structures to network systems, economic status that is established based on transactions in networks became powerful influencing social relations and the availability of choices.

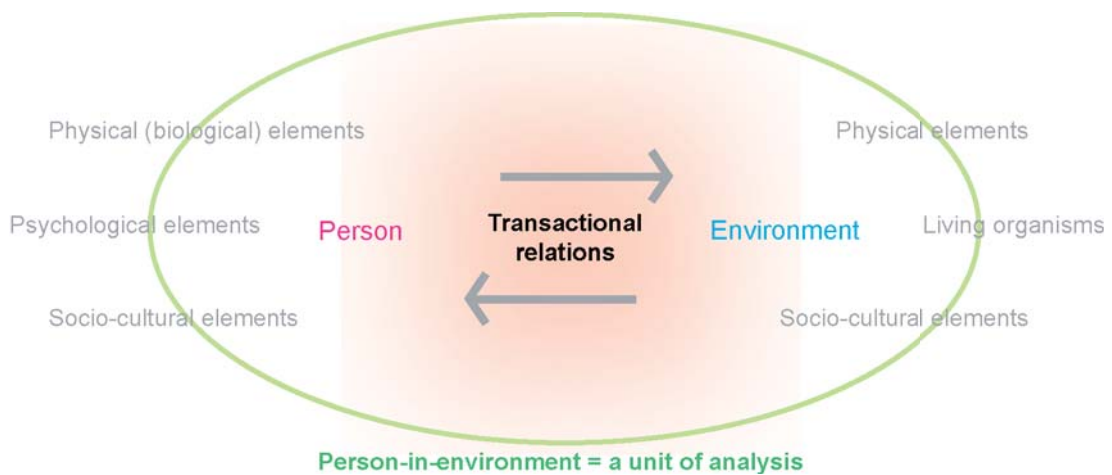
The second factor, the number and types of channels, depends on individuals' skills to obtain appropriate information to maximise a range of choice and optimise their decisions. Information can be obtained through networks of social actors and information. In terms of social networks mentioned earlier in this chapter, a chance to obtain appropriate information can be improved by a combination of weak ties and strong ties. Weak ties contribute to a variety of choices while strong ties support making right decisions. Those who are bound to a small community may have support from others to make decisions but within limited choices. Those who are well connected may have a broad range of choices but they may not know meanings of choices without strong ties that provide contexts of choices and therefore of their lives. Such skills and capacities to utilise social networks are diverse and affected by various factors.

Understanding the mechanisms of inequality of choice is significant to understanding how people are embedded in a wider society. The extent of choice is different between individuals and shapes how civic engagement practices can be effective or ineffective for 'embeddedness.' Therefore, in the following paragraphs, I will further discuss factors and mechanisms that affect individuals' choices.

The diversity of individuals' skills and capacities of social networks, which results in different levels of accessibility to choices, can be further illuminated by a person-in-environment model. To repeat, a person-in-environment model embodies the interrelations between three

elements on an individual's side including physical, psychological and socio-cultural, and three elements on his/her environments side including human beings and physical and socio-cultural elements. Those six elements are involved in transactions between the individual and his/her environments through his/her behaviour. The model suggests how an action to 'make a choice' is related to all the elements both internal and external in terms of cause and result of the action. The diagram (figure 4.1) was developed in my previous study (Tobari, 2003) to denote such interrelations between an individual and his/her environments involving six elements. The following paragraphs explore the roles of each of these six groups of elements in an individual's decision making starting with three elements on the environments' side.

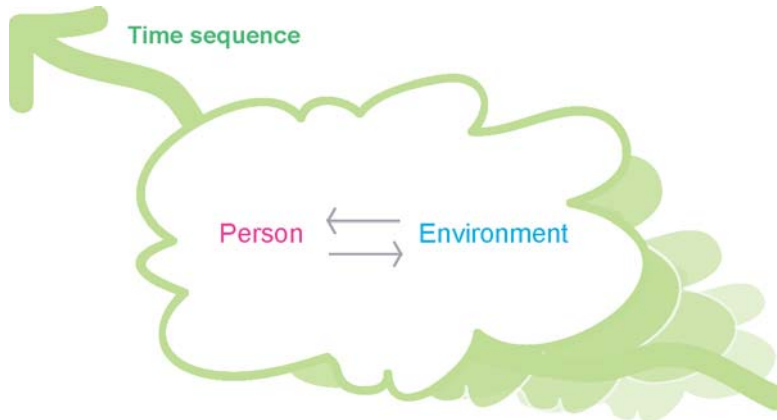
Figure 4.1 Person-in-environment model (see fig 2.2)



The diagram demonstrates transactional relationships between a person and his/her environment. The model emphasises three groups of elements of a person and another three of his/her environment. As explained earlier, all groups of elements, which interrelate to each other, affect one's behaviour and are affected by the environment as it is perceived.

Physical environments are, as mentioned above, inevitably part of the life of all human beings. Although physical environments are less significant in some activities than in others, a person is always embedded and embodied in locality and physicality. It is as if an individual has a bubble composed of socio-cultural elements surrounding him/herself and moving along with him/her in time, just like the bubble of physical environments moving along in space (figure 4.2). A significant difference from physical elements is that socio-cultural elements are more susceptible to changes than physical elements.

Figure 4.2 A bubble of socio-cultural elements moving along with an individual in time



The diagram demonstrates the relationships among a person, his/her socio-cultural environment and time. A bubble demonstrates inseparability between a person and his/her socio-cultural environment. As it is suggested in a person-in-environment model, they constantly affect one another. Hence their relationships are transactional. In relation to time, such a transactional relationship does not jump from one point to the other. It evolves and keeps updating in time sequence.

We always carry a bubble composed of physical elements, including buildings, furniture and air, and space created by those materials, all of which we perceive through our sensory systems either subconsciously or consciously. Even electric information requires some sort of physical device to be conveyed by someone. Based on the available information, we make a choice. As a result of the choice, we move around and the components of the bubbles change accordingly. Then we make another choice based on that new set of information available to us.

The mechanisms of decision-making embodied in the physicality of a person-in-environment unit can be represented in a 'way-finding model'. In space syntax analysis, a visual field from a point in a spatial system is called an '*isovist*' (Turner et al., 2001). As a point moves around in a spatial system, *isovists* change their shapes, sizes and directions. That explains how a person obtains a variety of visual information in a sequence as he/she moves to find a way. This idea of *isovist* can be applied to all other sensory systems, all other types of information and open-ended spatial systems. One obtains various types of information including visual information, smells, sounds and textures as one experiences the physical environment. For example, in a cosmopolitan city like London, you are likely to gather information from many countries by just walking in town. You will probably meet people from more than

ten different countries within five minutes if you are standing or walking around Trafalgar Square. You will find restaurants offering various cuisines from all over the world in many high streets. Visual recognitions do not necessarily mean an understanding of those different cultures or ethnicities, but there are more chances to be interested in, feel familiar with or actually communicate with them compared with those who live in a culturally homogeneous community.

Beyond the limitation of physicality of information that one can perceive, socio-cultural elements are disembedded from such physicality and connected through individually developed and globally saturated networks. Although a choice is constrained by the immediate bubble perceivable by an individual, information, on the foundation of which he/she makes a decision, is connected beyond the physical confines. Some elements, such as politics, education and legal issues, are still largely dependent on states which set those systems in accordance with international standards and strategies. Meanwhile, other elements, such as the economy, cultural trends and lifestyles, are disembedded from particular geographical boundaries. Consequently, socio-cultural circumstances are individually diverse and not correlated to geographic or political divisions. Such socio-cultural environments of individuals are part of globally expanded networks. Although the initial influences on one's choice are within socio-cultural elements that one can immediately perceive or experience, each element is connected with a wider socio-cultural environment through networks, which exercise secondary influences upon one's choice.

The third category of environmental elements is, simply, other human beings; that is to say, social psychology. Other people may influence one's choice in the most complicated way. There are several mechanisms in which another person or more people affects one's choice and they can be categorised in three different mechanisms by focusing on an individual's relations to the other(s) who make an influence upon his/her choice (figure 4.3). The first mechanism involves learning by observing, listening to a story about or reading about somebody, a group or an organisation. Those who are observed, telling a story and described in a book do not necessarily have the intention to make an impact upon his/her choice. On the other hand, the second mechanism involves more intentional actions including

advice, recommendations, support, persuasion, obligation and prohibition. Those actions are intended to make an influence upon a choice. In addition, there is a mechanism in which an influence upon one's choice is made as a result of assimilation of an individual into a crowd. The third mechanism is what is called 'collective behaviour' (Marx and McAdam, 1993). An individual in a crowd often acts as an anonymous person rather than on his/her independent person. He/she abandons his/her responsibility and follows what a crowd do or what a crowd expects him/her to do. To summarise, others have a great impact upon one's choice whether intentionally or unintentionally.

Figure 4.3 Three mechanisms of impact upon a choice



The diagrams above have been developed to summarise three different mechanisms as to how others can impact on one's choice-making. In the first case one learns from others without mutual interactions. Communications are one way. In the second case, the communications are one way in the opposite direction from the first. In the third case, one's decision is influenced by assimilation.

All of those external elements are perceived, experienced and obtained through one's behaviour, processed internally in conjunction with internal elements including psychological, physical and socio-cultural and then reflected in a decision of choice. Without this process of transactions via behaviour, one's external world and internal world do not have a connection with one another. Once external elements are transformed into internal elements, they are processed internally to form emotions, thoughts, beliefs, morals, knowledge and personal identities. Personal identities are also reflections of other internal elements such as physical

features, social status and cultural identities. However it should be noted that all of those elements only do make sense when they go through the transactions with the external world and come back to the selves. For example, one's physical features such as being tall, thin or white, mean nothing when he/she is entirely on his/her own. It is not until one meets others and perceives one's features in the reflections of others, that one recognises one's own features objectively and knows or judges whether oneself is tall, thin or white. That is, such transactional systems build a bridge between one's internal and external worlds and provide the contexts in which internal elements come to make sense. And through the transactional systems, all of those elements including internal and external are processed and reflected in a choice.

As seen above, choice, which is increased by the individuality and flexibility of network society, characterises individual-society relations in contemporary society. Our life is a series of choice. The process of choice is individualised. Day-to-day choice is not only about what to do in the short term but also about what to do in the long term and ultimately what kind of person to be. The series of choice plays a significant role in the development of personal identity and also in the formation of the 'embeddedness.'

Lifestyles offer references and standards for day-to-day choices. In contemporary society, where such references and norms are not embedded in social structures, lifestyles work as life models, which help individuals to make decisions over a series of actions and events, ultimately on personal identity.

Although a wide range of choices is on offer in network society, the variety does not contribute to an equal opportunity of choice. On the contrary, the problem of the inequality of opportunities and resources to make a choice remains individualised and complex because of the individuality and susceptibility of choice. As individuals' 'embeddedness' is affected by the choices they make, the mechanisms of the inequality of opportunities and resources for choice are relevant to the 'embeddedness.' As a person-in-environment model demonstrates, external elements of an individual's environments determine the availability of choice for individuals, while their internal elements including knowledge and experiences determine

their capability and competence of making a choice. A combination of external elements and internal elements then influences individuals' decisions, which affect personal identity and the 'embeddedness.'

4.4 Various mechanisms of embedding

So far, I have discussed fundamental logics of individual-society relation, primarily focusing on the impacts of increased individuality, flexibility and importance of networks on individuals' lives. I have argued that power has shifted from social structures to networks and that sovereignty of institutions such as states has been undermined. In this section, I will discuss the impacts of such social changes on social structures and social systems, as they affect civic engagement and 'embeddedness' in contemporary society.

4.4.1 Political ideologies and political institutions

Historically, there have been a variety of political ideologies conceptualising various social forms with different social systems that determine how people are involved in decision-making processes to influence the way their society operates. Political ideologies are embodied in social structures and implemented through social systems. The same political ideology can be achieved by different social structures and different social systems. Political ideologies do not assume particular social structures or social systems: instead, they provide principles for how to operate societies.

Democracy is probably the most important ideology and the most relevant to contemporary society amongst a variety of political ideologies. The birth of the idea of democracy dates back to Ancient Greece. The Athenian government was characterised by its democratic constitution and citizens' direct participation in governance (Sabine, 1963). They had 'the popularly chosen Council' and the Assembly constituted by 'the whole body of male citizens (Sabine, 1963: 6).' Direct participation in running the government was possible in Athens due to its relatively small population of citizens. However, as Sabine (1963) points out, the meanings of political ideologies, such as democracy, justice and liberty, are contextual and implemented in many different ways. In modern societies, opportunities for direct participation in government's management are not available for all citizens. A representation

system, which is commonly adopted as alternative to direct participation, is now considered to be almost equal to a democratic system. In either way, principles of democracy are the equality between citizens and 'rule by the people (Moran, 1994: 85).' Democracy assumes citizens' involvement in governing a state and assumes equal opportunities for all citizens to do so.

The UK government is one of those governments that adopt democratic political systems with parliamentary representation at the centre of the systems. Social structures are built up to support these political systems. Despite these infrastructures, the ideology of democracy is not completely realised. It is widely acknowledged that inequality of social class, region and gender still remain in the UK (for example, Moran, 1994). Gadafy, the leader of Libya, criticised the Western ideology of democracy suggesting that a social system in which less than half a population actually supports their president or prime minister is not democratic (Black, 2007: 21).

There is no magic answer for perfect social structures and social systems to achieve the equality opportunities for all citizens to be involved in governing a country. Although a representation system is considered to be one of the solutions, it only works in favour of majorities. However, in a society of diversity like the UK, minorities are almost the majority. It is a challenge for the UK government to establish complementary systems to involve minorities in governing in addition to existing systems. The UK government's initiatives promoting civic engagement of older people are intended either to serve as complementary systems or to improve existing systems that allow involvement of those who have been out of reach.

4.4.2 Power of media

One of the existing systems that complement the political systems is that of the media, which allows information flow between individuals and governmental institutions. Media, including newspapers, TV, radio, mobile phones and Internet, has become increasingly powerful system, whose networks have been extensively connected globally, with its synchronous interactivity increased by highly developed technologies. While the initial role of media is

to disseminate fact and opinions along with entertainment to individuals, it also plays an essential role in politics (Jones, 1994). In fact, media are often referred to as the fourth branch of government, in addition to three branches proposed by Montesquieu: the legislative, the executive and the judiciary. Carlyle (1840) describes literature as a 'Fourth Estate'. Jones (1994: 211) provides a list of political roles for the media: to 'report and represent popular views to those invested with decision making powers'; to 'inform society about the actions of government, educating voters in the issues of the day'; and to 'act as a watchdog of the public interest, defending the ordinary person against a possibly over-mighty government through their powers of exposure, investigation and interrogation'.

The media work as messengers who pass the citizens' voice to government and vice versa and as a third party whose position is neutral between government and citizens. As a messenger, they contribute to lowering the boundary between politicians and ordinary people by providing opportunities to get to know each other or to have reciprocal communications easily. For example, ministers may have their own blog page on which they provide records of their activities and comments. The website of Number 10 Downing Street provides a list of methods purporting to contact to the prime minister directly, which includes letter, email, online petition and fax.

There are also some critiques of such roles of media in politics. There are two major problems with the media's roles as both a messenger and as a third party: their lack of accountability and the difficulty of access to them. As a third party independent from both the government and citizens, the media is in theory in a position capable of being objective. However, articles in newspapers rarely seem absolutely objective, nor do any broadcasts. They report fact and opinions. Though they describe the facts discovered by reporters, which are normally part of reality the descriptions are not only partial but also reflect writers' attitudes and opinions of incidents. For instance, there are obvious differences in readers' political views between newspapers in the UK. The Telegraph, Express, Mail, Financial Times and The Times have a large proportion of readers favouring Conservatives while the Mirror, Star and The Guardian has a large proportion of readers favouring Labour (Jones, 1994). A variety of political views in newspapers seems to offer more opportunities of choice and to reflect

the diversity of people's opinions. However, in fact, the ownerships of many media sources are shared by only a few companies. Jones (1994) points out that at the time he was writing almost 80% of newspaper circulations are shared between three large corporations: Maxwell Communications Corporation, United Newspapers and News International. There was a high chance for those three companies to manipulate citizens' opinions or government's decisions, and although takeovers and mergers have changed this slightly, it could be argued that News International has moved from being one of three, to being the most powerful, internationally.

The second problem is about accessibility. The amount of information one can access, consume and absorb is limited. In addition, while information technologies contribute to the variety, interactivity and immediacy of information flows, technologies can also cause a division of citizens according to their skills of using those technologies. The inequality of accessibility to new information technologies resulted in so-called 'digital divide' (UNDP, 2001), which illustrates the division of populations between those who can benefit from information technologies and those who are disadvantaged because of lack of skills and/or resources to take advantage of those technologies. Even before the emergence of electric information technologies, information had never been distributed evenly. Limited availability of education divided those with literacy and those without. New information technologies added another division between those who can manipulate the technologies and those who cannot.

The media thus play a significant role in creating and manipulating information flows, creating a possible danger of misuse of power. The 'Hutton inquiry' in 2003 demonstrated how misuse of power by the media could impact on the government's decisions and citizens' life. Information is essential not only for political decision-making but also for any choice that affects individual-society relations or 'embeddedness' and personal identity as discussed in the previous section. What the media offers and do not offer greatly affects the social conditions of individual-society relations.

4.4.3 Lifestyles as global communities

As well as media, informal networks also complement political systems to get individuals involved in governing or, in a broader sense, in forming a society. Ways of affecting political decisions of the government are not confined within the political sphere. Consumptions and lifestyles can also be a means to express political opinions. Buying fair trade products, organic products or environmentally friendly products, recycling, travelling on a train instead of an airplane can be an expression of political opinions. Such individual actions could potentially influence a wider society. As discussed earlier, lifestyles, which can express political opinions, can be spread out globally through networks and form a community.

As discussed earlier, weak ties and strong ties play different but equally significant roles in disseminating lifestyle choice possibilities. While weak ties are likely to contribute to spreading them out, strong ties are likely to impact on decisions to accept particular choices. Furthermore, informal networks are likely to pass a variety of information while formal networks are likely to pass specific types of information.

Communities like lifestyles that are largely relying on globally expanded networks offer opportunities for minorities to gain the power of numbers. No one is entirely isolated in society and people influence each other through networks. Networks can provide individuals with power to make a difference in a wider society.

4.5 Older people and their ‘disembeddedness’

In previous sections, I have discussed the logics of individual-society relations in contemporary society and how those logics impact on social structures and systems in relation to civic engagement and the ‘embeddedness.’ In this section, I will summarise an overview of social conditions that are relevant to older people’s life in the UK including public services for older people and general perceptions on ageing. I intend to elucidate on why and how civic engagement and the ‘embeddedness’ are important for older people in particular.

This section is composed of three parts. Firstly I will outline the demographics of older people

to understand older people in numbers. Then I will summarise public services for older people in the UK to understand initial and general relations between the UK government and older people. Finally, I will discuss perceptions and images of ageing and older people to understand social positions of older people.

There are some variations of definitions of ‘older people’ in statistics and literature. In the overview of demographics and other statistics, I primarily use a definition of older people as 65 years old and above, unless otherwise stated, for the sake of clarity and convenience (in the BGOP programme for example, it is anyone over 50.). However, in general, I use the term ‘older people’ to represent people in their later life stage. I do not believe that older people need to be defined by a chronological age. Anything that is relevant to an individual older person’s ‘embeddedness,’ including lifestyles, health conditions and social networks, cannot be simply assumed to be based on their chronological age. Although certain images and attributes of older people are to some extent shared in a society, a social category of older people delineated by a certain age border was born with the emergence of social security systems such as pension schemes in the nineteenth century (Thane et al. 2005). Naturally, ‘older people’ is well defined as a social group in relation to public services and initiatives including social care services, healthcare services and the Better Government for Older People programme. In relation to those services and initiatives, I use the term ‘older people’ as defined in each case.

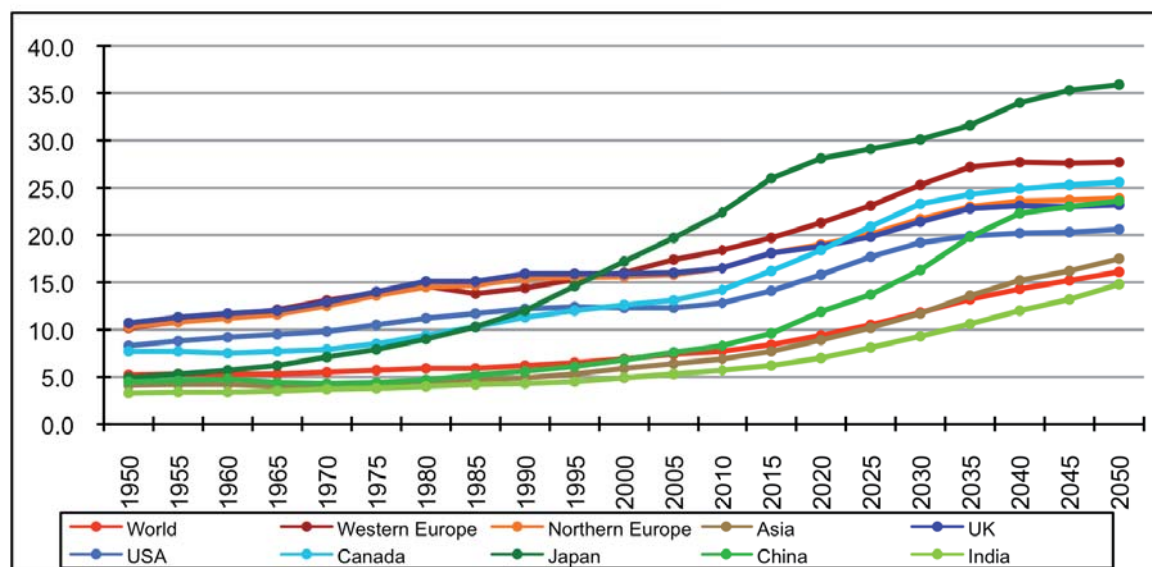
4.5.1 Demographics of older people

First, I will outline the demographics of older people in the UK in comparison with other countries in the world. One of the main reasons behind a number of initiatives related to civic engagement of older people is the recent demographic trend of a growing older population.

Population ageing is a global trend, which started in the 1960s in developed countries, particularly Scandinavian countries where the ageing of national populations was experienced earlier than any other region. The graph below (figure 4.4) shows the estimated and projected ratio of the population of 65 years and over in a range of countries between 1950 and 2050. Although the ageing of society started earlier in Europe, especially Northern Europe, than

Asian countries, some Asian countries are catching up with European countries ageing at much faster speed. In 2020, one in five of the national population is predicted to be 65 or over in most countries.

Figure 4.4 Population ageing in the world



Source: Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, *World Population Prospects: The 2004 Revision and World Urbanization Prospects: The 2003 Revision*, <http://esa.un.org/unpp>, Sunday, February 25, 2007; 7:45:27 AM.

Demography changes social structures and thus affects social systems. The public sector as well as other parts of society is inevitably facing structural and systemic transitions due to demographic changes. The gathering speed of ageing of the population reduces the time to tackle the demographic changes strategically. Between 1975 and 2000, the proportion of the population of 65 and over in the UK increased by 19.3%, between 2000 and 2025 it is projected to increase by 43.3% and in the following quarter of century the increase rate is projected to drop to 20.0%. The UK increase rate is lower than the world average, which is raised by some Asian countries such as India whose increase rates are well above 100% (UN, 2001). It suggests that those Asian countries may experience even harder challenges to tackle the fast growing demographic changes. The reaction of the UK government to such phenomena sets an example for those followers either to follow or to avoid.

In the UK, the increase of the population of 65 and over is coupled with low fertility rates and

is causing a change of balance between the working population and non-working population while the dependency ratio, which is a combination of the youth dependency ratio and the old-age dependency ratio, is also increasing (UN, 2001). This sets a generally negative image of aging society. However, the dependency ratio only takes chronological ages into account but nothing else. The increasing life expectancy implies the improvement of health for all generations including those aged 65 and over. Table 4.1 shows life expectancy of women and men at birth and at age 65 in the UK. It is reported that an average man aged 65 today can expect to live a further 19 years. By 2051, projected life expectancy at birth will have risen up to 84 years for males and 88 years for females. In 2001, healthy life expectancy at birth in Great Britain was 67 years for males and nearly 69 years for females, a rise of around two years (DWP, 2004b). It indicates that older people can expect more years in good health, which does affect the prospect of changes in some strategies and policies in relation to older people such as pension age reforms.

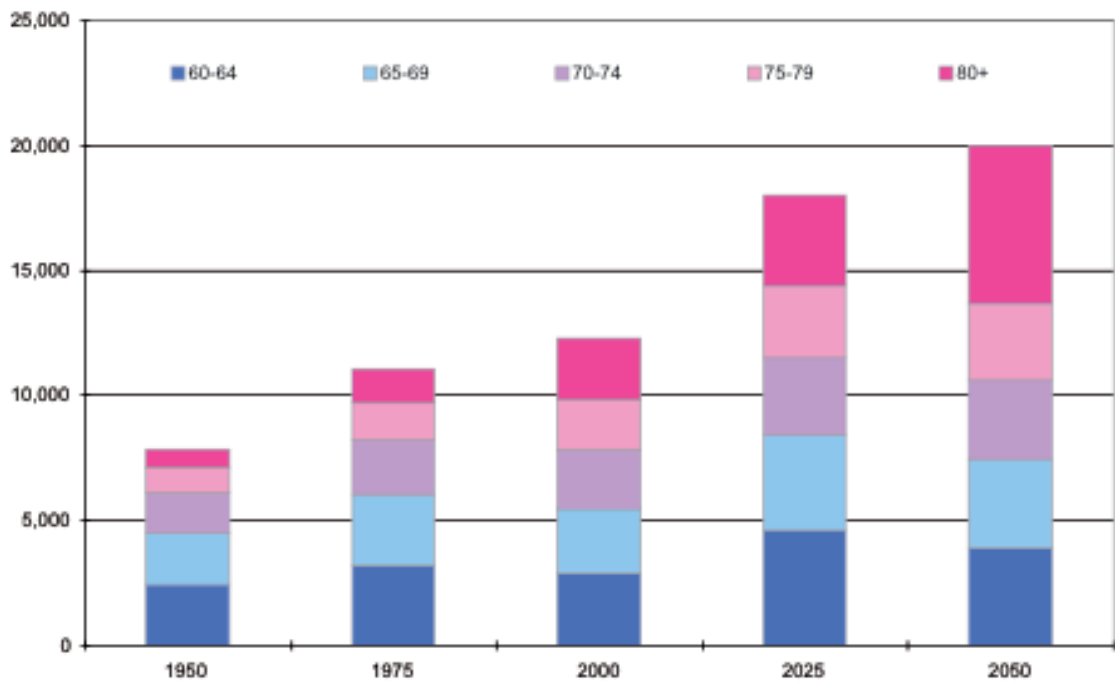
Table 4.1 Life Expectancy of women and men at birth and at age 65 (2003)

UK	Expectation of life at birth			Expectation of life at 65		
	1951	2005	2051	1951	2005	2051
Males	77	83	84	12	19	21
Females	82	87	88	16	22	24

Source: Source: DWP, (2004b), 'GAD, 2003 principal projections.'

In order to understand the issues of an ageing society, ageing of the population needs to be understood in further detail. The ageing population of the UK are characterised by the following three trends. Firstly, it is striking the increase of population of 80 and over as shown in figure 4.5. In 2050 it is predicted that almost one third of those aged 60 and over will be 80 and over. It can be said that the 20th century was a period of the increase of the third age while the 21st century, as far as the population projection shows, will be a period of the increase of the fourth age.

Figure 4.5 Population Estimations and Projections, 60 and over, 1950 – 2050, the United Kingdom



Estimated projection of population of 60 and over between 1959 and 2959 by 5 year age group.

Source: United Nations (2001)

Secondly, there is regional diversity. In 2002, the percentage of the population of retirement age varies between regions from 14.0% in London to 21.5% in South West (table 4.2). With exceptions of London and Northern Ireland, other regions' ratios are within a range between 18% and 22%. The regional differences in older populations imply that different strategies and initiatives may be needed.

Table 4.2 Population of Retirement Age by Regions, 2002

Regions	The ratio of the population of retirement age
United Kingdom	18.4%
England	18.4%
North East	19.3%
North West	18.6%
Yorkshire and the Humber	18.7%
East Midlands	18.6%
West Midlands	18.6%
East	19.1%
London	14.0%
South East	18.9%
South West	21.5%
Wales	20.2%
Scotland	18.8%
Northern Ireland	15.7%

Source: ONS

Last but not least, one unique and significant characteristic of population ageing in the UK is its growing ethnic diversity. The UK is one of the most cosmopolitan countries in the world and it is expected to continue to be so. Table 4.3 shows a larger number of the non-white population in the age group between 50 and 64 compared to the two age groups composed from 65 to 84, and 85 and over. Among those aged 85 and over, each ethnic group, such as Asian and Asian British, Black and Black British, Chinese, composes less than 1.0%, while the percentage of each ethnic group aged between 50 and 64 who will be between 65 and 79 in ten years ranged from 9.4% to 11.1%. The figure shows that the proportion of ethnic groups in each older age group is diverse and will change considerably over the next ten years. The change in proportions of ethnic groups prefigures changes in social demands such as social services and community facility services accordingly, which are specially designed for older-older people from certain ethnic groups.

Table 4.3 Proportion of Older People in Each Ethnic Group, 2001 (%)

	50 - 64	65 - 84	85 +	All 50+
All Population	17.5	14.0	1.9	33.5
All Non-white Minority Ethnic Population	9.4	4.8	0.3	14.5
White	18.2	14.9	2.1	35.1
Mixed	4.7	2.7	0.3	7.6
Asian or Asian British	10.3	5.0	0.3	15.5
Black or Black British	9.9	6.2	0.3	16.4
Chinese	11.1	4.8	0.3	16.2
Other Ethnic Groups	11.0	2.7	0.2	13.9

Source: ONS

Population ageing is, as seen above, a global trend and is progressing rapidly. However, the changes in society that such trends may require are not up to the speed of such demographic trend. Presumably due to lack of acknowledgement of such change and the delay or lack of response to it amongst the government as well as population themselves, such demographic trends have resulted in some problems of ‘disembedded’ older people. In the following chapters, I will explore socio-cultural factors that may underlie such problems of ‘disembeddedness.’

4.5.2 Households and Intergenerational Relations

Family and relatives are the most immediate social relations for individuals. Therefore, older people’s relationships with family members and relatives strongly affect their ‘embeddedness.’

As Troyansky (2005) suggests, living alone has become popular especially in North and Western Europe including the UK. Table 4.4 shows the percentage of people who live alone increases with age in 2001. It is considered that the main reason for the higher proportions in women than men in each age group is that women tend to live longer than their husbands. More than two thirds of women aged 85 and over live alone.

Table 4.4 Proportion of Older People living alone in Great Britain by age and gender, 2001 (%)

	50 – 64	65 – 84	85+
Men	14	21	42
Women	16	43	71

Source: ONS

Living alone is often associated with isolation from their family or local communities. However, living alone does not necessarily mean they have no relations with their children. Almost 80% of the population aged 65 and over in Great Britain meet their relatives or friends and neighbours at least once a week (table 4.5). It matches with the speculation that older people's independent living is largely supported by maintaining their social networks (Thane, 2005). It suggests that while living alone itself may not always cause isolation, maintenance of social contacts is important.

Table 4.5 Frequency of social contacts of population aged 65 and over in Great Britain, 2001 (%)

	At least once a week	Less than once a week	Not at all
Relatives or Friends	79	19	2
Neighbours	78	7	14

Source: ONS

The function of family and relatives are not limited to social interactions. Despite the government's intention to shift away from informal care for older people provided by their children to public support, much of the care for older people is still provided by their family members, friends and neighbours (DWP, 2004a). According to the 2001 census, 10% of people in the United Kingdom provided unpaid care to their family members, friends, neighbours or others. 68% of those carers provided unpaid care for up to 19 hours a week while around 21% did so for 50 or more hours a week (DWP, 2004a). Although it is not the remit of this study to discuss the contents of social care policies and social care systems, it is important to acknowledge the multiple functions of informal social networks.

On the whole, the data suggests that there are a great proportion of older people living alone. That seems to verify a stereotype that older people tend to be isolated and to feel lonely.

However, some other data confirms that the majority of them keep strong ties with their family and neighbours. It is considered that communication technologies and transportation play an important role to support interactions between family and relatives living apart. Such strong ties often involve domestic support and personal care as well as social interactions. It is important to understand multiple functions of such informal networks.

4.5.3 Public support and older people

In this section, I will review some public services that appear to be particularly relevant to older people's 'embeddedness.' Those include services related to employment and pension, accommodation and personal care. Those public services are essential to security and independence of some older people who need such public support. Not all older people are retired, poor, living in poor conditions, ill or disabled. However, as some statistics demonstrate, it is also true that some older people need public support in those areas. I analysed some statistical data to understand the reality of those public services and older people.

1) Employment and income

While having various relations with others is generally a positive factor for the 'embeddedness,' being dependent to others may be a negative factor. Dependency suggests the imbalance of power between two social actors. The 'embeddedness' is established on the basis of independent life. Economic independence is one of the important factors for independent life especially in the present capitalism. Being engaged in economic activities means not only having a source of income but also being able to maintain physical and mental independence.

Unlike times before the welfare state when people normally worked until they could no longer manage physically or mentally, there are more retirements caused by socio-cultural environmental factors. Although there are people over the pension age who are in employment, there is a significant gap of employment rates between two sides of the pension age border. It is reported that in 2003/2004 72% of men aged between 50 and 64 are in employment while 67% of women aged between 50 and 59 are so (table 4.6). This figure dramatically decreases

in those who are above the pension age (65 years old for men and 60 years old for women) where merely 8% of men and 10% of women over the pension age are in employment. Amongst people working beyond the retirement age, self-employment is more common than full-time and part-time employment for men while part-time employment is more common than any other for women. National Statistics' analysis suggests that there are correlations between age/health status and the employment rate. Long-term illness and older age cause retirement from the labour market. It is also remarkable that those out of employment beyond the retirement age are economically inactive rather than unemployed. It means, whether it is due to health problems or due to lifestyle choice, people who do not have a job are not searching for one. It is also reported that over a third of the population aged between 50 and 69 in Great Britain consider their retirement was forced rather than voluntary (ONS, 2005). The most common reason for this type of forced retirement is considered to be health problems.

Table 4.6 Economic Activity Status, 2003/2004, in the UK (%)

	Men		Women	
	50-64	65+	50-59	60+
All in employment	72	8	67	10
Full-time employees	49	1	32	2
Part-time employees	5	3	28	6
Self-employed	18	4	6	1
Unemployed	3	NA	2	NA
Economically inactive	25	91	32	90
Total (=100%) (millions)	5.2	3.9	3.8	6.6

Pension age, which is currently set at 65 years for men and 60 years for women in the UK, is influential for individuals' plans for retirement. This significant milestone in one's life course is going to be altered. The government has announced the plan of increasing the state pension age from 65 years old up to 68 years old from 2020. This is one of the main arrangements in pension reforms to tackle the current predicted pension crisis and to adapt the system to demographic changes such as increasing longevity and an ageing society.

The change of pension age will significantly affect older people's lifestyle and their relationships with society in various ways. The plan aims at encouraging people to be involved in the economic world longer and to be financially independent. However, there are also a number of criticisms of such an optimistic view. Opponents point out that older workers with physically harder manual jobs cannot work longer and those are the people who need pensions to live and also suffer from low life expectancy and bad health. A number of studies raise suspicions about the prospects for the plan. Nationwide Building Society's research indicates that there would be more people who save more than who choose to work longer (Nationwide Building Society, 2005). The other study reveals that there are already one million people aged between 50 and 65 who want to work but may not be able to find employment (Taylor, 2004). It is also pointed out that there are huge differences in employment rates of people above 65 between those in higher managerial positions and professional staff and those in lower supervisory positions and technical staff (BBC MMVIII, 2004a). In addition, compulsory retirement at a certain age is theoretically banned since 2006 in the UK in accordance with European age discrimination rules (BBC MMVIII, 2004a), although legal challengers to a "normal" retirement age in companies have not so far succeeded. In any case, older people's lifestyle is expected to become increasingly diverse in the next decade due to social changes in employment and pension systems.

Although the proportion of pensioners with a low income in Great Britain has dropped from 26% in 1995/96 to 20% in 2003/04 (ONS, 2005), it is still one in five, which is not negligible. Nearly half of older social renters (765,000 households) and 680,000 households (14%) of older owner-occupiers have a weekly gross income of under £100 (DTLR and Department of Health, 2001). On the other hand, it is also pointed out that around 152,000 older owners had incomes more than £700 per week. It is suggested that employment and pension systems would significantly affect older people's independent life and therefore also the 'embeddedness.' However, the data does not support the stereotype that all older people are financially disadvantaged.

2) Accommodation services and social housings

Combined with financial resource, accommodation is also an important factor in maintaining

independent life and a sense of security. There are many different types of accommodation support provided by public, private or independent bodies for those who need it. Some of them are for older people with financial needs while some others are for older people with personal and domestic care needs. In the UK, accommodation services available for older people include social housing, sheltered housing, registered homes and nursing homes. Standards of those accommodations are regulated by the government regardless of whether providers are public, private or independent.

Social housing originates from almshouses and workhouses in the 17th century and before (Thane, 2005). Although the proportion of social housing in all housing peaked in the 1980's and decreased afterwards, social housing services have been providing constantly above 20% of accommodations in England including both types of social renting housing. Almost one third (33%) of social renters were households headed by those aged 65 and over in England in 2005 (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2006). Social housing services, which are currently provided by local councils and housing associations, are important services that provide older people security and a foundation for independent life.

In relation to housing services, there is another issue regarding older people. The government admitted that a higher proportion of people amongst the population aged 60 and over live in housing of relatively poor conditions (DTLR and Department of Health, 2001). It is reported that 15% of people 60 and over in England live in 'poor housing,' which is defined as housing that is "unfit, in serious disrepair or in need of essential modernisation (DTLR and Department of Health, 2001)." Another report suggests 2.4 million of older households in England failed the Decent Homes Standard in 2001 (DWP, 2004b). For example, the percentage of people who live without central heating increases with age groups (ONS, 2001). Although those who live in poor conditions are not the majority amongst older people, the data suggests that living conditions become increasingly important issues for those aged 65 and above.

In addition to those housing issues mainly related to financial conditions, there are other types of accommodation services for those with medical care, personal care and/or domestic

care needs. Those types include hospices, hospitals, nursing homes, residential care homes, sheltered housing and recently emerged very sheltered housing. Each type offers different types and degrees of care and support. Hospices and hospitals are restricted to those with certain medical needs, while nursing care homes and residential care homes, which are often called 'care homes' all together, provide mainly personal care for those who are no longer able to do all activities to live independently.

Different types of accommodations offer different services and have different priorities. While the focus of services in nursing homes is on personal care, the focus in sheltered housing schemes is more on domestic care. In addition, there is an emerging type of service called extra sheltered housing scheme which responds to the increase of care needs of residents in sheltered housing schemes. Extra sheltered housing schemes are designed to allow residents' continuous life despite the increase of their needs for personal care. Such schemes are expected to support maintaining the 'embeddedness' of older residents, which could have been otherwise spoiled by dramatic changes in living environments and social networks.

Accommodation is a fundamental element of anyone's security, social life and consequently 'embeddedness.' Although it is not unique to older people, there is a certain proportion of older population who are actually vulnerable, and whose security is at risk. The issues of accommodation also tend to be combined with other issues such as loss of major income after retirement and decline of health. A combination of those three can be an enormous threat for older people's 'embeddedness.'

3) Personal care services

Along with financial and accommodation services, domiciliary care services such as home care service, meals-on-wheels and day care centres, are essential to support older people's independent lives at their own home. It is reported that some £6.9 billion was spent on older people by local authorities in England in 2002/03 and 8.4% of all people aged 65 and over were provided some support to live at home by local authorities in 2003 (ONS, 2004d).

Those services are also part of the social networks of service users. I discussed in my previous Ph.D thesis that those regular contacts are a significant part of ‘embeddedness’ due to its frequency and the significance of the services involved in interactions (Tobari, 2003). The availability and quality of those services affects one’s relations with others and possibly his/her ‘embeddedness.’ For example, family and friends often provide unpaid care to compensate for lack of adequate services responding to older people’s domiciliary care needs (DWP, 2004a).

In summary, financial support services, accommodation services and personal care services can be identified as core services that can improve the ‘embeddedness’ of older people by supporting their independence of life and providing security. Although those services are already in place, it seems also true that those services need to be further improved. It is important to acknowledge the significance of those public services for older people’s ‘embeddedness’ and the risk of some older people being disembedded in order to understand what strategies of older people’s civic engagement have to deal with.

4.5.4 Perceptions and images of older people

In this section, I will discuss perceptions and images of ageing and older people to understand the social positioning of older people. Who are older people? How are they seen from other generations? How do they see themselves?

Perceptions and images of older people have changed over the years but there are always positive and negative ones. Generally the positive images are related to older people’s experience and wisdom while the negative ones are related to death and physical/mental decline. There are three dimensions of ageing including physical, psychological and socio-cultural, which all together form images of older people. In the following, those three dimensions of ageing are explored in the order.

1) Physical ageing: abilities and appearance

Physical health is one of the most central concerns in relation to ageing that affects one’s

ability and appearance. A BBC Ageing Poll conducted in November 2004 reveals that what people most worry about in regard to getting older is health across all generations, followed by money (BBC MMVIII, 2004b). With the exception of the age group of 18 to 24 years, the percentage of the respondents regarding health as a primary worry is above 50%.

In general, ageing is associated with a higher risk of long-term illness and low mobility. The risk of suffering from long-term illness or disability increases with age. According to the census (ONS, 2001), just over a quarter of those between 50 and 64 years old claimed they had long-term illness, health problem or disability that limits their activities or the work they can do. The figure increases up to nearly 70% for the age group of 85 years old and above. However, a study on well-being of older people in the UK points out that having difficulties do not automatically mean dependency (DWP, 2004b).

In my previous study, I argued that individual older people cope with the decline of physical ability in various ways (Tobari, 2003). Some change their lifestyle. Others receive some help to maintain their lifestyle. Their well-being may or may not change as a result. The decline of physical ability does not necessarily mean that individuals cannot maintain their well-being.

Besides those health issues, there is another aspect of physical ageing. That is how old or young people look, which affects their confidence and possibly personal identities. In contemporary society that appreciates youth as a symbol of productivity, youth is associated with a sense of inclusions with a wider society (Thane, 2005). While people cannot reverse the ageing process, it is to some degree possible to maintain youthful looks. How young they look affects how young they feel (Oberg and Tornstam, 2001).

Physical decline including decline of youthful look is a part of inevitable process in ageing: however, the human beings' capability of controlling the ageing process has been improved. The development of technologies in health and beauty industries has enabled the prolongment of healthier life and younger looks. To some degree, it has become a matter of choice what

to do with the ageing process. However, the availability of choices is not equal to everyone as discussed earlier in this chapter. It largely depends on personal wealth and accessibility to resources in the living environment.

2) Psychological/mental ageing

Compared with physical ageing, psychological and mental ageing is still much less controllable and therefore it is more likely to be feared. An ageing process is often associated with the fear of psychological, mental and intellectual decline including depressions, loss of memory and increased difficulties in learning something new. The mechanism of mental ageing processes is still a mystery even for the latest medical and scientific knowledge. Such fears can impact on socio-cultural as well as physical aspects of the 'embeddedness' of older people by generating negative images of older people and by causing discriminations of older people.

It is reported that the number of older people with mental health problems is increasing and the number of those aged over 65 with such problems is predicted to rise by almost 10% in the next 10 years (Department of Health, 2005). Depression is one of those common problems among older people, affecting between 10% and 16% of those aged over 65. Depression in older age tends to be caused by personal experiences and various social factors that are typical to this age group. The decline of the physical ability to carry out work and other activities to the extent they used to do or they wish to do may rob them of their confidence. Loss of responsibility after retirement or loss of social networks is also likely to undermine people's positive mentality and attitude. However, those personal experiences are individually diverse and so are personal capacities (Tobari, 2003).

Dementia is another increasing problem particularly among those aged over 85. There were over 750,000 people with dementia in the UK according to the Census 2001 and the figure was projected to increase up to 1.8 million by 2050. Statistically one-quarter of those aged over 85 develop dementia and one third of these need constant care or supervision (ONS, 2001). The Alzheimer's Society (2007) reports the difference of the prevalence of dementia amongst age groups. While one in a thousand had dementia amongst those aged between 40

and 65, the ratio goes up one in fifty amongst those aged between 65 and 70, one in twenty amongst those aged 70 and 80, and ultimately one in five amongst those aged over 80. It was also suggested that there were approximately 14,000 people with dementia in ethnic minority groups in the UK (Alzheimer's Society, 2007). Reflecting a relatively younger population of ethnic minority groups compared with white population, the figure for those with dementia in ethnic minority groups is relatively small but steadily increasing. It was addressed that care for them required extra attentions to cultural backgrounds and might involve language problems (Alzheimer's Society, 2007).

Loneliness and a sense of isolation are more common among older people. Loss of spouse, family and friends is more likely to be experienced in later life. Decline of one's mobility and physical ability may also cause his/her social networks to shrink. In addition to those general factors, which may cause loneliness and a sense of isolation, there are more particular elements that may cause emotional and psychiatric problems in migrants. Silveira and Allebeck (2001) conducted an ethnographic study on perceptions of life satisfaction, anxiety and depression in older Somali men in East London and provide a list of causes of depression identified in the interviews with older Somalis. Some of the causes are generally applicable such as physical pain and loss of occupational roles but most of them are particular to migrants and even to Somali. Those, which are particular to migrants, include lack of sense of belonging, dissatisfactory rights to citizenship and geographic distance of family. Obviously those are crucial to a concept of civic engagement. When those elements are combined with physical decline or retirement, they could place catastrophic impacts upon individuals. On the other hand, Silveira and Allebeck also suggest the significance of some religious views, which lead to positive attitude in coping with ageing. However as they point out, religious faith seems to be merely preventing disclosure of negative comments such as expressions of anxiety and depression rather than actually increasing life satisfaction.

In addition to mental and psychological aspects of ageing, there is another stereotype about the intellectual aspect of ageing. While older people are sometimes associated with wisdom, they are also considered to be incapable of learning new things. In the industrial society with high technology, the latter is more emphasised than the former. One of the reasons for a more

weight on this negative association is the fact, or perception, that the development society is relying on new technologies rather than old knowledge which older people are better at than younger generations.

However, it does not mean older people are not capable of learning new technologies. In fact, a large number of older people are interested in learning activities (ONS, 2005). Among various learning activities, computing is the most preferred activity across different age groups (table 4.7). Professional training is also highly rated among those aged between 50 and 69 in particular. It is also reported that there are people in their 80s or 90s who learn at the University of the Third Age despite the difficulty in mobility (Parkinson, 2004). Giving the fact that there are many ‘fourth age’ learners in its members, the article continues, the name the University of ‘the Third Age’ is no longer appropriate and its name as well as its organisation should be change to meet the increasing needs of the fourth age group. These reports clearly suggest that it would be imprudent to ascribe incapability of leaning to older people.

Table 4.7 Preferred leaning activities by Non-learners, %, England and Wales, 2005

	50 - 59	60 – 69	70 and over
Computing	33	29	30
Leisure Activities	20	27	33
Professional Training	13	10	3
Academic	5	9	7
English/Writing skills	3	4	4
Basic Skills	2	3	1
Self-development	2	1	2
Driving lessons	1	2	2

Source: National Adult Learners Survey, Department for Education and Skills

In addition to the praise of new technology in contemporary society, another reason for the negligence of the value of older people’s wisdom is that wisdom is difficult to prove (Ranzijn, 2002). Wisdom has, unlike a skill to operate some computer system for example, a situational value. It is useful in a certain situational context. Hence, the wisdom of older people does not necessarily appear in collective results such as an improvement in operational systems in a factory. Nevertheless, there are some domains

in which the wisdom of older generation is still valued and respected or at least utilised. Many politicians and executives in private companies tend to be over 50 at least and some of them are over 60. For example, there was a list of ministers at the time of conclusion of the research for this thesis on the 10 Downing Street website (HSMO, 2008). According to the website, amongst thirteen ministers who disclosed their age, the youngest was Rt Hon James Purnell MP born in 1970 and the oldest was Jack John Whitaker Straw born in 1947. Many of them were born in the 1950s and they are now in their 50s.

In short, the process of psychological and mental ageing is considered to be less manageable than physical problems, which enhance fear and denial amongst older people themselves as well as younger generations. Such negative perceptions of ageing and older people are already part of social exclusion of older generations. On the other hand, the movement towards learning in older age contributes to the 'embeddedness' of older people not only by arming them with skills and knowledge but also by changing images of older people from negative ones to positive ones. It should also be noted that there are areas, such as politics, where older people are already actively contributing with their knowledge and experience.

3) Socio-cultural elements of ageing

Ageing is a social concept as well as physical and mental processes. How ageing is understood in a socio-cultural context affects images of older people and therefore socio-cultural 'embeddedness' of older people. There are innumerable socio-cultural elements that are related to ageing. As key socio-cultural elements of ageing, this section focuses on the following two issues: retirement and ageism.

In the era of global population ageing, there are global movements to promote positive images of older people. The United Nations (UN) set 1999 as the United Nations International Year of Older Persons and promotes active ageing (UNA-Canada, 2002). Along with such global trends, there are a number of practices challenging all kind of age discriminations at various levels from grass-roots to international, and in different areas from health to product design. Such global trends provide a social context for the UK government's strategies on healthcare, social security and social welfare. I will discuss this further in chapter six.

Retirement is one of the major milestones, which divides one life stage from another. On one hand, it can be a cause of depression as seen earlier in the research on older Somalis (Silveira and Allebeck, 2001). On the other hand, it could be seen as an eagerly anticipated event. There is a survey on retirement conducted in an American company, which demonstrated positive attitude towards ageing among older people (Rosenkoetter and Garris, 1998). In their research, Rosenkoetter and Garris measured perceptions of former employees towards retirement using questionnaires. Their research outcomes showed high percentages of agreement to positive statements, such as “I enjoy retirement” and “I rarely feel lonely”. It was suggested that retirement could be regarded as an opportunity to experience freedom from work pressure, responsibilities and time constraints and to enjoy their hobby and social life on their own pace. However, it should be noted that most respondents of this survey do not have financial problems or difficulties relating to retirement. The outcomes only represent views of people with a certain socio-economic status and not of those who are represented in the example of older Somalis (Silveira and Allebeck, 2001).

‘Ageism’ refers to negative attitude towards ageing, which still exist in all parts of society including media and social care industry. For example, Carrigan and Szmigin (2000) analysed the appearance of older people in advertisements. They analysed two groups of print advertising: adverts in publications that had a wide range of age groups in their readers; and those in publications that are targeted specifically at older audience (over 50). The first group of publications included the Daily Mail, Daily Telegraph, Good Housekeeping and Women’s Journal while the second included Choice, Saga, Goodtimes and Active Life. Their research revealed that despite a great proportion of older readers for both publication groups, the percentage of appearance of models aged over 50 in the publications for all generations was quite low compared with the proportion of population aged over 50 in the UK. They analysed the data further and pointed out that there were significant differences in the percentage of the appearance of older models between product categories of advertisements. For example, for health and medicine products, older models were more likely to be used while they hardly appeared in the adverts of jewellery, clothing and alcohol. In the adverts of health and medicine products, because of characters of those products, older models are usually depicted as frail and disabled. Such negative images of older people created and

amplified through the media are implanted in audience's mind and become a basis of culture of age discrimination, ageism. As mentioned in chapter one, information is a power and on that basis media is a powerful institution, which can make a large contribution to culture and individuals' perceptions. Therefore ageism in the media can be seen as greatly harmful in its influence on society as a whole.

Another distinctive example of ageism is introduced as "elderspeak" by Ng (1998), who uses the term for the patronising language often used in institutional environments such as a nursing home. "Elderspeak" is described as 'characterised by reduced syntactic complexity, simpler vocabulary, more lexical fillers and sentence fragments, slower speech rate and more repetitions in addition to high pitch and exaggerated intonations' by Cohen and Faulkner (1986). "Elderspeak" is similar to baby-talk. Ng introduces another study, which proves baby-talk and elderspeak are almost identical and difficult to distinguish from one another (Caporael, 1981 cited in Ng 1998). Baby-talk is normally intended to 'convey a sense of nurturing and warmth, to express solidarity with the baby, to facilitate comprehension' and 'to teach language to the baby' (Ng 1998: 106). The usage of baby-talk is based on good intentions and obviously recognition of babies' incapability of comprehensive conversations. On the contrary, when adults including older people are talked to in this way, it is felt 'patronising, demeaning and disrespectful' (Kemper, Vandeputte, Rice, Cheung and Gubarchuk, 1995; Ryan and Cole, 1990 both cited in Ng 1998). Although it may be based on caregivers' efforts to 'simulate intimacy' (Ng, 1998: 107), it seems to be based on an inaccurate assumption about the communication ability of older people or adult care receivers.

In a process of physical and mental ageing, some older people may experience hearing impairment, consequently difficulty in communications, dementia and slurring speech and so forth. Such reduced communication skills are often mistakenly associated with babies' lower communication skills. However, even when a older person with some difficulties in communications for any of those reasons require slower and clearer speeches from others, elderspeak, which instantly reminds people of baby-talk, may not only make him/her feel intimidated or disrespected but also make him/her behave in a 'dependent, helpless and senile way' (Ng, 1998: 107). "Elderspeak" impose the power relationship in which older

people receiving “elderspeak” are considered to be inferior on everyone involved in the situation. It deprives older people of initial control, confidence and ultimately dignity. A result of conceding this situation generates negative images of dependent and less energetic older people and those images become pervasive in society.

Ageism is not necessarily a problem between older people and all other generations or the young but does exist amongst those aged over 50 or 60 who themselves are often regarded as older people. Behind antipathy and contempt against ageing, there is the fear of senility and following death. The older you become, the closer and more realistic senility and death are. Hence, those negative feelings and attitude towards those who indicate signs of senility and death could be ironically even more profound and definite. Such feelings and attitude are often implicit even in older people’s positive attitude about themselves. The fear of ageing and death is disguised in a new form, which is the fear of being included in the group of older people. Oberg and Tornstam’s research (2001) reveals that in an attempt to deal with the new fear, older people ‘outdefine’ themselves from the negative collective identity of old people by describing themselves as still young’ (Oberg and Tornstam, 2001: 27). They conclude that their attitude towards ageing is not an acceptance but a denial. BBC Age Poll (BBC MMVIII, 2004b) also shows a similar tendency. Older age groups tend to define ‘old age’ starts later than younger age groups do. Those surveys indicate that the aspiration and admiration of youthfulness and the antipathy of ageing and old age are two sides of the same coin.

As illustrated above, ageism has a deep root based on the fear of death, which is our nature, and sometimes it exists implicitly in positive attitude of older people themselves. However, there are some movements to challenge such ageism by involving older people in mainstream culture or by disregarding categorisations and discriminations based on age. For example, one of the most internationally well-known and successful fashion brands Chanel recognises that it is older customers and not their granddaughters who bring in the money (Freeman, 2007). Chanel produces clothes that look youthful and fun but simultaneously can be worn by mature women, such as knee length skirts and unfussy evening dresses. There are more products in inclusive designs, such as kitchen tools, stationery and telephones, for all

generations including older people and those with some kind of physical disability (Jeavans, 2005). Inclusive design is often called universal design, which is promoted internationally. The Design Council is one of the leading bodies, which promote the idea of universal design in the UK. The idea of universal design is further discussed in detail later in chapter six in this thesis as an example of engagement of older people.

To summarise, similarly to perceptions of physical ageing and of psychological/mental ageing, ageing is perceived both positively and negatively in the socio-cultural domain. While positive images of older people and a positive attitude towards ageing have become more common reflecting the increased chance of remaining healthy in old age and the improved moral atmosphere which condemn all sort of discriminations, ageism still exists often in a disguise. It takes a form of the denial of being included in a group of older people as a social identity. Nevertheless, there are also genuine movements tackling with ageism. Examples of those movements in the arena of design demonstrate a trend towards inclusive and universal designs for all generations including those with and without impairments. Those positive movements can contribute to improve the socio-cultural aspect of the ‘embeddedness’ of older people.

4.6 Summary

In this chapter, I tried to answer two questions to address the social context in which civic engagement of older people emerged in the discourses on national and local policies. Those questions are:

- Why is civic engagement important? Is it unique to a certain society?
- Why do we focus on older people? Are they particularly in need of being engaged?

As I discussed in this chapter, the interrelationship between social actors are increasingly becoming more individualised, flexible, diverse and dynamic in contemporary society. It can be better understood as networks rather than as rigid social structures.

The dynamism of society has been largely driven by the development of technology, which

increased the mobility of individuals and freed individuals from physical places. That meant that the importance of being at a particular point in space has been reduced in interpersonal relationships. This logic was used to support the idea of disappearing concept of local community in traditional sense.

However, I presented the counter-arguments to the idea that local communities have disappeared. Local communities in traditional sense have been transformed into network-based communities, which are more flexible and dynamic than traditionally. An individual's life is less likely to be confined within a local community. It is exposed to a global network of people through trading and media, and inevitably mutually influential with the global environment. Local communities are no longer given communities for individuals but a matter of choice. Like any other communities formed around common interests, people can create and enhance ties with people in their neighbourhood or neglect or reject them.

Which communities or social groups to relate to is a matter of choice that is relevant to an individual's identity and lifestyle. In fact, it is not only the choice over communities and social groups they belong to but also the choices as to what to eat and wear or where to go on holiday that have an impact on an individual's identity, lifestyle and eventually 'embeddedness'. Identity and lifestyle are not only personal issues but are related to a question of how individuals relate to a wider society. Identity is how to see the self in relation to a wider society. Lifestyle is how to live and what it means in comparison with others' ways of living. Thus, they are both important factors in civic engagement and 'embeddedness'.

In contemporary society, we have innumerable choices of communities to belong to, consumer products, leisure activities and lifestyles. The act of making choice is one's responsibility. Less constrains means greater freedom. That means nobody else is responsible for individuals' choice. The 'embeddedness,' which is formed, maintained and developed through such choices, has also become individuals' responsibility rather than a given status.

While such choices were widened by the increased mobility of individuals, materials and

information at a global scale, they are not equally available to everyone. The range of choice depends on personal and social conditions, such as personal abilities, family situations, policies and culture. Being old itself is only one of such conditions which could be either beneficial or disadvantage for civic engagement. However, older people have higher risk of experiencing health problems, reduced income and limited social activities, and often in combination of those, in relation to their ageing process and certain social conditions. Those are risks for civic engagement and their 'embeddedness'. Furthermore, as a secondary effect, such risks associated with older people created negative images of older people in general, which then became a foundation of social and cultural exclusion. Hence, civic engagement and 'embeddedness' is a particularly important issue for older people though it is not limited to them.

In the investigation of civic engagement of older people, including its definition and the impact of relevant policies and initiatives, it is crucial to understand the network-based nature of interrelationships between social actors in contemporary society. Such nature generated necessity of engaging and embedding individuals in a wider society as well as provides a context in which civic engagement policies and initiatives have to be assessed. On the other hand, the potential of local communities in the context of civic engagement should not be underestimated even though a relative significance of local communities might have been reduced. To quote Castells (2005: 14) once again, "people, as long as they are physical beings, cannot but live and act in space, and the spaces they create reflect and shape social life in its totality."

Having discussed the social background of civic engagement of older people, I will move on to the discussion of what civic engagement means and what it could entail in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE

5. WHAT IS CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

In this chapter, I cast light on the concept of civic engagement and discuss what it can embrace. As stated in chapter one, the purpose of this thesis is to investigate how the UK government's policies and initiatives on civic engagement of older people impact older people's 'embeddedness' while civic engagement is examined from three different perspectives. One of the three is an academic perspective, which is explored in this chapter. The other two are both empirical: one is the perspective of the national and local governments; and the other is that of older people themselves. They are explored in later chapters.

In the previous chapter, I discussed the fundamental logics of individual-society relations and socio-cultural conditions in contemporary society that affect the 'embeddedness' of older people. Those discussions underlie the discussions on civic engagement in this chapter. The fundamental logics of individual-society relations in contemporary society provide a context, in which the concept of civic engagement should be discussed.

In this chapter, I will first discuss the concept of citizenship in ancient Greece and in contemporary society in order to understand meanings of 'civic.' Then I will try to clarify the meanings of civic engagement by asking the following questions:

- who are to be engaged?;
- which sphere of society is relevant to civic engagement?; and
- how people can be engaged?

Later in this chapter, I will present some diagrammatic models to explain the mechanisms of civic engagement.

5.1 Historical views on civic engagement: the conceptions of citizenship in ancient Greek and in contemporary society

As mentioned above and in chapter one, I will first discuss a concept of citizenship to

understand what a concept of 'civic' indicates. The meaning of 'civic' would elucidate who are to be engaged and relevant spheres of society.

5.1.1 Citizenship in ancient Greece and in contemporary society

The concept of citizenship has a long history. The origin of citizenship dates back to ancient Greece around 500 – 300 BC (Faulks, 2000). Its history has seen several significant events and as a concept it has altered its forms, extent and contents along with political, social and cultural changes until it was developed in its modern form. The history of citizenship itself shows that citizenship is indeed a dynamic and contextual concept, which revolves around social systems.

Amongst all the different forms of citizenship, three distinctive historical conceptions of citizenship can be identified. First and originally, was the concept of citizenship in ancient Greek and the Roman Empire's and the second may be seen as that in the modern industrial societies of the 19th and 20th centuries. Faulks (2000) draws a clear comparison between the ancient Greek polis and modern states. While citizenship in the Greek polis is characterised by its exclusive and participatory systems, the modern state's citizenship is characterised by its strong association with a state. But to these two a third (possibly post-modern) distinctive conception of citizenship might be added. That is a concept of multiple citizenship or universal citizenship, is in line with the idea of a global community that I discussed in the previous chapter in relation to lifestyles and global networks.

As mentioned above, one thing that characterises the concept of citizenship in Greek polis are its exclusiveness in terms of eligibility and inclusiveness in terms of the aspects of individuals' life. Citizenship status was a privilege superior to that of non-citizens including women, slaves and foreigners. It was also classified into hierarchical categories, to each of which particular roles and rights were designated (Faulks, 2000). Paradoxically, however, despite such exclusiveness, citizenship in the Greek polis entitled was also inclusive in some ways. It served as a membership, which obliged and allowed a citizen to take part in its political life in a fairly direct way. All male citizens aged over 20 years formed a town meeting called the Assembly or Ecclesia (Sabine, 1961). Citizens did not only form but run a community,

in which various activities from economic to domestic occurred. Consequently citizenship was not seen 'as a purely public matter, divorced from the private life of the individual. The obligations of citizenship permeated all aspects of life in the polis (Faulks, 2000: 16).' In short, citizenship in Greek polis can be described as a narrow and deep concept.

On the other hand, the modern state's citizenship demonstrates quite a contrast to that of ancient Greece. In Faulks' words, the modern state's citizenship can be described as inclusive and thin (Faulks, 2000). It is inclusive in terms of its extent of eligibility and range of rights. The implementation of the idea of inclusive citizenship was one of the main accomplishments of the French Revolution in the 18th century, which was influenced by the earlier revolution in England (Sabine, 1961; Faulks, 2000). Though the concept of citizenship kept changing after the revolution, at one point the French citizens' rights were extended even beyond states' boundaries and applied to all men regardless of their nationality. The contemporary concepts of citizenship are, though there is a variety, commonly determined not by a single factor but by a combination of the following factors: one's parents' citizenship, birth place and place and length of residence. In any case, it is strongly bound up with a state. The concept of citizenship in modern states is thin in terms of relations between citizens and their state. While the citizenship in Greek polis was participatory and concerned every aspect of citizens' life, the modern state's citizenship is, in principle, a legal concept and predominantly concerned with the public sphere.

In contemporary society, citizenship is commonly referred to as 'membership of a state' (The Committee on Human Security, 2004: 5). Bauman (2001b) claims, for example, that the sovereign state, which is so far 'the only totality which has come to embody and institutionalise the democratic procedure (2001b: 203),' is the body, which has power of interpretation and enforcement of citizenship. In fact, most states have legislation, which defines the citizenship of their political community naturally including entitlement, citizen's rights and duties.

In the United Kingdom, British citizenship, which is defined in the British Nationality Act 1981, is composed of three different categories of citizenships (British Nationality

Act 1981): British citizenship, British overseas territories citizenship and British Overseas citizenship. According to the brief guidance to those three citizenships provided by the UK Home Office, British citizenship is an entitlement to abode in the UK and to leave and return to the country without restrictions. Apart from inherited citizenship, these three forms of citizenship can be obtained by two ways: registration, which is available only for those under 18 years old; and naturalisation, which is for those who are at or over 18 years old. While the criteria for registration are all inherent properties, such as an applicant's birth of place, citizenship of parents and presence in the UK, the criteria for naturalisation are based on acquired attributes including periods of legal residence of an applicant in the UK, citizenship of his/her spouse, character and language ability (English, Welsh or Scottish Gaelic). That is, inherent properties, such as a place of birth and citizenship of parents, are main determinants of the UK citizenship while there is also a possibility of obtaining it regardless those inherent properties.

Apart from those conceptions of citizenship defined by states, there are some concepts of citizenship defined by political communities that extend across several states. EU citizenship is a good example. The European Union addresses on EU citizenship, which is given to 'every person holding a nationality of a Member State,' as follows:

'A citizenship of the Union was established by the Maastricht Treaty in 1992. It is included in Part Two (Articles 17–22) of the EC Treaty. The EU citizenship complements national citizenship of the Member States and does not replace it. Citizens of the Union enjoy rights conferred by the Treaty and they are subject to duties imposed thereby (European Union, EU citizenship).'

EU citizenship is accompanied by five core rights conferred by the citizenship under Part Two of the EC Treaty: freedom of movement and the right of residence within the territory of the Member States; 'right to vote and stand as a candidate at elections to the European Parliament and at municipal elections in the Member State of residence; right to diplomatic and consular protection; right of petition to the European Parliament; and right to refer to the Ombudsman (European Union, EU citizenship).'

Citizenship defined by each state is still valid and the main concept: however, it needs to be incorporated with the relevant conceptions

defined by a wider society such as the United Nations and the European Union.

In this section, I explored a variety of concepts of citizenship comparing the one of Greek polis and of modern states. I also examined the official definition of citizenship in contemporary society, especially that of Great Britain, and its umbrella concept of citizenship in a wider society. A concept of citizenship is initially bound with a state or a political community. It reflects political, social and cultural systems of that state or political community. The formal citizenship is defined by a combination of factors such as place of birth, nationality of parents and place of residence. It was also identified that there are concepts of citizenship beyond states' boundaries, inevitably reflecting a globally extended network. While detailed definitions and legislations of citizenship are made by each state, citizenship of a wider community defines overall principles for citizenships of its member states. In the next section, I will discuss the concept of citizenship in further detail focusing on what is involved in citizenship and the nature of citizenship.

5.1.2 Components of citizenship: beyond politics

Citizenship is, by its formal definition, membership of a political community and defines by law citizens' rights and responsibilities, which are exercised in citizens' daily life (Faulks, 2000). It is initially a membership of a political community and in contemporary society it is predominantly bound with a state. By defining rights and responsibilities, citizenship has a significant impact upon fundamental relations between citizens and their government. Citizens exercise their rights and responsibilities to influence the way the government works and the decisions that the government make. The government's decisions then support, facilitate or limit citizens' activities in return. It is through such reciprocal relations that citizens are involved in modifying and re-defining conceptions of citizenship. Thus, citizenship is a dynamic concept, which can be modified through the systems it offers. Faulks (2000: 6) asserts: 'as creative agents, citizens will always find new ways to express their citizenship, and new rights, duties and institutions will need to be constructed to give form to the changing needs and aspirations of the citizen and community'. As a legal term, citizenship is defined categorically. However, as a concept, its meaning is susceptible to influence by social systems. Therefore, the concept of citizenship has been discussed in various academic

fields. In the following, I will explore major discourses concerning citizenship to understand its concept in depth.

While components and extent of citizenship can be varied across societies from different periods in the history and different parts of the world, Marshall (Marshall and Bottomore, 1987) defines the fundamental concept of citizenship as ‘a form of belonging of being part of the community sharing the daily lived experience (Mullard, 2003: 126).’ Further exploring the concept of citizenship, Marshall identifies three sets of rights, which were built up through the history, that compose citizenship. These three sets of rights include: civic rights, developed in a modern sense in the eighteenth century; political rights, in the nineteenth century; and social rights in the twentieth century (Mullard, 2003). Those three sets of rights are considered to be the main components of citizenship that form a belonging to a community. In other words, those three rights confirm ‘the existence of the individual (Mullard, 2003: 27).’

What citizenship concerns has been developed from civil and political to social affairs, argues Marshall (Marshall and Bottomore, 1987). Those three sets of rights are built up on top of the others with civil rights on the base. According to Locke (cited in Sabine 1963), whose philosophy reflects the English revolutions of the 17th century, civil rights contain the natural rights of life, liberty and property. Civil rights are given to all citizens, who are by definition bestowed citizenship. In contemporary society, Human Rights declared by the United Nations recognise those civil rights as natural rights given equally to all human beings regardless of race, sex or any other social class. On the basis of those civil rights, there are political rights, which enable citizens to be involved in running their society. Through the exercise of political rights, the power of decision-making is negotiated between citizens and political institutions. Those two types of rights, civil and political, are designed to promise citizens fundamental equality and equal opportunities. However, providing those rights and making sure that no citizens are disadvantaged are different issues. Inequality inevitably occurs depending on individuals’ social as well as personal attributes even if not on a single attribute such as race or gender. It is then social rights that are designed to protect those disadvantaged and to minimise the gap of inequality.

In addition to those three sets of rights, a fourth set of rights is suggested by Shafir (Brysk and Shafir, 2004). Shafir argues cultural rights should be added for ‘groups that are not concentrated territorially’ (Brysk and Shafir, 2004: 17). The notion of cultural rights reflects cultural diversity within certain geographical boundaries, which emerged from network society as discussed in the previous chapter. Especially in a cosmopolitan state like the UK, citizens’ cultural backgrounds are considerably diverse. To pursue one’s own life with dignity and continuity as a citizen in such a society, one needs a guarantee of cultural rights. Cultural rights, which are included in Human Rights, are the rights to be culturally different without being denied other shared status, properties and resources. The importance of the cultural rights of citizens increases with the number of migrants who are more likely to experience cultural differences with others. It should be noted, however, that it is not only migrants but also those who accept migrants whose cultural rights need to be acknowledged and protected.

Unlike civic, political and social rights, cultural rights are difficult to delineate and therefore imperfectly legitimatised. Furthermore, rights to be different often conflict with political ideals such as social integration. Nevertheless, cultural rights are undoubtedly essential for citizenship in contemporary society.

It is not only the components of citizenship but also the scales of citizenship that have changed in accordance with social development. The increasing significance of global networks in contemporary society pushed the concept of citizenship beyond states’ boundaries. Historically, states with their sovereignty have held ‘distinct standards for membership, based on combinations of birth, descent or blood, residence, identity, achievement, and even characteristics of migrants’ states of origin (Brysk and Shafir, 2004).’ However, in contemporary society where even states are obliged to be part of global networks, what a state defines needs to comply with a standard of a wider community, which is constituted by several states or political communities. Globally, the United Nations enforce Human Rights and other agreements. Regionally, the European Union guides its member states with the EU citizenship and other regulations. In a society where people move across states and exercise their rights on a day-to-day basis beyond the confines of states, the concept of citizenship

requires its international standardisation. In response to this, Mullard (2003) proposes the idea of 'cosmopolitan citizenship,' referring to Held's idea of a 'cosmopolitan community' (Held, 1999). Held's idea of cosmopolitan community is a community of all democratic communities where democratic laws must be internationalised to be effective. The United Nations, which is the largest international community constituted by most of the states and political communities in the world, does in effect represent his idea of cosmopolitan community. Similarly, Heather (1990, cited in Faulks, 2000) employs a term 'multiple citizenship,' which is used to describe citizenship that is exercised in a unity of states. The EU citizenship is an implementation of the idea of multiple citizenship. Both concepts of cosmopolitan citizenship or multiple citizenship reflect the social changes towards the global integration as a single community.

While those rights provide citizens with power, they also have responsibilities to maintain their society. As Faulks (2000) points out, while a concept of citizenship in ancient Greek polis is obligation-oriented, the modern states' citizenship is rights-oriented. In participatory systems like the Greek polis, the reciprocity of rights and duties is rather direct and citizens' duties saturate their everyday life. On the contrary, in contemporary society, which relies on representation systems instead of a direct participation of all citizens, duties and obligations are separated from an exercise of rights.

Yet, in the UK, the importance of citizens' responsibilities has been emphasised in the 'Third Way,' which was espoused by the new Labour government since 1997 (see for example: Lord Irvine of Lairg, 1998). The emphasis on responsibilities is expressed in a handbook for the British citizenship that asserts 'involvement in public life and affairs' as a social and moral expectation (Citizenship Foundation and DfES, 2004: 2). Dean (2004) argues that UK citizens' rights are supplanted by a more universal concept of Human Rights while responsibilities are confined within the state. In a cosmopolitan state like the UK, it seems natural that citizens' rights are recognised as universal beyond boundaries of states. However, the notion of responsibilities towards a global community has also been more commonly recognised in recent years in response to global issues such as international terrorism, global warming and the current financial crisis.

So far, I discussed the components of the concept of citizenship above. The concept of citizenship, which is bound up with a state, involves rights and responsibilities, which citizens exercise to maintain and form a state. As citizenship is a social and dynamic concept, its development has been influenced by social changes. Expansion of political communities, revolutions and the awareness of social equalities have helped the growth of citizens' rights from civil rights to political, social and eventually cultural rights. Furthermore, in response to the increase in significance of global networks, universal concepts of citizenship that recognise a regional or a global community have emerged. Such developments of a concept of citizenship suggest that the concept of civic engagement is also subject to social trends. The components of a concept of citizenship also indicate what civic engagement is concerned with. That is, civic engagement is not only about political participations but also related to civil, social and cultural matters.

5.1.3 Duality of citizenship

As mentioned earlier, citizenship is bestowed collectively but exercised individually. Accordingly, the concept of citizenship bears dual aspects of collectiveness and individuality. In contemporary society where people's background, lifestyles and social networks are all individually different, the way people exercise their citizenship is diverse. On the other hand, formal citizenship is yet bound with a political community. Political communities, like any other type of community, offer a collective identity and a sense of belonging.

However, the prominence of individuals' relationships with political communities in their life is significantly reduced. While political communities are yet largely determined by geographical locations, people's life is expanded beyond the boundaries of political communities and affected by global networks. The increasing significance of global networks raised the notion of universal citizenship on one hand and posed a question of the value of political communities and consequently of formal citizenships on the other. To what extent people value a collective identity and a sense of belonging in association with their citizenship bound with a state is diverse reflecting individual differences in their social networks, social and cultural background and personal perceptions.

The reduced significance of individuals' relations with political communities is also related to another dual aspect of the concept of citizenship: public and private. In the ancient Athenian polis, the concept of citizenship was purely a public matter because 'the idea of the individual having a meaningful existence outside of the community was unthinkable' and 'the needs of the community and the interests of the citizen were seen as indivisible' (Faulks, 2000: 57-58). Duties and rights of Athenian citizens formed their daily life. Individuals' interests, values, identities and aims were largely shared by all other citizens of the polis. Citizens' private life submerged their public life. On the contrary, in contemporary society, interests, values, identities and lifestyles are individually different and a matter of choice. Individuals' public life almost submerges their private life. However, as mentioned earlier, even in contemporary society an official citizenship is still related to a political community. A global community cannot replace political communities such as states. Similar to individuals' relations with their local communities, the significance of relations with political communities has been transformed but not diminished.

5.1.4 Citizenship, civic engagement and the 'embeddedness'

As discussed above, citizenship is a dynamic concept, which is defined through social interactions between individuals and their community. It is a 'form of belonging (Mullard, 2003: 126)' and therefore 'dynamic identity (Faulks, 2000: 6).' The exercise of citizenship is part of social activities that allow people to belong to a community and provide security. Through exercise of citizenship, people form a community, which in return shape their everyday life by defining rights and responsibilities.

Such ideas of citizenship lead to the hypothesis that the exercise of citizenship is civic engagement. If this hypothesis is accepted, civic engagement is a concept of dynamic individual-society relations that involve rights and responsibilities and recognise civil, political, social and cultural rights and responsibilities of individuals. Through civic engagement, people form a society, which then provides a sense of belonging, security and a common identity. Thus, civic engagement can significantly affect individuals' 'embeddedness.'

In the following paragraphs, I will summarise the discussions on citizenship that I developed

above. The components of citizenship indicate what are involved in civic engagement and the nature of citizenship reveals the opportunities and constraints of civic engagement.

Citizenship is related to four different but interrelated aspects of individual-society relations. Firstly, in relation to a state, citizenship is a formal status. Secondly, citizenship is a form of belonging to a community, which includes a local community but is generally defined by socio-cultural factors rather than spatial factors. Thirdly, from an individual's perspective, citizenship is also a collective identity, which then affects his/her personal identity. Finally, the exercise of citizenship is embedded in individuals' daily activities.

Citizenship as a formal status is legitimised by a state in accordance with a wider community and defines rights and duties. In a society where networks of institutions and individuals are globally expanded, there is a sense of citizenship of the international society, which recognises citizenship of each state. EU citizenship is an example of a legitimised multiple citizenship. An EU citizen can have both EU citizenship and his/her state's citizenship without compromising one or the other. At a global level, however, the concept of cosmopolitan citizenship or universal citizenship remains conceptual and hypothetical rather than practical and legitimate. In reality, formal citizenship is rather collective and strongly bound with a state and is strongly related to politics.

Secondly, citizenship is a form of being part of a community. It overlaps with citizenship as a formal status but in the second sense citizenship is not necessarily formal or bound to a state or political sphere. It does not rely on legislations or compulsory rules but on a more spontaneous and voluntary sense of belonging and responsibilities. Citizenship in relation to a community can also raise a collective identity. A difference from formal citizenship is that an individual can be related to a large number of communities and has as many identities as the number of communities he/she belongs to. All of those identities constitute their personal identities. He/she might feel some of those identities are more important than others. Differences in the importance reflect individuals' personal preferences and priorities. As I discussed in chapter four, which communities to belong to and how and to what extent to be involved in each of them can be completely different between individuals. Thus,

citizenship in relation to a community is collective and individualised at the same time. It is collective in relation to each community and its members while it is individualised from individuals' perspectives, which leads to the third form of citizenship.

Citizenship in relation to a community can be global or local. Cosmopolitan citizenship and universal citizenship that I mentioned above can be seen as citizenship in relation to a global community rather than as a formal status because a global community is more conceptual and idealistic than realistic and practical. As Faulks suggests, 'unless rights and responsibility of global citizenship are linked to the democratisation of decision-making bodies that govern world affairs, however, their existence will remain precarious (Faulks, 2000: 156).' That is, a notion of global citizenship relies on individuals' perceptions and awareness rather than formal systems just like citizenship defined by any other communities of various scales.

While the sense of belonging to a community appears in many different ways, Turner (2001) identifies voluntary associations and voluntary activities as part of mechanisms in which active citizenship is enhanced on the foundation of the sense of belonging to a community. He points out four functions of voluntary associations to enhance democracy: 'they provide information to policy makers; they redress political inequalities that exist when politics is materially based; they can act as schools of democracy; they provide alternative governance to markets and public hierarchies that permits society to realise the important benefits of co-operation among citizens (Cohen and Rogers, 1995, cited in Turner, 2001: 201).' Although a sense of belonging is voluntary and informal, it is also essential, beneficial and supplemental for the legitimate and formal citizenship that I discussed earlier, as it can enhance citizens' commitment as well as attachment to a community.

Going on from the second point, citizenship as belonging to a community, citizenship in the third sense is a form of identity. Although citizenship is a collective identity, scales of citizenship perceived and the extent to which citizenship is important in individuals' identity are diverse reflecting the diversity of perceptions of a community and the level of commitment or attachment to it. Some people have no doubt about accepting their formal citizenship as part of their identity, whereas some others may have difficulties in dealing with the gap

between their formal citizenship identity and other identities such as their ethnic identity. As discussed in the previous chapter, a personal identity has become an individualised reflexive project. It is formed rather spontaneously through one's experience including political, economic, social and cultural activities. Although some collective identities, such as nationality, ethnicity and gender, naturally play a significant role in establishment of a personal identity, those are not determinants of a personal identity. The conflict between a formal citizenship, which is bestowed collectively and legitimately, and an informal citizenship, which is developed individually and spontaneously, denotes the problematic relation between institutions with rather firm structures and individualised networks as flexible systems. It represents a contradiction between power of structures and power of systems. As long as a formal citizenship is bound with a state, the conflict between a formal and an informal citizenship is likely to remain.

Finally, the exercise of citizenship is embedded in individuals' daily activities and therefore affects their lifestyles and personal identity. Individuals' attitude towards their rights and responsibilities are reflected in choices that they make on a day-to-day basis, which then become part of their lifestyles and identities. The rights and responsibilities defined by citizenship can also restrict their choices, which again affect individuals' lifestyles and personal identity.

In essence, citizenship is a multi-dimensional concept. All of the four aspects of citizenship identified in the literature are interrelated as well. Formal citizenship is collectively defined from the top down, exercised by individuals in their everyday life and partly affecting personal identity. At the same time, individuals belong to various communities to which they feel they belong and share collective identities with others. Some of them could overlap with formal citizenship when one feels a sense of belonging to a state or a higher political community such as the EU or the international community represented by the UN. Because of its multi-dimensional nature, the definition of citizenship is inevitably complex and contextual. That is also reflected in the concept of civic engagement. In the next section, I will examine the concept of civic engagement assuming the parallel between citizenship and civic engagement in terms of its complexity and multi-dimensionality.

5.2 What is civic engagement

Based on the hypothesis that civic engagement is the exercise of citizenship, I will explore the concept of civic engagement in depth following three sub-questions mentioned at the beginning of this chapter. First, I will discuss who are to be engaged in civic engagement. The concept of citizenship is used to clarify the meaning of ‘civic’ in relation to this question. Secondly, I will discuss which sphere of society is relevant to civic engagement. Again, the discussions are based on the examination of a concept of citizenship. Finally, I will discuss different dimensions of civic engagement including psychological, physical/behavioural and socio-cultural dimensions. I will then discuss the mechanisms of civic engagement using diagrammatic models in later sections.

5.2.1 Who are to be engaged?

If civic engagement is the exercise of citizenship, then the answer is simply citizens. However, the exploration of a concept of citizenship revealed that a definition of citizens is rather complex. It was suggested that the concept of citizenship could be broad and inclusive as well as narrow and exclusive. It can be defined in many different ways depending on context. Accordingly, the question as to who are to be engaged can be also discussed from various perspectives. Nevertheless, the discussion on citizenship already identified two major perspectives on citizens. On one hand, citizens can be defined in relation to a state or another political community that defines citizenship as a formal status. While at the same time, citizens can be also defined in relation to a community to which individuals belong by their choice. As I mentioned earlier, cosmopolitan citizenship and universal citizenship are more like a form of belonging to a global community than a formal status due to lack of a legitimate mechanism that ensures individuals’ exercise of rights and responsibilities as citizens of a global community. Citizenship in relation to a state is formal, legitimate, collective, exclusive and practical while citizenship in relation to a global community is less formal, less legitimate, individualised, inclusive and idealistic.

A formal definition of citizens tends to be used in initiatives and practices on civic engagement of older people that are initiated by public bodies such as the national and local governments. Those initiatives and practices require a high level of legitimacy, for which a formal definition

is the least problematic. However, it is a narrow definition of citizens that only includes the UK citizenship holders. On top of this, civic engagement practices generally have their own specific targets such as patients or residents of sheltered housing schemes as it will be seen in later chapters.

On the other hand, the concepts of universal citizenship, such as multiple citizenship and cosmopolitan citizenship, offers an inclusive definition of citizens. Everyone is a citizen of a global community. Although it is possible in theory, such a broad definition of citizens is rather problematic in practice. It can be used in conceptual discussions on strategies and policies but the implementations of such conceptual ideas require more specifications.

From an individual's perspectives, civic engagement is part of everyday activities. People are related to a wider society through everyday interactions through social networks and information networks. While individuals' official status affects their life and identity, they are also inevitably involved in social activities at various levels from a neighbourhood to a global level, often beyond a boundary of a state or a multiple-states community such as the European Union. Thus, a question as to who are to be engaged in each practice of civic engagement often has to be answered on the basis of the concept of universal citizenship rather than within the context of formal citizenship. It could be, however, problematic since the idea of universal citizenship is not accompanied by practical and legitimate systems in which individuals can exercise their rights and responsibilities. We shall see in later chapters how this problem is resolved or not resolved in reality.

In addition, as discussed in the preceding chapter, the significance of a local community in one's daily life should be emphasised. Although individuals' daily activities and social networks are not confined within a particular place, at a global scale, their activities and social networks are highly concentrated in a certain area around their residence. People are affected by and concerned about their relations with their community especially those close to their place of residence regardless of their official status. Thus, those who are to be engaged can sometimes be defined based on residence rather than nationality or official citizenship.

In this thesis, I will examine older people's civic engagement practices in the UK with a focus on the London Borough of Greenwich. As we shall see in a later chapter, the UK and particularly the London Borough of Greenwich have a high proportion of older people from ethnic minority groups (ONS, 2004). Unlike younger generations, older people in ethnic minority groups are more likely to suffer from poverty, isolation and cultural differences due to language barriers, lack of knowledge of what kind of services are available and double discriminations of racism and ageism (Butt and O'Neil, 2004). It is suggested that there may be particular issues in relation to civic engagement of older people from ethnic minority groups in their local communities.

5.2.2 Civic engagement and different spheres

I discussed already that citizenship is a multi-dimensional concept that is concerned in every aspect of an individual's life. As civic engagement is the exercise of citizenship, it is also concerned with various aspects of life accordingly. Although the concept of citizenship was primarily concerned with the public sphere, its historical development suggests that it was expanded into the private sphere. Thus a concept of civic engagement is also extended accordingly. Furthermore, it was also suggested that civic engagement also relies on informal and voluntary spheres as well as formal spheres. Drawing on Turner (2001), I have already suggested above that voluntary activities or voluntary associations could impact on people's sense of belonging.

Such diversity of spheres that civic engagement seems to be involved in suggests a variety of sectors, including public, private, community and voluntary are relevant to civic engagement. Individuals are related to all of those sectors in one way or the other in their everyday life. Therefore, in the following sections, I will examine the concept of civic engagement in relation to those four sectors: public, private and community and voluntary.

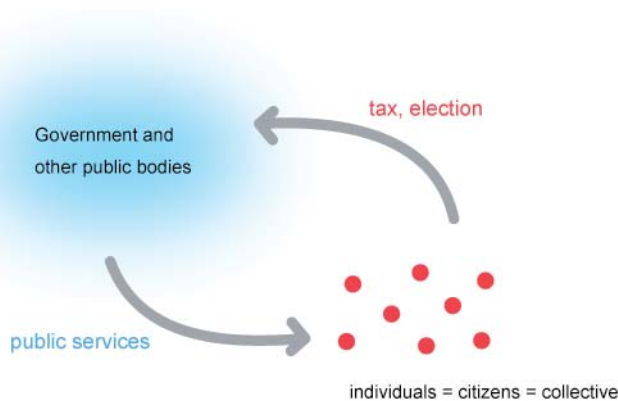
1) Civic engagement and the public sector

In the public sphere, civic engagement primarily concerns the relationships between citizens and public bodies. Citizens exercise their rights and responsibilities to be involved in the design and maintenance of social structures and social systems. A system of government

provides services through government institutions, which influence and help to maintain social structures and social systems in a state maintaining social orders. Relationships between citizens and a government are maintained through citizens' exercises of their rights and responsibilities such as voting (political participation), paying taxes (financial contribution) and performing public duties (military service and jury duty).

It is an aspect of the formal systems of government acting through bureaucracies that requires categorisation and standardisation, to conduct their work. In the process of categorisation and standardisation, citizens are categorised according to social attributes, which can be standardised and easily justifiable. Entitlement to social benefits, such as a citizenship, pension, social services and housing benefit, needs to be clear, objective and measurable for the sake of social justice and equality. Although whether perfect social justice is achievable or not is dubious, as Baker (2008) points out, so-called objective criteria deal with collectively individuals rather summarily.

Figure 5.1 The public sector and individuals



The diagram demonstrates the relationship between citizens and public bodies, which is a context of civic engagement in the public sphere. Individuals are seen collectively as citizens in relation to government and other public bodies. Citizens take responsibility for government through taxation and electoral systems. Government and public bodies are accountable for public services.

2) Civic engagement and the private sector

In the private sphere, civic engagement primarily concerns the relationships between individuals and their own networks. As discussed already, individuals' networks are different from one another in terms of their extent and contents. From an individual's perspective,

the relations with their own networks have significant impact on their lifestyles and their personal identity.

As mentioned earlier, in contemporary society, economic activities dominate social interactions between individuals and a society, exercising influencing within the political, social and cultural domains. As Granovetter (1985: 482) describes, in contemporary society, 'instead of economic life being submerged in social relations, these relations become an epiphenomenon of the market.' Individuals relate to society as consumers via economic activities and transactions of monetary value. As Clarke (2007) suggests, consumption behaviour is totally an individual act based upon one's choice. Although marketing strategies and product developments do respond to collective attributes of consumers such as gender, age groups, social status, the location of residence and so on, the act of choice is essentially an individual act. Although individuals' choice may be influenced by their families or by their friends, they have a range of choices that are different from what their families and friends have.

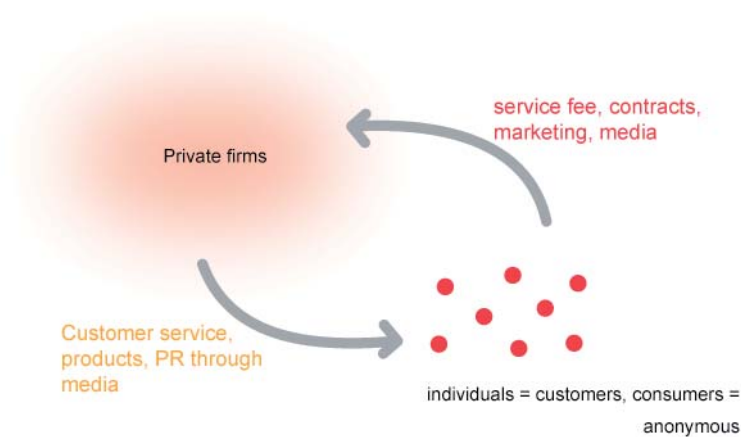
Such individuality of private life is also supported by worldwide trading systems. Global networks in the market have brought cultural diversity in local areas where otherwise it would have been more homogeneous. On the other hand, global networks have also contributed to the homogeneity of individual-society relations at a global level. For example, some brands such as Coca Cola or Starbucks coffee offer experience of the same taste to people in many parts of the world. Online shopping also makes the same products globally available regardless of the location of residence. The global market enveloping the private sphere makes individual-society relations globally homogeneous and locally diverse at the same time (c.f. Chaney, 1996).

Although consumption behaviour is related to personal identity, personal identity is hardly valued in economic transactions. Individuals are seen as individually unique social actors but anonymous and replaceable. As a result, from markets' perspectives, consumers can often be categorised by economic status, which affects consumption capacity, or by different types of consumption demands, which often correlate with lifestyles. Such categorisations

are temporary and fundamentally free from social groups as ‘the meanings of objects and practices are continually being re-created’ (Chaney, 1996: 113). In short, from the suppliers’ perspective, consumers can be seen as anonymous individuals or collective groups of people, which represent and are associated with certain consumption demands.

While the maintenance and development of society is the basic motivation of individual-society relations in the public sphere, the pursuit of individuals’ interests is the primary motivation in the private sphere. In the public sphere, individuals as citizens exercise their rights and responsibilities to influence, support and criticise the government, which in return provides public services. Instead, in the private sphere, individuals as consumers exercise their rights and responsibilities to take part in economic systems while purchasing products, whether materials or experiences (Chaney, 1996). Consumers make decisions on purchases to design and establish their own lifestyle and identity. In return, private firms seek to attract customers to make profits by producing products which respond to consumers’ demands or by creating demands and encouraging consumption. In economic transaction systems, consumers seek information on products to optimise their purchase while enterprises seek for information on potential customer needs or feedback on their products to maximise and increase their profits. In his book on lifestyle, Chaney (1996: 19), in his discussion of the relevance of citizenship to his arguments on the social form of lifestyles, says he uses the term ‘citizenship’ because he can find ‘no good way of summarising the idea that mass marketing, as with other forms of mass democracy, offers the illusions of equal participation, and indeed even the glory of national culture, without much of its substantive powers.’

Figure 5.2 The private sector and individuals



Individuals are seen as consumers in relation to private firms. They are anonymous individuals. Relationships between consumers and private firms are not based on responsibilities but contracts. In addition to exchange of economic values (i.e. money, product), they also mutually influence each other through various media.

3) Civic engagement and the community and voluntary sectors

In the community and voluntary sphere, civic engagement concerns the relationships between individuals and the community and voluntary organisations. Principles of community and voluntary organisations are well articulated by Van Til in his discussion on the third sector.

He asserts that third sector activities need to be:

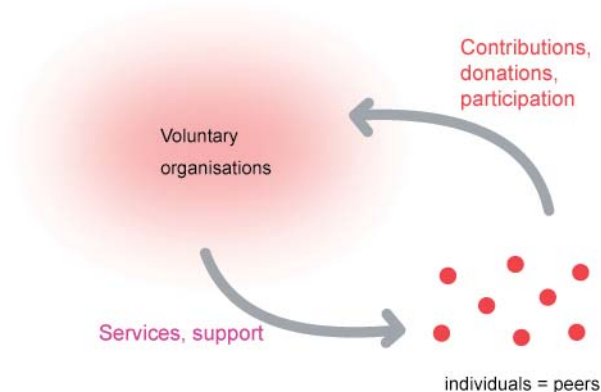
- 1. conducted through processes of sustained dialogue and democratic deliberation,*
- 2. directed towards tasks that construct and reconstruct society's commons, and*
- 3. aimed toward constructing a politics of relationship. (Van Til, 2009: 1076)*

He suggests that the key idea is 'to see the third sector as a social space within which caring, sharing, and communal action may be advanced. "What really counts is the informed, voluntary, and self-actualizing activity of individuals, joined with others in a search to build a better, fairer, and more productive society."

It suggests the relationships between individuals and community and voluntary organisations are established on the foundation of sharing and equality. Here, an individual is seen as a member of a community. Personal identities and interests can submerge in shared identities and interests. Their transactions with those organisations are based on mutual trusts as well as shared knowledge, resources and experiences. Here, non-monetary values are recognised. Their primary motivations are not obligations or economic profit but shared interests or a

spontaneous sense of responsibilities as a member of a community. While citizens and a government are seen as mutually exclusive in public sphere, individuals have more equal and participatory relationships with the community and voluntary sphere.

Figure 5.3 The community and voluntary sector and individuals



Individuals are seen as peers in relation to voluntary organisations. Their relationships are equal and based on mutual support and trust. Peers may be involved in voluntary organisations by making financial contributions or performing voluntary work. Voluntary organisations provide services and support without seeking financial profit.

4) Inter-relationships between sectors

These three different sectors, which are interrelated to one another, together influence social systems as well as individuals' experiences. While firms' economic activities affect an individual's or group's pattern of consumption as well as the economic and political power of a state, a government regulates the markets' activities to maintain an economic and social order and to protect public interests. While government and private companies support voluntary organisations, voluntary organisations provide services to fill the gaps of social needs that were provided neither by public nor private organisations.

Interrelationships between the public sphere and the private sphere are recognised and expressed in a new concept of citizen-consumer (Clarke et al., 2007). The concept of citizen-consumer recognises the inevitable susceptibility of a concept of citizen that relies on the sovereignty of a state. The concept of citizen-consumer assumes that citizens make a choice over public services just as they do over products in the market. This increasing awareness of the concept of citizen-consumer suggests that the conventional approach of public sector is challenged. Public bodies are obliged to regard citizens as individuals rather than collectives

following private firms' approach to consumers.

However, while the increase of flexibility in public services is desirable in order to respond to the diversity and dynamism of individuals' needs, as Clarke (2007) warns, there is a danger of increasing inequality in public services. Having choice also means that individuals are responsible for their own choices. Although individuals' choice may not seem to be directly affected by their wealth, it is affected by the information they have. As we discussed in the previous chapter, the access to information is not necessarily equal. Economic status is one of the factors affecting the availability of information through the access to technologies, education and other resources. Geographical location of residence may also limit the level and type of information that is accessible. Social network skills also significantly affect the accessibility to information. As I mentioned in the previous chapter, Gravenotter (1973) showed that strong ties and weak ties play different roles in information flows.

Regardless of whether the impact of such a paradigm shift is positive or negative, it is undeniable and inevitable that the differences between public and private sphere are increasingly reduced as the global economy grows and the awareness of global community develops. Accordingly, the cultural norms of public bodies and private firms have become closer. Public bodies try to be efficient and individual-centred, while private firms, at least some of them, are more involved in social issues such as ethical trading and global warming.

Community and voluntary organisations are also interdependent with public and private sectors. Although they may be non-profit organisations themselves, they support economic activities by offering employment opportunities. They are also important instruments to implement public policies (c.f. Defourny and Pestoff, 2008). In return, they may receive funding from public bodies and private firms as well as from individuals.

Civic engagement involving those different sectors is expected to integrate different spheres with different principles. Those spheres are inseparable and continuous in individuals' experiences. An individual is generally a citizen, a consumer and a member of community.

Governments, private entrepreneurs and voluntary organisations are all social actors in globally connected networks.

While acknowledging the interdependency between those sectors, this study predominantly focuses on the public sector and community and the voluntary sectors rather than the private sector. For the purpose of examining the effectiveness of the UK government policies and initiatives on civic engagement of older people, the public sphere is naturally the primary sphere. In addition, the principles in community and voluntary sphere include values such as mutual trust and sharing, which are particularly relevant to the concept of civic engagement.

5.2.3 Different dimensions of civic engagement

The concept of civic engagement can be seen as having three dimensions within the person-in-environment model. For the individual as a member of a community or a social network, it is a socio-cultural status. It is contextual and collective. For the individual in civic engagement, it is also part of social interactions and therefore it has a physical/behavioural dimension. For the individual as a person with 'identity' and a sense of belonging, it also has a psychological/perceptive dimension as a sense of belonging. Those three dimensions are interrelated but not transferable. Each of them is equally important and necessary and one cannot substitute another.

Mechanisms of civic engagement, in which those three dimensions of civic engagement are interrelated and experienced by individuals, are explored in the next two sections. The next section discusses the mechanisms at a micro level focusing on how civic engagement impacts an individual. There I will explain interrelationships between those three dimensions in further detail. Then section 5.3.2 discusses how civic engagement impacts a society on the whole, shifting the focus from the micro to the macro level.

5.3 Mechanisms of civic engagement at a micro level

In this section, I will discuss the mechanisms of civic engagement at a micro level using

two models. One is a communication model, which explains a mechanism of information exchange. As mentioned in the preceding chapter, information plays a key role in individual-society relations and civic engagement is not an exception. Just as the accessibility to information affects the ability to exercise power in a network-oriented community, it is also affects the ability to exercise citizenship.

Information exchange is part of transactional relationships between individuals and their environments including their social networks and information devices. Thus, it is possible to explain information exchange with a person-in-environment model. Information, which is received by an individual through social interactions with others or interactions with information material such as newspapers, a computer and a radio, is processed internally in the individual's brain and digested (Hall, 1966). Nevertheless, I would like to explain mechanisms of information exchange by means of a communication model.

There are some benefits of using a model specifically demonstrating information exchange mechanisms instead of a more comprehensive and inclusive person-in-environment model. Firstly, a specialised model contains more detail. As I discussed in chapter two, modelling involves simplification as well as generalisation. To keep a model simple and comprehensible, some details need to be represented in a concise manner. A communication model can focus on information exchange processes between two people without spatial elements included in the model. Secondly, while a person-in-environment model is an ego-centred model, a communication model is objective and treats two people on the both sides of communication equally. It is a first step in shifting perspectives from an individual to a society.

The other model is a transaction model, which explains a mechanism of interrelationships between the three dimensions of civic engagement. It illustrates different elements that the concept of transactionalism brings together. Using those two models, one which focuses on communications and is non-ego-centred and the other which includes multiple elements and is ego-centred, I will propose a new model, which demonstrates the mechanisms of civic engagement at a micro level. I will discuss different levels of civic engagement using this micro civic engagement model.

5.3.1 Micro civic engagement model

As mentioned above, the mechanism of information exchange, which is a key element of civic engagement, can be explained by a communication model. A transaction model helps embed such information exchanges into multi-dimensional interactions between individuals and their environments. Below, I introduce two models before proposing another model of civic engagement at a micro level.

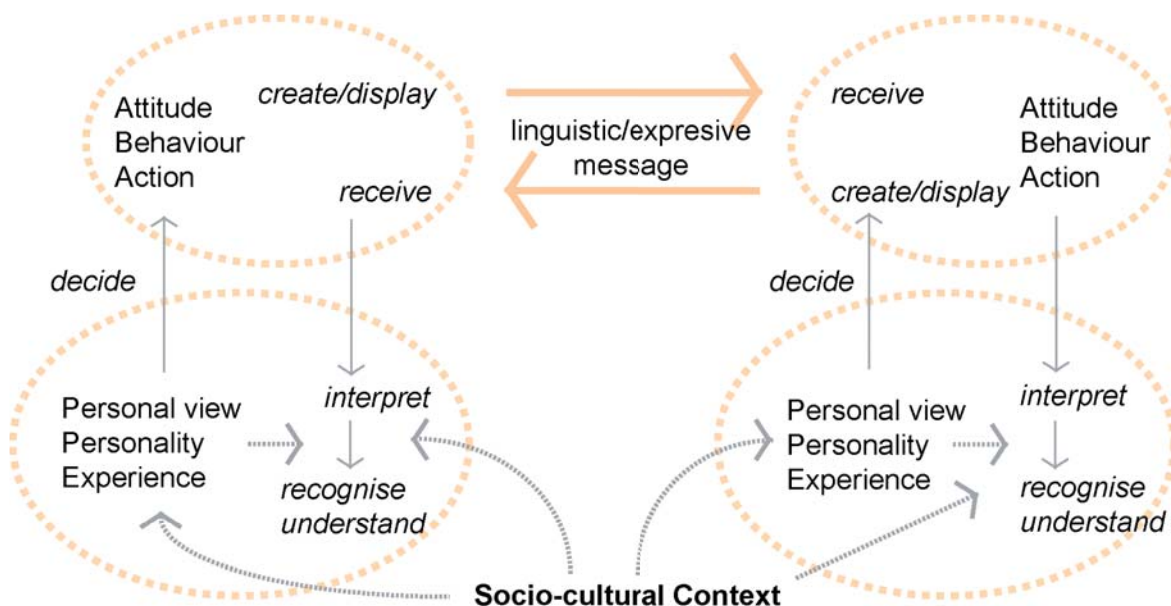
1) Communication models

There are various communication models developed by many researchers ranging from the one way model to a system model, some of which are introduced by Fisher (1993). A one-way model simply explains a one-way flow of a message or a display as information from one person, who creates the message or the display, to another, who receives it and interprets it. An interaction model, created by Fisher by combining ideas of several communication theorists, develops two-way flows adding feedback from the receiver. A two-person relationship model supplements a communication model with each person's internal element such as one's view of his/herself and one's view of the other. A communication-in-context model, named as 'a system model' by Fisher, emphasises that communication is contextual and influenced by its socio-cultural environment. The diagram on the next page (figure 5.4) summarises the ideas from those various communication models.

Communication is a transaction of information including written and spoken expressions as well as facial and body expressions. Messages exchanged in a communication episode, whether linguistic or expressive, are not purely symbols or independent from social and cultural context of the communication. When a message is created or displayed from one person, the other receives and interprets it. The reaction, in turn, sends a message from the initial receiver to the initial sender and again is interpreted. Because of this interpretation the message cannot be free from social and cultural context of the communication and from the receiver's personal views constructed based on his/her personality and experiences. Without an interpretation a symbol alone does not mean anything: that is, a message requires a context to make sense. In indirect communications, which do not involve the physical presence of two persons, such as an exchange of letters or conversations on the phone, the principle

remains the same. Even though facial and body expressions are not delivered, a tone of voice or a form of letters can deliver the additional information to the message itself and all of this information is interpreted by the receiver in social and cultural context. This model helps us to understand the mechanisms of information flows between two people.

Figure 5.4 A communication model



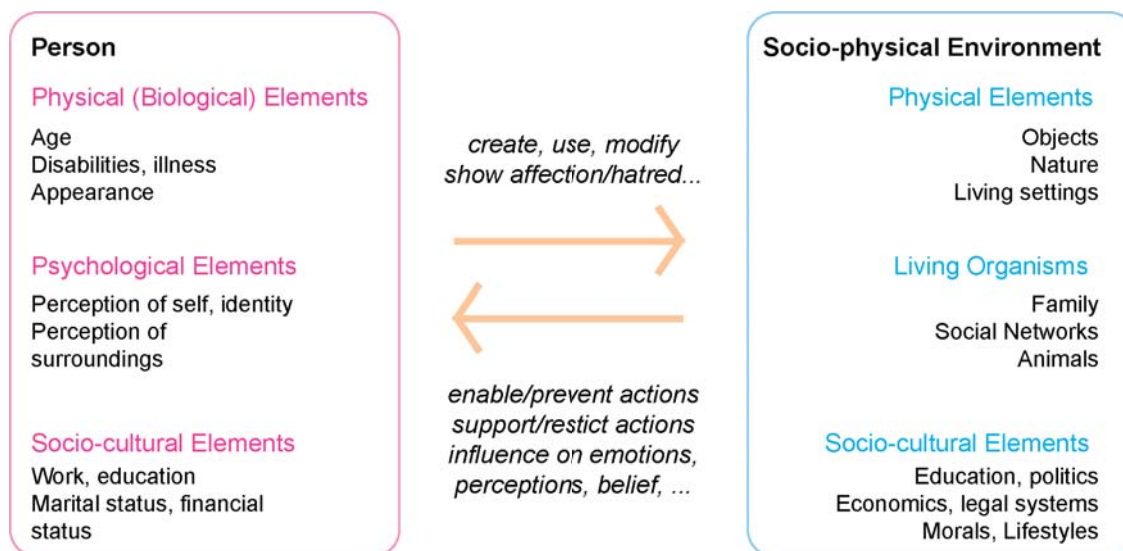
The diagram was developed based on various communication models introduced by Fisher (1993). It demonstrates the mechanism of information flows in communication between two people. There are two steps of information flows. Each side, right and left, shows internal information flows in each person's mind. One makes a decision on his/her attitude, behaviour and action based on personal view, personality and experience. Such attitude, behaviour and action are generated and displayed, and exchanged with the other person as linguistic or expressive messages. Received information on the other person's message is internally interpreted and then recognised and understood. Socio-cultural contexts influence a person's interpretation, personal views and so on directly and more generally outside the context of this particular communication. The model suggests that there are internal processes of information flows relevant to communications. However, only information that is exhibited can be exchanged.

2) Transaction models

Although the communication model explains the complexity of internal information interpretation processes and external information exchanges between individuals, it does not explain the relationships between such processes and all three dimensions of civic engagement. As mentioned above, a transaction model can relate such information flows to three dimensions of civic engagement. While the communication model can explain the mechanism of information flow between remote locations, a transaction model primarily focuses on transactions of individuals and their environments in a shared physical environment.

On the other hand, a transaction model encompasses physical and socio-cultural elements as well as other social actors. A transactional model, which is developed based on a person-in-environment model and relevant studies (for example, that by Wapner, and Demick, 2000), is represented in the diagram on the next page (figure 5.5).

Figure 5.5 A transaction model

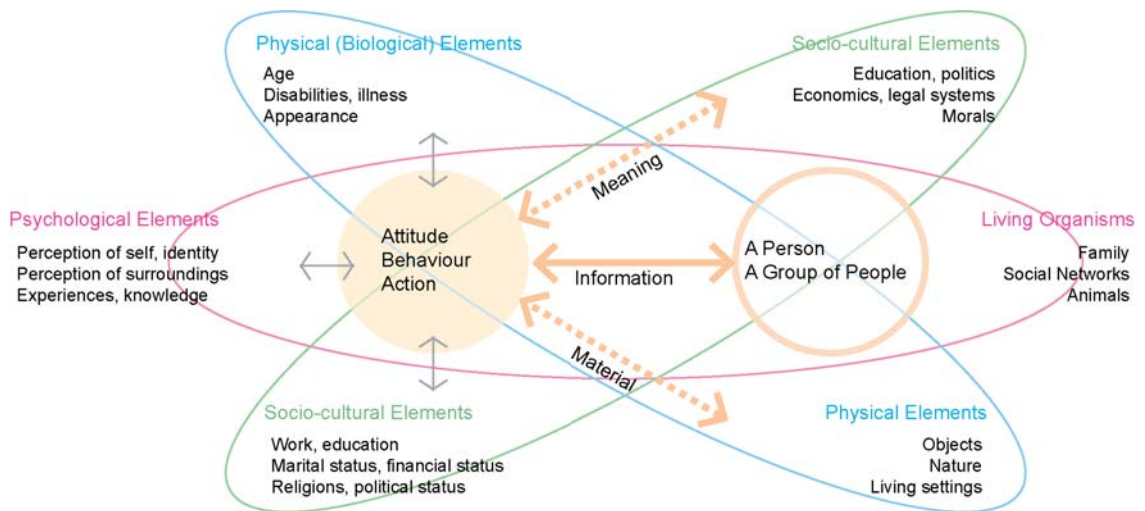


The diagram demonstrates external transactional relationships between a person and his/her socio-physical environment as well as internal transactional relationships between different groups of elements that affect external transactional relationships with his/her environment. On the person's side, there are physical elements including age and health, psychological elements including identity and perceptions, and socio-cultural elements including work and education. On the environment's side, there are physical environments including nature and built environment, living organisms, namely other people, and socio-cultural environments including social systems and culture. As in the communication model introduced earlier, internal elements are all interrelated and expressed/displayed as attitude, behaviour or action. Environments also have impacts on one's attitude, behaviour and action. Such impacts could occur upon behaviour, emotions, perceptions or social status.

3) A micro civic engagement model

Combining the two models introduced above, the mechanisms of civic engagement at a micro level are represented in the diagram below (figure 5.6). The model provides an ego-centred transactional perspective on the interactions and a form of engagement between an individual and another person, a group of people or an organisation. It describes the complexity of person's physical, psychological and socio-cultural elements and socio-physical environments in relation to interactions with other people. This model helps us to conceptualise and organise ideas about how dynamic mechanisms of engagement in which a person's interactions with others could be developed from an initial contact to engagement with a wider society.

Figure 5.6 A micro civic engagement model (ego-centred)



The diagram was produced by combining the previous two diagrams. It demonstrates the mechanisms of civic engagement from ego-centred perspectives. It puts human relationships into perspectives. Six element groups introduced in the transaction model are still interrelated to one another. Roles of each element group on the environment side in human interactions are clarified in this model. Physical elements provide materials and the physical environment for interaction while the socio-cultural environment provides meaning to it. Between people where actual civic engagement is happening, information is exchanged through verbal or non-verbal communications, which is then processed internally to form perceptions, identity and so on.

As shown in this transactional model, interactions between an individual and his/her environments suggest that there are three interrelating dimensions including physical (behavioural), psychological and informational, all of which are inherited in the micro civic engagement model. The physical dimension concerns the physicality of a person as well as all physical existence in the environment and therefore it implies existence at present. A person's physical (biological) elements include age, disabilities, illness and appearance whereas environmental elements include objects, nature and living settings such as cities, towns and houses. Actions are inevitably taken in a certain physical environment and have some physicality in their form as they are embodied in human bodies. Psychological dimension concerns feelings, perceptions, conceptions, identities, experiences and knowledge, which are all internal elements within individuals. The suggestion is that those internal elements determine or influence one's actions as emphasised by the communication model. On the environment side in the psychological dimension, there are living organisms including family, friends, neighbours, colleagues, boss, teacher, doctor and other social networks as well as animals as individual entities within their internal worlds. Socio-cultural dimension concerns a variety of social norms and culture that evolve over the time continuingly through human activities. The model identifies an individual's socio-cultural elements so as to show

how and where the individual is located in relation to the outside society and include all sorts of socio-cultural attributes such as political status, occupation, education, marital status, financial status, religion, ethnicity and gender. The suggestion here is that these elements are products of one's actions and experiences as well as what determine, restrict or influence one's actions. The socio-cultural elements on the environment side, such as education, politics, economics, legal systems and morals provide meaning, context and orientation to locate an individual's socio-cultural attributes in a wider context.

In chapter two, I suggested, drawing on Haggett (1965), that the modelling method is inevitable (i.e. it just is what we do when we formulate our beliefs), and if well done, economical and stimulating. The micro civic engagement model not only encapsulates comprehensive and transactional relationships between an individual and his/her environments. It also highlights several significant points to ascertain civic engagement, which have been claimed by researchers in different fields (for example, Hall, 1966; Stokols, 2000; and Hillier, 1999). Mechanisms of transactional relationships between behaviour, perceptions and socio-cultural elements are well described by Hall (1966). At a personal level, his/her physical elements influence the other person's view towards him/her as well as his/her own view of his/herself, which partly forms self-confidence and identity. The other person may use such information on his/her physical attributes to judge, prejudice or understand. His/her psychological elements are also significant determination of his/her behaviour. His/her feelings and self-perception, which appear to their appearance, attitude and behaviour, influence the other person's view towards him/her. Furthermore, these elements influence his/her own interpretations of incoming information from outside. His/her social status and position also effect interpretation of information and influence his/her attitude, behaviour and action. The interrelationships between social and physical environments are well articulated by Stokols (2000) and Hillier (1999). On the social and physical environment side, physical elements can enable/support or prevent/restrict one's behaviour. Communication with people sometimes requires some kind of material as a device. Materials, clothes and accessories for example, are also often used as a way of expression. More importantly all communication takes place in some space composed of nature and living settings. Such physical elements become more meaningful in the socio-cultural context. For instance, a certain fashion

brings a special meaning in some society and those meanings can be different in different societies. Socio-cultural environments are also able to enable or restrict one's behaviour and give one's behaviour a meaning. Socio-cultural elements form an individual's socio-cultural conception and influence on his/her way of communication, way of thinking and perception. Civic engagement as social inclusion is largely influenced by the socio-cultural environments, which affect individuals' sense of belonging. Other people are always part of his/her environment without visibly interacting with each other as nobody can live in complete isolation.

Despite the fact that all interactions between a person and his/her environments are experienced through his/her behaviour, the three dimensions highlight that civic engagement is not only a matter of behaviour such as participation and communication but also concerns perceptions and feelings such as a sense of belonging and an identity as well as socio-cultural issues such as a collective identity and a formal status. As emphasised by the micro civic engagement model, information is exchanged through interactions between an individual and environments and then processed internally to form knowledge, perceptions, opinions and feelings.

The idea of transactionalism suggest that one's behaviour and decisions are to some extent either positively or negatively affected by his/her social environments. That is, it is suggested that an organisation influences the behaviour and decisions of its members. Brooks (2003:122), in his studies on organisational behaviour, introduces Max Weber's (1978) idea of 'bureaucracy.' One of the assumptions that underlie his idea of 'bureaucracy' is that 'employees act in an impartial and unemotional manner, being motivated by a sense of duty towards achieving organisational goals (2003: 122).' That is, an individual as a member of an organisation, especially the bureaucratic one, acts and makes decisions mainly motivated by a sense of duty rather than by his/her personal belief or knowledge. As noted in chapter one, this model of bureaucracy as the logic of a particular organisation may produce a different vision of how society works to the vision of social engagement as the logic of the whole community.

As Brooks (2003) suggests, an organisation defines individuals' roles. Organisational roles are assigned to organisational positions accompanied by certain rights and responsibilities. Such limitations on rights and responsibilities that are assigned to individual positions are part of control factors for individuals' behaviour and perceptions. Furthermore, Parker (2007) points out that individuals' role orientation, or the way they define their role, also influence their performance. Her study suggests that the way an individual in an organisation behaves is affected by his/her organisational role not only because his/her behaviour is shaped by rights and responsibilities of his/her role but also because he/she behaves in a way they think expected to his/her role.

The gap, between a person's spontaneous behaviour and his/her behaviour as influenced by his/her role, is not always recognised by him/herself. However, as I will explain more in a later chapter, the fieldwork in this research project revealed that it is often acknowledged and I show it causing frustration for a social worker working with older people in the London Borough of Greenwich.

5.3.2 Different levels of civic engagement

Civic engagement is part of individual-society relations, which are built up on social interactions and social networks. As there are different strength of ties in social networks, there are different intensity and frequency of social interactions, which result in different levels of individual-society relations and therefore of civic engagement. While the variation of intensity is gradual and continuous, I identified four distinctive levels of civic engagement.

The empirical research reported in later chapters shows these vary from passive social interaction by staying in a group of people without actually interacting with anyone else to participation in political decision making processes by attending a meeting or contributing to drafting a manifesto. Amongst such a wide range of variations of civic engagement, four major levels of civic engagement are identified. The four levels include: one-way cognition, two way interaction, active interaction and matured transaction. Each of those levels is explained below by means of a micro civic engagement model.

1) **One-way cognition (figure 5.7)**

The first step of civic engagement is one-way cognition. Civic engagement at this initial level includes what Goffman (1963) calls 'cognitive recognition' but its concept is extended to fit to a micro civic engagement model. In Goffman's study, any form of an individual's direct contact with another person or other people is considered as a form of engagement of the individual and his/her environments. In other words, the engagement of an individual with a situation, which is composed of the full physical environment and people concerning the subject's immediate presence, occurs inevitably whenever the person enters a gathering to form a situation regardless of verbal communication between the entering person and other members of the gathering. This view is based on the idea that as soon as a person enters a gathering, the members of the gathering recognise the entering person and their perceptions of the entering person form the basis of their relationships with each other. It also applies to the entering person. As soon as the entering individual recognises the gathering, he/she starts to form perceptions of the gathering, which then determines his/her next action towards them. Although Goffman's (1963) analysis of an individual's engagement with his/her environments are limited to those in which the individual and a gathering share the same space and do not include indirect relationships, his study suggests a significant point that engagement does not always rely on verbal communication and it does begin from one's recognition of others. In addition, he differentiates a term 'involvement' from 'engagement,' employing 'involvement' to describe interactions between individuals while 'engagement' is considered to include interrelations between them often without any involvement of one another.

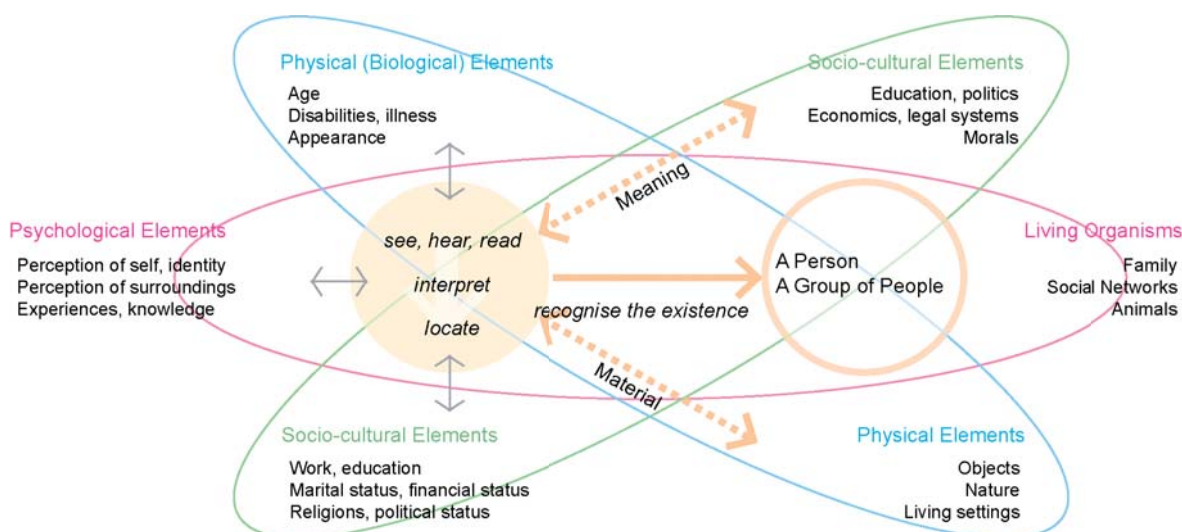
Combined with a micro civic engagement model, Goffman's idea of 'engagement' can be extended to interactions between individuals and their environments through indirect communications. An individual can relate to another person or a group of people without sharing a space at the same time. Accordingly, his idea of a 'gathering' and that of a 'situation' can also be extended. The idea of 'gathering' can be interpreted as an 'any set of two or more individuals, groups of people or organisations whose existence are or will be recognised by an individual on the subject. And the idea of 'situation' can be interpreted as 'an entity, which is composed of physical and socio-cultural environments and biological organism that

concern any interactions between an individual on the subject and others.’ The extended view of ‘engagement’ ultimately concerns any sort of human activities since all human activities somehow involve an interaction with someone or something in the environment as Hall (1959:62) states ‘to interact with the environment is to be alive, and to fail to do so is to be dead.’

In a case of direct engagement with another person or a group of people, recognising the other(s) visually is the first step of engagement. Although visual information may be the main form, the other information such as sound, smell and touch may also be involved. Such information is interpreted in socio-cultural context and located in his/her perceptual world. His/her own physical, psychological and socio-cultural elements affect on the procedure of interpretation. Physical and living organism environments of the situation also have an impact on this perception of the other(s).

Indirect engagement also works in a similar way in principle. Information recognised could be someone’s voice, sounds of someone moving around, a brochure from local government or an email from his/her friend. They are also processed corresponding to all elements of both the person and the environment.

Figure 5.7 One-way cognition



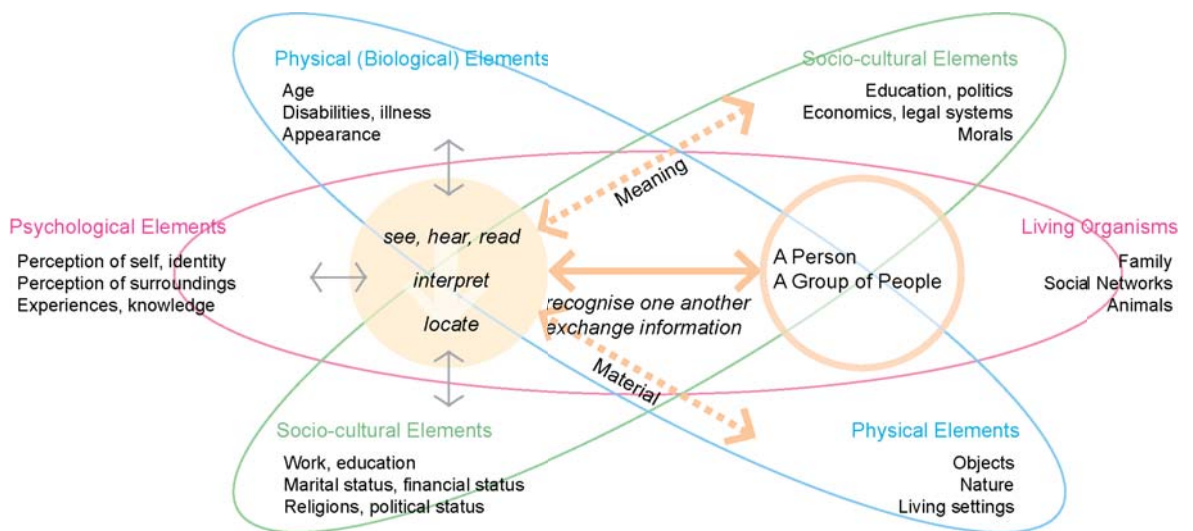
The diagram demonstrates what happens at the stage of one-way cognition using the micro civic engagement model. The information flow is one way. The information received by seeing, hearing or reading is internally processed and influences one’s perceptions, appearances, belief and so on.

2) Two-way interaction (figure 5.8)

One-way cognition may give rise to two-way interaction such as an exchange of greetings, conversation and an exchange of information between those involved in the engagement.

Two-way interaction starts when one takes action responding to the other's first contact and takes place within a short time of period. Through such interactions those involved in the engagement seek more information about the other(s), what they want to say, what they really mean and what their facial/body expressions mean and so on, and edit perception of the other(s) simultaneously during the interaction.

Figure 5.8 Two-way interaction

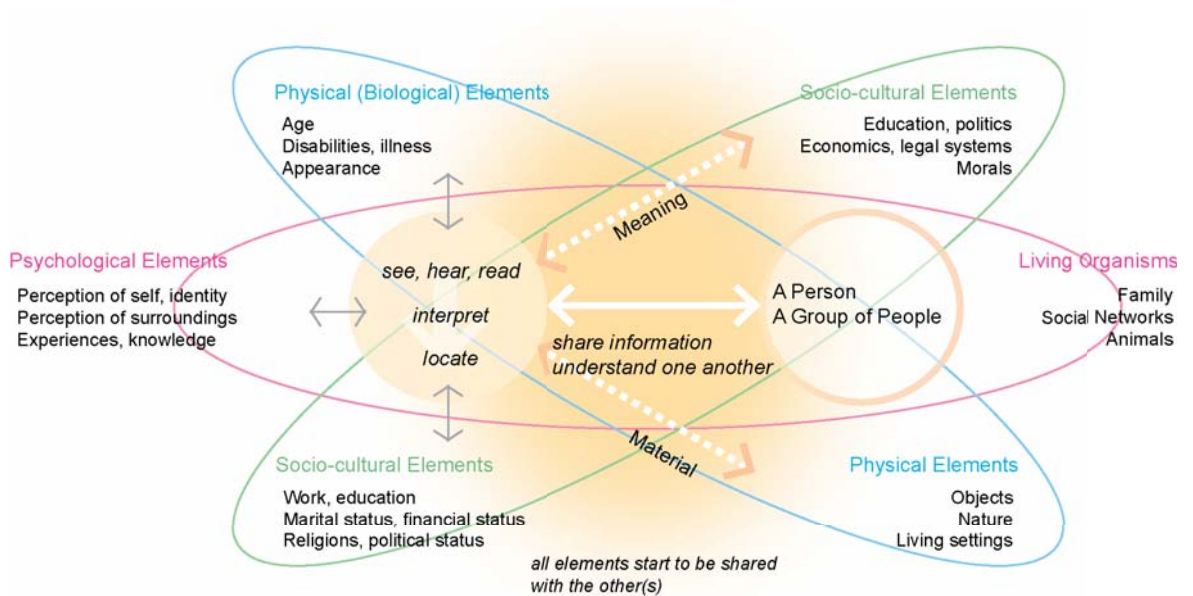


The diagram demonstrates the stage of two-way interaction. Information flow becomes both ways. Not only that one is affected by the other(s) but also affects them.

3) Active interaction (figure 5.9)

When both parties become actively involved in the engagement, it can be at the next phase of active interaction. Both sides give and receive more information and share it and as a result they understand each other better. The shift from two-way interaction phase to active interaction phase is usually gradual requiring frequent and/or intense interaction between them. Sharing objectives and interests is one of the essential and effective factors which can lead to active interaction. Sometimes a discovery of shared objectives or interests could be an instant trigger to enhance each other's brisk active involvement.

Figure 5.9 Active interaction

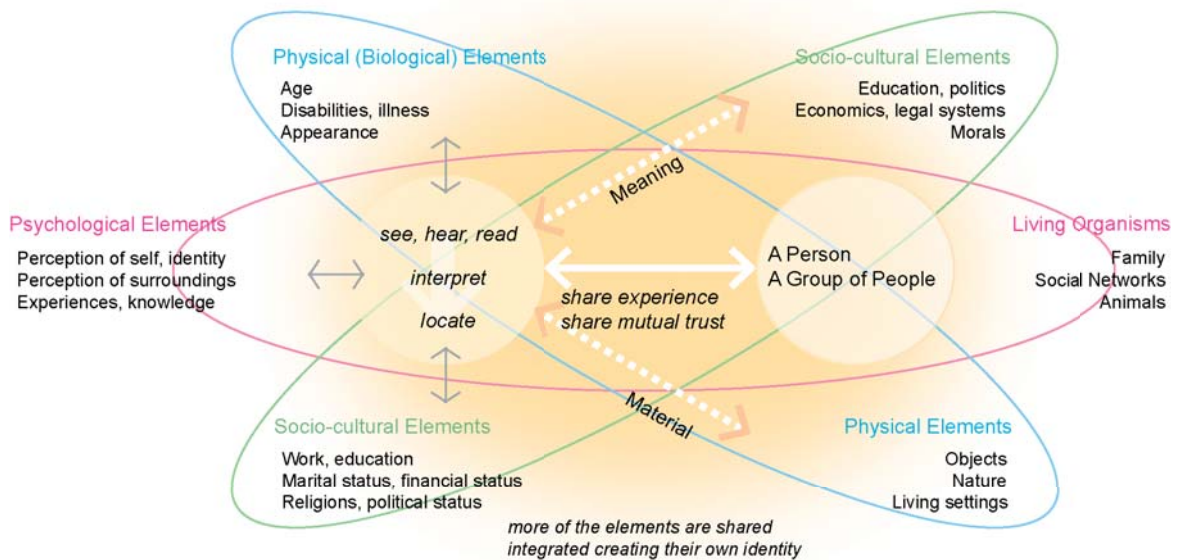


The diagram demonstrates that at this stage of active interaction people involved in the interaction start to share information. Shared information and understanding can be a foundation for further development of their relationship.

4) Matured transaction (figure 5.10)

Meaningful active interactions can lead two parties to the matured transaction. Meaningful active interactions become their shared experience and create mutual trust between them. They start to act as an entity with its own identity. They start to feel fully engaged and belonging to the entity. This is a rather ideal state of relationship between two people. Even family members have their own social networks and do not necessarily share their experiences in all aspects of their lives within themselves. However, they are more likely to share core values as they have shared meaningful time and space together rather than just because of long time proximity. Likewise, in a matured engagement practice, even though people do not necessarily share all the aspects of their lives including education, customs, traditions, social networks and living environments, they could share a core value, which is developed through their meaningful active transactions. In modern democracy, representations are supposed to be based on this matured transaction on certain issues between representatives and those who are represented by them.

Figure 5.10 Matured transaction



The diagram demonstrates the stage where interaction becomes matured transaction. At this stage, experience and knowledge are shared through frequent and intimate interactions and create mutual trust. All of those who are involved in such transactional relationships create a shared identity.

In this section, I proposed a micro civic engagement model, which was developed based on two models including: a communication model, which explained mechanisms of information exchange; and a transaction model, which delineated the complex mechanisms between an individual and his/her environments involving three dimensions of civic engagement. Using a micro civic engagement model, I explained four distinctive levels of civic engagement including one-way cognition, two-way interaction, active interaction and matured transaction. As levels advance, interactions increase their frequency, intimacy and stability. That is, relations between two or more social actors develop from weak ties to strong ties.

It was also suggested, using a micro civic engagement model, that rights and responsibilities, which are social factors of individuals, often overcome personal factors such as personalities and preferences to impact behaviours. This explains why individuals in institutional organisations are often impersonal and therefore they are difficult to establish a strong tie with.

5.4 Mechanisms of civic engagement at a macro level

In the previous section, I examined mechanisms of civic engagement at a micro level

using a micro civic engagement model. The model explains interrelationships between the psychological/perceptive, physical/behavioural and socio-cultural dimensions of civic engagement. Based on the understanding of micro level mechanisms, I will discuss mechanisms of civic engagement at a macro level in this section. Just as a society is not a simple assembly of individuals, civic engagement at a macro level is not just an assembly of individuals' relations with society.

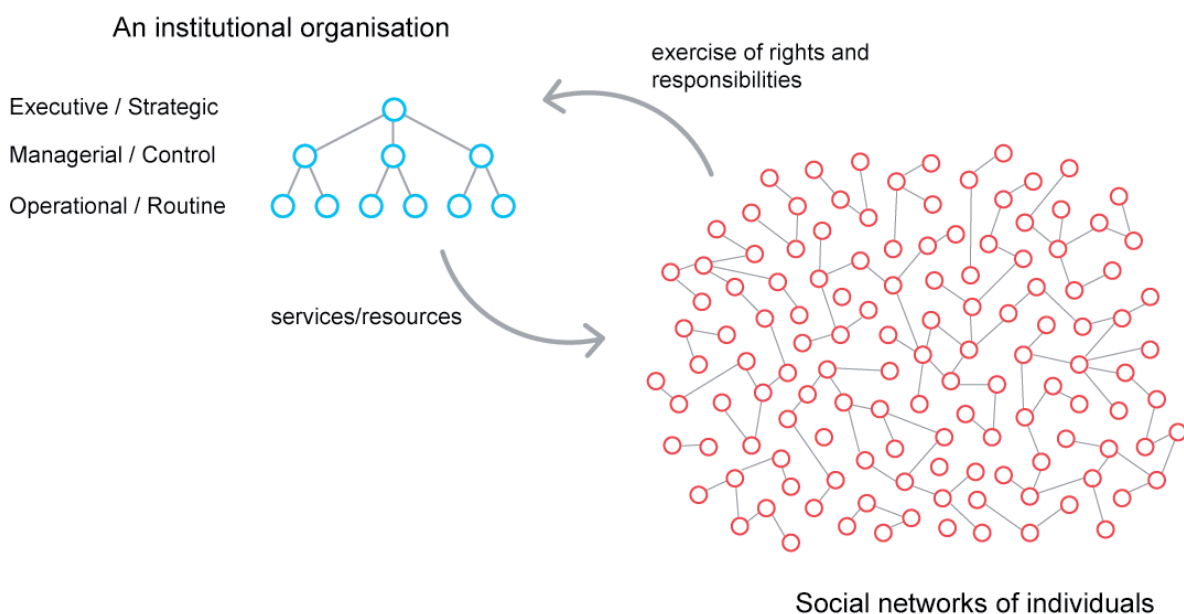
5.4.1 Institutional organisations and existing networks

As discussed in chapter four, individuals are connected through globally extended networks forming various types of groups, communities and organisations. Some connections are formal while some others are informal. Some connections are stronger than others depending on their frequency and intimacy. All those connections are dynamic and multi-layered. Social groups including communities and organisations are a group of individuals who are connected to each other by sharing certain norms between them and accepting certain structures and systems that constitute the group. Some social groups allow flexible relationships between members while some other groups have rigid structures and inflexible systems. The former groups have inclusive relationships with other social actors including individuals and organisations whereas the latter have exclusive relationships. Social groups with network systems tend to be the former while social groups with hierarchical systems tend to be the latter.

All social groups have compound relations internally and externally. The more flexible and dynamic internal structures are, the more transparent their external relationships are. The more hierarchical internal structures are, the more exclusive their external relationships become. When a social group is exclusive and distinctive from others, it can be seen as a single social actor at a macro level. In the voluntary sphere, all social actors have an equal relationship as a member of the community. Their relationships are flexible and transparent. On the other hand, in the public sphere, relationships between social actors can often be awkward. The internal systems of institutional organisations tend to be inflexible and less transparent and therefore external relationships between those organisations and individuals can be complex and superficial. The diagram below demonstrates relationships between individuals who are

connected through networks and an institutional organisation with a hierarchical system like the government (figure 5.11).

Figure 5.11 Existing networks and public institutions



The diagram demonstrates the relationship between social networks of individuals and public institutions with a hierarchical structure such as government. Individuals are connected to others in a form of network. Some are better connected than others. Within an institutional organisation, there are people at executive levels who make strategic decisions, those at managerial levels who control daily operations and those at operational levels who conduct routine work. Internal relationships within the organisation are of a different culture to that of individuals which are network oriented. Relationships between individuals and such an institutional organisation are maintained through individuals' exercising of their rights and responsibilities to influence and take part in the organisation's decision making and through the organisation's services.

The relationships between institutional organisations and individuals are particularly important in discussions on civic engagement in relation to the government. In the following section, I will discuss different mechanisms of civic engagement involving those institutional organisations at a macro level.

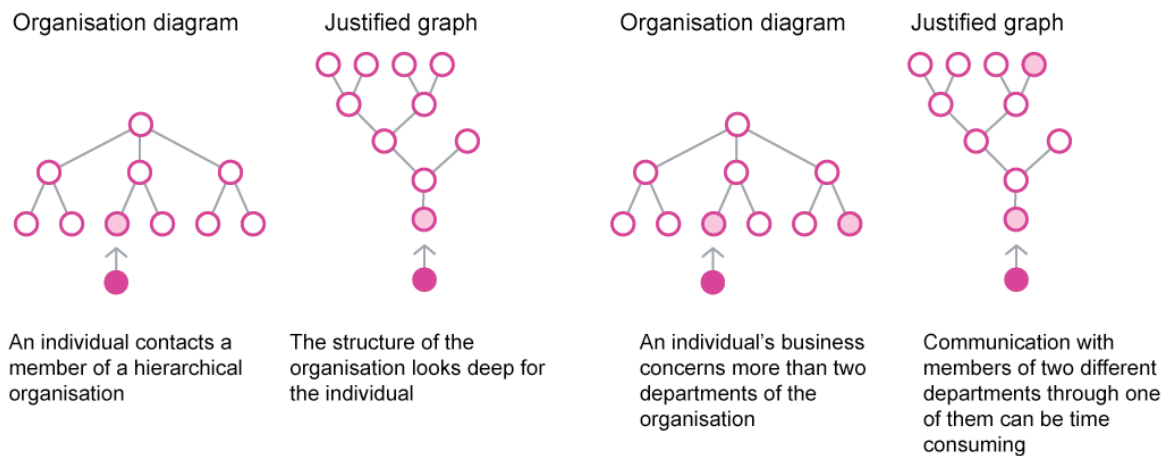
5.4.2 Different models of civic engagement at a macro level

As mentioned above, institutional organisations as social actors tend to have an awkward relationship with individuals in networks due to the two opposite principles of external relations and internal relations. The diagram below explains it visually based on the idea of graph theory (fig. 5.12). When an individual has contact with someone in a hierarchical organisation, the structure of the organisation looks deep. In addition, if he/she has business that concerns two or more different specialities, he/she either has to contact two different

people or the communication with the first contact will be excessively time consuming.

Figure 5.12 An institutional organisation and an individual

A hierarchical organisation and an individual



The set of diagrams show different scenarios in which someone contacts a member of an organisation with a hierarchical structure such as a local government. A set of two diagrams on the left demonstrates a scenario where one contacts a member of the organisation in a relevant section. The organisation diagram shows the hierarchical structure of the organisation and the position of the person (the individual) contacted. The justified graph, which was originally used by Hillier and others in the analysis of spatial configurations from a perspective of a certain point in the network (Hillier, Hanson and Graham, 1987), shows the depth of the organisation from the individual's perspective. The one who makes decisions is two steps away and people in other sections are deeper in the system in relation to the individual.

The other set on the right represents a scenario where an individual has an issue concerned with more than one department. The individual contacts one of the two relevant sections. The justified graph demonstrates how deep the other relevant section is from the individual's perspective. For example, if the issue that the individual brought up concerns Social Services and Public Services and the first contact was Social Services, it takes four steps via the decision making staff for the information to be acknowledged by Public Services.

Nevertheless, there are mechanisms that support and facilitate interactions between institutional organisations and network-oriented individuals. Focusing on the way information is exchanged, which is key in civic engagement, I identified four different mechanisms of interactions between an institution and individuals based on the fieldwork. Those four include: representation model, expert model, event model and finally network model. These four represent different information processes in relation to time and to space.

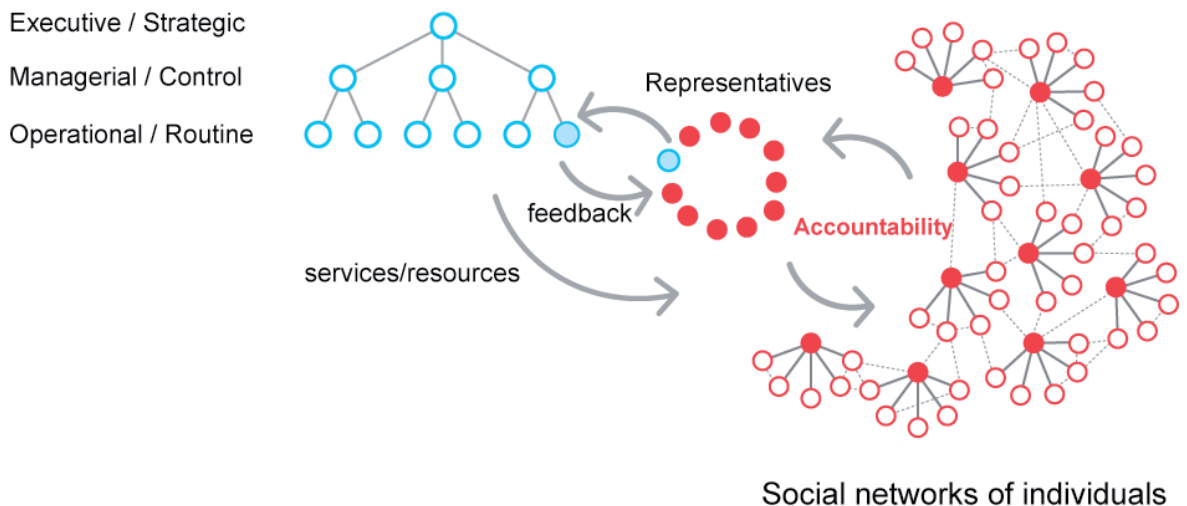
1) Representation model

Representations are the core of political systems in a democratic society. The diagram below (figure 5.13) illustrates a representation model with an example of a state and citizens. A representative, who is chosen by citizens, represents a group of citizens even though not

every citizen supports him/her. He/she works within an institutional structure such as a state or a local government and makes decisions on behalf of his/her citizens. In other words, citizens are collectively represented through hierarchical systems but not individually.

Figure 5.13 Representation model

An institutional organisation



The diagram demonstrates how individuals are related to an institutional organisation through a representation system. Representatives are accountable for those who they represent and they negotiate with members of the organisation. The result of such negotiations is reflected in the plan of service provision and services are received by individuals.

Representation systems commonly involve many social organisations across the public, private and voluntary sectors. The systems create an order in otherwise flexible, network-oriented individuals' lives, which helps institutional organisations to coordinate with individuals. In a small system, a representation system works well because processes of representations can be transparent. When a representative represents a small group with high coherence, the representative can express interests and opinions of the group easily. On the contrary, when a representative represents a large group with less coherence, there are inevitably wider gaps between the representative's act and interests and opinions of individuals in the group.

However, in reality, representation systems tend to be used in larger scales rather than small scales. In a small system, individuals can interact directly with each other rather than their representatives. In a large system, it is not efficient for all individuals to directly participate in all decision-making processes and therefore individuals choose their representatives to

express their opinions.

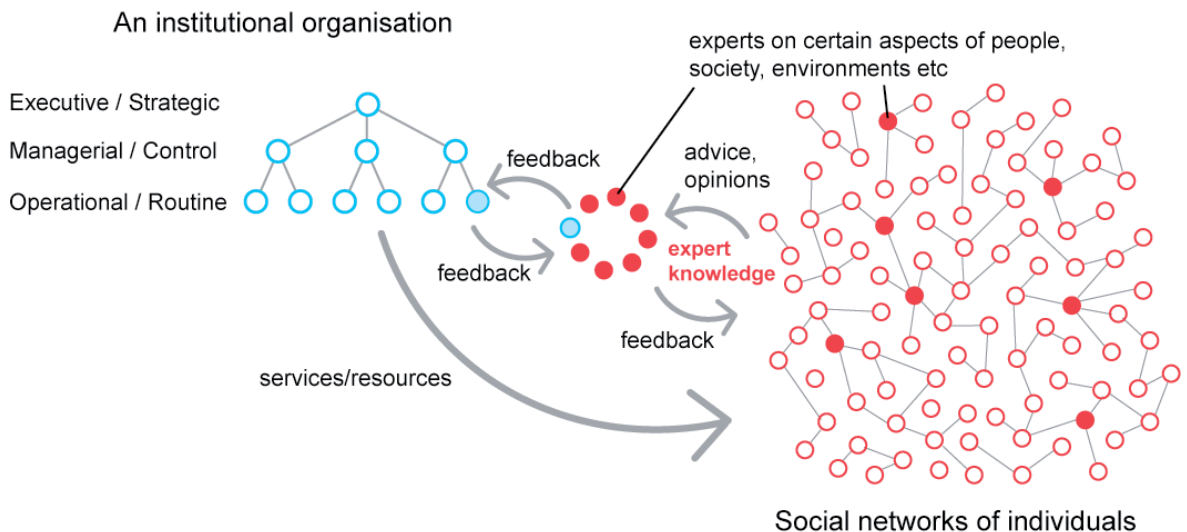
2) Expert model

An expert model demonstrates a system in which the third party, or expert, bridges between individuals and an institutional organisation (figure 5.14). While representatives in a representation model are directly accountable for those who are represented, experts in an expert model do not necessarily have direct relationships with those whose relationships they provide a bridge to. Also unlike representation systems, not all individuals are structured or involved in expert systems. Some experts form systems through which they interact with an institutional organisation using their knowledge on individuals.

The relationship between a group of experts and lay people can be either direct or indirect. Experts are those who have objective perspectives and special knowledge on particular issues in relation to specific situations, cultures, social groups and so on. Such experts' knowledge is based on their experiences or on secondary experiences such as reading.

Experts' knowledge is by definition focused and specific while a wide range of issues can be involved in representation systems. On the other hand, experts have the advantage of being independent from both individuals and institution whereas representatives are dependent upon both individuals and institution. Manipulation of information is more likely to be avoided.

Figure 5.14 Expert model



Experts bridge between individuals and an institutional organisation. Their relationships with individuals are not necessarily direct. Individuals' concerns and issues are represented by the experts as knowledge. Experts have more direct relationships with the organisation and provide them their knowledge. The experts' knowledge is then reflected in decisions on services within the organisation, which are relevant to individuals.

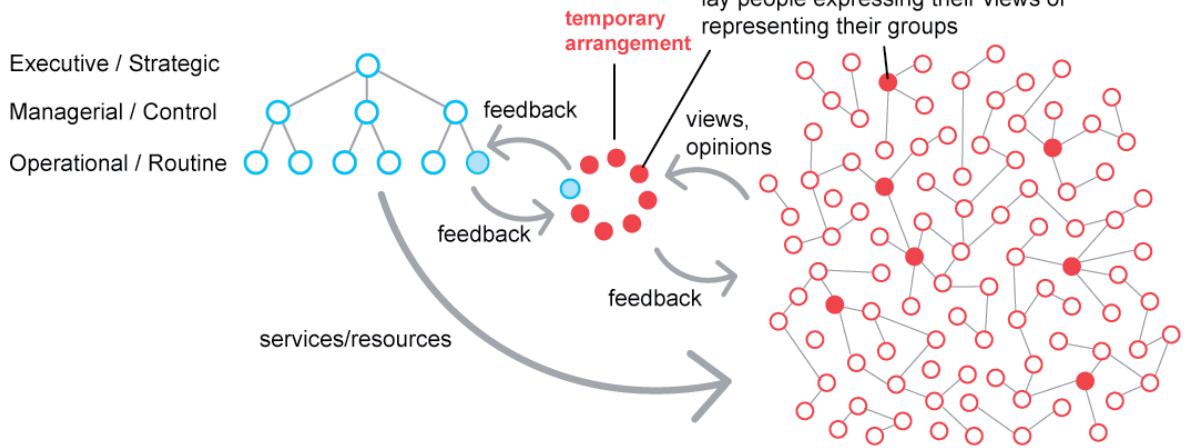
3) Event model

An event model represents temporary civic engagement forms (figure 5.15a-c). Examples of an event model include consultation events, seminars, campaigns and so on. Consultation events and seminars are mostly organised by institutions but campaigns can be organised by individuals to impact the decisions of institutions. Some of these temporary social forms are open to individuals in networks (figure 5.15a) while some others are closed or offer limited accessibility from outside (figure 5.15b). In the case of campaigns, feedback from institutions is less likely to pass through campaigners (figure 5.15c).

Relationships between individuals and an institution tend to be single-dimensional rather than multi-dimensional, focusing on themes and purposes of temporary arrangements. Combined with the limitation of time, such relationships also tend to remain immature. However, a temporary social form also offers an opportunity to connect individuals from different social networks.

Figure 5.15a Event model: Open events

An institutional organisation

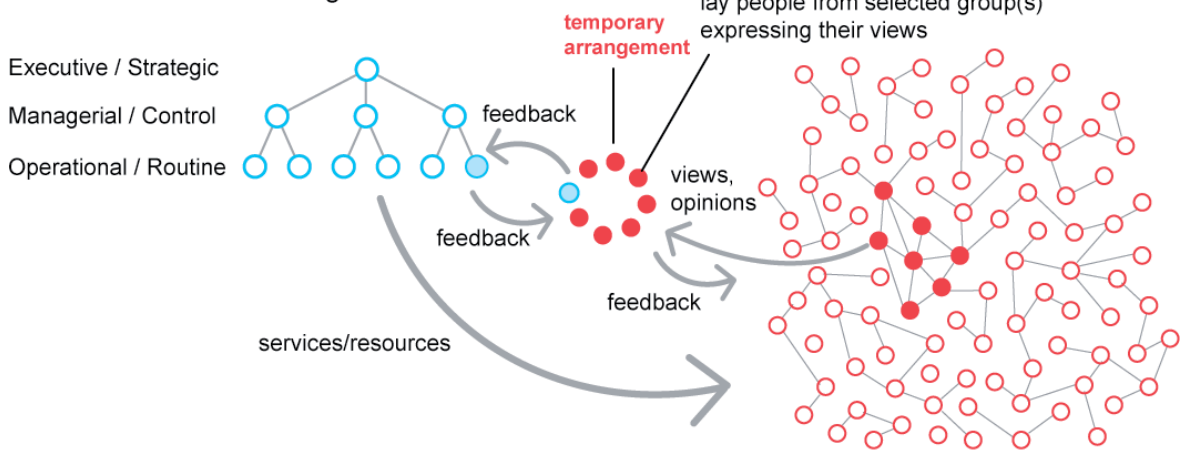


Social networks of individuals

Individuals can temporarily be voluntary ‘representatives’ as shown in the representative model. They are not necessarily an elected member but each of them is seen as a representative of his/her certain social group.

Figure 5.15b Event model: Events with selected groups

An institutional organisation

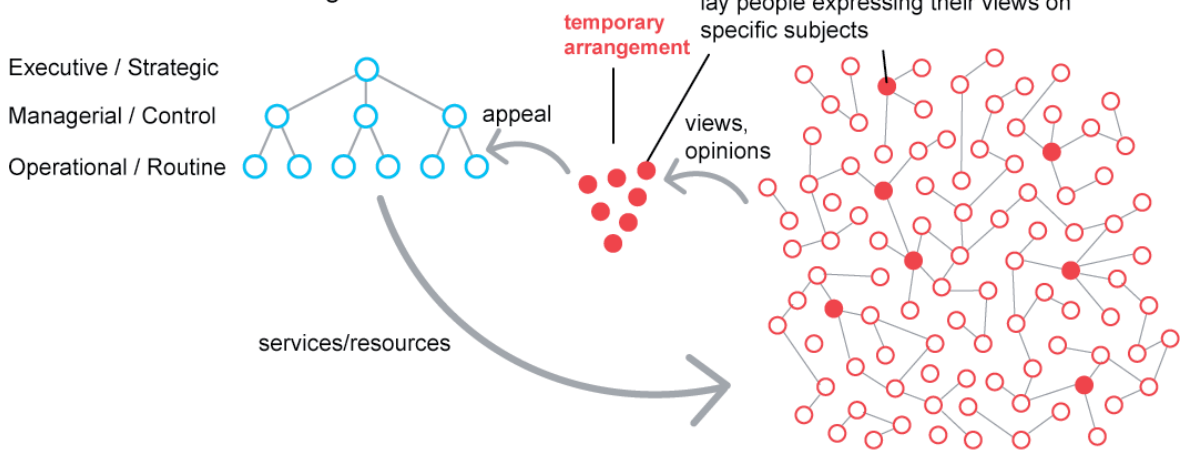


Social networks of individuals

Individuals are chosen from a certain social group or more. They temporarily act as ‘experts.’

Figure 5.15c Event model: Campaigns

An institutional organisation



Social networks of individuals

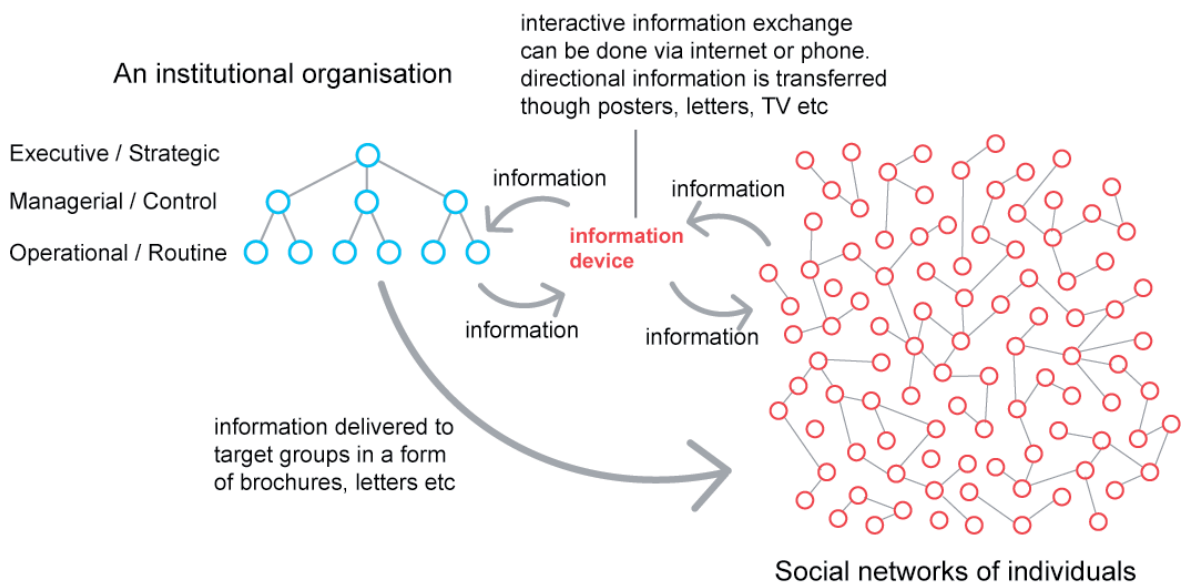
Individuals gather to express their opinions collectively for a specific topic. They do not necessarily come from a single social group.

4) Network model

While the previous three models assume individuals or groups of people themselves act as bridges for relationships between an institution and individuals, a network model depicts those relationships as bridged via information devices or materials. A network model allows separation of time and space between an institution and individuals. Another advantage of this model from the institution's perspective is that it allows mass distribution.

Information is transferred by various means including informational technological devices such as telephones, radios, televisions, emails and Internet, or conventional materials such as letters, leaflets and posters. While some technologies allow interactive information exchanges between remote locations, conventional materials tend to create one-way flows of information. These devices could also be used in interactions in the other three models. However, here network model represents those information exchanges in which information is transferred in impersonal ways or as supplementary to the other three methods.

Figure 5.16 Network model



Individuals communicate with an institutional organisation via information devices. Their relationships are more individualised than in the other models. Information from the organisation can be delivered in various forms including brochures, letters and emails.

5.4.3 Different levels of civic engagement at a macro level

As seen earlier, civic engagement at a micro level becomes stronger and deeper as its frequency

and intimacy increase. Although differences of intensity vary gradually and continuously, the levels of micro civic engagement can be classified in a typology of four levels ranging from one-way cognitions to matured transactions. On the other hand, although differences in levels are also omnipresent at a macro level, it is harder to depict the overall levels of macro civic engagement. To capture social dynamisms of civic engagement, I simplified civic engagement mechanisms at a macro level by treating institutional organisations as a single social actor. Yet civic engagement at a macro level is still complex because it involves at least two steps of relations: one between individuals and bridges such as representatives, experts, events and information devices; and the other between those bridges and institutional organisations themselves.

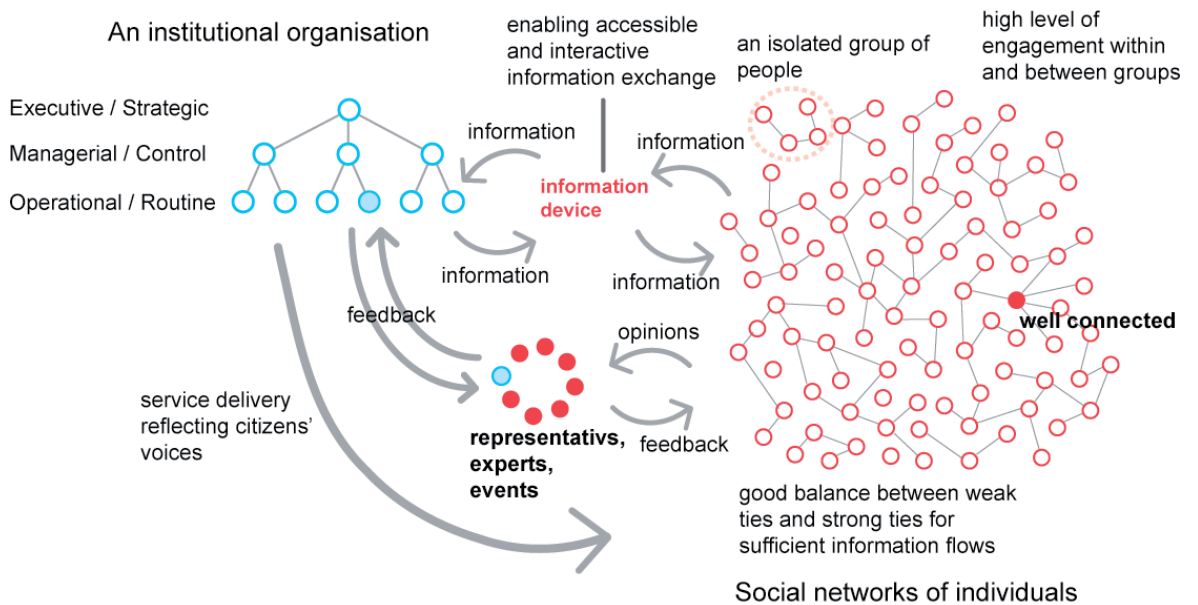
The principles of the four levels of civic engagement at a micro level can be applied to evaluate each step of civic engagement at a macro level. The quality of civic engagement at each step significantly affects the overall level of macro civic engagement.

5.4.4 Civic engagement in social dynamics

In the preceding sections, I discussed mechanisms and levels of civic engagement both at a micro and a macro level. Based on the understanding of civic engagement both at a micro and a macro level, I will endeavour to identify values in civic engagement in society as a whole in this section.

In reality, a society comprises a complex mixture of civic engagement at various levels, of various scales and in various spheres, each of which is often overlapped and layered. A mature level of civic engagement in a society can be achieved in numerous ways and usually only by a combination of them. That is, there is no single solution to the problem of achieving a high level of civic engagement in a society. Nevertheless, there are some common values for civic engagement in a society, which are summarised in the diagram on the next page (figure 5.17). Those values emerged mainly from social network theories, which are then combined with the civic engagement models proposed above.

Figure 5.17 Strength and depth of collective engagement



The following key factors for strong and in-depth collective engagement are summarised in the diagram.

- 1) a certain number of social groups with strong ties
- 2) strong relationships between different social groups
- 3) balance between strong ties and weak ties
- 4) transparency of relationships including frequent feedback and clear information

First of all, it is important to have a certain number of social groups, in which members are strongly connected. Within those social groups, members have frequent and intimate interactions with each other and share common goals and a common identity. Those social groups provide individuals with security and a sense of belonging while they also provide stability in a society.

The same idea can be applied to relationships between different social groups. As discussed earlier, at a matured transaction level two or more social actors share experiences and mutual trust and consequently they almost become an entity with a certain shared identity. When members in a social group have such mature relationships, a social group can be seen as a single social actor in relation to other social actors.

While the strength of relationships is certainly a significant value in civic engagement, the integration of those relations to all other systems is also important. The integration is not only provided by strong or numerous connections. It is essential to have the right connections. Even if one has a number of relationships, when those relationships are with those who are

disconnected to each other and segregated from the rest of society, those relations do not offer opportunities to develop one's networks and expand opportunities. When one has the right relationships, no matter how few, one can succeed in finding information that helps one's civic engagement and improves one's 'embeddedness.' As mentioned in chapter four, weak ties often provide opportunities to expand networks. The flexibility that weak ties offer allows individuals to expose themselves to a variety of information. Therefore, the right connections may be weak ones rather than strong ones.

Last but not least, it is essential to have transparency in social relations. As seen above, the mechanism of civic engagement at a micro level is extremely complicated involving psychological, physical and socio-cultural elements. Civic engagement in a society, which is composed of countless numbers of layers, is extremely complex. Without transparency, social actors cannot form mutual trust or have matured relationships. Information is power and therefore there is a natural tendency to control and limit access to information. However, civic engagement develops on the grounds of sharing. Making information flows and social relations transparent is the first and most significant step towards the development of civic engagement.

In summary, I identified three key values of civic engagement in a society. Those include: strong ties between individuals and social groups, which involve frequent and intimate interactions; flexibility in social relations, which are often provided by weak ties; and transparency in social relations, which is requisite for sufficient information flows and matured relationships.

5.5 Summary

In this chapter, I explored three different bodies of theory including citizenship theory, theory on information and communications and theory on transactions in order to establish theoretical framework for civic engagement. Discussion of the theory of citizenship revealed what the concept of civic engagement may involve while the other two theories elucidated how civic engagement works.

The exploration of citizenship theory revealed that civic engagement, as a concept, needed to be defined as the exercise of citizenship with recognition of a broad sense of citizenship. Civic engagement needs to be seen as a dynamic concept, which can be defined and re-defined through interactions between citizens in a society. Civic engagement involves rights and responsibilities and recognises civil, political, social and cultural rights of individuals. Through civic engagement, people are able to structure and re-structure a society, which then provides a sense of belonging, security and a common identity. Thus, civic engagement can significantly affect individuals' 'embeddedness.'

Civic engagement is the exercise of citizenship. Citizenship is a multi-dimensional concept and could be defined in many different ways. While individual states generally have a formal definition of its citizenship based on place of birth and nationality of parents, citizenship can conceptually be defined as a 'form of belonging (Mullard, 2003: 126)' to a community and therefore 'dynamic identity (Faulks, 2000: 6)' that is bound up with a community. Citizenship defines rights and responsibilities by which individuals and a community are united and define themselves. Individuals exercise their rights and responsibilities in their daily life.

In contemporary society, the concept of community also needs to be multi-dimensional. As discussed in chapter four and earlier in this chapter, any community today is a social form that is part of networks that have expanded globally. A formal citizenship initially assumes a political community such as a state or a union of states as a community. However, the development of global networks not only increases the importance of international communities but also allows the increase of variety of communities both at a global and a local level. The likely result is a variety of scales and layers of civic engagement.

Although this thesis argues that there are three spheres of life impacted by individuals' civic engagement, the public, private and the voluntary, this study is necessarily primarily focused on public and voluntary spheres to discuss the government's initiatives on civic engagement of older people in relation to 'embeddedness.' Although all three spheres are interrelated, how products that people buy involve people in other countries and their economic situation, for example, is not my primary concern in this study. My primary concern is individuals as

citizens and as members of communities rather than individuals as consumers.

Civic engagement is embedded in individuals' daily life. For full civic engagement, individuals should form a community and develop a sense of belonging and a common identity through civic engagement embedded in day-to-day social activities. Since individuals' daily lives are composed of a series of choices, for which they are responsible, it is also individuals' responsibility to design their own civic engagement. A society of diversity and flexibility offers multiple choices to individuals while, however, stripping security away from them. Civic engagement depends on individuals' abilities and skills to design and develop their social networks rather than the structure and a system of a single community. Individuals' civic engagement is also affected by a combination of structures and systems of all the relevant communities rather than by those of a single community. Thus, the model suggests that civic engagement of individuals may appear in various forms and the relationships between a community, such as a state or a London Borough, and individuals in terms of civic engagement are so complex that they are hardly comprehensible.

Therefore, I further developed discussions to disentangle the complex mechanisms of civic engagement both at a micro level and a macro level using communication theory and transactional theory. A micro civic engagement model, which I developed based on a communication model and a transaction model, demonstrates transactional relationships between individuals and a society in which civic engagement is embedded. Three dimensions of such relationships were discussed including perceptive/psychological, physical/behavioural and socio-cultural. What individuals do affects and is affected by who they are and what they think as well as what other people think of them and what other people think what they are doing.

Civic engagement is a dynamic status of individual-society relations, which can be developed through transactional relationships between individuals and society. Although the development process is gradual and continuous, four distinctive levels of civic engagement at a micro level were identified and explained using a micro civic engagement model. The four levels include one-way cognition, two-way interaction, active interaction and matured transaction. As civic

engagement develops, more values such as knowledge, experience, goals, trust and ultimately a common identity are shared between those who are involved. While civic engagement at more mature levels offer stability and security, a more immature civic engagement offers more flexibility and mobility than more mature ones. A combination of various levels of civic engagement constitutes individuals' life and affects their 'embeddedness.'

At a macro level, a society comprises a complex mixture of civic engagement of various levels, of various scales and in various spheres. I pointed out that amongst different types of social groups, institutional organisations, as social actors, tend to act with incoherence in networks. An institutional organisation is, as a social actor, related to other social actors through networks, which value flexibility and transparency. On the other hand, an institutional organisation internally tends to have a hierarchical structure and a rigid system, which do not allow flexible or transparent relationships between its members.

Four different types of civic engagement were identified to compensate for such awkward relationships between institutional organisations and individuals. All four types, that is, the representation model, the expert model, the event model and the network model represent different mechanisms of information flows and individuals' interactions in terms of time and space. In reality, those four types are not mutually exclusive and they are all embedded in social systems.

Finally, I discussed key values of civic engagement in a society. Those include: strong ties between individuals and social groups, which involve frequent and intimate interactions; flexibility in social relations, which are often provided by weak ties; and transparency in social relations, which is required for sufficient information flow and matured relationships. Strong ties provide stability and maturity in social systems. On the other hand, weak ties provide flexibility in social systems and increase mobility of individual social actors. Transparency in all social relations, whether those with strong ties or with weak ties, supports the optimisation of decision-making to the decision-maker by allowing access to sufficient information and forms a foundation for mutual trust that is essential in civic engagement.

From individuals' perspectives, those properties are also valuable for individuals' civic engagement and consequently for their 'embeddedness.' As discussed earlier, individual-society relationships are dynamic particularly in contemporary society. 'Embeddedness' can only be maintained by constant interactions with other social actors in networks. Strong ties provide stability and maturity in their social relationships. Weak ties provide opportunities for the development of new social relationships. Transparency allows individuals to optimise their choices.

One of the most important key assertions discussed in this chapter is that civic engagement is a dynamic concept, which does not fit into bureaucratic procedure. It is a challenge for public sectors to pursue civic engagement through their policies and initiatives. Their bureaucratic procedures have to be challenged in order to achieve a higher level of civic engagement with the rest of the world, which are networks of individuals and social groups connected to one another. It requires an holistic approach, because genuine civic engagement, which could support individuals' 'embeddedness,' involves all aspects of individuals' lives including the civic, political, social and cultural, which are interrelated and inseparable, and work at different levels.

Individual civic engagement practices can operate at any scale between international and neighbourhood. To achieve an overall civic engagement in society, not only do individual civic engagement practices have to be better and more numerous but also there needs to be a certain degree of flexibility and transparency to allow and encourage expansion of networks and efficient information flow. Public bodies have to find a way to adapt themselves to the culture of networks as opposed to their culture of hierarchy.

In this chapter, I discussed the concept of civic engagement broadly without restricting the discussion to its relevance to older people. Differences between the social group of older people and of any others defined as adult are not relevant to defining the concept of civic engagement. However, in the following chapters, I will focus on the civic engagement of older people to examine the government's initiatives and individuals' experiences.

CHAPTER SIX

6. CIVIC ENGAGEMENT OF OLDER PEOPLE IN THE UK IN THE GLOBAL CONTEXT

In the previous chapter, I discussed what civic engagement is. I argued that civic engagement is a dynamic concept and can be embedded in social systems of various forms in reality. The next three chapters are dedicated to the analysis of the empirical side of civic engagement, focusing predominantly on the public and voluntary spheres.

The aim of this chapter is to understand what are the UK policies and initiatives promoting civic engagement of older people and how they do so. In the next chapter I will discuss how civic engagement actually works with examples focusing on the London Borough of Greenwich.

Now I will first explore global-wide and international policies and initiatives relevant to civic engagement of older people. Those initiatives do not necessarily have hierarchical relationships with national and local initiatives. However, they affect and are affected by national and local initiatives and practices. Secondly, I will examine national policies and initiatives, primarily initiated by the UK government, to understand how such initiatives are related to the concept of civic engagement at a strategic level. Then I will also examine local governments' initiatives. Finally, I will discuss relationships between all of those policies and initiatives with a particular focus on their interrelationships across different specialities and different levels.

6.1 Global-wide promotions of civic engagement of older people

In contemporary society in particular, social trends in a state are inevitably affected by global trends. The interpretations of the concept of civic engagement in UK policies are influenced by those in the international policies. Therefore, although this study focuses on civic engagement practices in the United Kingdom, I will outline global trends of international

policies regarding civic engagement in this section.

Responding to growing older populations, there are many international practices focusing on older people. One of the most important and influential plans is probably the Madrid Political Declaration and International Plan of Action on Ageing, which was adopted at the United Nations Second World Assembly on Ageing in Madrid in 2002. The Assembly, as representatives of governments, adopted political declarations, in which they defined three priority directions to take actions on. Those three directions include: ‘older persons and development; advancing health and well-being into old age; and ensuring enabling and supportive environments (UN, 2002: 1).’

The aim of the International Plan of Action on Ageing is ‘to ensure that persons everywhere are able to age with security and dignity and to continue to participate in their societies as citizens with full rights (UN, 2002: 7).’ In another words, the plan of action endorses civic engagement of older people across the world although the term ‘civic engagement’ is not specifically employed in the document. The action plan has eleven central themes underlying the whole action plan, which are linked to a wider context of the improvement of economic and social conditions for all age groups. Those themes are further broken down into specific issues and objectives, for each of which action plans are suggested. The examination of those themes, issues, objectives and suggested action plans illuminates how the concept of civic engagement is interpreted in the international action plan on ageing.

The eleven themes can be summarised as follows: realisation of human rights and freedom, eradication of poverty, empowerment through income generating and voluntary work, provision of opportunities for learning and community participations, elimination of abuse and discrimination, gender equality amongst older persons, inter-generational relationships, social care and health care, integration of all sectors at all levels, potential use of technology and diversity of needs and involvement in decision-making processes. The descriptions of those themes and the following objectives, issues and actions express recognition of multiple aspects of civic engagement including civic, political, economic, social and cultural aspects and other multiple dimensions including psychological, physical/behavioural and socio-

cultural dimensions.

The term 'participation' is used in a rather broad sense based on the recognition of the dynamism of individual-society relations. For example, it is suggested that to achieve older people's full participation in a society, it is necessary to educate society to recognise older people's contributions to the community, and provide opportunities for older people's activities in a community and to combat discrimination, poverty and abuse. The implications of the term 'participation' cannot be limited to attendance at certain events as a matter of formality.

It is also clearly implied that the implementation of those plans is the governments' responsibility while it emphasises the importance of international collaborations at a strategic level as well as the importance of understanding and responding to the diversity of individuals' needs at a local level. The declaration and the plan are designed to work as guidance not only for governments but also for a wide range of stakeholders including private organisations, voluntary organisations, unions, academic organisations, religious institutions and the media (UN, 2002). Although governments or any other organisations do not have a legal obligation to pursue the declaration or the action plan, the action plan also includes proposals of monitoring and reviewing systems at a global and a national level.

While the declaration and the action plan are undoubtedly valuable for the promotion of civic engagement of older people across the countries at a strategic level, actions that the action plan suggests are still generic and the responsibility of designing detailed action plans to achieve the objectives is left in the hands of each member state. For example, under the objective as to encourage participation of older persons in decision-making processes at all levels, three actions are listed. They are to:

- (a) Take into account the needs and concerns of older persons in decision-making at all levels;
- (b) Encourage, when they do not already exist, the establishment of organizations of older persons at all levels to, inter alia, represent older persons in decision-making; and

- (c) Take measures to enable the full and equal participation of older persons, in particular older women, in decision-making at all levels. (UN, 2002: 10-11)

The actions listed above are too generic and difficult to evaluate each state's performance against those items.

In accordance with the Madrid Political Declaration and International Plan of Action on Ageing, there is another scheme initiated by the UN in relation to civic engagement. The Dubai International Award for Best Practices to Improve The Living Environment (DIABP) is not specifically targeted at older people but awards 'Best Practice' annually to applicant communities from all over the world (The Together Foundation and the UN-Habitat, 1996). The award is primarily designed to 'recognise and enhance awareness of outstanding and sustainable achievements in improving the living environment (UN-Habitat and Dubai Municipality, 2008: 6)' but also to promote and encourage citizens' participation in community development processes. A concept of civic engagement is incorporated in the criteria for 'Best Practice.' For example, 'positive impact in improving the living environment of people' suggests a basic level of civic engagement in all aspects of life from economy to health. Two of the additional criteria, 'leadership and community empowerment' and 'innovation within local contexts and transferability,' suggest a more advanced level of civic engagement (UN-Habitat and Dubai Municipality, 2008: 10).

For instance, the Burlington Legacy Project in the United States was awarded the Best Practice in 2004 for their successful involvement of local citizens in strategic decision-making processes for the development of a sustainable community. Local citizens and other stakeholders shared the recognition and understanding of local problems and the processes of resolving such problems. The Home Alone Programme in Singapore is another example of 'Best Practice.' The programme encouraged and facilitated inter-generational interactions by sending young people to older people living alone to help with domestic work and to be company for them. In contrast to the Madrid Political Declaration and International Plan of Action on Ageing, the 'Best Practices' Award offers a system to recognise values in specific cases rather than setting generic standards. The two initiatives complement each other.

A non-governmental organisation called 'AGE Platform Europe', which is a network for European, national, regional and local organisations of older people and working for older people, was launched in 2001 to facilitate co-operation between other organisations also working for older people across the countries in the European Union with financial support from the European Union itself. The ultimate goal of the organisation is to achieve a society 'inclusive of all ages and free from all forms of discrimination, where all citizens enjoy equal rights and equal access to fundamental goods and services and where all citizens, regardless of their age, are empowered to participate fully in society (AGE Platform Europe, 2008: 4).' In another words, it is to promote civic engagement of older people within the EU countries.

Nine goals and objectives are set to achieve this ultimate goal for AGE Platform Europe. Multiple aspects of civic engagement are acknowledged and included in their strategies. Some of the goals are related to generic issues such as age and gender equality, inter-generational solidarity and the image of active ageing. Some others concern more specific issues such as lifelong-learning, health, income and community participations. As a means to achieve those goals, AGE Platform Europe recognises the importance of older people's involvement. Internally, its member organisations of older people are involved in decision-making processes.

As an EU-wide organisation, it also aims to influence EU policies and to monitor European countries' performances according to international policies and strategies such as the Madrid Political Declaration and International Plan of Action on Ageing. AGE Platform Europe bridges between older people's organisations working at a local level and global and international institutions as well as between strategic initiatives and local practices.

Apart from those initiated by international institutions, there is a grassroots, bottom-up movement in regard to civic engagement. The so-called 'design for all' or Universal Design supports products, services and systems that are flexible enough to be used by people with the widest range of abilities including disabled and elderly people (see for example STAKES, 2006; and EIDD, 2004). The purpose of this movement is the inclusion of all people with

different physical abilities. In other words, it is to diminish barriers or distinctions between those people who have difficulties in using ordinal products and other people who do not. What is unique to the concept of universal design is that the inclusion is pursued not by targeting excluded people but by designing products that are suitable and usable for everyone regardless of their abilities. The products supported by the movement vary from small equipment, such as scissors which can be used by both right and left hands, to accessible housing and public spaces. All are essential in people's everyday life. This is a good example of initiatives that take advantage of global networks and influence individuals' lives. Such a practice connects an individual with a global realm. In Northern and Western Europe, there is another project called INCLUDE (The Swedish Handicap Institute, 2007), which introduces some examples of 'Design for all'. This regional alliance bridges between individuals within the regions and the global movement and helps the concept to be implemented locally.

Another international project relevant to civic engagement is called LETS (Local Exchange Trading System). LETS is a global movement and is operated locally. It installs a unique exchange system in local communities (Linton, M. and Soutar, A., 1994). Individual LETS groups are found in many different areas in various countries from all over the world and the United Kingdom is not an exception. The members of a LETS group exchange goods and services with one another in the spirit of harmony and with a desire of helping each other. It is an alternative way of exchanging values without money, which is a dominant globally exchangeable value. It enables us to value abilities, activities and time, which are difficult to be valued economically. Furthermore it brings the group members a sense of shared community. Within the UK, there are innumerable groups that use this system including two groups in the London Borough of Greenwich (LETSlink UK, 2007). For example, THISTLES is a name of a local currency, which is used instead of pounds in a LETS group of 90 members living within and around Fife in Scotland (Fife Council, 2008). Services on offer vary from short term pet care, organising events, and teaching foreign languages to groceries, books and gardening tools, according to their website (Fife Council, 2008). They are affiliated to LETSlink Scotland that helps in linking all Scotland LETS groups and they also organise events and festivals. LETS is also widely spread in Japan (LETSlinkup, 2008). In Tama-shi, one of the large new towns in Tokyo, COMO is used as their

local currency among the members of the COMO Club (COMO club, 2007). The members offer what they can and what they want using the website as a notice board as well as the newsletters. As many pilots demonstrate, LETS makes contributions to civic engagement of local residents based on their daily interactions within the community and a spontaneous feeling of belonging generated through the system rather than based on institutional frames which forcibly give them unity and integration as a community.

As shown by examples above, there are top-down initiatives as well as bottom-up initiatives at a global level. The former primarily create a climate and suggest directions for civic engagement by articulating the concept of civic engagement, while the latter implement the concept even though it may be a small scale and partial. Multiple aspects and various values of civic engagement are recognised at a global strategic level as well as a global practice level. Those initiatives one way or the other naturally effect initiatives and practices at a national and a local level in the UK. In the following sections, I will explore strategies and initiatives regarding civic engagement of older people at a national and a local level in the UK. The practices in the UK will be analysed in the following chapter.

6.2 National strategies and initiatives on civic engagement of older people

Provided that civic engagement is a multi-dimensional, inclusive concept that is concerned with individuals' everyday life, civic engagement of older people is relevant to a wide range of strategies and initiatives set by the UK government to impact older people's lives.

Alongside the global and international agenda reviewed in the preceding section, the UK government has its own agenda in relation to civic engagement of older people. Most of the initiatives regarding civic engagement of older people in the UK are launched under the umbrella of the UK's Modernising Government Agenda. The Modernising Government Agenda sets out three aims: ensuring that policy making is more joined up and strategic; making sure that public service users, not providers, are the focus, by matching services more closely to people's lives; and delivering public services that are high quality and efficient (The Prime Minister and the Minister for the Cabinet Office, 1999: 6). It is clearly stated that it is essential to involve service users in the decision-making process to deliver

services, which meet their needs. In response to such goals of the Modernising Government Agenda, the Better Government for Older People programme was set out in 1998 to bring older people into decision-making processes to improve public services for them (The Prime Minister and the Minister for the Cabinet Office, 1999: 26). The Better Government for Older People (BGOP) programme is designed to integrate individual initiatives and schemes that are relevant to public services for older people in the UK. In this section, I will explore the BGOP programme and other major initiatives initiated by the UK government to understand how they work at a national level.

6.2.1 The Better Government for Older People (BGOP) programme

The ‘Better Government for Older People’ (BGOP) programme started with 28 pilots in different areas across the UK funded to pursue improvements of local governance for older people in 1998. After two years, approaches and achievements of the pilots were evaluated by researchers at the University of Warwick. The evaluation report (Hayden and Boaz, 2000) proclaims the remarkable advantages of the eight BGOP principles based on the analysis of real voices collected from older people who were involved in the pilots. Those principles are:

- Listening to older people through consultations;
- Engaging with older people;
- Better meeting the needs of older people through improved information;
- Better meeting the needs of older people through delivering services differently;
- The contribution of older people (active ageing);
- Tackling ageism and promoting positive images;
- Key factors for a strategic approach; influencing the national agenda; and
- Conclusions and implications for policy and action.

Although what ‘engaging with older people’ means is ambiguous and does not seem to be an exact synonym for civic engagement of older people, those principles are all relevant to the concept of civic engagement. Importantly, the principles emphasise: the importance of information, the diversity of individuals’ needs, the potential of older people and the

importance of socio-cultural changes particularly in relation to the image of ageing and older people.

Since 2000, those principles were implemented locally through the nationwide network of the local governments or any other public and voluntary agencies interested in taking actions to improve their services for older people at a local level. The BGOP national office was set up as a hub of this nationwide network. The roles and activities of the BGOP national office were broad including: encouraging exchange of information between its members; coordinating with other agencies such as the Department of Health, one of the largest voluntary organisations for older people, Age Concerns to organise seminars and events promoting civic engagement of older people across the country; collecting the data on local practices; and evaluating the overall performance of the UK government against the International Plan of Action on Ageing to report to the United Nations.

The launch of the BGOP programme was a significant step forward towards the increase of flexibility in the public sector. The BGOP network allowed information flows across different local authorities from all over the country and different expertise from health, social care and housing in the public sector to voluntary organisations and academics, all of which rarely had an opportunity to exchange knowledge and experiences otherwise. Being connected to the UK government, particularly with the Cabinet Office, the BGOP office also worked as a bridge between the national government and local governments. Furthermore, the Advisory Group of Older People was also established to involve older people in discussions and activities regarding the BGOP programme as an application of the BGOP principles at a national level. It meant that the voice of individual older persons was valued at a national strategic level.

The BGOP national office was also involved in the management of the Older Persons Action Learning Sets, which I attended as part of the participant observation for this study. As mentioned earlier, the initiative was set up by the UK government and sponsored mainly by the Capacity Building Programme, a joint programme between the Local Government Association (LGA) and the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (the former body of the

Department for Communities and Local Government) and additionally by the Department for Work and Pensions and the Department of Health. The general theme of the learning groups was to improve public services for older people. It was designed to provide opportunities for those who are involved in the delivery of services for older people at a local level in various sectors including local government officers, staffs from Primary Care Trusts and members of voluntary organisations such as Age Concerns to exchange knowledge and experiences and to discuss and learn how to improve their local public services for older people. Guest speakers were often invited from outside including academics and the national government. The learning groups not only discussed issues which emerged from the group members' experiences at a local practice level, but also more fundamental concepts such as civic engagement and empowerment of older people. The discussions were held in a rather informal and relaxed atmosphere, which allowed the group members to express their concerns and develop their discussions without being strictly constrained within what were conventionally considered to be the roles and responsibilities of the public sector.

Although it is undeniable that the BGOP programme made a significant contribution to improving information flows in relation to civic engagement of older people across different sectors at different levels, there are also criticisms of its approach. Although the BGOP network or national office was not part of the UK government, it was not entirely independent from it, either. While the close relation with the government benefitted the BGOP network in terms of information by access to relevant information even before its official publication, the BGOP programme itself was not free from the top-down approach. The chair of the National Pensioners Conventions expressed his concerns over this in the interview, asserting that there was a danger that the BGOP programme would simply end up repainting and centralising new representation systems of older people whose voices had been more or less heard over the existing systems representing the voice of older people, which had existed for a long time prior to the formation of the BGOP programme.

Although I would partly agree with the statement of this interviewee, this thesis will argue that the BGOP programme, though it unmistakably takes a top-down approach, is not meaningless or unnecessary. The real danger was that people, especially those who work

in government, might act as if the BGOP programme was the answer to all the problems regarding public services for older people and their civic engagement. As I have shown in the preceding chapter, civic engagement of older people can be achieved by a combination of various practices and through various types of networks. The BGOP network has made a significant contribution by bridging various social actors and advocating the values of civic engagement amongst those who had not necessarily acknowledged those values in relation to their work in the public sector. However, it is also true that the network was primarily built upon the existing organisations, which had already been one way or the other connected to each other. It was not widely extended to include individual older people whose voice had not been reflected in decision-making processes at any levels regarding public services.

6.2.2 National Service Framework for older people

The National Health Services (NHS) in the Department of Health is one of those organisations that have been highly relevant to civic engagement of older people long before the establishment of the BGOP programme. Health is naturally one of the major concerns of older people and a fundamental concern for civic engagement. The NHS contributes to civic engagement of older people in a number of ways, for example, promoting patients' involvement in the process of service improvement in general.

Further to such general policy objectives, the NHS set out the National Service Framework (NSF) for Older People, which stipulates national standards and service models of care across health and social services for all older people, as a strategic approach to improve their services for older people (Department of Health, 2001). NSF for Older People set out eight standards, three of which are particularly relevant to civic engagement.

The NSF standard 1 aims to root out age discrimination (Department of Health, 2001). In accordance with this standard, the NHS designates 'Older People's Champions' to monitor NHS achievement of the NSF standards and all NHS organisations performances in terms of patients' involvement. Older people selected through the Patients' Forum are on board along with an elected council member or a NHS non-executive director and a clinical or practice champion. By including a council member on board and a NHS non-executive director, Older

People's Champions are designed to be connected to outside the NHS so that 'older people become and remain a priority within their organisations (Department of Health, 2004).'

While having Older People's Champions create systems in which older patients' voices are represented by champions in decision-making processes, the NHS also encourages co-operation within the Department of Health, between the NHS and social services, to encourage engagement of individual older patients in each service. NSF standard 2 is set to promote a person-centred approach (Department of Health, 2001). In accordance with standard 2, the NHS promotes the integration of patients' information and sharing such information between all staffs involved in healthcare and social care services for an individual older person including those in primary care trusts, local hospitals and social workers. It addresses the significance of respecting patients' dignity and privacy and of understanding their differences and specific needs including cultural and religious differences in their delivery of care (Department of Health, 2001). By working in partnership with social services, it is expected that a wide range of information on a single patient beyond his/her medical needs, such as housing and personal care needs, will become available. Such information can be used to understand the patient from multiple perspectives rather than a single aspect of illness or health problems. Trying to understand individuals from multiple perspectives significantly contributes to improving civic engagement of individuals because civic engagement links multiple factors including health, housing conditions and income that are interrelated.

NSF Standard 8 is related to public health rather than medical services for older patients. It is set to promote a healthy and active life in older age, acknowledging the importance of access to wider community facilities, such as libraries, education and leisure (Department of Health, 2001). Access to these facilities allows older people's continuous participation in and contributions to their local communities. To achieve this standard, it is suggested the NHS need to work in extensive partnerships with organisations outside the Department of Health, such as local councils, education and transport. The Rotherham Active in Later Life (RAILL) project was introduced as a good example of promoting activities for older people to keep fit and active (Department of Health, 2001). There are six local leisure centres in Rotherham providing various activities including: keep fit sessions and line dancing; seminars

and debates on health; and local older residents' involvement in planning and designing of the project itself.

Although the NHS primarily focuses on health issues, the initiatives led by the NHS are increasingly having an impact beyond health issues to respond to the complexity and the diversity of individuals' needs. The NHS encourages its local organisations, the NHS trusts, to develop their own networks at a local level in the public sector and also in the voluntary sector by working in partnerships within and beyond the department and with other organisations such as Older People's Champions and other voluntary organisations.

6.2.3 Neighbourhood Renewal programme

The Neighbourhood Renewal programme was launched in 2001 under the National Strategy Action Plan set by the Prime Minister at that time to improve the quality of community life in deprived neighbourhoods (Social Exclusion Unit, 2001). The Neighbourhood Renewal programme is relevant to civic engagement of residents at all ages in their neighbourhood. The Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy addresses the purposes of the programme including: to deliver decent housing and physical environment in neighbourhoods, which are necessary for better health, and to promote a new sense of community amongst residents. The former provides security and forms a foundation of social activities for individuals, both of which are significant elements of civic engagement. The latter is related to a sense of belonging and sharing, which is also the core value of civic engagement.

A report on the Neighbourhood Renewal programme by the government (ODPM, 2005b) introduces various examples of neighbourhood practices in England, some of which are particularly relevant to civic engagement. For example, Hartlepool New Deal for the Community (NDC) worked with ethnic minority residents to improve their access to training and employment prospects through adult education courses at a local centre. It encourages citizens from ethnic minority groups to be involved in economic activities in their later life as well as while they are in middle age (ODPM, 2005b). Another example is the street wardens' teams in Coventry, which support residents to improve community safety levels. The teams provide support by helping residents in reporting housing problems, identifying

and informing environmental issues and tackling anti-social behaviour.

The Neighbourhood Renewal programme is a national initiative whose strategies are implemented locally. Neighbourhood Renewal units in local governments are responsible for reporting to its national organisation and complying with the national strategies. At a strategic level, the programme provides opportunities for inter-generational collaborations by treating older people just as local residents like any other age groups. Furthermore, it is encouraged to see older people as a resource for neighbourhood management (ODPM, 2005b).

6.2.4 Supporting People and Housing Services for older people

In relation to housing, which is fundamental for the security of individuals' lives and therefore for civic engagement, there is a nationwide 'Supporting People' programme, a joint initiative led by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister at the time (now Department of Communities and Local Governments) in collaboration with Social Services and Housing Services (ODPM, 2004). As with the Neighbourhood Renewal programme, the government is primarily responsible for the programme while local authorities are responsible for implementing the strategies set by the national body within the areas working with various organisations in the delivery of services.

It was launched in April 2003 to provide housing related support services, which are preventative rather than substantive compared with health care and personal care, for vulnerable people including older people. The purposes of the programme include: delivery of quality of life and promotion of independence; delivery of services which are of a high quality, strategically planned, cost effective and complement existing care services; need-led service planning and developments; and working in partnership with local government, probation, health, voluntary sector organisations, housing associations, support agencies and service users (ODPM, 2004).

It was reported that in some cases the increased independence through the Supporting People

programme resulted in generating self-confidence and a sense of belonging in vulnerable people (ODPM, 2004). It confirms that independent life with a decent standard of quality of life is fundamental and also an effective facilitator of civic engagement.

Apart from the Supporting People programme, there are also other schemes relating to housing for older people. Sheltered Housing schemes are one of those, which support older people's independent lives by providing accommodations and domestic, social and health care services (Audit Commission, 2005b). There is also a lobby group called the UK coalition, working to improve living conditions for older homeless people (Audit Commission, 2005b). The group provide residential support as well as other relevant supports they need to survive and to be active in their community in an attempt to engage older homeless people with their communities.

The government asserts that effective housing provision combined with appropriate care, support and wider community services according to individuals' needs and conditions is essential for individuals to remain involved in social activities, while conversely poor housing can cause immobility, social exclusion, ill health and depression of individuals (DTLR and Department of Health, 2001). Those initiatives and schemes mentioned above are essential foundations for civic engagement of those who live in poor conditions because of their financial status or health condition.

6.2.5 Work and Pensions

As mentioned in chapter four, economic activities are dominant social determinants in individuals' lives especially in contemporary society. Thus, income, employment and pensions affect civic engagement of older people significantly. The 'Age Positive' team in the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) sets up strategies and policies to support people making decisions about working and retirement. The team collects and disseminates information by conducting research, by organising events and by publishing press and other publications to encourage individuals to make their own decisions (DWP, 2004a).

The 'Age Positive' team also organises the 'Age Positive' campaign. The campaign promotes positive attitudes towards ageing in employment. Some commercial companies, such as IKEA and Tesco, are identified as showing a positive attitude towards ageing and recognising the value of older people's experience and knowledge in their employment strategies and practices. Some local councils and NHS trusts were also identified as good practice for employing people over the retirement age.

At present, the state pension age is set to 65 years old for men and 60 years old for women. Those standards effectively affect the retirement age in the public and the private sectors. It was already announced that the UK government intended to raise the state pension age for men from 65 years old up to 68 years old from 2020. There are two causes of such pension reforms. First, they are due to financial necessity for the UK government. Currently a pension crisis is predicted due to demographic changes such as increasing longevity and the ageing society in the UK. Secondly, there is a socio-cultural demand from older people themselves. Older people who remain healthy in their later life do not have a reason to withdraw from their economic activities and are willing to stay financially independent.

Pension reform will have a significant impact on civic engagement of older people since it will affect older people's lifestyle and their relationship with society in various ways. Although the decision has already been made and the reform seems to be inevitable due to the financial condition of the UK government, some problems are already predicted. It is pointed out that older workers with physically harder manual jobs cannot work longer and these are the people who need pensions to live with low life expectancy and bad health. It is reported that there are huge differences in employment rates of people above 65 between those in higher managerial positions and professional staff and those in lower supervisory positions and technical staff (ONS, 2005).

There are some studies questioning the effectiveness of the reform as well. Building Society research indicates that there would be more people who save more than those who choose to work longer (Financial Times, 2005). The other study reveals that there are already 1 million people aged between 50 and 65 who want to work but are not able to find employment (The

National Audit Office, 2004).

It seems that social systems in relation to pension and employment in the UK are not responding well to the diversity of individuals' preferences, abilities and needs. Compared with other services such as health services and housing services, pensions and employment are strongly regulated by age criteria rather than needs-led. The lack of flexibility in social systems with regard to pension and employment is compensated by various types of income support services, which can be applied according to individuals' financial conditions, and by the information services provided by the Age Positive team as mentioned above.

6.3 Local strategies and initiatives on civic engagement of older people

The national agenda and initiatives introduced above are generally strategic, providing guidelines for local authorities. Local authorities are responsible for interpreting and fitting those strategies into their local contexts and for delivering services accordingly. The national government is responsible for monitoring and supporting local implementations of its agenda and strategies. In this section, I will first discuss the monitoring and supporting systems in the UK. The discussion is ultimately about social structures and social systems in the UK, which define power relations between the national government and local governments. I will then also introduce three examples of successful local practices for civic engagement of older people initiated by local governments. The examination of these examples illuminates key factors for a successful local practice in the public sector, which I summarise in the following section.

6.3.1 Monitoring and supporting local governments' performances

Those national agendas and strategies introduced above guide and also constrain services at a local level. Local governments are required to set their strategies complying with the national strategies and to establish action plans accordingly. Local implementations are generally monitored and evaluated through a hierarchical system within a section with a certain speciality such as housing, social care and health care. For example, the NHS has its own hierarchical structure headed by four national NHS organisations including the NHS England, the NHS Northern Ireland, the NHS Scotland and the NHS Wales. The NHS

England has 28 Strategic Health Authorities (SHAs), which support and manage Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) and other NHS organisations operating locally. Likewise, the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit and the Social Services Department have their own hierarchical systems with their departments in the central government on the top and departments in local governments at the bottom.

Apart from these sectional hierarchical systems, there are other types of systems in relation to the overall performance of local governments, in which local governments are monitored as well as supported. For example, there are two initiatives, Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) and Local Area Agreements (LAAs), promoting local partnership between different departments within local governments and other organisations by providing funding to improve effectiveness and efficiency of local services (ODPM, 2006, 2005a). Partnership is considered to be a means to improve public services using resources outside local governments. It is recommended in many other initiatives, such as 'Better Government for Older People' and 'Neighbourhood Renewal',

Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) is another assessment system for local governments' performance. Unlike the previous two initiatives, the assessment is done by an independent organisation, the Audit Commission. It offers a more comprehensive assessment from various perspectives including corporate assessment, use of resources, financial management, internal control, children and young people, social care, housing, environment and culture (Audit Commission, 2005a). The award of Beacon Status is an initiative for acknowledging excellent and innovative public services provided by local authorities (Hartley et al., 2002).

Each of these systems was created for its purposes with the common aim as to improve public services at a local level. The value of each system is in itself logically unquestionable. However, they are not mutually exclusive and, in fact, there are many criteria that repeatedly appear in those assessment and support systems. Thus, at a national level, there appears to be inefficiency in the system as a whole. The BGO national office (Hayden, C. and Boaz, A. 2000) identified inequality between local authorities in terms of access to those support

systems. Some local authorities accessed the supporting systems more than others and as a result of their improved public services they are more likely to be involved in discussions and in decision-making processes. On the other hand, local authorities without access to support are less likely to be involved in discussions or decision-making processes and therefore do not receive adequate information on opportunities to receive support to improve their public services.

Such an inequality reveals the limit of top-down approaches and hierarchical systems. As pointed out earlier one of the interviewees from the National Pensioners Conventions anticipated that the top-down approach would primarily work on the basis of existing structures and systems. Although those initiatives are designed to strengthen horizontal networks across different sectors at a local level, ironically the relationships between the national government and local governments are kept as hierarchical. As I discussed in chapter four, hierarchical systems tend to be rigid and inflexible. Local authorities that are relatively isolated in networks are less likely to have access to new information, which tends to be centralised.

However, using opportunities provided by the national government is not the only way to improve public services at a local level. The following three cases are the examples of successful practices for civic engagement of older people initiated by local governments. Those examples illuminate key factors that are required for a success of local initiatives and factors that cause failures of local initiatives in reverse, both of which I will discuss in the following section.

6.3.2 Examples of local initiatives

1) Manchester City Council

Greater Manchester is one of those areas where many practices relevant to civic engagement of older people can be found. Some of the practices are initiated by independent organisations in the area while some others are initiated by Manchester City Council. Although it is important to acknowledge that those practices led by independent organisations create a foundation for an overall success in terms of civic engagement of older people in the area, in

this section I will focus on initiatives led by the public sector.

Manchester City Council has its own community engagement strategy. In the strategy, local residents are seen as resources for the community rather than passive service users (Manchester City Council, 2005). It is emphasised that engagement of local residents would not only enable efficient allocations of public services but also provide them a sense of belonging, responsibility and ownership. These psychological factors are essential for civic engagement of local residents as well as for sustainable community development.

In accordance with the community engagement strategy, the Council introduced a scheme called 'ward co-ordination' to promote community engagement at a ward level. Each of the 33 wards plus the city centre have its own ward service co-ordination group (WSCG) composed of council officers, representatives from the local community and other public agencies and at least three ward councillors (Manchester City Council, 2005). The roles of the co-ordination groups include identifying priorities of local residents and developing and implementing action plans. Such localised groups are designed to capture the needs of local residents, including older people, and to act as representatives at the city level. The ward co-ordination scheme is embedded in a wider strategy of community engagement along with neighbourhood regeneration initiatives and health-related initiatives.

There is another initiative relevant to civic engagement led by the City Council. 'Sense of Place' was introduced as part of the Council's community engagement programme and is designed to encourage and facilitate residents to think about where they live to delineate what they want (Manchester City Council, 2007). It is a unique approach to increase residents' interest and awareness of the city and their local areas where their daily life is based. One of the projects conducted in relation to the scheme is particularly relevant to civic engagement of older people. 'A Life through a Lens' project in the Collyhurst Harpurhey area was designed to enhance inter-generational communications. In the project, pictures of the local area taken by young people, and those of older people's possessions were shared and prompted their conversations about the area that both generations share despite their age differences. Such shared experiences provide opportunities to develop their relationships to

a matured transaction level involving shared knowledge, respect, trust and a shared sense of place and belonging. Although the scale of the scheme is small, its effects are fundamental and sustainable for civic engagement of local residents.

Community strategies addressing engagement of citizens are not unique to Manchester City Council. What makes their practices unique and successful is to have a strategy that clearly identifies areas of actions and to empower residents by evoking a sense of belonging, responsibility and ownership rather than by providing financial or material support. Although local authorities are responsible for providing various types of support including financial, accommodation, social care, health care and so on, for those who are in need, it does not change the fundamental relationship between residents and local governments. Residents are dependent on local governments as service users. Only by sharing responsibilities for and ownership of the community, residents and local governments become equal as a social actor forming a society together.

2) Suffolk County Council

Partnership with Older People (POP) initiative is a good example of a bottom-up approach, which started in Suffolk County Council in collaboration with Age Concern and was then adopted by other local authorities including Warwickshire and the London Borough of Harrow. POP is a local network connecting older citizens and organisations working for older people in the area such as the County Council, local councils, health services and voluntary and community groups (Suffolk County Council, 2005). The purpose of the initiative is to improve the quality of life of older people by developing and supporting practical programmes in the area.

An extensive consultation with stakeholders and older people in the area formed outlines of the main objectives of the POP initiative. The objectives include improving older people's access to information, developing networks of older people and valuing the practical support, such as maintenance of gardens, that are not covered by social care services. While the importance of partnerships between different stakeholders and older people is widely acknowledged and often included in local government strategies, the POP initiative has a

distinctive approach, which led to its success.

First of all, the POP initiative involves both the County Council and local councils within the county. Co-ordinations between the county level and the local council level increase the range of resources and opportunities, which otherwise would have been limited to those within the local area. Secondly, just like the example of Manchester City Council, it focuses on empowering older people by supporting older people's access to information and supporting the development of their networks. Finally, it also seems to be crucial that the Council recognises the importance of small scale but practical support that is out of the scope of the conventional public services.

The outline of the initiative was presented to representatives of local authorities at a regular meeting of the BGOP network as an innovative approach to improve public services for older people. Some other local authorities then adopted the initiative in their local areas. It also demonstrates a successful effect of the BGOP network as a information hub for different local authorities.

3) Greater London and London Boroughs

In Greater London, which has undoubtedly unique features in terms of demography, socio-physical conditions and resources compared with other parts of the UK, there are innumerable practices relevant to civic engagement of older people at a city scale and at an individual ward level. Reflecting various urban conditions unique to London, such as a concentration of population, highly urbanised city centre and high demand for transportation systems, there are certain issues that need to be strategically dealt with at a city scale or even wider scale.

The London Older People's Strategy Group (LOPSG) is a charity group of older people working closely with the mayor of London. They organise a series of London Older People's Assemblies annually since the first event in 2002 (Greater London Authority, 2003). The assemblies provide opportunities for older people living in London to discuss various issues such as transportation, culture, housing, health, pensioner poverty and climate change

(Greater London Authority, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007). The events attracted a number of older people from various organisations and groups including Local Pensioners' Forums, the National Pensioners Convention and the Age Concern London.

The 'London Older People Strategy' was published in spring 2006 by the Mayor of London on the basis of these consultations at the Assemblies (The Mayor of London, 2006). The strategy includes a range of issues related to public services for older people including transportation, employment, income, health and housing as well as more generic issues such as information, empowerment and inclusion. Although the strategy is not mandatory, it is followed by action plans including certain targets and goals to be achieved by all boroughs in London.

The London Borough of Camden is one of the boroughs which have been focusing on engagement of older people long before the establishment of the London Older People Strategy and a number of practices relevant to civic engagement of older people can be found in the borough. Camden Council set up the Quality of Life Strategy for Camden's older citizens in line with their overall Quality of Life Strategy (London Borough of Camden, 2002). The strategy for older people set out eight objectives to achieve the strategic aim as to improve and maintain the quality of life of older citizens in Camden. Those include: promoting active engagement of older people; ensuring older people have equal access to all services; and challenging assumptions about ageing by promoting inter-generational activities and networks. Inclusion of and support for older people from ethnic minority groups are identified as a high priority in the borough where the ethnic minority population is increasing (London Borough of Camden, 2002).

Experiences of successful practices in the London Borough of Camden as well as those in other boroughs are shared by representatives from other London boroughs through the BGOP London network. Although each borough is unique in terms of demographics and resources, there are certainly some common issues such as the increasing demand for accessible public services for older people from ethnic minority groups. The BGOP London network also offers opportunities for representatives of London boroughs to be involved in

decision-making processes at a city level. For example, the representatives were given an opportunity to address their opinions on a draft of London Older People Strategy before it was officially published.

6.4 Key values for local initiatives

Examinations of national initiatives and local initiatives highlighted some key values that are necessary to the success of local initiatives and local implementation of national initiatives. In reverse, it also revealed why the national initiatives are not successfully implemented in all local authorities. These key values for success can be summarised in the following three points. These include: co-ordination between national, regional and local strategic levels, partnership across different expertise and different sectors and finally a bottom-up approach.

6.4.1 Co-ordinations between national, regional and local strategic level

First of all, it was identified that co-ordinations between strategies at national, regional and local levels were essential to develop efficient and effective action plans. National agendas and strategies are designed to set goals, principles and directions as well as to identify major issues that need to be tackled or solved. Most of the national agendas and strategies including those introduced earlier in this chapter address the importance of local contexts and expect local authorities to establish their own strategies and action plans to achieve these goals set at the national level. Naturally, national agendas and strategies tend to be generic and conceptual rather than specific and practical.

Local strategies should not only follow and repeat what is stated in the national strategies but also interpret principles and concepts to fit them into their local contexts. Local governments have different roles from the national government. The roles of local governments are to identify priorities in their local areas and available resources and to develop action plans accordingly. At present, the relationships between the national government and local governments are still hierarchical. Communications between those two levels are rather directional: national to local. National agendas and strategies tend to be seen as imposed goals rather than goals reflecting local needs.

Some of the initiatives introduced above demonstrate examples of co-ordinations and interactions between the national and local levels, and between regional and local levels. The POP project in the Suffolk County Council promotes a partnership between the County Council and local councils within the county. The partnership between the regional and the local levels helps to optimise allocation of resources by increasing the availability and variety of resources. The BGOP network at a national level and the BGOP London network offer their member organisations working at various levels opportunities to exchange knowledge and share experiences across the national, regional and local levels. These partnerships and networks allow information flow in both ways. Local issues and priorities can be reflected in strategies at a regional and a national level.

On the other hand, it also appears that the lack of co-ordinations between national and local level causes inefficiency, confusion and inequality. As mentioned above, the initiatives promoting partnerships at a local level, such as the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) and the Local Area Agreements (LAAs), are not used effectively on the whole. Although some local authorities benefit from those initiatives, they are still top-down in approach and do not change the dynamics of national-local relations.

6.4.2 Partnership across different expertise and different sectors

The importance of partnership across different expertise and different sectors was recognised and supported in most of the initiatives at all levels. At a national level, these initiatives discussed earlier in this chapter including the Neighbourhood Renewal programme and the Supporting People programme recognised the complexity of individuals' needs and promoted collaborations between healthcare services, social care services, housing services, academics and local residents themselves. However, because of the sectionalism, which divides governmental departments, and the hierarchical systems from a national level to a local level within each of the department, the responsibilities to pursue those initiatives tended to be taken separately at a local level. As mentioned earlier, local Neighbourhood Renewal units tended to be only concerned with achieve the goals set in the Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy at a national level and local primary care trusts tend to focus on NHS initiatives.

Local governments have responsibilities to develop their strategies to improve their public services to respond to local needs by integrating those initiatives and co-ordinating their resources efficiently. The Community Engagement Strategy proposed by Manchester City Council is a good example of integrating and co-ordinating various relevant schemes while recognising and responding to local needs. Instead of allocating responsibilities to respond to requirements in each of the national initiatives to relevant departments or organisations, Manchester City Council integrated all those requirements and rearranged them according to their community strategy.

6.4.3 Bottom-up approach: local to national, individuals to communities

Finally, there appears to be a consensus that a bottom-up approach is essential for civic engagement and the improvement of public services. As discussed earlier, the top-down approach generally works on the basis of existing systems and existing networks. Individuals or organisations that are well connected and position themselves in the centre of networks tend to benefit from initiatives because they have access to relevant information. Those that are relatively isolated in networks tend to remain isolated because of the lack of information. As mentioned earlier, communications between different levels, which allow information flows from a local to a national level, are essential to reflect local needs in national strategies.

Furthermore, it was revealed that empowering older people or local residents was effective for civic engagement and for community development. An example of the 'Sense of Place' project in Manchester City demonstrated that a sense of belonging, responsibility and ownership forms the foundation of a sustainable community. A sense of belonging, responsibility and ownership is not something that local governments can give to individuals. As a micro civic engagement model illustrates, they are what can grow and can be created through interactions between individuals. Local governments can only empower individuals by supporting activities that evoke the awareness in those who are involved.

By sharing responsibilities for and ownership of the local community, the relationships between residents and local governments become equal as a social actor and dynamic. This dynamism is essential for the sustainability and development of the relationships. Civic

engagement models introduced in the previous chapter demonstrated that shared knowledge, experiences and identities and mutual trust are essential values for the development of civic engagement, through which relationships between individuals and local governments can be sustained and developed.

6.5 Summary

In this chapter, I examined initiatives at all levels from local to international, which are relevant to civic engagement of older people to set the context of UK policies and initiatives promoting civic engagement of older people and how they do so.

It was identified that various civic engagement values, such as a sense of belonging and information to make a decision, are recognised and valued at a strategic level. I also discussed three key values that are essential for successful initiatives for civic engagement. Those include: co-ordination between different levels, partnerships between different expertises and different sectors and a bottom-up approach. The examples of local initiatives that I discussed above demonstrated the effectiveness of those key factors.

It seems that at a strategic level, civic engagement is valued and pursued. Although there are a variety of languages used to describe what I define as civic engagement, there are many policies and initiatives that actually concern civic engagement and promote it. The idea is there. It suggests that there is a good foundation at present for civic engagement practices to be developed. However, policies and initiatives at a strategic level do not change our lives on their own. For those policies and initiatives to be meaningful, they need to be translated into action plans and reflected at an actual service delivery level. In reality, it seems that these three key factors for the success of civic engagement are rarely realised at a local level. The culture of hierarchy in the public sector seems to be working as a resistance against pursuing those values.

In the next chapter, I will investigate how those policies and initiatives are implemented or not implemented with a focus on the case of the London Borough of Greenwich. I will

particularly focus on those three key factors and discuss why the London Borough of Greenwich failed in its Better Government for Older People project.

CHAPTER SEVEN

7. PROVISION OF LOCAL PRACTICES: THE EXAMPLE OF THE LONDON BOROUGH OF GREENWICH

In the previous chapter, I examined policies and initiatives relevant to civic engagement of older people at all levels from local to global. By examining a wide range of initiatives across different expertise and different levels, I illustrated how each of the initiatives worked in relation to a concept of civic engagement and how those initiatives are related to each other in general. Whilst I identified key factors at a strategic level that are essential in pursuing civic engagement of older people, I also pointed out that there seemed to be a resistance against pursuit of those values in the existing social systems especially in the public sector where a culture of hierarchy still dominates and determines the way public bodies work. Such a resistance appears at an operational level rather than a strategic level.

In this chapter, I will further investigate initiatives relevant to the civic engagement of older people at an operational level with a particular focus on the London Borough of Greenwich. Initiatives are examined to understand how they operate; how they are related to strategies at all levels, and how they are related to civic engagement of older people. The analysis of older people's civic engagement practices at an operational level will illustrate mechanisms that work as a resistance against the pursuit of those key values for civic engagement of older people, which were highlighted in the preceding chapter.

As mentioned in chapter two, I was involved in the BGOP project in the London Borough of Greenwich from an early stage. My research itself, including the data collection and the data analysis, was an important part of the BGOP project. Most of the data collection by document surveys and interviews was conducted as part of the BGOP project. However, this thesis is perhaps able to be more objective in hindsight than the report written during the project in analysing the processes of the BGOP project itself.

I will start from a brief overview of the socio-demographics of older people in the borough providing a local context for civic engagement of older people. Then I will outline public services for older people in the borough in relation to national and local initiatives. Based on the understanding of those social contexts, I will examine older people’s civic engagement practices and their relationships with each other and with national and local initiatives. In addition, I will analyse perceptions of civic engagement of those who are involved in older people’s civic engagement practices in relation to their positions. Finally, I will discuss the problems and difficulties in implementing goals and principles set in national and local strategies, which exist in social systems, in social structures and in perceptions of people who are involved in the operations of civic engagement practices.

7.1 Socio-demographic contexts of the London Borough of Greenwich

7.1.1 Demographics of older people in Greenwich

Among local authorities within the UK, the percentage of the population aged 65 and above for the London Borough of Greenwich is below the national average (table 7.1). According to the National Statistics, the percentage of the population aged 65 and above in the London Borough of Greenwich was 12.1% in 2004, which was significantly lower than the UK average of 16.0%, whereas it was in line with the average of Greater London (12.0%) (ONS, 2007). This figure was projected to drop by 0.5% in 20 years while the overall population of the borough was expected to grow.

Table 7.1 Older People Population, 2004

	Total Population Growth (%) (2004 – 2024)	65 + population (%)		75 + population (%)	
		2004	2024	2004	2024
LB Greenwich	121.4	12.1	11.6	6.0	5.7
Greater London	115.6	12.0	12.2	5.7	5.9
The UK	109.0	16.0	20.5	7.6	10.5

The demographics of the London Borough of Greenwich stand out amongst other local authorities in the UK due to the high proportion of its population from ethnic minority groups (table 7.2). According to the crude ‘racial’ ethnic criteria of the 2001 UK census, while in

the UK as a whole 92.1% of the population is white, the population of the London Borough of Greenwich is more ethnically mixed (ONS, 2001). The ethnicity of the population is diverse.

Table 7.2 Populations in the London Borough of Greenwich by ethnic group

Ethnic group	Ethnic group %
White	77.1%
Mixed	2.7%
Asian or Asian British	6.6%
Black or Black British	11.1%
Chinese or Other Ethnic group	2.3%
Total	100%

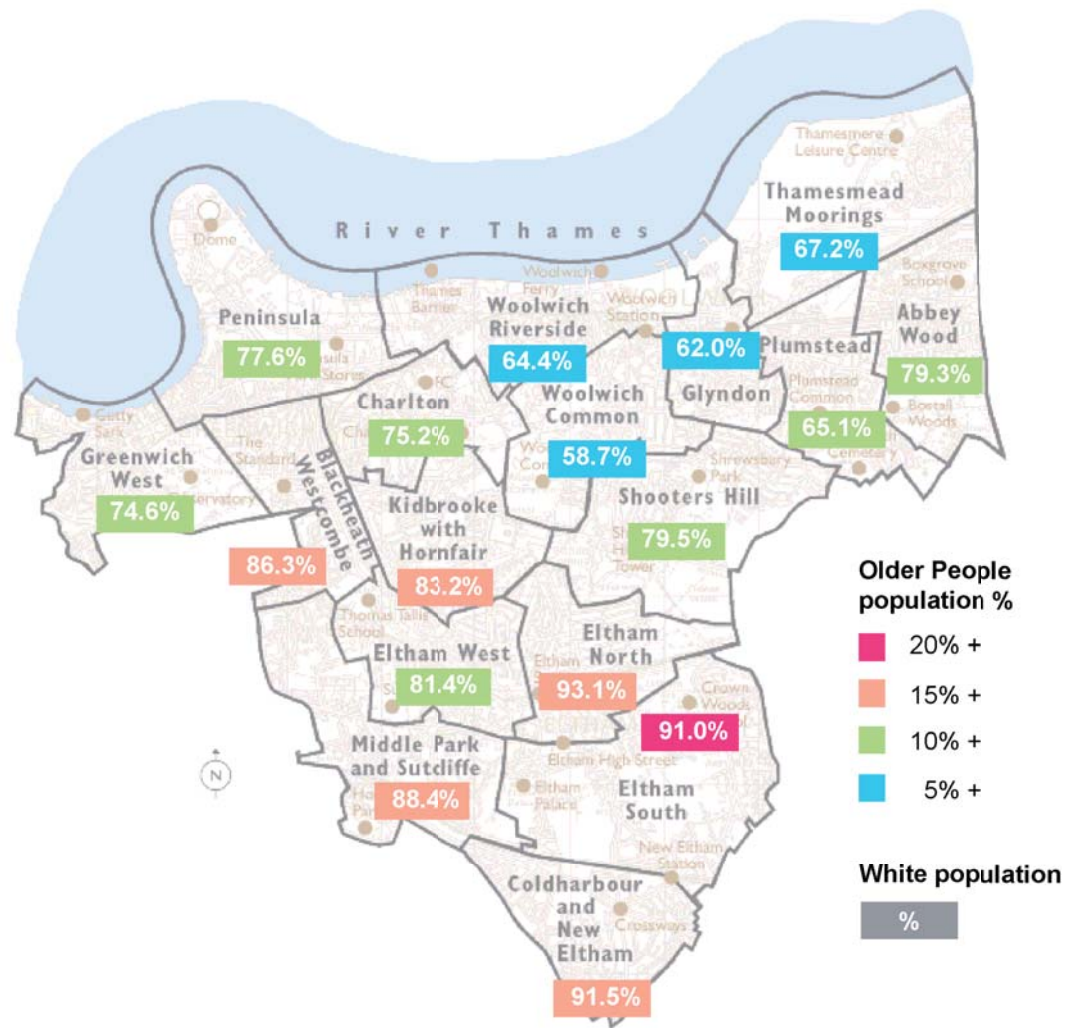
In the UK, it is the white population that is proportionately older compared to other ethnic groups (table 7.3). The 65 and above age group represents almost 16% of the White population both in the UK and in the London Borough of Greenwich (ONS, 2001). The ethnic minority populations are younger in the UK overall and even more so in the London Borough of Greenwich. Reflecting migration to the UK in the 1950s and 60s, the 65 and above age group represents only 8% of the black population. For the Asian population, reflecting migration in the 1970s, only 4% are in this age group.

Table 7.3 Population of older people by ethnic group

Ethnic minority group with age 65 and above	Percentage of total UK population	Percentage of total LB Greenwich population
Overall population	15.0%	13.0%
White	15.8%	16.0%
Black and Black British	8.0%	2.5%
Asian and Asian British	4.3%	5.0%
Mixed and Mixed British	2.0%	2.0%
Chinese and other	6.0%	5.0%

The percentage of the older population is also different between wards within the borough. The figure 7.1 illustrates differences between wards in terms of the older population and ethnicity. Generally, wards with a higher proportion of white population have a higher proportion of older population.

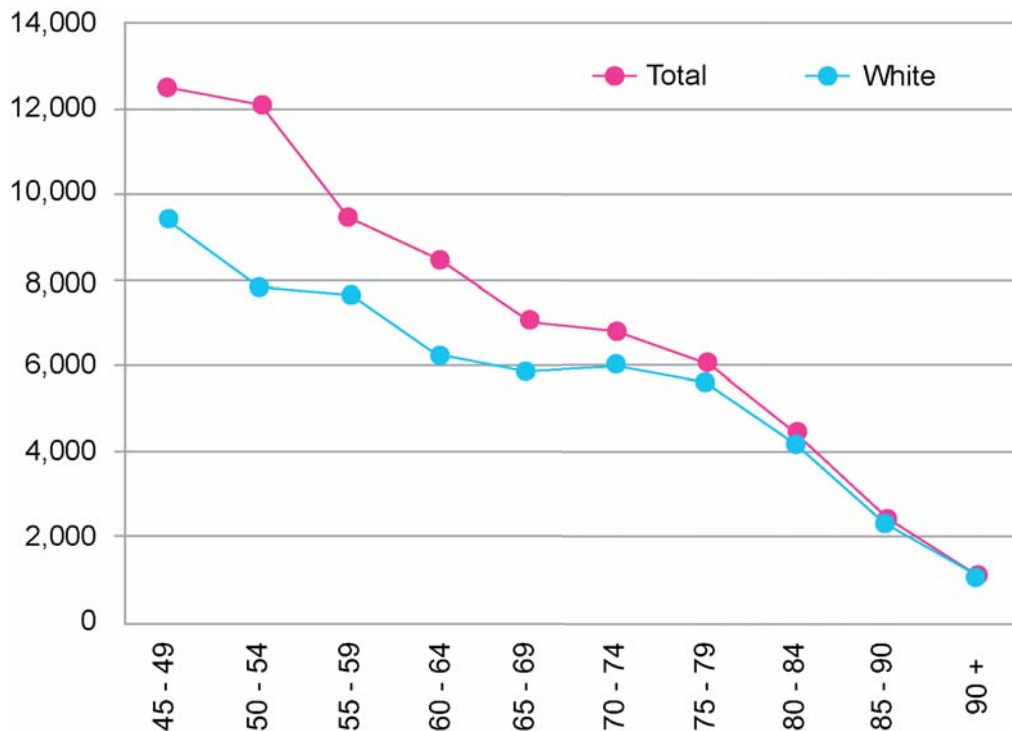
Figure 7.1 Older people population and ethnicity by ward



Source: Greenwich Council (2008)

However, this condition is expected to change in the next ten years. Figure 7.2 indicates that although older age groups have a relatively smaller proportion of non-white groups at present, it is predicted that in ten years time the proportion of ethnic older people in the London Borough of Greenwich will change and there will be larger non-white population in older age groups. It means the cultural needs of those people in ethnic groups will also change accordingly.

Figure 7.2 Total and white population by age group



To summarise, it was identified that population ageing in the London Borough of Greenwich is not advanced compared with other parts of the UK. It is predicted that the proportion of ethnic minority older people will significantly increase in the next ten years. It suggests that requirements for public services in the borough will be required to adjust to their socio-cultural needs.

7.1.2 Public services for older people in the London Borough of Greenwich

Prior to the launch of the BGOP project in 2003, which was initiated by the Social Inclusion and Justice Division in the Chief Executive's Department of Greenwich Council, the council had applied for a pilot scheme of the national BGOP programme back in 1998. The Social Services and the Greenwich Teaching Primary Care Trust were the core members in the application team in 1998. After their application was rejected, the team that had worked on the application together was dispersed. Since then, apart from standard public services for older people there had been no major initiative specifically to promote civic engagement of older people until the launch of the BGOP project in 2003. It is suspected that issues regarding older people had not been a priority for the council because of the relatively small proportion of the older population in the borough.

In 2003, when the BGOP project in the London Borough of Greenwich was launched no single person was aware what kind of public services in relation to civic engagement of older people were available within the borough. Therefore, the first task of this project was the identification of existing good practices of civic engagement of older people in the borough, so that any new models of civic engagement of older people for the borough could be appropriate. The project started identifying relevant social actors outside the council as well as within it. It was at this point that I and the University of Greenwich became involved.

By means of document surveys and informant interviews, whose details were explained earlier in chapter two, I identified major public services, which were provided by different council departments or organisations, that were relevant to the civic engagement of older people in the borough. Those service providers included Social Services, Housing Services, the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit, the Social Inclusion and Justice Division, the Greenwich Teaching Primary Care Trust and finally a quasi-independent voluntary organisation called the Greenwich Partnership.

Below, I will provide an overview of what each department and organisation does in relation to civic engagement of older people. Although it is not a directly state-run public organisation, I will start with the Greenwich Partnership as it was in charge of the Greenwich Strategy, which set the visions for the future of the borough in various areas.

1) Greenwich Partnership

This was a quasi-independent voluntary organisation working together with all sectors including the public, private and voluntary sectors. The Greenwich Partnership board, which was composed of members from Greenwich Council and the business, community and voluntary sectors, also worked closely with the Neighbourhood Renewal panels and two other voluntary organisations, Greenwich Council for Racial Equality and Greenwich Association of Disabled People (Greenwich Partnership and Greenwich Council, 2003). As an organisation, the Greenwich Partnership connected different sectors and also acted as a bridge between residents and the Council via the Neighbourhood Renewal panels, which were composed of local residents.

Its primary responsibility was to monitor and evaluate the Council's performance against the Greenwich Strategy, which was an overall strategy for the public services in the borough. It set visions and objectives to improve public services for those who lived and worked in Greenwich and for visitors by integrating individual strategies set by council departments or other public bodies such as NHS Trusts. It is noticeable that the remit of this strategy was inclusive rather than limited to the residents in the borough or to UK citizenship holders.

However, while the Greenwich Strategy offered an overview of strategies for a wide range of issues including health, housing, business, leisure, safety, education and so on, its visions and objectives remained generic. The responsibility for detailed objectives and following action plans was kept in the hands of each council department or public body. Unlike the case of the area co-ordination plan in Manchester City Council, cross-departmental connections remained at the strategic level. Public services for older people were still dealt with by individual council departments and other public bodies such as the Greenwich Teaching Primary Care Trust except in the schemes involving several departments and organisations, such as the Supporting People programme, as discussed in the preceding chapter.

2) Social Inclusion and Justice Division, Chief Executive's Department

The Social Inclusion and Justice Division in the Chief Executive's Department has its own strategies to tackle any form of inequality within the borough and was in charge of monitoring other council departments' performances in relation to the equality.

As noted earlier, one of the distinctive characteristics of the demographics of the borough is the high proportion of its ethnic minority population while the proportion of its older population is relatively low. Reflecting such demographic trends, the focus of the Social Inclusion and Justice had been racial equality rather than equality in general. The BGOP project in the borough was part of the first strategic step for the Social Inclusion and Justice division to take action in relation to equality and other issues for older people, who had also been identified as a disadvantaged group in terms of social equality along with children, women and disabled people.

This step also had a political implication. By promoting the BGOP project as an umbrella initiative embracing all other existing initiatives and practices within the borough that are relevant to civic engagement of older people, the Social Inclusion and Justice division sought to strengthen its position of being on top of all other departments and other organisations. That is, its approach to the BGOP project was undoubtedly top-down, exploiting existing structures and systems.

3) Social Services

The Social Services department is a local council department mainly in charge of delivering services related to social security and social care, which in principle supports civic engagement of service users at a fundamental level. There is a team dedicated to the management and delivery of services for older people such as social care assessments, day centres, care homes and home care services.

The interviews included two interviewees from the Social Services department. One was the head of the corporate policy team in the department and was in charge of overall services of the department. The other was a project manager, who worked closely with individual older people on a day-to-day basis. The comments from these two interviewees in different positions within the same department revealed a contrast between their views on older people and civic engagement.

At a strategic level, older people were regarded as one of the main categories of user groups of social services (the others were children and adults under 65). Occasional consultation events and regular open meetings were identified as opportunities for all service users to get involved in the department's decision-making processes to design service provisions. In addition to those events, the department conducts their own statistical data analysis to understand needs for social services within the borough. However, it was pointed out that those events tended to be attended by the same people (the so-called 'usual suspects'). As a result, neither those events nor the data analysis managed to capture the whole variety of individuals' needs.

In principle, the diversity and complexity of individual older people's needs were acknowledged. In relation to the National Service Frameworks (NSF) standard 2, which promotes a person-centred approach in healthcare services (discussed in the preceding chapter), the Social Services and local PCTs are working together on single assessment schemes to share service users' information between them. This prevents repetitive questions and allows assessments of individuals' needs from multiple angles including health and social care.

Another partnership was found between the Social Services and the Housing Services in relation to residential services such as sheltered housing schemes and extra sheltered housing schemes. Social workers help the assessment of older people's conditions for those residential services. However, it was pointed out that those links were still under construction and that the links need to be extended to those who deal with safety, transportation and public environment including street lights and pavements.

4) Housing Services

The Housing Services Department provides accommodation-related services, which also in principle support civic engagement. Generally, demands for those services are related to financial status or to health conditions, or both. Low income can result in low-standard housing conditions while health problems can shape accommodation service demands. Decline of health often requires a great amount of health and social care, which may not easily be delivered to an individual's home.

Just like the Social Services Department, the Housing Services Department has an elderly services unit, which is responsible for older people's quality of life in a community. The unit is in charge of provisions and management of sheltered housing, over 50's flats, lunch clubs and an IT centre for older people (over 55) in addition to some other services such as community alarm services and resettlements. They also work in partnership with health and social services for hospital services and extra care schemes, which provide a higher level of social care and health care services in sheltered accommodations. Those partnerships are supported by the national initiative, 'Supporting People', which was discussed in the

preceding chapter.

Secure and decent accommodation is one precondition for civic engagement and the right to a physically secure place to live is a fundamental civic right of citizens. Therefore the main services provided by the Housing Services are crucial in developing civic engagement for those whose fundamental rights to live safely are threatened in any way. In addition, the Housing Services also deliver services such as lunch clubs at some sheltered housing schemes to provide opportunities for socialising with other people by offering space and time for interactions in casual settings. Some of the groups of sheltered housing residents become actively engaged with a wider society and their representatives often attend consultation events. Those examples prove that informal social networks can be a basis of more formal types of civic engagement.

5) Neighbourhood Renewal Unit

The Neighbourhood Renewal programme was a national government initiative, started by the Department for Communities and Local Government (formerly the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister), targeting improvements in the living environment in deprived areas in Great Britain through engagement of residents themselves. The Neighbourhood Renewal unit is in the Chief Executive's department of the Council and runs the Neighbourhood Renewal programme locally in the borough in partnership with the Greenwich Partnership. Although the unit is part of the local council, because they are funded directly by the national government without passing through the local government, the unit acts more independently than other departments or divisions.

The national initiative had four cross-cutting themes, focusing on neighbourhoods that were the most deprived areas in Britain. The four themes are:

- a) children and families, promoting health, achievement and well-being;
- b) jobs and training, creating ladders of opportunity for work, enterprise, skills and income;
- c) neighbourhoods, place to live and grow;
- d) better access to services, a new way of doing business with diverse communities and

developing shared values, knowledge and skills (Neighbourhood Renewal Unit, 2002).

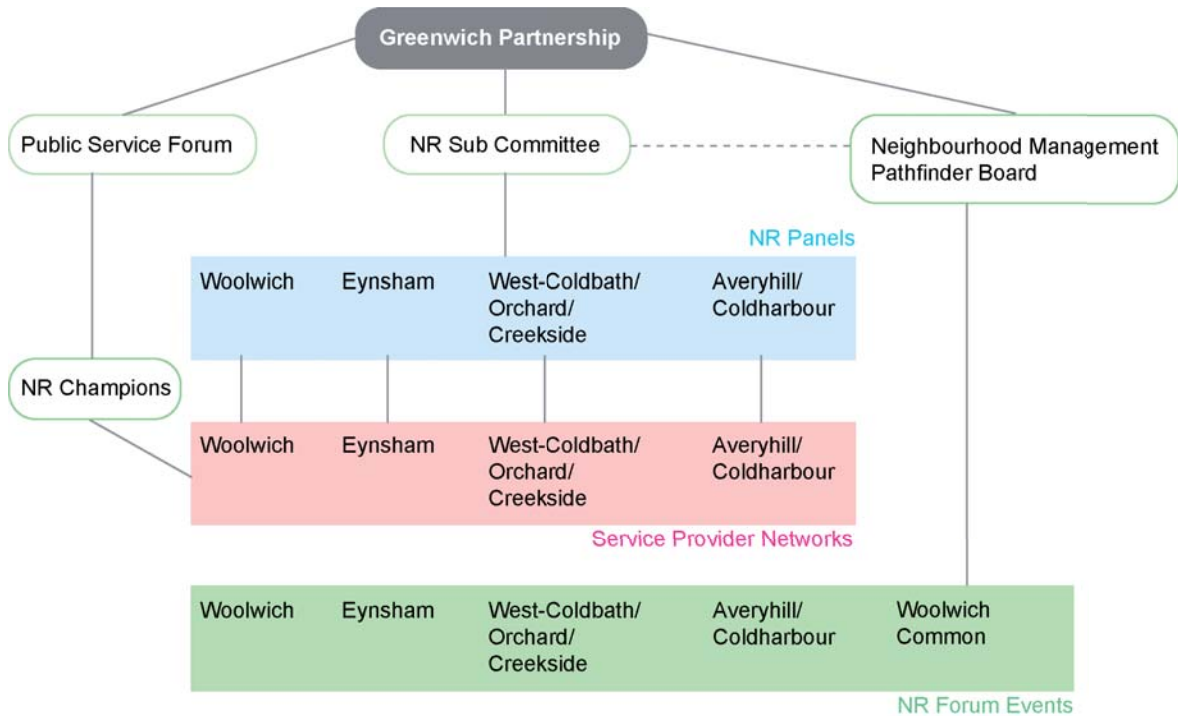
The national initiative was aimed at improving the civic engagement of residents in the most deprived areas not only by providing essential supports but also by empowering them for independent life and their community development. There were four areas in the London Borough of Greenwich, which were identified as among the most deprived in Great Britain and set as priority areas in the national initiative. The local Neighbourhood Renewal unit is responsible for identifying issues and priorities in each of those neighbourhoods and for setting and managing initiatives at a neighbourhood level.

The mechanism of operations of the local Neighbourhood Renewal programme in the London Borough of Greenwich is demonstrated in the diagram below (figure 7.3). The core of the systems of the programme is a neighbourhood panel, constituted by local residents often including older people, in each of the neighbourhoods set as a priority area. On the basis of understanding the multiple needs in those priority areas, a service provider network in each of those neighbourhoods was composed of a variety of experts including police, doctors and nurses, depending on locally unique issues. In each of those neighbourhood areas, the neighbourhood panel and the service provider network worked together to identify and discuss local issues and priorities and to plan and implement action plans for solutions while the local Neighbourhood Renewal unit facilitated their activities. Neighbourhood Renewal forums were often held to exchange knowledge and experiences between different neighbourhoods. Local residents in those neighbourhood areas were represented by their neighbourhood panel members at the Neighbourhood Renewal subcommittee where they made decisions on overall local Neighbourhood Renewal strategies and action plans for the London Borough of Greenwich together with council members and members from the Greenwich Partnership.

Although its operations were limited to four priority areas in the borough, the local Neighbourhood Renewal programme successfully established a system in which local residents were involved in decision-making processes at the borough level while they worked closely with members from different sectors including public, private and voluntary

organisations in their neighbourhood.

Figure 7.3 Four priority areas in the Neighbourhood Renewal programme in the London Borough of Greenwich



NR = Neighbourhood Renewal

The original diagram in Greenwich Strategy (Greenwich Partnership, 2003) has been simplified.

6) Greenwich Teaching Primary Care Trust

The Greenwich Teaching Primary Care Trust (Greenwich TPCT) is the only primary care trust in the borough. It has a strong relationship with its national body, NHS England and ultimately the Department of Health rather than with the local Social Services division in Greenwich Council. As a local primary care trust, it is accountable for implementing the national and regional NHS strategies, including the National Service Framework (NSF) for Older People. In accordance with those strategies, it operates several schemes that are relevant to civic engagement.

In line with the national strategy, it manages and facilitates Local Patients' Forums, Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALs) and the Commission for Patients and Public Involvement, and for older patients in particular Older People's Champions, through all of

which patients are involved in decision-making processes of the primary care trust at various levels (Greenwich Teaching Primary Care Trust, 2004).

Some staff at the primary care trust were involved in the application for a pilot of the national Better Government for Older People programme working with Social Services in Greenwich Council. Since it was turned down, the primary care trust's partnership with Social Services and other organisations had been confined within the arrangements formally promoted by the national NHS framework and had not been developed beyond them. Likewise, their contributions to civic engagement of older people were mainly what was promoted by the NSFs for older people, including the involvement in strategic decision-making processes through the Older People's Champions, the person-centred approach and public health, as noted in the preceding chapter.

7) Summary

Overall, there are a variety of public services and initiatives that are relevant to civic engagement of older people in the London Borough of Greenwich like any other local authority in the UK. Major relevant national strategies, which were discussed in the preceding chapter, were implemented through the council departments and other public organisations within the borough. However, the strategies and initiatives of those local public bodies merely followed the national strategies and initiatives while those local bodies worked as subsidiaries of their relevant national bodies. That is, it was apparent that hierarchical relationships between local bodies and their relevant national bodies were more influential than horizontal relationships between different departments and organisations at a local level.

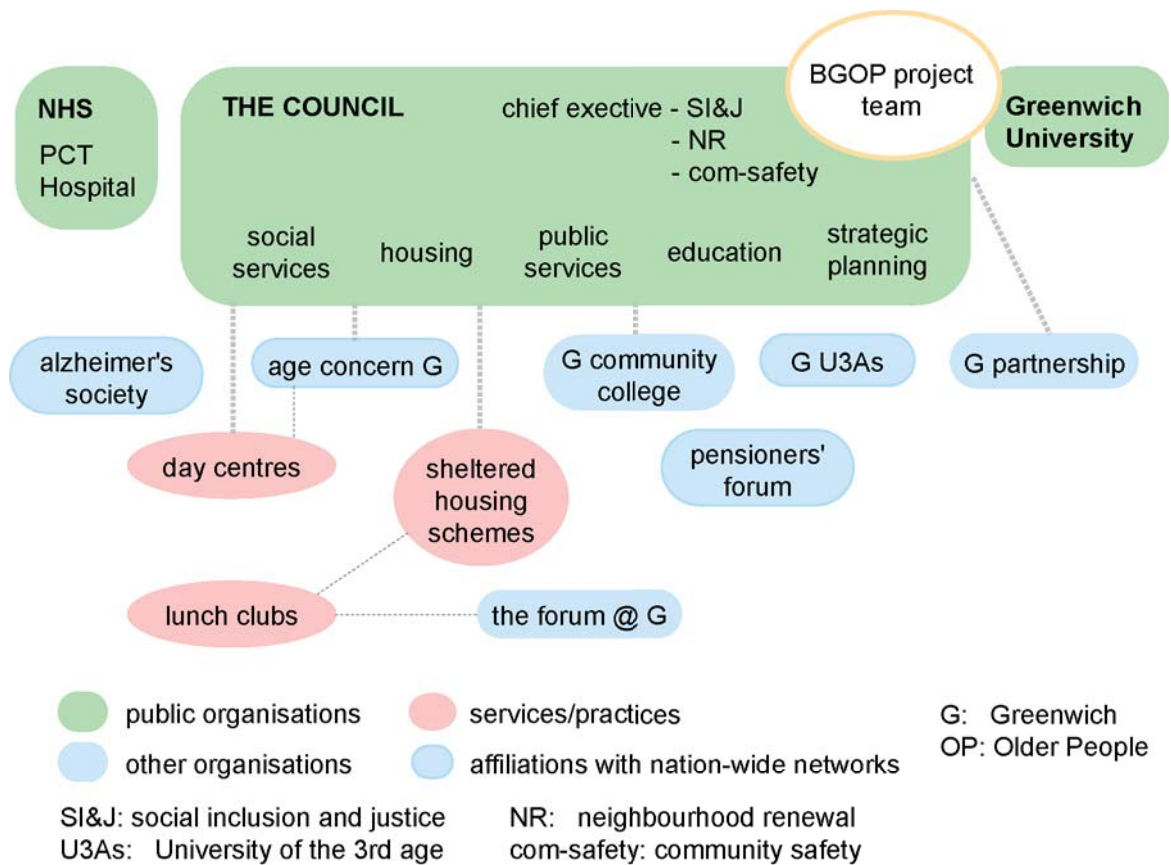
The Greenwich Strategy was designed to integrate all of those local strategies and initiatives, each of which was linked to a different organisation at a national level. However, because it was not accompanied by action plans to enhance collaborations between different organisations at a local level, like the area coordination scheme in Manchester City Council, each local organisation pursued only the initiatives which fell within its own responsibility.

Most of those local initiatives take a top-down approach except the local Neighbourhood Renewal programme, which empowered local residents by facilitating the activities of neighbourhood renewal panels and their partnership with service provider networks. However, the programme is limited to deprived neighbourhoods in the borough. Because the programme is sponsored by the national initiative, it cannot be applied to other areas unless the local Neighbourhood Renewal unit or the local council takes control over the programme and implements it in other areas. In short, it seems that Greenwich Council lacked its own strategy and action plans to improve civic engagement of older people independently and simply complied with the national strategies and initiatives.

7.2 An overview of civic engagement practices in the London Borough of Greenwich

Based on the interviews and document surveys, I identified a number of practices of civic engagement of older people in the London Borough of Greenwich. They were managed or initiated by various types of organisations including public and voluntary organisations. The diagram below (figure 7.4) summarises complex interrelationships between those identified organisations involved in older people's civic engagement practices within the borough including the Greenwich BGOP project. While those organisations have their hierarchical relationships with their relevant regional or national bodies at a strategic level, as pointed out in the previous section, they are related to other organisations including those in voluntary sector at an operational level.

Figure 7.4 Council structure and practices in the London Borough of Greenwich



The diagram summarises the council structure and the council’s relationship with major organisations and practices in the London Borough of Greenwich relevant to civic engagement. Distinctions were made between: public organisations and others, organisations and services/practices, and independent organisations and affiliates of nationwide networks. Organisations and practices are related to different departments of the council.

Community and voluntary organisations, the “third sector”, play key roles in civic engagement of older people. Those organisations aim to improve the provision of services responding to needs which are not met by other services provided by the public or private sectors. In other words, their services are complementary to public and private services. On one hand, their services lack the official political legitimacy of the public services or the profitability of commercial private services. On the other hand, their services can respond to individuals’ needs more flexibly than public services and embody and appreciate non-monetary values which can be squeezed out of the for-profit sector.

The scale and financial circumstances of community and voluntary organisations differ widely within the sector. Some of them are developed nationwide while some others operate only locally. Although all of them have some financial uncertainty because their funding

largely depends on public grants or donations, some have more stability than others. The source of funding of any practice is important not simply because it determines the stability of that practice but also because it could set restrictions on the management and operations of that practice. For example, although community and voluntary organisations are less required to toe an official line, those organisations, which largely rely on funding from the public sector, are more likely to be obliged to respond to what those funding bodies need, rather than to what older people need.

Older people's civic engagement practices that I identified can be categorised into the following five groups by focusing on their relations to sectors and their own organisational structures including their networks of affiliates. The relations to sectors are determined by their financial dependency and responsibilities to each sector. Although financial dependency is not necessarily reflected in the power balance, it tends to indicate a certain degree of compliance is required, which then impacts the level of flexibility of practices. The organisational structure and relationships with affiliates or umbrella organisations also affect the flexibility as well as the stability of practices. The extent of the networks of affiliates is also a significant factor indicating the extent of connections and of influence from wider society. I will explore each group of practices focusing on those two points, their relationships with sectors and their own organisational structures, to delineate opportunities and constraints of civic engagement practices in each group.

7.2.1 Public operation and self-funding

The first group includes those practices which are operated by the public sector but are financially independent. I was told in one of the interviews that there were 13 lunch clubs for older people in the borough. Except for two of them, which are run by the Age Concern Greenwich, the rest are organised by sheltered housing scheme managers from Housing Services in Greenwich Council but are self-funding. Those lunch clubs are based in sheltered housing schemes but are open for other local older residents as well as the residents of the sheltered housing schemes. Services include hot meals and social activities such as bingo games and seasonal events. Those lunch clubs create communities for older people in the neighbourhood.

Although they are operated by council staff, they are financially independent from the Council. Their independence from the council is reflected in the variety of services across the lunch clubs. It also results in the flexibility of management and differing contributions by each of those lunch clubs to the civic engagement of older people in its neighbourhood. Some of the members of the active lunch clubs are actively involved in borough-wide activities such as consultation events organised by a joint team between the Housing Services and the Social Services in Greenwich Council. Although they may be the so-called ‘usual suspects,’ their involvement in wider society is important and meaningful for the other members of lunch clubs who are directly or indirectly represented by those proactive members.

Although the sheltered housing scheme managers organising those lunch clubs are employed by the council, they are involved in day-to-day operations of sheltered housing schemes. They work closely with older residents and lunch club users involving face-to-face communication with them. The intimacy between the managers and older people, created by frequent contact, is considered to be another factor which allows the flexibility of the management of those lunch clubs. They have established relationships, which allow older people to express their preferences of activities and help managers to understand older people’s needs from multiple perspectives. It suggests that, even though there might be overall restrictions in management caused by the fact that those lunch clubs are operated by the public sector, it is possible to respond to individually different needs at a day-to-day operational level.

7.2.2 Nationwide voluntary organisations

The second group includes those practices run by voluntary organisations, whose networks extend nationwide. These include Age Concern, the Alzheimer’s society and LETS (Local Exchange Trading Schemes). They tend to be independent from the public sector with less financial dependency. Although their networks are extended nationwide or even internationally, their relationships with other affiliates are not hierarchical but network oriented. Their networks share common goals, philosophies and principles while they operate independently at a local level. The networks are used for information exchange and knowledge and experience sharing.

The source of funding varies between practices. For example, the Alzheimer's Society completely depends on public donation, which makes them independent from any other organisation but also puts their survival at risk. While Age Concern London is funded by various types of community funds and is constantly seeking more funding sources to improve its stability, Age Concern Greenwich is largely supported by Greenwich Council with a little extra funding from other sources including national government.

Age Concern Greenwich is one of the most influential voluntary organisations for Greenwich Council. Age Concern Greenwich provides various services such as day centres and drop-in centres for older people, which complement social care services provided by the Council. They also provide information on older people to Social Services, which are gathered through their operations of those services and other events they organise. Its relationship with the Council is formally equal rather than being subordinate despite its financial dependency on the Council. The independence of the Age Concern Greenwich is supported by its agenda, which is in line with the principles of the Age Concern networks extended across the UK.

LETS (Local Exchange Trading Schemes) is an internationally recognised unique exchange system in local communities (Linton and Soutar, 1994). The members of a LETS group exchange goods and services with one another in a spirit of harmony and in a desire of helping each other. It is an alternative way of exchanging values without money, which is a dominant globally exchangeable value. It enables its members to value abilities, activities and time, which are difficult to value in the economic domain. Transactions of non-monetary values assume and help form a community, in which people share those values on the basis of mutual trust.

LETSlink UK, which is a network of many local LETS groups in the UK, is funded by the European Social Fund and works independently from the UK and local government. In the London Borough of Greenwich, there are two schemes: South Greenwich LETS which started in 1997 and has nearly 200 members; and Waterfront LETS which started in 1998 and has nearly 90 members (LETS, 1998). Each LETS group forms a community in which members are networked sharing common rules for exchange. Services and products offered

from the members include language lessons and child care. The members can also inter-trade services and products across those two LETS. In addition to those two LETS groups, a LETS Advisory Group is established to develop the schemes and promote good practice in the borough. Through the activities of the LETS Advisory Group, the two local LETS groups share ideas, good practice, expertise, problems and solutions. LETS are open to all generations in the community and therefore provide older people with opportunities to exchange their skills and abilities with other generations as well as between themselves.

What LETS offers is not only engagement within the LETS communities but also an independent life, which is a basis of civic engagement with a wider society in general. Valuing skills and abilities, which are often undervalued in the capitalist system, enables recognition of individually different values and consequently provides individuals with confidence and dignity. While each system is operated locally and exclusively among members who made commitments to the schemes, the concepts of LETS are globally acknowledged and inclusive.

The practices in this group are all operated locally. However, the principles and goals of those practices are shared with practices in other local areas across the UK or even outside the UK through the networks of their schemes. On one hand, the relationships between those local organisations in the London Borough of Greenwich and other organisations in the same networks are flexible in terms of organisational structures since they are network-based. On the other hand, the shared principles and goals affirm those local organisations' independence from other organisations such as the UK and local governments.

7.2.3 Local community and voluntary organisations

The third group includes those practices which are operated by local community or voluntary organisations. These include the Greenwich Community College, the Forum at Greenwich, the Pensioner's Forum and neighbourhood lunch clubs. Their organisational structures, relationships with Greenwich Council and funding sources are all different from one another.

The Greenwich Community College largely relies on Greenwich Council for funding. Education Services in Greenwich Council is involved in the management of the college. There are ten sites in the borough offering over 2,800 courses for a wide range of age groups from children to over 50's. An interview revealed that IT training courses and exercise courses tend to be filled with older people. Those courses contribute to civic engagement of older people by providing opportunities for older people to improve skills and abilities to be proactively involved in social activities. Although community colleges are common across the local authorities in the UK, the variety of courses is different from one another depending on local needs and available resources.

The Atrium at Greenwich is an independent community organisation without any funding from the Council. It is supported by community funds and users' fees. Their services include managing lunch clubs and supporting community activities. The primary aim of the Atrium at Greenwich is to facilitate older people's activities, which is more supportive compared with services provided by the Council or Age Concern Greenwich. An observation study was conducted in one of the lunch clubs supported by the Forum at Greenwich. An analysis of the observation will be given in the next chapter in relation to older people's experiences of civic engagement.

The Pensioners' Forum is a voluntary organisation of older people funded by community funding. Membership is open to all pensioners in the borough. Members hold regular meetings where they discuss relevant issues such as health and transportation often with guests from outside. The Pensioners' Forum in Greenwich is part of the nationwide network of pensioners' groups, which are common across the UK, organised by the National Pensioners Convention whose details will be explained in the next chapter in relation to older people's experiences of civic engagement. The Pensioners' Forum in Greenwich has an opportunity to be connected to other pensioners' groups from all over the country. On the other hand, its relationships with other organisations within the borough are very limited.

These organisations are all independent and do not have strong relationships with other organisations unlike those in the second group. It is inevitable especially for grass-roots

practices such as the Atrium at Greenwich and other neighbourhood lunch clubs to be rather isolated. Moreover, their social isolation indicates lack of information flows of both ways: lack of information in those organisations and also lack of opportunities to express voices of older people involved in the practices to a wider audience.

7.2.4 Collaborations with the private sector

The fourth group is those practices involving the private sector. These include New Eltham Centre, which is a resource centre for older people in the borough funded by the PFI (private finance initiative), and the Healthy Greenwich Network, which is a network of various organisations including public, private and voluntary sector. In both cases, resources from the private sector are used in an area where financial profits are expected to be minimal.

The New Eltham Centre is one of the three neighbourhood resource centres. It was completed in 2004 and founded as part of the UK's first pathfinder care PFI (private finance initiative) scheme, which means the project is run by a partnership between public sector and private sector. The centre is designed to contribute to encouraging older people with some degree of social care needs to remain socially active by providing adequate services for them to maintain their daily lives and opportunities to communicate with other people. It provides a combination of registered care, nursing care and day care services for more than 180 older people with a wide range of needs in the borough. Registered homes and nursing homes are both a combination of accommodation services and social and personal care services whereas nursing homes provide a higher level of care, as the name suggests. Day care services are designed for those who need regular social care services but are able to live in their own home. The centre's capacity for providing different levels of care services enables continuous care for individuals with changing needs.

The Healthy Greenwich Network is a partnership of 17 statutory, voluntary and private organisations, aiming at improving health and wellbeing of people in the borough. The network organises a wide range of community-based activities including food initiatives, diet and nutritional advice, cooking courses, advice and advocacy, exercise, and referral and information. The network provides older people with a wide range of choices so that

they can choose the way to be involved in the network according to their own interests and to communicate with other people who share the same interests.

7.2.5 The Better Government for Older People Greenwich project

The Greenwich BGOP project was a joint project between Greenwich Council and the University of Greenwich. The project was unique in many ways and its process has many implications for the success and failure of civic engagement practice. Therefore, I will explore this particular project on its own as the fifth group.

As previously explained, the BGOP project in the London Borough of Greenwich started in 2003 with initiatives by the Social Inclusion and Justice Division in the Council, seeking ways to pursue the national initiative of Better Government for Older People in an original way. Its main funding source was the Neighbourhood Renewal (NR) Unit in the Council, which had a relatively large budget allocated by the national government for the regeneration of priority areas. Through the first three months of pre-research initiated by a few members within the Council, civic engagement was identified as a central value for their BGOP project based on the understanding of local situations and the principles of the national BGOP programme. After October 2003 when the University of Greenwich joined as a partner in the action research project of the BGOP Greenwich, the project was taken over by a Steering Group composed of two members from the Chief Executive's Department, including one from the Social Inclusion and Justice Division, and four university members including myself and a liaison officer who was employed by the Council specifically for the project.

The objectives set under the purpose of promoting civic engagement in the borough include: reviewing good practice of civic engagement in the borough and proposing models of civic engagement. Although the project was designed to be in line with the national BGOP programme, the project in Greenwich was designed to also be independent from the national programme in order to be able to be critical of it if necessary. The project started with the question as to what civic engagement means in terms of older people's everyday life. In line with the strategy of the Social Inclusion and Justice division, the project targeted all older residents in the borough regardless of their official citizenship.

Preliminary research involving informant interviews and document surveys and initial analyses revealed the lack of and some demands for informational integration in the borough in regard to civic engagement for older people and reminded us of the significance of involving older people in decision-making processes which are relevant to their life. Following a recommendation of the national BGOP programme, the Greenwich BGOP Steering Group set up an Advisory Group composed of older citizens in the borough to reflect older citizens' perspectives in the project. The members were carefully selected in hope the group would represent a wide range of perspectives and would help the Greenwich BGOP team develop networks amongst organisations and groups of older people. On the establishment of the Advisory Group, the Steering Group had established a basis of the system in which the Steering Group would be a facilitator and works as brain of a whole network of systems eventually involving all organisations and groups working for/with older people in the borough.

Along with the establishment of the Advisory Group, the Steering Group designed and organised a community event to share key interim findings of the project in the London Borough of Greenwich with older people themselves and learn their perspectives with people who work for older people in the public and voluntary sectors. While the details of the event are explored in the next chapter, it should be emphasised here that the event provided an opportunity for both older people and people working for older people in the public and voluntary sectors in the borough to discuss issues regarding civic engagement of older people together.

All those activities of the BGOP Steering Group were initially designed to be part of a civic engagement practice itself involving and connecting various agencies of/for older people in the borough. Within the Steering Group itself, the members developed mutual understanding through a number of meetings discussing civic engagement for the borough. At the beginning there was an evident gap of perspectives between the council members and the university members, which was reduced through mutual efforts to understand each other while working for the same purpose. The Steering Group members saw the whole project as an ongoing civic engagement practice and planned several action plans for the second year and further.

The future plans included: creating a new system of civic engagement through which all information relevant to older people in the borough is constantly gathered to the BGOP team and individual older people can access the information; and more community events which would be participated in by different groups of older people in the borough.

However, those plans were not carried out since the project was discontinued after the first year. The main and apparent reason for its sudden termination was a lack of funding. However, this funding problem itself demonstrated systematic problems within the Council and within the Steering Group, which have important lessons to teach us about civic engagement values at an operational level. One of the systematic problems is the sectionalism and lack of collaboration between different departments and different divisions within the Council. While the Greenwich BGOP project was undoubtedly designed to improve public services for older people in the borough, the political intention of the Social Inclusion and Justice Division, which initiated the Greenwich BGOP project, was to absorb and integrate all other relevant initiatives pursued by other departments, divisions and organisations, including the Neighbourhood Renewal unit, under the name of the Greenwich BGOP project. Although the importance of partnerships in promoting civic engagement of older people was acknowledged, partnerships with other departments or divisions within the Council were not developed in the process of the development of the Greenwich BGOP project over the year.

On the other hand, as mentioned earlier, the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit, whose independence in the borough was supported by a large budget directly from the national government, had a stronger relationship with its national body rather than with other departments or divisions within the Council. Its relationships with the national government were based on financial support and the responsibility to achieve requirements set by the national government. Again, although the importance of partnerships in regenerations of neighbourhoods was acknowledged, partnerships with other departments or divisions within the Council had not been developed.

It is suspected that such a conflict of political intentions between the Social Inclusion and Justice Division and the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit was expressed as a disagreement over

the scope of the Greenwich BGOP project. At the end of first year of the project, the Steering Group summarised the achievements of the first year stage and proposed in a second stage to achieve some of the goals which had been initially agreed by the Neighbourhood Renewal unit but were not met at the first year stage. The Neighbourhood Renewal Unit, on the other hand, did not accept the proposal and saw the Greenwich BGOP project as a failure since it did not fulfil the initial goals that were agreed between the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit and the Social Inclusion and Justice Division.

This incident revealed the inflexibility of the public sector, the problem of sectionalism and a power struggle between different organisations, which was defined by financial resources. The legitimate relationship between the local Neighbourhood Renewal Unit and its funding body, the national government, resulted in its inflexible arrangement with the Social Inclusion and Justice Division. Lack of communications between those two local council organisations in the course of the BGOP project left no space for negotiations or adjustments at the end of the first year of the project.

Furthermore, the lack of sufficient communications and common understanding amongst the Steering Group members also caused a delay of actions to secure a future of the project. Towards the end of the first year of the project, the council officers in the Steering Group had some information on the availability and possibility of further funding for the project while the university members were not well informed on the issue. The council members apparently underestimated the risk of relying on a single source of funding and it was not until the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit made an adverse decision on the termination of financial support for the project that the university members were informed about the loss of the main funding to carry on the project. The Steering Group tried to find an alternative funding source in vain. The project, which proposed to promote better communications between different sections in the council and their collaborative work in cross-cutting areas, ironically ended up revealing existing problems of miscommunications, sectionalism in the council and difficulties of joint work within the framework of political legitimacy.

After the termination of the Greenwich BGOP project, the borough wide practice of civic

engagement lost its focus again. The situation in relation to civic engagement of older people in the borough by and large returned to how it had been before the project had started. That is, although there are a number of ongoing practices relevant to civic engagement of older people in the borough, which are initiated by various bodies from different sectors, those practices are not well integrated or co-ordinated at the borough level. Therefore, at a strategic and a provisional level, there seemed to be problems to be solved in the use of resources and funding. The lack of integration and co-ordination also caused confusion for older people, which I will discuss further in the next chapter.

7.2.6 Summary of civic engagement practices in the London Borough of Greenwich

As seen above, there were many practices in the London Borough of Greenwich that are relevant to civic engagement of older people. I delineated the relationships between those practices and local strategies introduced in the previous section as well as between themselves.

Due to the lack of a strategic approach to integrate individual practices at a local level, which was addressed at the end of the previous section, all of those older people's civic engagement practices were fragmented and not well coordinated. In addition, there was a lack of integration at a strategic level and at the level of implementation even within the same council department or organisation. The lack of integration between different sectors, organisations and different levels was also evident in the interviewees' perceptions of civic engagement. The next section outlines the different perceptions of civic engagement across various types of organisations that the interviewees belong to.

7.3 Insight into Civic Engagement Practices

As explained in chapter two, semi-structured informant interviews were conducted with 17 people who work with/for older people. One of the purposes of those interviews was to understand individuals' perspectives on civic engagement. The majority of the interviewees are based in the London Borough of Greenwich but a few of them were working at a regional and a national level. Although older people were represented by a few of the interviewees, the perspectives of older people themselves were gleaned more from observation rather than

interview surveys. The interviews were semi-structured with foci including their organisation's structure, the organisation's main roles and their relationships with older people.

The data assembled through the interviews contain various types of information. The information includes interviewees' organisational and individual tasks in relation to civic engagement of older people, their personal views on civic engagement of older people both in general and in terms of the reality in the borough and a list of practice of civic engagement of older people they can identify that indicate the extent to which their awareness of civic engagement stretches. The semi-structured interviews set a few standard questions which needed to be answered by all interviewees while those fixed questions were limited to a minimum in order to maximise opportunities to extract interviewees' spontaneous reactions based on their perceptions of civic engagement. Their utterances and expressions including verbal and non verbal were analysed within their contexts, such as their professional occupations and positions and their professional roles, so that they were understood multi-dimensionally. While the previous section focused on factual information on civic engagement practices, this section explores perceptions of individual interviewees focusing on four different perspectives including public bodies, structured non-governmental organisations, independent voluntary organisations and non-governmental organisations operating at a national level.

7.3.1 Public bodies

Eight interviews were conducted with people who work in different departments/divisions/teams in the London Borough of Greenwich or the Greenwich NHS primary care trust. The interviews revealed that all of the eight interviewees were to some extent aware of the national government initiative, the Better Government for Older People (BGOP), which was promoting civic engagement of older people and encouraging local authorities to follow and implement its priorities. The degree to which they understood the BGOP programme and its priorities were diverse according to the amount of information about the programme they had. Council staff in the Social Services, Housing Services and Chief Executive's departments were involved in or at least aware of the council's unsuccessful attempt to apply for the pilot scheme of the national programme back in 1998. However, as the borough was not included

in the 28 pilots or did not pursue to conduct the programme locally on its own term, the principles were not widely acknowledged within the council.

The attitude towards civic engagement also varied between individuals. The interviewees from the Social Services Department asserted that they think they were already offering civic engagement opportunities for older people whether or not the BGOP project in the borough had been officially launched. Acknowledging the necessity of outreach to those whose voices were not yet heard, they do attempt to involve more and different groups of older people in the borough through occasional consultation events. Meanwhile the interviewee from the Housing Services Department did not seem to be familiar with the concept of civic engagement even though they provide various services for older people, which, from my perspective, are often the object of civic engagement practices. Other agencies in the council including the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit and the Social Inclusion and Justice were already involved in the BGOP project in Greenwich. However their approach to civic engagement of older people is different from that of the Social Services, for example. Unlike the Social Services and the Housing Services, they do not have a team dedicated to older people's issues or deliver services directly. Therefore for them, the emphasis is placed upon 'civic engagement' rather than 'older people' and the concept of civic engagement is not confined within service deliveries but embraces ideas of participation, which is physical involvement in decision-making processes, and inclusion, which is socio-cultural integration into a society.

The Primary Care Trust (PCT) also has a different attitude from all the rest. Although in the London Borough of Greenwich, there happens to be only one PCT covering the whole borough, the NHS has its own regional structure which is headed by the NHS England and broken down into Health Strategic Authorities. The Greenwich PCT is not responsible for the council although they often work in partnership. The interviewee from the Greenwich PCT addressed her awareness of the national BGOP programme but not of the local project in Greenwich. In regard to civic engagement, the relation between civic engagement and the patients' involvement programme initiated by the NHS and implemented by the PCT locally is recognised. Whereas the patients' involvement programme is about participations

in decision-making processes, it is also considered to be relevant to civic engagement to promote healthy and active life in older age, which is set as standard eight in the National Service Framework for older people. Here the concept of civic engagement is understood in a wider sense, which embraces individuals' participation in a civil life in general rather than in a narrow sense which is limited to participation in a certain event.

While there was a variety of perspectives on civic engagement, there was no general consensus on what civic engagement actually was, either conceptually or pragmatically. Nor indeed did any individual grasp the whole figure of civic engagement practices in the borough. The lack of a common view on civic engagement and a strategic joint-working approach for the promotion of civic engagement was, however, recognized by the majority of interviewees in the public sector. It was also pointed out by some that the lack of clear understanding of civic engagement in the public sector inevitably caused confusion amongst citizens.

7.3.2 Established non-governmental organisations

Three interviews were conducted with people who work in quasi-independent non-governmental organisations, which included Age Concern Greenwich, the Greenwich Partnership, and Greenwich Council for Racial Equality. These organisations distinguish themselves by their relational proximity with the council from independent voluntary organisations which are categorised as another group. The relational proximity with the local government often appears in resources. Age Concern Greenwich is, as a structure, an affiliate of national and regional Age Concerns while its major funding (over 80%) comes from Social Services in the council. Although they have to renew their contract with the council every three years, considering the significance of their services in the borough, the support from the council is almost certainly given. The Greenwich Partnership was set up under the Modernising Local Government programme and six out of 24 members are from the council. The Greenwich Council for Racial Equality was set up under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 and is funded by the council.

Reflecting the close relationships with the council, these interviewees' perspectives have similarities to those of the first group introduced above. Their attitude is strategic in terms

of service deliveries for older people in the borough which are relevant to civic engagement and their task is strategically incorporated into those of the public agencies. They provided services which were complementary to those provided by public agencies. They were aware of their roles in civic engagement practices in the borough, to provide civic engagement opportunities and mechanisms in the areas where the public services do not reach. However, they also had tangible distinctions from the public bodies. While their approach was strategic, their perspectives were those of older people rather than of the government. Their service deliveries were designed to reach beyond the minimum requirements of society.

For example, Age Concern Greenwich provided day care services to those older people who were not severely frail but still required some support or help to maintain their quality of life. The Greenwich Partnership plays the role of critic and auditor of public bodies to assess the accountability of their performances. The Greenwich Council for Racial Equality has its own networks within ethnic minority groups including those who are not identified by the council.

All of the five interviewees had a common notion in regard to civic engagement. They saw civic engagement as a dynamic process. Civic engagement was not a goal which could be measured and evaluated by means of definite criteria so that one could tick a check box when it was achieved. Rather, civic engagement was a process in which more and better civic engagement practices are sought. One may suggest that their perspectives of civic engagement as a dynamic process are reflections of the dynamism of their overall work. They saw their work as ongoing projects which collectively contributed to civic engagement in the borough in collaboration with other bodies including public, private and voluntary agencies.

7.3.3 Independent voluntary organisations

Four interviews were conducted with people who worked in independent voluntary organisations including the Pensioner's Forum in Greenwich, a pensioner's lunch club, the Atrium at Greenwich which manages and facilitates some lunch clubs for older people, and the Alzheimer's Society. The perspectives of those four interviewees were noticeably

different from those of the rest of the interviewees already mentioned above. They worked with older people themselves on a daily basis closely enough to represent older people's views. Their perspectives also reflected the distance between their organisations and the council. Financially none of these organisations were affluent and all relied on public donations, users' fees, volunteers and some other grants which are not reliable or abundant. Although structurally both the Pensioner's Forum in Greenwich and the Alzheimer's Society were affiliates of national and regional organisations, there is no financial support from umbrella organisations.

The interviewee from the Pensioner's Forum in Greenwich expressed concerns about the organisation's future. He asserted that there were not many members of the Forum and therefore their influence upon public decisions was limited. He still felt that important decisions were made behind closed doors and not in the so-called open meetings. Although they received some funding from the council, it was not enough to recruit new members. On the whole, he felt that they were neglected by the council and powerless. The interviewee from the Alzheimer's Society, which provides services mainly for carers, also addressed the lack of public support and understanding as well as practical resources including financial support and man-power. These two interviewees both considered civic engagement as a rather fundamental condition which is required to protect individuals' civic and social rights.

While advocacy and information dissemination were the main roles of the Pensioner's Forum and Alzheimer's Society, the Atrium at Greenwich and a pensioners' lunch club provided direct services for older people in neighbourhoods. For the interviewees from the Atrium at Greenwich and the pensioners' lunch club, civic engagement of older people is to be actually involved in social activities and being part of a community. Lunch club services provided by those two organisations provide not only hot meals for those who may not otherwise have a hot meal for the whole week but also provide opportunities to come out from their home and spend some time with others. Those interviewees who both work as managers also took advantage of their encounters with older people to check their health and social conditions. Even though they also felt a lack of funding to provide sufficient services for their users, they appreciate their position is at arm's length from the council and they were certain about

the significance and actual effects of their services for individual older people using their services. They implied that the involvement of these grass-roots practices made a significant difference in civic engagement of older people in the borough although better strategies and resources were still required.

7.3.4 Non-governmental organisation at a national level

The National Pensioners Convention (NPC) and the Better Government for Older People (BGOP) national network are both non-governmental organisations relevant to civic engagement of older people. Nevertheless, the interviews with two informants from these two organisations revealed significant differences between their organisations in the way they approach and perceive civic engagement. The Better Government for Older People national office is a partnership supported by various organisations including the Cabinet Office and the Department of Work and Pensions and it works with the Anchor Trust, Age Concern and Help the Aged. It works as the hub of the whole network of local organisations involved in the BGOP projects and as a data resource centre. On the other hand, the NPC is a federal organisation constituted by older people themselves unlike other national organisations including Help the Aged, Age Concern, the Anchor Trust and the BGOP that work for older people. It is independent from the government, attempting to represent 11 million pensioners in the UK. In short, the BGOP networks have a top-down structure whereas the NPC has a bottom-up structure.

Reflecting the different structures and characters, the approaches to and perspectives on civic engagement of these two organisations are quite a contrast. The BGOP national office attempts to facilitate and encourage local authorities to enhance civic engagement of older people locally and to learn from each other. While civic engagement of older people is viewed as participation in local decision-making processes as well as being part of social networks, the approach of the BGOP national office towards civic engagement is strategic and its focus is on local authorities. The NPC also has a structure from national to local, or local to national to be precise, and facilitates local pensioners' groups separately from the governmental hierarchy but its focus is on individuals rather than local pensioners' groups. Civic engagement is viewed as involvement in decision-making processes as well as having

power and control over life. The NPC itself offers a system of representation for individual pensioners and also attempts to increase pensions, which are considered to be a basis for power and control in many aspects of our daily life.

To summarise, a variety of perceptions on civic engagement seem to reflect different positions and experiences of individuals. Nevertheless, it can be summarised as three perspectives. Firstly and most commonly, civic engagement is considered to be participation and involvement in decision-making processes. It is the fundamental exercise of political rights as well as the conduct of life with dignity. Secondly, there is the issue of social inclusion. Being part of a community socio-culturally is what citizenship concepts imply. Finally, it is considered to be having an independent life at a certain standard and having socialising opportunities. It is a form of social inclusion at a behavioural level. Ultimately all of these are exercises of citizenship rights as seen in chapter five. Civic engagement is considered to be the exercise of civic, political, social and cultural rights. However, it needs to be noted that there was no comment on responsibilities of older people in terms of civic engagement. As explored in chapter five, a concept of citizenship involves rights and responsibilities, which are required to belong to a community. The concepts of civic engagement are, however, associated with citizenship rights but not with responsibilities.

In a practical sense, there are some problems and difficulties in the development of civic engagement identified by the interviewees. They are listed below.

- Lack of information is identified as a problem that makes it difficult even to start communication. It is impossible to make a decision over anything without relevant and sufficient information such as what kinds of resources are available and where to ask.
- Some interviewees pointed out that additional services are needed to achieve the effective use of existing services. For example, extra individual support in getting information and in expressing their needs is required especially for those from ethnic minorities. Also some help is needed to understand the technical language often used in political meetings. Transportation support, appropriate meeting places, and education about dementia and ageing are also suggested.
- How to undertake outreach work is recognised as a difficult issue in practice. Many

agencies have tried to access ‘non-joiners’ and those people who are not necessarily the direct targets of council services. For example, the Greenwich Partnership conducted interview surveys in many different sorts of public places such as clinics, community libraries, shopping centres, streets and community centres to catch those people who have no interest in, or engagement with the common forms of consultations.

- The need for education and training was particularly emphasised by some interviewees. For genuine civic engagement, in which older people themselves can make their own decisions about what they are involved in and are not forced to join a group against their will, older people need opportunities to prepare themselves to become active citizens and to employ their rights more effectively.

7.4 Summary

This chapter examined civic engagement practices at a local level with an initial focus on the London Borough of Greenwich to investigate how policies and initiatives promoting civic engagement of older people are taken forward at a local level and what civic engagement practices are in place. I first delineated the demographic and socio-political characteristics of the London Borough of Greenwich. The London Borough of Greenwich has a higher proportion of ethnic minority population compared with the national average. Reflecting the younger age structure of ethnic minority groups, the borough has a lower proportion of 65 and over population: however, the proportion of ethnic minority groups in older age groups is expected to increase in the near future.

By examining local strategies and practices relevant to civic engagement of older people, I pointed out that, at a strategic level, hierarchical relationships between local bodies and their relevant national bodies were more influential than horizontal relationships between different departments and organisations at a local level. As a result, despite a variety of public services and initiatives, which contributed to the civic engagement of older people individually, there is a lack of coordination and integration of those individual strategies, initiatives and consequently practices. Such problems were ironically revealed by the failure of the Greenwich BGOP project. In addition, most of the local initiatives are top-down approach rather than empowering older people to be independent. Although there are some

grass-root practices which support older people's independent activities in the communities like the Forum at Greenwich, there is not enough support to facilitate those practices across the borough.

Finally, three main views of civic engagement amongst the interviewees who work for or with older people in the UK were identified. It turned out that the most common view was to consider civic engagement as participation and involvement in decision-making processes. This perspective was common in all of the informant groups including members of public bodies, non-governmental organisation staffs, independent voluntary organisation staff and nationwide non-governmental organisation staff. Secondly, civic engagement was seen as a form of social inclusion. Being part of a community is what the concept of citizenship in a broader sense implies. The third perspective of civic engagement was to have an independent life exercising the civic, political, social and cultural rights that are captured by the concept of citizenship.

Although multiple aspects of civic engagement appeared to be acknowledged, there was no mention of older people's responsibilities in relation to civic engagement in the interviews. It suggests a top-down approach towards civic engagement. A sense of belonging, which is essential for civic engagement, is linked to a sense of ownership, which involves responsibilities as well as rights, as suggested in the example of the Manchester City Council. The lack of understanding of the concept of civic engagement from individuals' perspectives presumably reflects the lack of partnership and collaborations between different expertise and different roles at a strategic level.

This chapter revealed an inherent problem of bureaucracy as an operational organisation, particularly in dealing with multiple factors which are interrelated. As Weber (1978) suggests, bureaucracy has its own form of efficiency. Hierarchical structures and specialisation have advantages especially in a large organisation. However, as the example of the London Borough of Greenwich suggests, bureaucracy also embodies a propensity to prevent development of civic engagement. Sectionalism and hierarchy are obstacles to actual implementation of the concept of civic engagement, which requires flexible and dynamic interactions between

different expertise and different roles within a hierarchical organisation. It is essential that such a propensity of hierarchical organisations is acknowledged as a challenge, that supportive systems to overcome sectionalism and hierarchies are in place, and that a bottom-up approach is encouraged.

The next chapter further explores practices of civic engagement of older people from individual older people's perspectives in order to answer the question as to how civic engagement is experienced by older people. Based on four case studies, I will examine how individual older people can be engaged in a wider society through practices and how their engagement affects their 'embeddedness.' I will also analyse how each scheme works in relation to wider contexts including policies, other initiatives and other practices.

CHAPTER EIGHT

8. INSIGHT INTO CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AT AN INDIVIDUAL LEVEL

In the preceding two chapters, I investigated the policies and initiatives relevant to civic engagement of older people at different levels ranging from local to global. In chapter six, I reviewed those at strategic levels and discussed what the key elements that such policies and initiatives should entail to achieve high levels of civic engagement are. In chapter seven, I moved on to the local level and reviewed what policies, initiatives and practices are there to promote civic engagement and how they are implemented, focusing on the London Borough of Greenwich as a case study.

The key elements for successful civic engagement, which were identified in chapter six, include: co-ordination between different levels, partnerships between different expertises and different sectors and using a bottom-up approach. I argued in chapter seven that those three values were not well achieved in the London Borough of Greenwich at either a strategic level or at the level of provision because of the bureaucratic nature of the council.

In this chapter, I discuss older people's own perceptions and experiences of civic engagement, shifting my focus from strategic or providers' perspectives to older people themselves. As I discussed in chapter five, civic engagement is a multi-layered, dynamic concept involving civil, political, social and cultural rights as well as responsibilities. From an individual older person's perspective, it is through civic engagement that he/she relates him/herself to a society, becomes part of a society and forms a society. Social activities in his/her everyday life and his/her social networks, formal and informal, are part of civic engagement and impact his/her 'embeddedness.'

Because the concept of civic engagement is so inclusive and pervasive, individuals may not necessarily be aware of it. In other words, it is suspected that it may be difficult to understand what they think of civic engagement by asking them questions. Therefore I

attempted to capture older people's perceptions and experiences in each of those practices by means of participant observation as well as by informant interviews. As Hall (1956) claims, behaviour often speaks more than words. Observations of natural behaviours allow us to form conclusions about how older people perceive and experience civic engagement without influencing what they think civic engagement is.

I analyse civic engagement practices in more depth focusing on four case studies. All of the four cases demonstrate different dimensions, different components and different levels of civic engagement of older people. The analysis of those case studies illuminates key values for civic engagement of older people from individuals' perspectives, especially in relation to the 'embeddedness.'

8.1 Various civic engagement practices

Four case studies were selected to examine a variety of older people's civic engagement practices in terms of scale, domain and elements involved. The purpose of the case studies is not to cover the whole range of varieties thoroughly but to analyse multiple factors involved in each practice in depth including correlations between those factors. Those case studies include: the National Pensioners Convention Parliament, which is an annual assembly of the National Pensioners Convention; the Quadrilateral Lunch Club, which is run by a local charity organisation, the Atrium at Greenwich; the Riverbridge Day Centre and the Palmtree Day Centre, which are run by the Social Services of Greenwich Council; and finally the experience sharing event, which was organised by the Greenwich BGOP Steering Group as part of the project.

As mentioned in chapter two, a mapping method was employed in participant observations at all of those four practices. Supportive interviews were also conducted before the observations on site, to gather overviews of the background and of the practices.

In the following sections, I will examine each of those four civic engagement practices in detail focusing on the following questions:

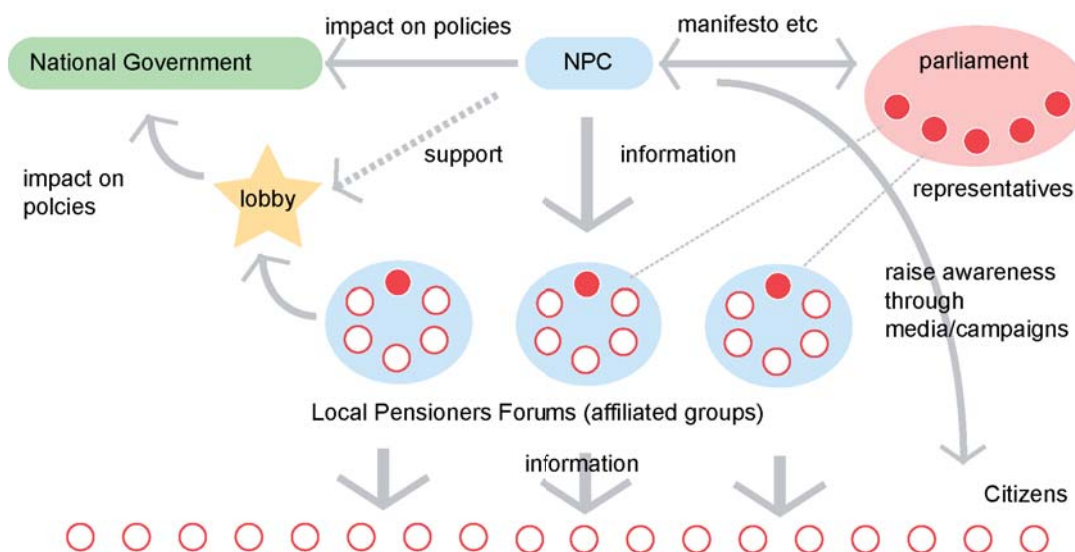
- which elements are involved? i.e. behavioural, psychological, socio-cultural elements
- which aspects of civic engagement are relevant? i.e. civic, political, social and cultural aspects
- how does the practice impact individual older people's 'embeddedness'?

Those questions will guide us to understand key values of civic engagement from individuals' perspectives.

8.1.1 A Nationwide civic engagement practice: National Pensioners Convention and its parliament

The National Pensioners Convention (NPC) is one of the biggest organisations of older people in the UK, which represents pensioners' groups throughout the UK (figure 8.1). It is claimed that it has been aiming at promoting the welfare and interests of all pensioners, as a way of securing dignity, respect and financial security in retirement. The NPC aims to do this by organising campaigns and seminars for the members and has tried to influence the national government since its establishment in 1979 (NPC, 2001). It was emphasised in an informant interview by the chair of the NPC that it is one of the few organisations that are of older people rather than working for older people.

Figure 8.1 National Pensioners Convention



The diagram shows how the organisation of the National Pensioners Convention (NPC) is related to other organisations and individual pensioners. They have a direct relationship with the UK government as well as through supporting lobbying trying to impact on the UK policies. One of their roles is also to disseminate relevant information for pensioners through Local Pensioners Forums and through an annual gathering called the "Pensioners' Parliament" where representatives from local affiliates gather to exchange knowledge and experiences.

The NPC's nationwide "Pensioners' Parliament", which over 2,000 pensioners from all over the UK attended, was held in Blackpool between 18th and 20th May 2004. The main focus of the assembly was a draft of a manifesto which the NPC was planning to submit to the UK government. The contents of the manifesto addressed a wide range of concerns of the NPC beyond the issue of pensions which affect pensioners' life including health, social care, community safety and citizenship. On the first day of the three days parliament, all participants gathered together to debate issues on the draft of their manifesto with MPs. The next day there were six group discussions, each of which was focusing on one of the following aspects of the manifesto draft: Active Citizenship, Health and Social Care, Pensions and Income, Neighbourhood and Community, Transport and Mobility, and Women. In the evening, a social event was also organised and those who attended enjoyed drinks, music, dance and socialising. The parliament ended on the third day after three workshops on the topics of Campaigns, Europe, and Engaging with ethnic elders.

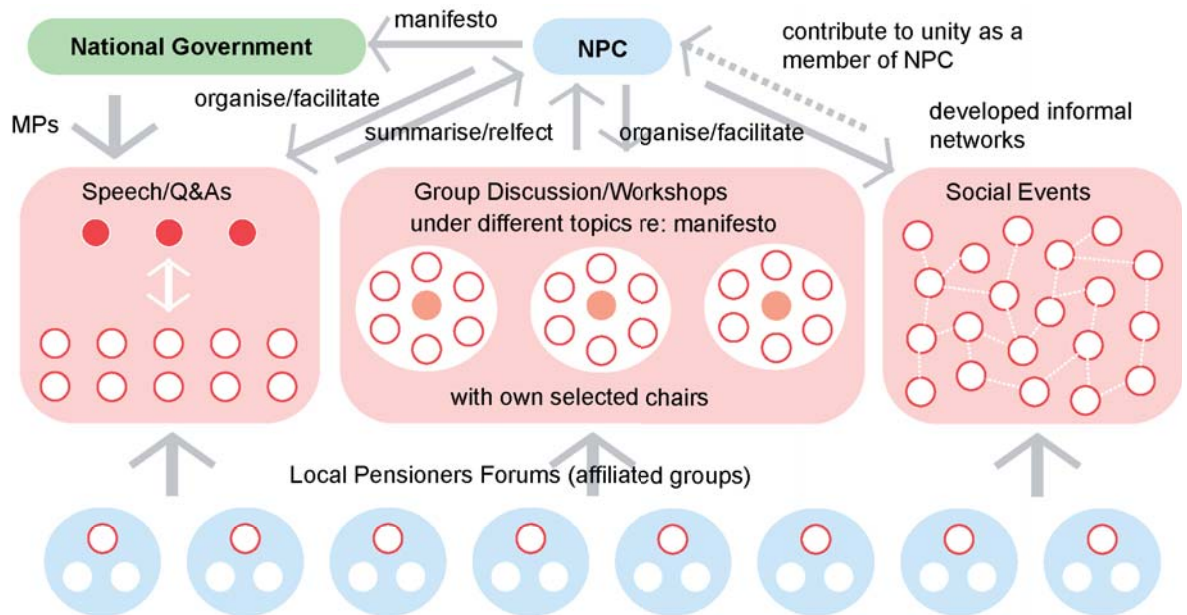
There were several layers of civic engagement observed in the whole event. The first layer was the structure of the NPC itself, which shows a hierarchical representation system of pensioners' groups (figure 8.2). Local groups were represented by their members who participated in the parliament and the NPC takes actions towards the UK government as a representative of all pensioners who are supposed to be represented by their group members. At this layer in particular, responsibilities as well as rights are involved. The NPC members are the owners of the event and of the organisation rather than service users.

The second layer is direct engagement between participants and MPs at the parliament. Pensioners asked questions addressing the situations in their own local areas and the MPs responded to them in regard to the points they were accountable for. These communications between the MPs and the representatives bridged between the top and the bottom of a democratic hierarchy. This happened in a large hall where the MPs were seated on the stage and the representatives were in audience seats, as shown as the diagram in fig 8.2 (a left box). The diagram sheds light on the contrast between the spatial position in the hall of the MPs and that of the representatives.

The third layer is horizontal engagement between participants. All participants were given opportunities to exchange information with each other, particularly in group debates and workshops, which were held in smaller separate rooms. Whereas the debate between the MPs and participants had a clear distinction between their positions and attitudes, the discussions in group debates and workshops assumed an equal status of each participant. Furthermore, the debates and workshops in rooms for around 30 people allowed for everyone to see each speaker's face whereas the debates with the MPs were held in a large hall where more than 2000 people could easily gather and people could hardly see the speaker's face or gestures.

Finally, there is another layer, which penetrates all of those situations, that is informal communications between participants throughout the event. Outside the official programme activities, participants freely communicated with each other at lunchtime, in town and at the evening event. Those encounters were observed everywhere including in corridors, the entrance hall and restaurants in town. There is a high probability of encounters not only in the venue of the parliament but also in town as over 2000 pensioners were around the town hall. It can be speculated that those informal communications encourage pensioners to attend to the parliament despite the trip they have to make and this enhances the unity of the NPC.

Figure 8.2 Several types of direct engagement in the NPC Parliament



The diagram demonstrates the mechanisms of civic engagement in relation to the NPC Parliament. Individual pensioners are involved in the practice through the representatives from Local Pensioners Forums (LPF). There were representatives from the UK government to give speeches and for a Question and Answer session.

In the **speech/Q&A session**, LPF representatives and the UK government representatives had rather formal relationships, in which their communications were restricted in form and length. On the other hand, the session provided pensioners with an opportunity to hear direct voices from the UK government members and express their opinions directly to them.

In the **group discussions and workshops**, LPF representatives were divided into smaller groups to discuss various topics relevant to pensioners' life. The NPC was in the process of compiling a manifesto and all discussions were focused on the content of the manifesto. The relationships between group members were equal and a chair was selected within each group.

At a **social event** in one evening, LPF representatives interacted with one another more freely. This contributed to the development of informal networks, which are essential to unite individuals as part of the organisation of the NPC.

The NPC summarised and reflected the voice of LPF representatives which were gathered through the speech/Q&A sessions and the group discussions/workshops, which were then used to impact on the decision making process in the UK government.

While there are various options in forms of engagement, the extent to which people are engaged is also diverse, depending on individuals' choice of options and their grade of commitment. In the first form of civic engagement, all members of local pensioners forums are collectively represented by their representatives and ultimately by the NPC and their voices are heard by the government through the manifesto. Although individuals' voices are not always represented at a higher level in those several levels of a hierarchy, individual pensioners have opportunities to express their opinions at a local level, which are possibly incorporated at debates at a national level. Apart from the manifesto, the NPC has a long history of engagement with the government since its foundation in 1979 and they established a reciprocal relationship involving suggestions, negotiations, campaigns and reactions in a

form of changes of strategies and policies.

In the case of the second form of civic engagement, the overall level of engagement between individual pensioners and the government is influenced by the quality of three engagement systems. This form of civic engagement is a part of two representation systems. That is, the MPs are representing the central government, particularly their ministries while pensioners who attend the parliament are representing their local pensioners. Therefore, the overall level of engagement is dependent on the quality of engagement between the MPs and the government, between the representatives and local pensioners, and finally between the MPs and the representatives. The last one is what actually was observed at the parliament. The quality of debates between the MPs and the representatives, including the level of mutual understanding and information sharing, directly affects the quality of engagement. The other two are what happen before and after the parliament. A high quality of communications held before the parliament both between the MPs and the government and between the representatives and local pensioners, can make a debate between the MPs and the representatives at the parliament more meaningful in the context of the whole engagement system. On the other hand, a low quality in those communications undermines the significance of a debate and makes it disconnected from the whole system. Likewise, a high quality of communications after the parliament both in the government and in local pensioners' forums promotes the development of the whole engagement system while a low quality in those communications may stop the system continuing. Whether pensioners' demands are reflected in policy changes and whether the government's policies are accepted by local pensioners are not necessarily ultimate tests of the civic engagement practice at the NPC. Those matters involve a number of practical issues, which cannot be solved immediately or completely. What is significant, however, is that there are processes in which all individuals share enthusiasm for better communications and constructive relationships to work as a whole system of civic engagement of local pensioners with the central government through the NPC.

8.1.2 An community organisation and a lunch club: the Atrium at Greenwich and the Quadrilateral Lunch Club

The services and activities of the Atrium at Greenwich and the Quadrilateral Lunch Club (QLC) provide an example of local practices that are successful in facilitating civic engagement of older people in the SE10 postcode area in the London Borough of Greenwich. The Atrium at Greenwich is a community organisation mainly based in a converted church building in Greenwich, whose main role is to facilitate other organisations and groups of older people and to support their independent activities. The QLC is one of the independent organisations, which the Atrium at Greenwich helped to establish and provide continuing managerial and practical support for. A participant observation was conducted at the QLC a day after an informant interview with the manager of the Atrium at Greenwich.

In June 2004 five volunteers, including a driver and an escort, and a staff member from the Atrium at Greenwich were supporting the QLC, which once a week provided lunch and other activities, such as exercise in the morning and bingo in the afternoon, to twenty- three SE10 residents. Usually around 19 or 20 members came to have lunch. Some came in the morning for the exercise session and stayed in the afternoon to play bingo while others just came to have lunch or to have lunch and to play bingo. Users' fee varied from £4.50 to £0.50 depending on the service they use. Almost half of the users are from a sheltered housing scheme in SE10 area. The QLC has its own management committee, which is a requirement for an independent voluntary organisation. The committee is constituted by eight persons, mostly over 50s, and chaired by a volunteer staff member, who is also a driver. The eight committee members include a wide range of representatives of local residents from various ethnic groups.

Various forms of engagement can be found in the activities that take place at the QLC and they fall into the following two main categories: long-term civic engagement, which includes lunch services and exercise sessions; and immediate civic engagement, which includes general socialising and entertainment. The first category provides a basis of civic engagement for all users. The lunch service is vital for some users who have some difficulties in getting a decent hot meal every day because of their physical abilities and/or living conditions. For

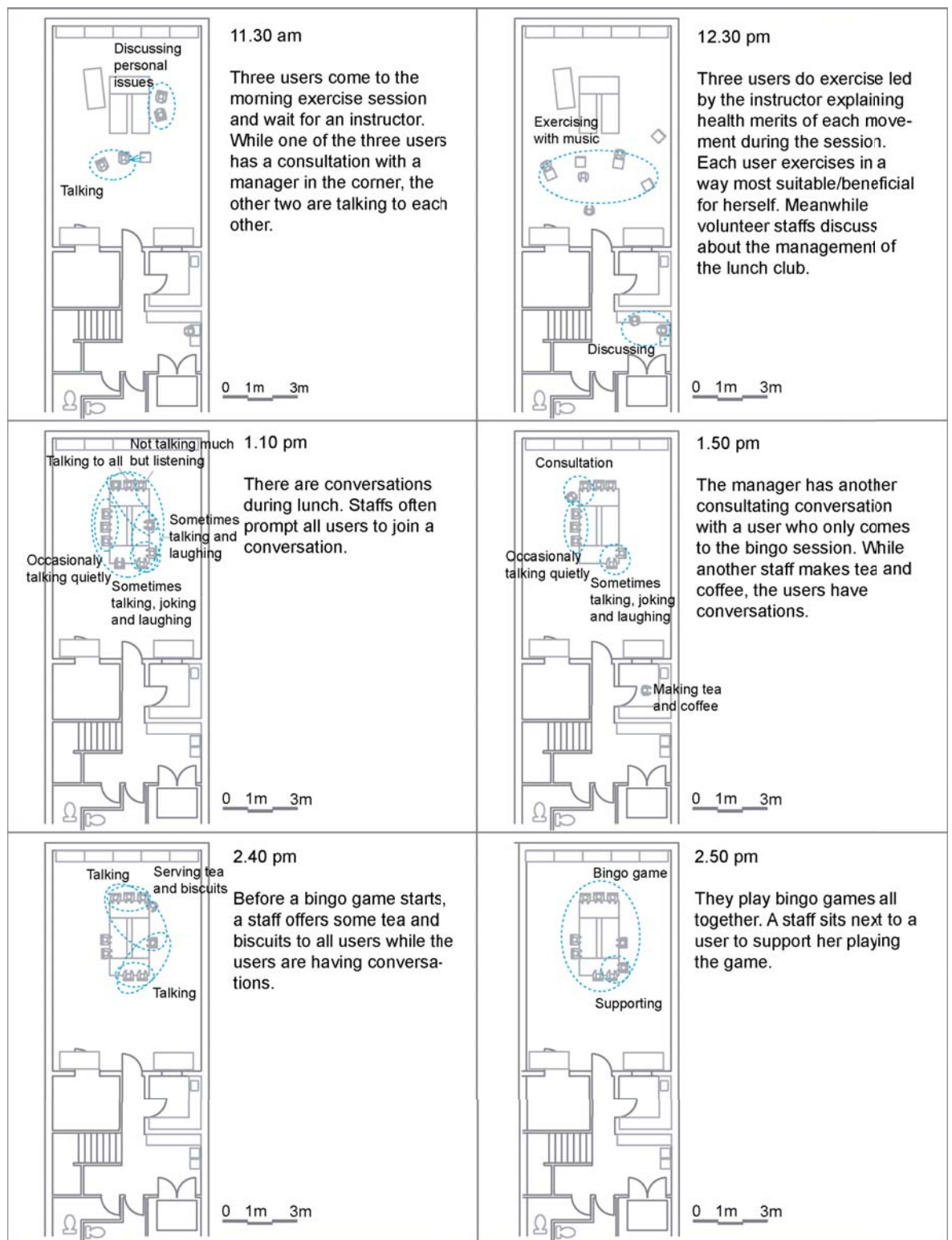
frail older people living alone, it is not easy to go out to buy fresh food and cook hot meals everyday only for themselves even though it is not impossible. The exercise sessions serve likewise. As discussed earlier, maintaining their health is one basis of civic engagement. In the second category, the lunch club offers socialising opportunities. Just as all other civic engagement practices previously examined, a communication with others is itself a form of civic engagement process, which might develop further. The bingo game brings everyone together even though they are not necessarily friend with each other outside the lunch club.

The image on the next page (figure 8.3) shows a few examples of observed scenes, which demonstrate various types of engagement. The room is a rather small, simple rectangular room with basic furniture including some tables and chairs with a separate kitchen. The furniture layouts were changed according to the activities. In the exercise session, a table was moved aside to make an enough space for three users and an instructor to stretch their arms and move around. Afterwards, tables were grouped together to make a big table in the centre so that all users and staffs can sit around it. Bingo was played in the same setting as lunch.

During lunch and the bingo session, communications were observed between different combinations of people. Spontaneous communications between users normally occur between two or three people who sit close to each other, possibly because they know each other and are willing to talk and therefore they try to sit together. When the staff joined in the conversation and tried to blend one group to another, conversations between people or groups of people who sit on opposite side of the tables or with the whole group can also be seen. Private conversations between the manager and users about users' family or financial issues are also observed. Although those conversations were held away from the rest of the users, they were all still in the same small room and privacy was hardly protected. The level of engagement was different between individuals. As the figure shows, some users were not in any of the conversation groups at some times but were passively listening to other conversations or just being part of the whole group. Those passive participations may be less dynamic but are still part of engagement processes.

The various forms of civic engagement at the lunch club were also part of a wider context of civic engagement. In this case, the manager connects the service users and wider society through his activities at the Atrium at Greenwich. The manager, as a representative of the Atrium at Greenwich, is well connected with other organisations working with/for older people in the London Borough Greenwich and has opportunities to represent the QLC service users. He has established constructive and mutually reliable relationships with the QLC service users through his regular involvement in the management and operations of the lunch club. He learns users' situations and problems through open and private conversations he has with them at the lunch club. While he acts as a representative of older people in relation to his wider external networks, he is a trustworthy listener and consultant in relation to older people. Such roles were not necessarily a consequence of his position but were due to his personality. This may mean that civic engagement opportunities which the QLC and the Atrium at Greenwich offer, may not be structurally embedded but may depend on a single person's personal character.

Figure 8.3 A selection of observed scenes: the Quadrilateral Lunch Club



These are examples of some maps with observed behaviour and activity of the lunch club users and staff members for a selected time periods. These maps, in which those behaviours and activity are spatially recorded, were used to analyse their interactions as part of civic engagement at an individual level. This method is particularly useful to understand:

- multiple interactions which take place simultaneously (see for example, 11.30am, 2.40pm); and
- non-verbal interactions, in which spatial positions of those who are involved are even more important than verbal interactions (e.g. 1.10pm).

8.1.3 Socio-cultural engagement: the Riverbridge Day Centre and the Palmtree Day Centre

Two day centres in the same building, which are run by Greenwich Council Social Services, provide lunch, day activities and transportation services five days a week to in total about 57 users in the London Borough of Greenwich. While 12 users from an Afro-Caribbean background chose the Palmtree Day Centre, which offered food and cultural activities and the atmosphere of the Afro-Caribbean, 45 including one Jamaican as well as British, Irish, Welsh and Portuguese users choose the Riverbridge Day Centre, which provided services on the basis of British culture. Most users lived in the four wards around the centres. The majority of them use the day centres twice or three times a week. The number of users per day is between 10 to 20 for the Riverbridge Day Centre and around ten for the Palmtree Day Centre.

In the Riverbridge Day Centre, a service day starts at nine o'clock in the morning with tea and biscuits. There is no fixed programme before lunch and users choose to do whatever they like. A group were playing dominos while others were knitting or reading on their own. They had lunch in a dining room. After having a rest after lunch, all users play a bingo game together until the time to leave. Due to the limited capacity of the transportation service bus, there are two groups: the first group arrives at nine o'clock in the morning and leaves at two o'clock in the afternoon; and the other group arrives at eleven o'clock in the morning and leaves at half past four in the afternoon.

In the Palmtree Day Centre, service started at half past eleven in the morning with tea all together while listening to some music. There were two options for lunch from which they can chose freely. After lunch, some users joined the bingo game at the Riverbridge Day Centre while others enjoyed their independent activities such as knitting, reading, listening to music and watching the TV until four o'clock in the afternoon.

The image (figure 8.4) shows a few examples of observed scenes, which demonstrate various types of engagement at the Riverbridge Day Centre. The Riverbridge Day Centre used two rooms: a dining room and a day activity room. Similar to the Quadrilateral Lunch Club,

these day centres served as a place for social interaction as well as for care services and day activities. Some conversations between care staff and users amounted to consultations. The day activity room was large enough to accommodate various settings. In the morning, all the users at the bigger table were engaged in a domino game except one lady who was engaged in knitting while just sitting next to the group of domino players. At the smaller table, three users occasionally communicated with each other but mainly engaged in separate activities such as reading or looking around. After a while, people in the domino game group moved on to different activities individually. One user offered physical support for another user to walk to the toilet. These activities showed constructive interaction between these older people who were collectively engaged with wider society as day care service users.

The fourth figure illustrates the scene in which one of the users visited a staff room to talk about her problematic situation with a day care staff member. The staff room is located right at the entrance of the day activity room accessed from the corridor and its entrance is visible and noticeable for users especially when the door is open, but inside the room is not open to the day activity room, which enables a private conversation without whispering. At lunchtime, all users moved to a dining room, which is connected to the day activity room through a corridor. While they ate, no conversation was observed. In the afternoon, most of the users were joined by a user and a staff member from the Palmtree Day Centre to join in a bingo game. Meanwhile, however, a few users pursued different activities such as reading or looking around although they still sat at the same table as those who participated in the bingo game. Some people including the Palmtree Day Centre user and staff member took seats at tables, which are located around the main table but rather remote from it. The last figure illustrates the contrast between the users who do not form a physically distinctive group but are engaged in the same activity and the other users who constitute a group around a table but are engaged in separate activities.

The two centres demonstrate two different approaches to civic engagement. The Riverbridge Day Centre was designed to be inclusive and allow its users to decide what they want to do. As a result, there were always some users who were disengaged from the majority group in terms of activities while they still shared the room and the overall day schedule. The

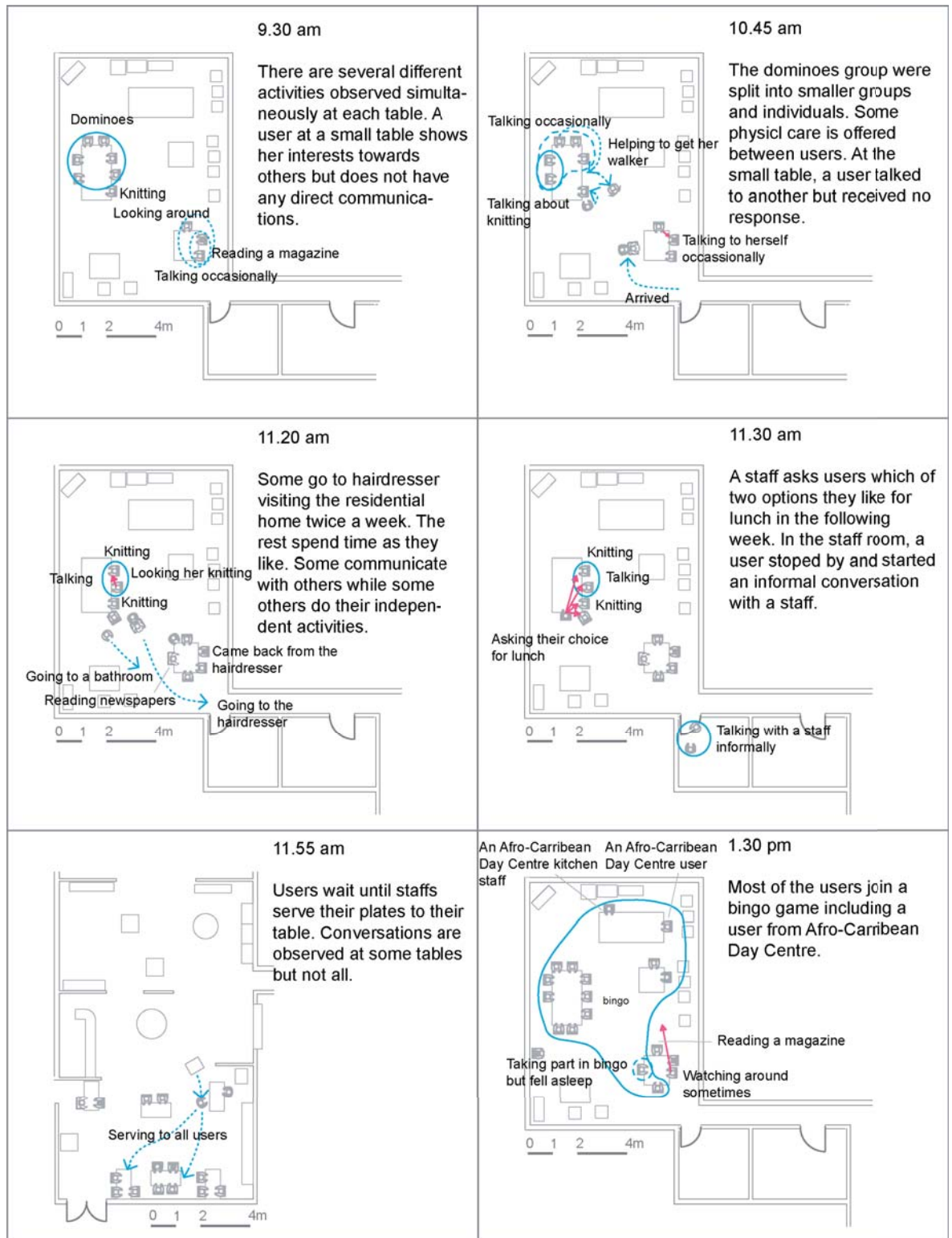
emphasis was laid upon individuality and co-presence with each other as well as socialising and group activities. On the other hand, the Palmtree Day Centre was designed to respond specifically to the cultural needs of people with an Afro-Caribbean background. Although it was not necessarily meant to be exclusive, it was designed to provide specific services including food, music and pictures hung on the wall of the rooms in the centre to respond to specific needs related to Afro-Caribbean cultural backgrounds (figure 8.5). The main purpose of the Palmtree Day Centre was to provide opportunities for the Afro-Caribbean elders, who may be isolated from wider society because of their cultural differences from other ethnic groups, to be engaged with people who share the same cultural background. The emphasis was laid upon commonality although individuality was still respected within a group. These two centres operated in the same building in parallel and together offer users a chance to meet different cultures according to their own choice.

Figure 8.5 Wall paintings in the Palmtree Day Centre



The photograph taken by the author during the participant observation. The image on the wall represents the cultural identity of the Palmtree Day Centre group.

Figure 8.4 A selection of observed scenes: Riverbridge Day Centre



As before (Figure 8.3), these images are examples of some maps with observed behaviour and activity of day centre users and staff members for a selected time periods. The users' interactions involved not only socialising but also helping each other. There were also users who do not seem to have direct communications and were involved in independent activity (i.e. knitting). However there was presence of others, which makes the meaning of the same activity different.

8.1.4 Opportunities for interactions on general issues: Making a Decision Together: the BGOP Event in the London Borough of Greenwich

The event, which was held on 29th June 2004, was organised by the Steering Group of the Greenwich BGOP project to apply what the project defined as civic engagement and provide some feedback on the project to those involved in the study. 180 participants including community groups of older people as well as a number of council officers from various directorates attended the event. The event was divided into three main sections: presentations on interim research outcomes from the Greenwich BGOP team, workshops in small groups and finally debates between all the participants. It was designed to be interactive and participatory throughout the event.

The main purpose of the first session was to provide feedback on the research project for those who were involved in the research as well as for those who were likely to be interested in being involved in the future. A lunch buffet was provided in the hope of encouraging the participants to socialise with people from different groups or organisations informally rather than in a formal setting. After lunch, all the participants including older people and people from public and voluntary sector were divided into small groups of around ten people for the workshops. The workshops were designed to offer opportunities for the participants to embody or act out the principle of engagement by sharing their experiences around nine scenarios drawn from the kind of situations that had emerged from the research in the BGOP project. Three themes were set around issues in decision-making: ‘resource provision’, ‘information and communication’ and ‘feeling valued’. The intention was to offer opportunities for lay people to learn service providers’ perspectives and for service providers to learn lay people’s perspectives. Those three themes also correspond to three dimensions of the person-in-environment model: physical/behavioural, mental/psychological and socio-cultural dimensions. The nine scenarios describing specific incidents like falls, street crime, and housing problem highlighted the importance of dynamic and inter-agency approaches to health, disability, security and ease of access to services and information. Each of nine groups, which was composed of people from different backgrounds – one or two from the council or the state agencies and older people from different community groups, was given one of the three themes and corresponding scenarios. The last session, in which three panellists

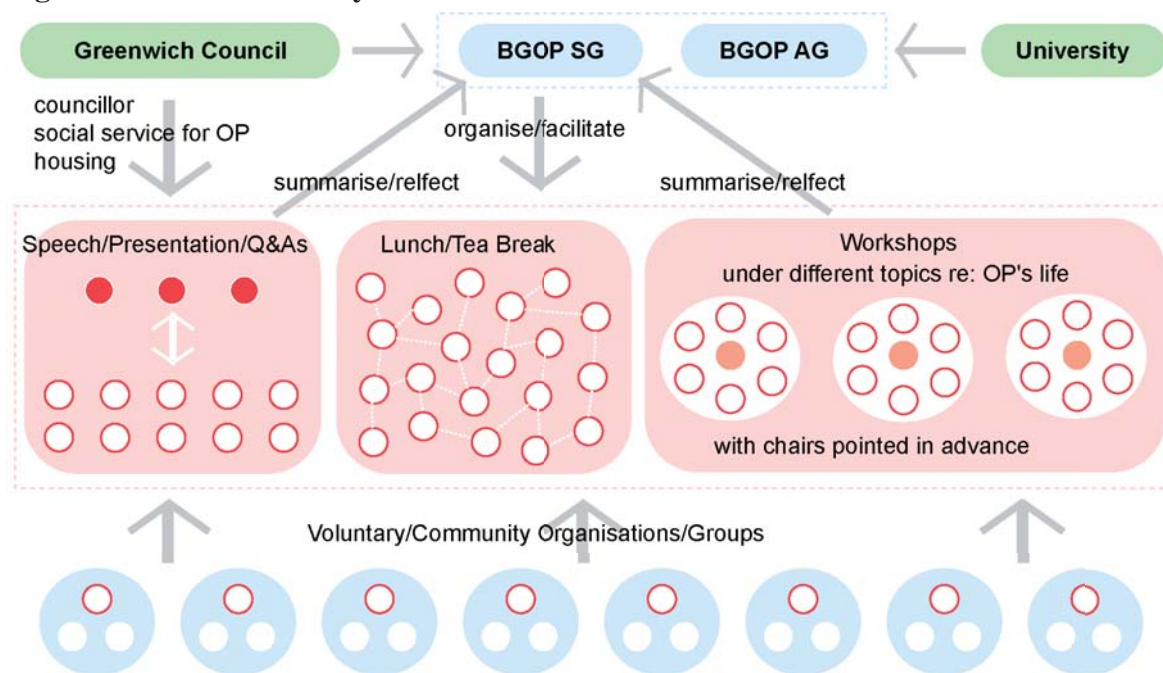
initiated a debate, offered an opportunity for all to provide feedback on the workshops and the event on the whole.

A variety of forms of civic engagement were observed in the event (figure 8.6). As the figure shows, there were mainly three different forms, which were reflected by the physical settings of the room. The first session of the presentation and the last session of the debate with the whole group fell into one type of civic engagement. In those cases, there was a clear distinction of roles between those who delivered information and initiated interactions and those who responded. The presenters in the first session and the panellists in the debate session sat at a table located in front facing the rest of the participants who were sitting around several round tables. In contrast, the second form was a network form, which was observed at lunchtime and tea break. People moved around individually without being constrained by the physical settings of tables and or by the social boundaries of groups and roles. The third form was individual engagement in a small group, which was observed at the workshop. The facilitators, who were assigned to each small group, tried to make sure that individual participants took part in discussions in the groups. The role of facilitator was different from those of presenters or panellists. The relationships between the facilitators and the rest of the group were, or at least meant to be, equal and everyone was expected to provide input. The groups sat at round tables, which signified the equality between all participants including facilitators. Enthusiastic discussions were observed in most of the groups. A less formal and less intimidating atmosphere was created by the small number in each group, by the round tables and their familiarity with the topics for discussion, which encouraged individual older people to express their opinions.

What was discussed in those sessions was summarised and reflected by the Greenwich BGOP steering group. The feedback from those who attended confirmed the success of the event. It was evident that the opportunity to share their experiences of difficulties and challenges at the event, which would otherwise have kept as private matters, had been appreciated and provided them hope to be further engaged with a wider society. However, as explained in the previous chapter, it did not make much impact on the council's decision making afterwards because the Greenwich BGOP project itself has been terminated due to lack of systems and

recourses. Hence civic engagement of those who attended was not extended to outside the group who have been involved in the Greenwich BGOP project.

Figure 8.6 The community event for the Greenwich BGOP



SG: Steering Group AG: Advisory Group

The diagram demonstrates the mechanisms of civic engagement in relation to the community event for the Greenwich BGOP. Individual older people are involved in the event through the representatives from local voluntary/community groups and organisations. There were some representatives from Greenwich Council including a councillor and some staff from Social Services for Older People and Housing Services. There were three different types of activity in terms of form of interactions.

Similar to the NPC Parliament, the event started with a **formal session** including a councillor's speech, followed by a presentation by the Greenwich BGOP steering group members and following Q&A session. The interactions in this session were formal and limited, but involved representatives of older people's groups and those of the council who would otherwise rarely have direct communications.

The Lunch break and tea break were designed to prompt informal interactions between the participants.

In the workshops, all participants were divided in smaller groups in which they discussed different topics relevant to older people's civic engagement. The workshops provided those attended with an opportunity to share their experiences of difficulties and challenges, which related to various fields and therefore tended not to be dealt with well in the culture of sectionalism in the public sector.

8.2 Key values for civic engagement from individuals' perspectives

Analysis of the four case studies above, each of which has multiple layers involving a range of elements concerning various aspects of civic engagement, provides deep insight into civic engagement practices. From the analysis, I will summarise and discuss five key values of civic engagement in terms of individuals' experiences below.

1) Civic engagement in a wider society

First of all, it is important that civic engagement practices offer a route through which an individual can be connected to wider society. For example, the National Pensioners Conventions (NPC) offered a system in which a pensioner is eventually represented at the NPC parliament, where representatives and the MPs, who are the representatives of the government (as well as of the people as a whole), have discussions on issues concerning pensioners' everyday life. Even though it is on a smaller scale, the Quadrilateral Lunch Club (QLC) also provides opportunities for service users to be connected to the wider community, through the manager of the Atrium at Greenwich, who represent the QLC service users in relation to his own networks which extended at least borough-wide. The former example of the NPC demonstrates a representation model while the Atrium at Greenwich is more like an expert model. Despite the difference in scale, both of them have systems in which individual older people are connected to a wider society beyond their group members such as those who attended the NPC parliament and the QLC service users.

From an individual's perspective, one does not always have a desire or need to feel connected to the entire world. As my previous research on individual older people's 'embeddedness' suggests, one's life tends to be psychologically, physically and socio-culturally dense in the local area of one's own residence even though the size of such areas might differ between individuals. If we could somehow demonstrate a relationship between the distance from one's residence and the density of his/her life, which can be calculated from frequency and importance, it will show a regression as the distance increases.

Yet, the route from an individual to wider society is important. From an individual's perspective, it is about possibility and offering prospects. Some lunch club users might appreciate the service only because it satisfies their needs of having a warm meal once a week. They may think they do not need to socialise with others because they have their personal network of people outside the lunch club. However, this may change. Or she might respond to the need of another service user who is lonely. As I discussed in earlier chapters, individuals' expectations as well as experiences of civic engagement are dynamic and diverse. From designers' and suppliers' perspectives, it is important that civic engagement practices

respond to such dynamic and diverse expectations and needs.

2) Informal forms of civic engagement

Secondly, it is important to allow informal interactions between those involved. There are various types of arranged and designed interaction opportunities that civic engagement practices offer. Debate, workshop and bingo sessions are included in those designed interactions. While they encourage interactions between those who may not otherwise have had interactions, they often put limits on those with whom people interact, and on the form of interactions and what interactions are about. Those limits may or may not fit individuals' needs for civic engagement, which are diverse and dynamic. On the other hand, in informal interactions, individuals do not have obligations or constraints about whom they interact with, in which form and what their interactions are about. Individuals find a way to fill their needs by themselves rather spontaneously. For example, some service users at the Quadrilateral Lunch Club or at the Riverbridge Day Centre talk to service staffs about their problems in an informal way. Opportunities were created to respond to individuals' needs rather than provided to everyone on an assumption that some of them might need such opportunities.

Even though informal interactions are spontaneous activities that are initiated by individuals rather than service providers, they can still be either encouraged or discouraged by their environments. For example, private conversations between users and service managers or carers at lunch clubs and day centres would not have happened without the openness of service managers or carers. In my experience of fieldwork in Japan, I have seen many cases in nursing homes and hospitals where carers and nurses are so busy with carrying out their immediate and obvious tasks such as changing bed linen, feeding, nursing and personal care that residents and patients simply do not even try to talk to them about anything unless it is a vital matter or relevant to such obvious tasks.

Adequate social and spatial settings are also essential to accommodate and encourage informal interactions. Both the Quadrilateral Lunch Club and the Riverbridge Day Centre provide a small space where a user can be alone with a manager or a carer keeping enough distance from others so not to be overheard in their conversations by others. At the community event

in the Greenwich BGOP project, lunch was provided in a buffet style instead of a fixed table style to enhance opportunities of random encounters between those attending.

Informal communications can be powerful not only in informal relations but also in formal relations. Brooks (2003) discusses the advantages of informal groups in organisations, which seem to be transferable to advantages of informal networks in general. The advantages of informal networks that are mentioned in Brooks' book (2003: 89) are mainly related to the psychological aspect of engagement including emotions, feelings and perceptions. They include, for instance, the tendency to 'reduce feelings of insecurity and anxiety and provide each other with social support,' also to 'fulfil affiliation needs for friendship, love and support,' 'help to define our sense of identity and maintain our self-esteem,' and 'provide guidelines on generally acceptable behaviour: they help shape group and organisational norms.

Supporting interviews revealed that informal interactions between service users and service managers/carers at the Quadrilateral Lunch Club or at the Riverbridge Day Centre provided additional support for some service users. It confirms some of the advantages of informal networks which are addressed above. It was also revealed that informal interactions at the social event in the National Pensioners Conventions Parliament facilitated those attending to develop their informal networks. While the civic engagement structure that the NPC offers is vertical, linking local pensioners' groups to the UK government, informal networks are developed horizontally. Informal networks complement what the NPC formally offers and enhance the unity of members and consequently the civic engagement of each member.

3) Individuality in civic engagement

The way that individuals establish their 'embeddedness' is different between individuals. For example, there was one service user with a Jamaican background at the Riverbridge Day Centre. He could have chosen the Palmtree Day Centre if he wanted to have Caribbean cuisine for his lunch and to listen to familiar music. While the Palmtree Day Centre users exercised their rights to be culturally different from British, Irish and other Europeans, this older person with Jamaican background exercised his right to be different from other Afro-Caribbeans. This example shows that cultural engagement is important for some but may not

be everyone's highest priority.

Likewise, the way and the extent to which individuals relate to a civic engagement practice are different even between those who are involved in the same practice. Two figures from observations at those two day centres and at the QLC illustrated a variety of activities pursued by individuals in the same situation. Some people prefer to play bingo with others or to be involved in conversations with others while some others prefer to do things like knitting or reading in the presence of others.

In theory, the importance of individuality in civic engagement is present in any society. In chapter four, I discussed why it is particularly important in contemporary society in relation to globally expanded networks and increased flexibility. The case of the older person with a Jamaican background offers a scenario, which is characteristic of contemporary society, involving culture, identity and personal preference.

4) Dynamism of civic engagement

A process is often more meaningful than merely as an achievement of individuals' immediate desires in civic engagement. For example, it is quite unlikely that all the requirements that were expressed in the NPC manifesto were accepted and adapted by the UK government, not because they would be neglected but because there would be conflicts of interests between pensioners and others. However, it is significant that local pensioners' voices were by and large discussed at various levels and eventually reflected on the manifesto, which was then presented to the UK government. Whatever the reaction of the government is, it will be circulated by the NPC between its members.

It is not to say that reactions of the government are not important. On the contrary, it is essential for the dynamism of civic engagement. As I mentioned in the previous chapter, the interviews revealed that it was often the case that there was no feedback after consultation events. Those who attended to those events felt neglected and found those events meaningless. Regardless of whether it is favourable or not, the reaction of the more powerful other makes

the interaction two-way instead of one-way. As I demonstrated in chapter five within the four levels of civic engagement at a micro level, two-way interaction is better than only one-way recognition. As long as there is a system that has a route allowing continuous two-way interactions, there is a chance of an ongoing civic engagement process. The NPC is an example that embodies such systems involving the UK government on the one hand and individual pensioners on the other.

5) Responsibilities in civic engagement

As I discussed in chapter five, the concept of civic engagement is transactional. Civic engagement is about being part of society by continuously forming and shaping a society through transactional activities. It is not only about benefitting from public services or obtaining whatever one wants from others and society. It is equally important to take part responsibly in public affairs and to socialise, to be part of society as well as to exercise rights.

In chapter six, I discussed an example of a local civic engagement initiative in Manchester, which was designed to evoke residents' sense of belonging, responsibilities and ownership rather than focusing on service delivery. It was argued that encouraging individuals to be responsible and independent would eventually form a foundation for sustainable civic engagement.

The head of the National Pensioners Conventions emphasised in our interview that the NPC was one of the largest organisations in the UK that not only works for and with older people but that is made up of older people. In his view, that is one of the NPC's best values as an organisation. Indeed, other large organisations such as Age Concern and Help Aged are working for and with older people but they are not organisations of older people. Participation in the NPC activities is a form of civic engagement in which older people themselves take responsibilities of shaping a society. Organisations working for and with older people offer different forms of civic engagement, which are equally important without a doubt. They provide older people with advice and support to enhance their independence and proactiveness. Such empowerment may also lead to older people's responsible actions

to form and shape society. Yet, it seems to be worthwhile emphasising the importance of organisations of older people that directly provide older people with opportunities to take responsible actions to be part of society.

Learning from those examples, the community event of the Greenwich BGOP project was designed to make all those attending, including policy makers, service users and older people, realise that responsibilities could be shared and service users could take ownership of their relationships with policy makers and service providers more proactively. In the workshop sessions, everyone was encouraged to discuss issues in a mixed group of policy makers, service providers and lay older people so that older people could learn policy makers' and service providers' perspectives and vice versa.

8.3 Summary

This chapter examined four civic engagement practices in depth in order to understand older people's perceptions and experiences of civic engagement. The in-depth analysis disentangled multiple layers of civic engagement in each of the practices, through which individuals are connected to a wider society psychologically, behaviourally and socio-culturally. Despite the diversity of individuals' relationships with civic engagement practices, I identified five key values in civic engagement from individuals' perspectives.

It is essential that civic engagement practices not only offer opportunities for social interaction between older people but also create systems through which they are connected to a wider society. In other words, civic engagement practices should connect older people to society vertically as well as horizontally. Some people may have opportunities to influence the UK government's decisions directly by interacting with the government representatives while the majority rarely get involved in the decision-making processes of the UK government or even of local governments apart from via elections. However, detailed analysis of civic engagement practices in this chapter demonstrated there were alternative ways to influence the decision-making of the UK or local governments other than direct involvement. Voices of service users at the QLC were unofficially represented by the service manager, who was involved in various groups making decisions that affect the life of older people in the London

Borough of Greenwich. Individual service users voices are conveyed via multiple layers of civic engagement from the everyday life domain to the strategic domain.

It was also demonstrated that flexibility in civic engagement practices was essential. Civic engagement practices that have flexibility to accommodate informal interactions and individual activities can respond to the diversity and dynamism of individuals' needs. In the Quadrilateral Lunch Club and the Riverbridge Day Centre, some individual service users were observed having private conversations with a service manager and a carer respectively. In the Riverbridge Day Centre, there were also some users who do not communicate much with other service users or carers while the majority of users were engaged in a group activity such as a bingo game. The flexibility of those practices accommodating individuals' needs for private conversations and individual activities allows individuals to be engaged in the practices in their own ways.

As discussed in chapter four, in contemporary society, being part of a community is a process rather than a given status. Therefore, it is important that civic engagement practices offer dynamic systems, which allow individuals to establish their own unique relationships with a wider society, rather than offer structures in which individuals are embedded according to their status. The example of the NPC parliament demonstrated that individuals enjoyed the process of being involved in decision-making processes. It supports my speculation that the process of social interactions itself creates a sense of ownership and a sense of belonging when individuals take responsibility for their relationships within a wider society.

That then also supports another theoretical speculation that civic engagement in older peoples' everyday life plays a significant role in their 'embeddedness.' Older people can be proactive and take responsibilities for their relationships with a wider society. Such social interactions are part of civic engagement in their everyday life, developing social networks that suit their preferences and lifestyle and creating a sense of belonging. Civic engagement seems then to be relevant to three sets of elements of the 'embeddedness.' A sense of belonging that civic engagement can produce is an essential part of psychological 'embeddedness.' Social interactions themselves are behavioural 'embeddedness' and also become part of physical

‘embeddedness’ as such interactions happen in certain time and space. Social networks embed individuals in society socially and culturally in individually unique ways.

While the theoretical frameworks on civic engagement that I established in chapter five help to identify those key values, those frameworks were also supported by the examinations of civic engagement practices from various perspectives. Also the analysis of civic engagement from individuals’ perspectives provided support to some speculations as to how civic engagement of older people impacts their ‘embeddedness.’

In essence, from individuals’ perspectives, civic engagement is happening at all levels and it takes many different forms. Knitting while sitting next to another user at a day case centre is also part of civic engagement. So is talking to a representative of another Pensioners Forum at the bar in an evening event. It is not only expressing their opinion themselves in the presence of MPs or local councillors that matters. All those different forms of civic engagement at different levels together offer variety of opportunities and also links directly and indirectly individual older people and the UK government.

Interactions with others contribute to the ‘embeddedness’ in two important ways through those layers of civic engagement. Such interactions themselves are part of individual older people’s life. Individuals construct their own ‘embeddedness’ in a society through their daily activity and interactions (Tobari, 2003). Those interactions are also part of wider networks of people which ultimately involve all sort of social actors including the UK government and international organisations.

It seems that, looking from individuals’ perspectives, it is the UK government and local governments which need to be involved in endless and ever changing networks. In the next chapter, I will discuss problems of the current conditions in the UK in relation to civic engagement of older people, which have mainly emerged from the arguments in this and the two preceding chapters.

CHAPTER NINE

9. CIVIC ENGAGEMENT VALUES AND THE REALITY

In the preceding chapters, for the purpose of investigating how the UK government's initiatives promoting civic engagement of older people contribute to their 'embeddedness,' I examined various initiatives relevant to older people's civic engagement at a strategic level and at a delivery level and looked at the way older people's expectations for and experiences of civic engagement are shaped.

In chapters six and seven, I examined older people's civic engagement initiatives at all levels focusing on scales, elements involved and mechanisms. Based on those examinations, I identified some key elements for civic engagement at the levels of strategy and service provision. Those include: co-ordination between national, regional and local strategic levels, partnership across different expertises and different sectors and finally the need for a bottom-up approach. That is, a strategic approach to improve civic engagement requires both vertical relationships between different levels and horizontal relationships between different expertise and sectors in order to be open and interactive. Furthermore, it is essential to empower older people to take responsibilities and ownership in order to achieve a higher level of civic engagement.

In chapter eight, I examined older people's civic engagement practices from individuals' perspectives to understand how they perceive and experience civic engagement and how their perceptions and experiences affect their 'embeddedness.' An older person perceives and experiences multiple layers of civic engagement and various elements in a civic engagement practice at the same time as a single event rather than as separate incidences. The whole event affects his/her 'embeddedness' through multiple layers of civic engagement involving various elements. The key values of civic engagement in relation to individuals' 'embeddedness' include: civic engagement in a wider society; informal forms of civic engagement; individuality in civic engagement; dynamism of civic engagement; and older

people's responsibilities in civic engagement. It was then suggested that what individual older people expect from civic engagement is to be connected to a wider society in their own ways and to take control of their relationships with a wider society.

Those key elements of civic engagement both from strategic and service provision perspectives and an individual's perspective illuminate what makes civic engagement practices effective or ineffective in relation to older people's 'embeddedness.' In this chapter, I will bring together these threads to give a model of the most important elements for the overall articulation of civic engagement in the UK, drawing on the discussions on civic engagement from those different perspectives as well as the conceptual discussions on civic engagement that I developed in chapter four and five. In chapter four, I explained that social relations between social actors were increasingly becoming network-oriented rather than structured. I argued in chapter five that frequent and intimate interactions, flexibility and transparency were important for civic engagement in a network-oriented society. I will assess the current social structures, social systems and cultures in the UK, which affect older people's civic engagement and eventually their 'embeddedness,' focusing on how they impact frequency and intimacy of interactions and flexibility and transparency of social relations.

I will summarise overall civic engagement values under four main themes. The first theme is network-oriented relationships at a macro level. As I discussed in chapter four, although social relations in contemporary society are generally highly network-oriented, there are still two different cultures of social relationships, hierarchies and networks, particularly in the public sector. I will discuss why it is difficult for institutional organisations in national and local government to achieve partnerships and collaborations across different levels and across different expertises and sectors.

The second theme is the stability of social relations, which is crucially supported by strong ties between social actors. As I discussed in chapter five, it is essential to have frequent and intimate interactions to establish strong ties bound with mutual understanding and mutual trust, which are necessary components of a higher level of civic engagement. However, there are also dangers that strong ties may entail. I will discuss two issues, collectiveness and

exclusiveness, in relation to such potential dangers, of which we need to be aware when we pursue policies to develop civic engagement.

The third theme is the flexibility of social relations, which characterises principles of social relations in contemporary society. Although strong ties and weak ties are both essential to maintain and develop civic engagement for individuals and in society as I discussed in chapter four, strong ties and weak ties play different roles in civic engagement. Weak ties are particularly important to achieve the flexibility and the dynamism of social relations creating layers of social relations in a society and within a civic engagement practice. While strong ties provide stability in social relations, weak ties open up the possibility to extend networks to a wider society.

The fourth theme is the sustainability of civic engagement, in which individuals' responsibilities play a significant role. In chapter five, I argued that the concept of civic engagement involves both rights and responsibilities. While older people have rights to be part of a society, they are also responsible for forming a society. Although the majority of civic engagement initiatives acknowledge such rights of older people, their responsibilities are rarely recognised or demonstrated. I will discuss several systematic problems that seem to be causing the current underperformance of older people's responsibility in civic engagement.

The discussions under those four themes will reveal the gaps between what would be ideal to improve older people's civic engagement and 'embeddedness' and the reality in the UK. Based on the analysis of those gaps, I will then develop my conjecture as to how such gaps can be filled.

9.1 Network-oriented relationships and hierarchical organisations

9.1.1 Cultures of networks and cultures of hierarchies

As discussed in chapter four, social relationships are increasingly becoming more network-oriented than embedded in social structures. In network-oriented relationships, transparency

is a key value. On the other hand, transparency is the least common property of social relations in the culture of hierarchies. As I mentioned in chapter four, it is a challenge for institutional organisations to increase transparency in their internal and external communications when their social structures and systems work to create resistance to transparency and flexibility.

The UK government promotes partnerships between organisations at all levels and between different sectors by various initiatives including the Better Government for Older People initiative as part of the Modernising Government Agenda. The partnership was intended to be a breakthrough to challenge the constraints of the culture of hierarchies, which are particularly common in the public sector. Partnership helps social relations to become equal, interactive and flexible while hierarchies make social relations unequal and rigid. Partnership is a form of networking, which allows all social actors to make their own contributions using their skills and capacities. It is the addition of each social actor's skills and capacities rather than the division of an organisation's skills and capacities. Partnership, therefore, offers an efficient way of achieving a given goal by using a wide range of existing resources, utilising required skills and capacities where they can be found. Some examples of successful local civic engagement practices that involve partnerships across different levels and/or different sectors were introduced in chapter six.

On the other hand, the case study of local civic engagement practices in the London Borough of Greenwich demonstrated that lack of communications between different levels and between different sectors prevented civic engagement from further development.

The consultation events organised by the Social Services and/or the Housing Services in Greenwich Council demonstrated the Council's efforts to develop network-oriented relationships with individual older people in the borough. Working with one of the most connected voluntary organisations in the borough, Age Concern Greenwich, various groups of older people and/or their representatives were identified and invited to the events. According to the interviewee working in the Social Services in Greenwich Council, those attending such events expressed their opinions and concerns regarding public services, which were informative for council staff. Those events created opportunities for council staffs and

individual older people to interact with each other less formally and more interactively than it would have been in open meetings, for example.

Despite what seemed to be the success of these consultation events, it was also revealed that there were problems with those events as civic engagement practice. It was reported that older people's voices, which had been raised at those events, were scarcely reflected at all in decision-making in the Council. One problem was the lack of sufficient communications within the organisation of the Council rather than difficulty of communication at the events. Council members and officers who had actually attended to the events failed to share their understanding of the importance of older people's voices with their colleagues. Another problem was the lack of clarity regarding the responsibilities of individuals working in the Council. Council members and officers, who attended the events, were sometimes themselves not involved in making the particular decisions over strategies or action plans on the issues raised at that meeting by older people. For example, when issues on public safety were mentioned in a consultation event organised by the Social Services, the matters could either be regarded as less of a priority, or simply neglected, rather than passed on to an appropriate division or council members. As a result of those internal communication problems across different levels of a hierarchy and across different divisions within the Council, older people often have little feedback from the consultation events.

As the example of consultation events shows, social structures and social systems of local governments can be problematic for civic engagement by fracturing information flows between individual older people and those who are involved in decision-making processes, in a local government and between different departments or teams within the Council. Although there are interactions that are dynamic and flexible in some of the daily operations of local governments, the culture of hierarchy is still dominant in the public sector. Hierarchical structures and systems reduce transparency by fracturing information flows vertically and horizontally. Vertically, information flows tend to be one way rather than interactive, which is fatal for civic engagement. Horizontally, information tends to stay within a certain team or department. Those problems conceived by the culture of hierarchy are discussed in the following sections focusing on each of those two directions, vertical and horizontal.

9.1.2 Limit of the government's top-down approach

As I argued in chapter five, a top-down approach itself is not necessarily a negative factor for civic engagement. On the contrary, a strong vision at a strategic level is also an essential and indispensable element to promote civic engagement. Without a strategic approach, the development of civic engagement has to depend on individual agencies and individuals. Nevertheless, a higher level of civic engagement cannot be achieved solely by a top-down approach.

One limit of a top-down approach is that it relies on existing structures and systems. Although the Better Government for Older People programme, which promoted civic engagement of older people, created a new network of local governments and other public and voluntary organisations, it was still a top-down approach operating on the basis of existing structures and systems, which were hierarchical from national on the top to local to the bottom. While it undoubtedly encouraged interactions between different expertises such as health and housing, and between different sectors such as the public sector and the voluntary sector at both the national and a local level, those interactions rarely involved older people themselves. Nor indeed, did it change the power balance between those existing organisations working for/with older people. Although older people's representatives from the 28 BGOP pilots and some other local authorities are included in the national Advisory Group, they are the ones who have been already involved in successful civic engagement practices. Those whose voices have not yet been heard remained outside the networks. In short, the BGOP network successfully improved interactions between organisations and individuals who had already been involved in planning or providing services for older people by working as a network hub. However, it neither reached those who have not yet been involved nor overturned the power balance between the national government and local government, let alone that between national and local governments and lay older people.

Another problem of a top-down approach is related to the specificity of visions and strategies at a local level. At a national level, visions and strategies inevitably remain rather generic. Those visions and strategies need to be interpreted at a local level according to local contexts and to be fed into action plans. It still requires a strong initiative at a local level to set

local visions and local strategies and to design action plans to achieve them while making sure that those visions and strategies are in accordance with the national ones. However, national visions and strategies, which have been developed irrespective of local contexts and complications, tend to be seen as obligatory targets rather than shared goals. As a result, local governments tend to use national strategies as a checklist rather than a guideline or a source of inspiration.

In the case of the BGOP programme, the visions and strategies were developed based on the 28 pilot studies at a local level. Those are not what have been developed merely in discussions within the national government. Yet the majority of those who attempt to pursue the principles of the BGOP locally had not been involved in the development of the visions and strategies. Although the BGOP network is designed to assist local authority members and officers, it does so mainly by providing useful information via emails, leaflets, reports and websites rather than by offering opportunities of direct interaction between those who are leading the national BGOP programme and those who aim to follow. Sharing knowledge, enthusiasm and goals, requires interactive, frequent and intense communication at an individual level. Without direct face-to-face communications, local authority members and officers are unlikely to be able to share enthusiasm and a sense of ownership of the BGOP project. As a result, while some local authority members and officers are motivated and take the initiative in their local BGOP projects, some others hardly take any action.

To summarise, although a strong initiative at a strategic level is essential in promoting civic engagement nationally and locally, it has to be accompanied by strategies and action plans according to local contexts to be effective. In addition, it has to be acknowledged that a top-down approach is normally effective primarily within the existing structures and systems. In order to expand the extent of social relations and reach out to those who have not been recognised by existing decision makers and service providers, other approaches such as partnership need to be used in parallel.

9.1.3 Obstructions from sectionalism

As well as a top-down approach, sectionalism is also common in the public sector and limits

the development of civic engagement. It obviously works as an obstacle to partnerships across different expertises. In the culture of sectionalism, experts tend to keep their knowledge and experiences to themselves because those are what define them. Specialised knowledge and experiences differentiate them from others and define their professional identity. In other words, those are the rationale of their existence and therefore the source of their power. The increasing concentration of the power of knowledge of the system within bureaucratic public organisations was already anticipated by Max Weber (1978) a century ago. Unlike Weber who was particularly pessimistic and thought ‘there was ultimately no clear escape from the iron cage of specialization and rationalization’ (Turner 1999: 65), in this thesis I will suggest several ways to open up the iron cage later in this chapter and in the following chapter (chapter ten).

In a hierarchical organisation, when there is an issue to deal with, its elements are classified according to an existing group structure from the top end. For example, in a local council, the first question is which division (Chief Executive, Social Services, Housing Services, Education Services and Public Services) and then which groups within a division should deal with which elements of the issue. Once those elements are sorted in all relevant groups within the organisation, each of the groups deals with elements of the issue that are allocated to the group without a whole picture of the original issue. Each element is detached from the original issue and becomes an independent matter from the rest of the elements which might be dealt with in other departments in the council.

The case study in the London Borough of Greenwich revealed that people working in the public sector tend to consider the concept of civic engagement in relation to what they do in their jobs. In another words, they only use their own languages. A manager in the primary care trust uses the term ‘patients’ involvement’ instead of ‘civic engagement of older people’ as that is how they interpreted it to relate to their daily tasks. A manager in the Social Services is pre-eminently concerned about frail and vulnerable older people, because those are the ones who would need and use social care services, but not healthy ones. Although all services provided by those public agencies contribute to some extent to overall civic engagement of older people in the borough, their contributions are predominantly confined within their own

territories.

Overall performance of civic engagement beyond sectionalism both at strategic and service-provision levels has to be monitored and evaluated to achieve a high level of overall civic engagement in a local area. Such monitoring and evaluation needs to be done by a third agent who is either at the top or outside the organisation. In the Greenwich BGOP project, the BGOP steering group, composed of council members and the university members, was expected to play a role of monitoring and evaluating overall performances of the borough with regard to civic engagement of older people. However, in reality, the walls of sectionalism in the public sector stood in the way and the BGOP steering group never managed to establish collaborative relationships with other existing organisations, especially in the public sector. The BGOP project was funded by the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit in Greenwich Council, which meant that the BGOP steering group was neither on the top of the council's organisational structure nor outside.

Without a strong strategic initiative, the culture of sectionalism tends to allow gaps to develop between what needs to be done to achieve a high level of civic engagement in a local area and what actually is done by individual experts. As I mentioned above, each expert interprets a goal in his/her own language regardless of what other experts might think. In theory, there are three ways of filling such gaps. One is to establish a new body that is responsible for the uncovered area and composed of all experts required for the task of improving civic engagement of older people in the borough. Another is for one of the existing departments to take over and include the improvement of older people's civic engagement in the borough in its responsibilities. The third one is to extend all existing departments' remit and roles to be equally in charge of civic engagement of older people in the borough.

In the culture of hierarchy and bureaucracy, the first option requires legitimacy. The area that the new body covers has to be defined precisely to assure its validity and to avoid a conflict with other existing agencies. It has to be embedded in the existing hierarchical structure so that there is no confusion as to who is responsible for the new body. The second option, on the other hand, may require less new legitimacy but may cause confusion and

suspicion amongst other departments. It requires less fresh legitimation because there is little communication between different departments and a change of tasks in one department may not be even noticed by people in other departments. If the take over by one of the departments is done in a legitimate way, then it has to follow bureaucratic procedure and has to be embedded in the existing structure. However, the assignment of a new role to one department could cause an imbalance of power between all the other departments. The third option requires a consensus of all the existing departments and well-organised systems that can be self-sustained amongst all relevant departments. They need to agree on what are each department's roles and responsibilities.

What the BGOP steering group tried to do in the London Borough of Greenwich involves all of those three options. The ultimate goal of the Greenwich BGOP project was in principle a combination of the first and the third options. The BGOP steering group was designed to play a role as a new agency whose responsibility was to facilitate and monitor older people's civic engagement practices in the borough. It was envisaged that all relevant departments and non-public agencies would eventually take part in the BGOP project proactively. The idea was to locate the new agency outside the council's hierarchical system to be independent from the council or any other existing organisations, especially those with power or influence. The new agency would need to break through existing barriers between different agencies and bring them together. It would need to challenge the culture of hierarchy and bureaucracy in the council.

However, in reality, what happened was closer to the second option. After all, despite the discussions about the concept of civic engagement between the BGOP steering group members, the members' opinions and intentions were not in agreement. While the University members in the steering group suggested establishing a new agency involving various council departments and expertises outside the council and to share power between them, the officers from the Chief Executive's department were not ready to give up their power to be shared with other departments. The way the officers from the council worked was constrained by the culture of hierarchy and bureaucracy which gave them authority over other public and non-public agencies.

Despite the fact that the members of the Social Inclusion and Justice division took the decision to initiate the BGOP project in the borough without consulting other council departments such as Social Services and Housing Services, which were also relevant to older people's civic engagement, once the project had started they demanded the co-operation of those other departments. Some interviewees expressed their surprise that they had never heard of the project or of the involvement of the Social Inclusion and Justice in the project. Some even seemed offended by the fact they had not been informed in spite of the relevance and significance of their roles in relation to civic engagement of older people. While the BGOP steering group acclaimed the cross-disciplinary approach and proactive communications, the steering group members from the council contradicted it by holding on to their existing privileges, keeping powerful information to themselves.

As emphasised in the preceding chapters, knowledge is a powerful tool. Civic engagement can be developed on the basis of sharing knowledge and sharing power and can impact 'embeddedness' of older people. However, the culture of sectionalism leads people to keep knowledge to themselves to maintain their power. Such an approach may work in a small, hierarchical system. Doctors, lawyers and so on still have authority based on their exclusive knowledge. However, it does not work in this way to deal with a comprehensive issue such as civic engagement in a highly networked society. Sharing knowledge involves diffusing power in a networked society and empowering the network itself. Civic engagement can only be developed on the basis of the collaboration of experts sharing knowledge.

9.2 Stability of civic engagement

The second theme is the stability of civic engagement, which is mainly provided by strong ties between social actors. Strong ties involve frequent and intimate interactions. As the micro civic engagement model that I proposed in chapter five suggests, frequent and intimate interactions are necessary to advance civic engagement at a micro level. A social group that internally achieved civic engagement of a matured transaction level develops a shared identity, which encourages its members' integrity as a social group.

In this section, I will discuss two issues related to dangers that strong ties may entail. The first

issue is a common confusion between social groups connected with strong ties and social groups as a collective cohort. A social group, such as older people, pensioners and patients, does not necessarily involve strong ties despite a similarity or a common attribute between the individuals in a group. The other issue is the potential exclusiveness of strong ties. While strong ties provide intimacy and security amongst group members, their intimacy and shared properties could enhance their segregation from others. Although the contribution of strong ties to the stability of civic engagement is undeniable, the negative propensities of strong ties also need to be recognised as a potential obstacle to civic engagement of older people.

9.2.1 Common properties and collectiveness

Social relations between individuals who are connected with strong ties to one another are more stable than those based on weak ties. Through frequent and intimate interactions, individuals share knowledge and experiences and maintain mutual understanding and trust. Civic engagement at a matured transaction level in a social group allows one member to represent the group efficiently. The example of the Quadrilateral Lunch Club in the London Borough of Greenwich demonstrated that the manager had learnt the health and social conditions of lunch club service users through his regular and rather intimate interactions with them. He expressed those service users' needs as a representative in his external relations in the borough.

Naturally, a group of people who have common or similar knowledge, experiences or social attributes have an advantage in achieving civic engagement at a higher level. Similarities such as age, ethnicity, economic status, educational background, cultural background and religious beliefs can work as glue that unites people within a group.

A grouping method using these properties has been commonly used by governments in the design of public services. Citizens are categorised according to those properties and each of the categories of people is assigned to certain characteristics and associated with certain demands. As introduced in chapter four, the concept of older people as a social group emerged along with social security systems such as pension schemes. It is convenient to group people and deal with them collectively rather than to deal with individuals separately. However,

especially in a highly individualised society, individuals grouped by a single social attribute such as age group, or ethnicity, may have little to share besides what defines them as a group. Those social groups that are formed for external reasons are not necessarily integrated internally and they do not represent certain needs of individuals. Thus, they may have little to contribute to civic engagement.

9.2.2 Exclusiveness of strong ties

A group of people who are connected with strong ties to one another forms a cluster, which distinguishes itself from any other individuals and groups in a network system. While those groups united with strong ties offer a high level of civic engagement internally, they could be externally exclusive. What unites individuals as a group is what distinguishes them amongst others and distinctions often become a social distance.

The level of exclusiveness of social groups varies depending on what defines the groups. For example, the Palmtree Day Centre in the London Borough of Greenwich is formed based on users' ethnic background, which is tightly associated with a certain culture. While it provides opportunities for older people with Afro-Caribbean background to socialise in familiar environments, it feels exclusive for older people with other ethnic backgrounds. It contrasts the other day centre, the Riverbridge Day Centre, in the same building. The services provided in this centre are more general, including two different menus for lunch to choose from. Its users include English, Irish, Welsh and an older person with Afro-Caribbean background as well. Social groups based on specific social attributes like the Palmtree Day Centre users can be strongly united because what they share are fundamental elements of life. On the other hand, those groups tend to be inevitably exclusive for the same reason.

In a highly individualised network-oriented society, however, many social groups are formed through social interactions between people, rather than based on social attributes. As the micro civic engagement model that was introduced in chapter five demonstrates, through frequent and intimate interactions, people start to share knowledge, experiences and even a group identity. Compared with social groups based on a social attribute, those based on obtained shared properties can be more open and inclusive. Members of those groups share

purposes, principles, norms and protocols, while they acknowledge and respect differences of each other. They are united not by who they are but by what they do.

Unlike a given shared property such as ethnicity or economic status, obtained shared properties that unite social groups are editable. Rules, systems and organisations of those social groups are designed and maintained by individual members to achieve internal integration and groups' organisational purposes. Therefore, those groups can be open to new members who are willing to share groups' purposes. The unity of social groups, which is a relative concept as social groups are dynamic, is maintained by systems rather than structures.

9.2.3 Strong ties and the stability of civic engagement

Despite the risk of exclusiveness and its collective nature, a social group that is united with strong ties creates a core in social relations in society as well as for an individual. Strong ties provide stability in social relations and security in individuals' life. In reverse, the lack of strong ties leaves civic engagement practices immature and insecure and deprives individuals of security and a sense of belonging. In combination with weak ties, which I discuss in the next section, strong ties are essential for one's civic engagement as well as overall civic engagement in a society.

9.3 Flexibility of civic engagement

The third theme is the flexibility of civic engagement. As mentioned in chapter four, in a network-oriented society, flexibility is essential for any social relations between social actors to improve civic engagement in that society. It is crucial for social groups to deal with the diversity of individuals and other social groups and to be inclusive while respecting diversity rather than relying mainly on existing similarities.

However, social groups and organisations are generally prone to structures that embody rules and routines, which increase predictability, certainty and stability and reduce flexibility in return. In a highly network-oriented society, structures of social groups and organisations, especially institutional organisations, often work as a constraint on internal and external

network-oriented relations, which require flexibility in their day-to-day operations.

Although flexibility of social relations is inevitably accompanied by unpredictability and instability, it is a necessary and an essential property of social relations in a highly networked society. As discussed in chapter four, social relations in a networked society are generally characterised by their dynamism and individuality, which are best realised by weak ties as opposed to strong ties. Weak ties can increase flexibility in social relations and allow expansions of networks across different social groups by connecting a variety of people who may have little to share. While strong ties improve the quality of civic engagement in the existing groups, weak ties bear the potential to extend civic engagement beyond existing networks involving those people or groups of people who were not well connected.

There are two properties of social relations that are significant to achieve the flexibility of civic engagement. They are: connectivity of individual social actors and multiple layers of social relations. In this section, I will first discuss how connectivity of individual social actors impact civic engagement of older people. In the other half of this section, I will discuss how multiple layers of social relations contribute to individuals' civic engagement and eventually their 'embeddedness,' as well as an overall civic engagement in a society.

9.3.1 Connectivity of individual social actors

The connectivity of a social actor indicates with how many social actors he/she is connected. Regardless of the quality of the connections, being connected with others is the very first step for any form of social relations. Some have more connections than others. Some connections are strong ties while some others are weak ties. Although the number of connections alone does not guarantee a higher level of civic engagement, it suggests a number and a variety of opportunities for civic engagement.

Some network organisations, such as the national BGOP office and Age Concern London, are established initially to connect a number of organisations to one another for certain definite purposes. The connectivity of those network organisations affects the civic engagement of

those individuals who are involved in member organisations. Knowledge and experiences are shared between member organisations through information exchanges via network organisations. The more organisations a network organisation connects, the more information the whole network has. The more information a network has, the more powerful members can be since information is a powerful tool, as discussed in chapter four.

In networks of organisations, such as the national BGP network and the London BGP network, member organisations are usually connected through weak ties. While they have a common purpose to share knowledge and experiences in regard to certain themes, such as improving public services for older people, they are also independent and have their own agenda in how to use the shared knowledge and experiences. There is very little conflict of interests or imbalance of power between them. Their relationships are interactive and needs-oriented rather than controlling and obligatory. Although they are focused on forming a network for a clear, defining purpose, they are also flexible in terms of activities and concerns as long as those are largely in accordance with the main purpose of the network.

Hierarchical organisations require more rules and regulations to manage themselves as they grow. More members mean more varieties of interests in an organisation, which are considered to need to be controlled for the unity of the organisation. By contrast, network organisations are required to offer more flexibility in managing member organisations as they grow. More members mean more variety of interests, knowledge and experiences in a network, which are considered to be valuable properties of the network.

As well as an organisation, an individual can serve as a network hub connecting a number of and a variety of individuals and organisations. For example, the manager of the Quadrilateral Lunch Club in the London Borough of Greenwich and the chair of the National Pensioners Conventions are both well connected and service users at the lunch club and the other members of the National Pensioners Conventions benefit from their widely extended networks including those who are in the position of making strategic decisions at local and national level. Individuals can be engaged, though indirectly, in wider society beyond the lunch club or the pensioners' network through these networking individuals.

Although one's connectivity itself is not a direct indication of a level of one's civic engagement, the connectivity of social actors within one's networks does impact on one's civic engagement. What is important to achieve the flexibility of civic engagement is to be connected to those social actors, either individuals or organisations, serving as a network hub.

9.3.2 Layers of social relations

As well as the connectivity between individual social actors, multiple layers of social relations are required to achieve flexibility of civic engagement. As we have seen in the preceding chapters, there are multiple layers of social relations in society and in civic engagement practice. In a society, there are various civic engagement practices, all of which operate at different scales and involve different elements. None of them can satisfy the dynamic and broadly ranging needs for 'embeddedness' of an individual on its own. Multiple layers of various civic engagement practices are necessary to respond to the dynamism and the diversity of individuals' needs. Layers of various civic engagement mechanisms that a civic engagement practice offers also help to accommodate and respond to such dynamic and diverse individual needs.

Furthermore, through multiple layers of social relations, individuals are related to and embedded in wider society. Although individuals may only be aware of their immediate social relationships, they are inevitably affected by other social actors who are related through multiple layers of social relations. For example, members of the Quadrilateral Lunch Club or the Pensioners' Forum in the London Borough of Greenwich may only be concerned about the services provided at a local lunch club or by the Pensioners' Forum. However, as mentioned already, those members are somehow represented by the manager of the lunch club at a borough level or connected to a nationwide network through the National Pensioners Conventions.

9.3.3 Flexibility of civic engagement and the 'embeddedness'

To summarise, multiple layers of social networks, which are extended through weak ties, provide varieties of opportunities of civic engagement to individual older people. By

controlling the way of relating to each of those social networks or to each of individuals within those networks, one can design his/her own way of relating to a society, which then affects his/her 'embeddedness.'

9.4 Sustainability of civic engagement

The final theme is the sustainability of civic engagement. It is an important quality in social relations for society and for an individual. It is also challenging to achieve it in a highly flexible network-oriented society. As I discussed in chapter four, the principles of social relations differ between a network-oriented society and a hierarchical structured society. In a society where power resides in networks rather than social structures, the maintenance and development of civic engagement is inevitably an ongoing process through social interactions.

First of all, to maintain and develop civic engagement, it is important that civic engagement practices are embedded in social systems and do not rely on temporary conditions or existing social structures. I will discuss this issue comparing two case studies, the Quadrilateral Lunch Club in the London Borough of Greenwich and the National Pensioners Convention.

In addition, as I discussed in the preceding chapters, it is important for older people to take responsibilities and ownership in civic engagement activities for the sustainability of civic engagement. The proactive initiatives of older people themselves in individual-society relations are the most powerful and effective driver to maintain and develop civic engagement of older people. A sense of responsibility and ownership significantly affects the sense of belonging and therefore the 'embeddedness.' However, it was revealed that in reality, older people's responsibilities are underemphasised compared with their rights. I will discuss what causes lack, or neglect of older people's responsibilities for civic engagement.

9.4.1 Embedding civic engagement practices

The second issue is related to the question as to whether and to what extent the mechanism of a civic engagement practice is embedded in social systems, which in the end raises the

question of the sustainability of the practice. Two examples, the Quadrilateral Lunch Club run with support of the Atrium at Greenwich and the National Pensioners Conventions, reveal this issue at very different levels; at a neighbourhood level and at a national level respectively.

As depicted in chapter eight, the Quadrilateral Lunch Club was a local lunch club that offered warm meals and social occasions for local older residents. As mentioned in chapter seven, its manager was an employee of a community organisation, the Atrium at Greenwich, one of whose roles was to facilitate community activities. The manager played various roles within and outside the lunch club. At the lunch club, he was a member of the management board, a carer, a manager and even a consultant at the same time. Outside the lunch club, he was involved in various community activities as well as several borough-wide projects. Seemingly due to such a wide range of experiences, he had a good understanding of various aspects of local residents' life and of local conditions in the borough in terms of the council structures, its policies and strategies and various community group activities.

Behind the success of the Quadrilateral Lunch Club as a civic engagement practice which responds to individually diverse requirements, there seem to be the manager's characteristics and knowledge based on his experiences that allow people to retain independence and individuality not only within, but also outside the lunch club. While he is at the lunch club, he often discussed with individual service users separately various issues that emerged in their lives. He gave advice on who to contact or what to do, which was supported by his wide range of knowledge and experiences in the local community. When he was involved in projects regarding older people in the London Borough of Greenwich, he often acted as a representative of or an expert on his lunch club service users.

In essence, he was an agent who worked beyond the confines of the structure and made the system work. His position in the whole system could not be substituted by anyone else. Furthermore, without someone in his position, the whole system would not work or at least there was no guarantee that it would work as successfully as it did at the time of my observation. The service users of the Quadrilateral Lunch Club would be far less represented

at a borough level. In the terminology of social network theory, he is a “cutpoint” (Wasserman and Faust, 1994). If he is removed from the system, users will be isolated from a wider society. The successful mechanism is not embedded in the existing social structure. In order to make this mechanism more sustainable, the lunch club organisation itself has to be more independent from the manager and have direct connections with individuals and groups outside the lunch club.

On the other hand, the National Pensioners Conventions, which is a powerful nationwide organisation comprised of older people, provides an example of a system well embedded in the social structure. As described in chapter seven, it offers opportunities to make an impact upon the UK government’s decision-makings. Its success might seem largely to rely on the charismatic chair of the organisation, who had a wider picture of the UK society as well as a deep understanding of local pensioners’ perspectives. While he manages the organisation comprising 1.25 million pensioners from various local affiliate groups, he was also well connected with other organisations. Through social interactions with other organisations, he gained a variety of in depth perspectives. It underlay his belief that money is one of the important elements that affects the quality of life to a great extent. His view is seemingly that wealth is not necessarily a goal of one’s life but money is an essential tool to achieve a certain standard of life. His knowledge and experiences contributed to the success of the National Pensioners Conventions as a civic engagement practice, which embraced a large number of pensioners from all over the country and offered them civic engagement opportunities concerning multiple aspects of their life through his management of the organisation and through his diplomacy.

However, unlike the case of the Quadrilateral Lunch Club, it seems that the National Pensioners Convention has established systems of civic engagement, which rely little on the chair’s personal characters and skills. The systems of civic engagement of pensioners with the National Pensioners Conventions and with the central government are embedded in the organisational structure and relations with other organisations including the UK government. Even though the National Pensioners Convention still benefits from the chair’s personal skills and social networks, it is pensioners themselves who run the whole system. Even when

the chair leaves the organisation (as the chair interviewed has since done), the organisation will work in the same way as before. The National Pensioners Convention created a system of empowerment of local pensioners by offering civic engagement opportunities involving the central government and other various organisations relevant to pensioners' life.

9.4.2 Older people's responsibilities

As I discussed in chapter five, civic engagement involves both rights and responsibilities. A sense of responsibility for civic engagement activities would infuse a sense of ownership and a sense of belonging as argued in chapter six. I pointed out that the lack of bottom-up approach initiatives to empower older people in the London Borough of Greenwich was one of the reasons for its unsuccessful civic engagement of older people.

However, there is no reason for older people to wait until local government takes action to encourage their actions. Older people can also proactively create opportunities of civic engagement involving members of the national and local governments and other public agencies. It is not only the right of older people but also their responsibility to take part in the process of shaping a society.

Nonetheless, self-organised activity of older people was rarely identified in Greenwich. Rather, it appeared that the number of older people who proactively take opportunities to be involved in decision-making processes was limited. For example, it was revealed that a series of open discussions by the Social Services and occasional consultations by the Housing Services in the London Borough of Greenwich only attracted the so-called usual suspects despite the wide circulation of information to recruit people who did not already attend regularly. This example suggests that a given opportunity is not necessarily exploited.

Whether or not individuals take a given opportunity for civic engagement is their choice. However, there seem to be some systematic problems that lead to older people's rather passive and pessimistic attitude and behaviour towards civic engagement. Those problems can be summarised into three issues: lack of information, lack of education or training opportunities

and the gap between older people's expectations and reality. I will try to make an informed speculation about the causes of each of those factors below.

1) Lack of information

First of all, the interviews and observations revealed that some older people felt that they did not have enough information to make a decision. On the other hand, it was also suggested that the council tried to reach out to every individual by distributing information in several different forms such as websites, letters and brochures. These contradictory statements suggest that the problem is not only the lack of information disclosed but is more likely to be the lack of interaction between information senders and receivers and the sparseness of the information distributed.

As the micro civic engagement model demonstrates, information flows through websites, letters and brochures are one-way. Information senders are generally unspecified and information is often delivered in a simplified and generalised manner to meet the diversity of the potential audience's needs and situations. Such over-simplification and over-generalisation do not deliver enough meaning for individuals to make a decision based on them. For individuals to make a decision for themselves, they need to interpret information in the context of their personal life. In one-way communications, information senders do not take responsibilities for receivers' interpretations of the information.

In apparent contradiction, it was also expressed that there was almost too much information, which was fragmented. As discussed in chapter seven, there is a demand for integrating relevant information not only for individual older people but also for those who work for/with older people. The integration of information is even more important in contemporary society, where the amount of information is immense. Without having a clear vision of the whole, one can never be sure about one's choices, let alone feel a sense of belonging to society, as Durkheim (1984) pointed out more than a century ago when he suggested that the failure of "organic solidarity" led to "anomie."

2) Lack of education/training opportunities

It was also revealed that some older people felt that they did not have enough skills to take part in civic engagement practices. Being part of civic engagement requires personal skills for effective communication and for handling information efficiently. Such skills can improve the quality of interaction and improve the level of civic engagement. Education and training can empower older people to exploit given opportunities of civic engagement.

One of the skills commonly sought by older people is the ability to use computers. In this world of high technologies, much information in an electronic format is exchanged via emails and on the Internet including that of public services and opportunities for social networking. Skills to use email and websites can increase the amount of information that users can deal with and their opportunities for social contacts. Given that those who are over 50 years old are not the generations that grew up with emails and Internet, education and training for computer skills are more necessary for older people than for younger generations.

Another set of skills that were mooted as useful in relation to older people's civic engagement practices were management skills. Some people have gained such a skill in their previous occupations while others have not. There are many voluntary organisations and groups for older people that are managed by paid staff in public bodies or other voluntary organisations. As discussed in chapter seven, such management systems tend to introduce some degree inflexibility within voluntary organisations for older people. There are, therefore, some needs to manage older people's groups by themselves to flexibly respond to diversity and the dynamic needs of group members. Although they do not have a hierarchical structure like most of the legitimate organisations, they need a management system and management skills to maintain internal and external relations. Education and training opportunities for such skills can encourage older people, regardless of their current skills, to be part of a management of older people's groups that is efficient and flexible.

3) Expectations of older people

Another factor that impacts older people's attitude and behaviour towards their responsibilities

in the development of civic engagement is their expectations, or, more precisely, the gap between older people's expectations for the government's initiatives and what reality offers.

As transactional theory suggests, social environments impact one's perceptions, which are then reflected in one's attitudes and behaviour. Likewise, older people's expectations, in their relationships with the government, have been developed over years of experiences. As much as the government and any other public bodies are accustomed to certain ways of operations, older people are also used to certain ways of relating to the government and other public bodies. Older people's expectations are formed and adjusted through social interactions and are then embedded in their way of thinking and daily life.

While the government aims at providing public services that respond to the diversity and dynamism of individual older people's needs by engaging them in decision-making processes, the flexibility of public services combined with the lack of sufficient and integrated information can be seen as confusing and almost irresponsible. Older people are required to make their own choices without sufficient information and without being equipped with skills to manipulate information.

As individuals' expectations and realities are produced by a reflexive consciousness, older people are able to learn to adjust their expectations according to social changes. Changes in their expectations are seen in various case studies in preceding chapters. Those changes take time but can be facilitated by local initiatives like the 'Sense of Place' project in Manchester City Council by provoking and implanting a sense of belonging and ownership in individuals.

9.5 Summary

In this chapter, I discussed civic engagement values under four themes based on both the conceptual arguments on civic engagement in chapter five and the examination of civic engagement practices in chapter six to eight. Those four themes include network-oriented

relationships, the stability of social relations, the flexibility of social relations and the sustainability of civic engagement. Civic engagement values that emerged from the examination of civic engagement practices are recaptured under those four themes. The discussions on those themes delineated what is important for the civic engagement of older people in contemporary society as well as problems in reality.

Civic engagement is, as stated in chapter five, the exercise of citizenship, which involves day-to-day social interactions to form and maintain society. It is embedded in individuals' everyday life and relevant to all spheres including public, private and voluntary, and all levels from neighbourhood to global, of society. Inevitably, what is important for civic engagement in contemporary society largely overlaps what is generally important in social relationships especially in a highly networked society.

Under the first theme of network-oriented relationships and hierarchical organisations, I focused on the problems at a strategic and a service-provision level that are related to principles differing between network cultures and hierarchical cultures. The problems of top-down approaches and sectionalism in national and local governments are generic and not specific to their operations in relation to civic engagement of older people. Those problems are common in any institutional organisation with hierarchical structures and cause inefficiency in responding to the diversity and dynamism of individuals' needs. However, it is particularly important to challenge those problems in order to promote civic engagement of older people. As discussed in chapter six, collaborations and partnerships between and across different levels and different expertises are essential to respond to the diverse needs for civic engagement efficiently.

Under the second and the third themes, I discussed two different values of civic engagement, which are both essential yet almost oppose to each other. The stability of civic engagement is primarily provided by strong ties, which form the cores of social relations. Stability is a significant value especially in a highly networked society, which offers flexibility and in return increases unpredictability and insecurity. On the other hand, the flexibility of civic engagement is important to accommodate and respond to the diversity and dynamism of

individuals' needs. Multiple layers of social networks, which are extended beyond social groups united with strong ties, create varieties of opportunities of civic engagement available and accessible to a wide range of individuals.

Finally, I also discussed two issues in relation to the sustainability of civic engagement. To maintain and develop civic engagement of older people, firstly civic engagement practices need to be embedded in social systems rather than relying on temporary conditions or existing social structures. The example of the Quadrilateral Lunch Club demonstrated that their success depended on a single person and was not embedded in social systems. The manager is in a position of "cutpoint" and the relationships of the lunch club with a wider society will be undermined without the manager's personal networks.

I also identified that older people's responsibilities in civic engagement were crucial for the sustainability of civic engagement in a society. The example of Manchester City Council demonstrated that the Council's initiative to make older people take responsibilities in civic engagement activities was effective in improving civic engagement of older people in the area. Yet older people's responsibilities, unlike their rights, seemed generally undervalued at all levels. I discussed the problems that discourage older people from taking responsibilities in civic engagement, including lack of information, lack of education/training opportunities and the gap between older people's expectations and the realities of the government's initiatives.

Civic engagement is a complex concept involving multiple elements, which are interrelated in a society, inside an individual, and in dynamic individual-society relations. Factors leading to both the success and failure of overall civic engagement in a society and of an individual civic engagement practice reside at all levels. That is, strategies, service provision and individual older people's attitudes and behaviour need to work together to achieve a high level of civic engagement in a society or in a practice. The government's persistent preference for the top-down approach and state legitimation limits the possibility of using older people's abilities and capacities to develop civic engagement and improve their 'embeddedness.'

The need for civic engagement is not unique to contemporary society. However, promotion of civic engagement has been given a priority in the face of the new challenges in a network-oriented society. There are two fundamental difficulties. Firstly, as seen in chapter five, better civic engagement depends on frequency and stability of interactions. Stability of relationships is not what networks can guarantee most easily. It requires skills and knowledge to achieve stable relationships in network-oriented society. But in individualised society, it is an individual's responsibility to gain such skills and knowledge and to deal with the difficulties.

Secondly, it is a challenge for the organisations with hierarchical structures which are particularly common in public sector. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the current social phenomena can be seen as a challenge for those public bodies to be involved in the rest of the networked individuals, groups and organisations. They need to understand the diversity of needs, the flexibility required in their service provisions and the dynamism in relationships that is required for better civic engagement.

Although it is impossible to measure the success of civic engagement on a single scale, I have identified and discussed what works and what does not in this chapter. I hope that the outcomes of my research can help individuals including those in public sector understand the mechanisms of civic engagement better and get prepared for better civic engagement.

CHAPTER TEN

10. CONCLUSIONS

Civic engagement is a complex concept, which is strongly related to the concept of the ‘embeddedness.’ The UK government’s policies and initiatives promoting civic engagement of older people have impacts on their ‘embeddedness’ in various ways and levels.

Civic engagement was presented as a multi-dimensional and multi-layered concept, which is embedded in everyday life. As a dynamic concept, civic engagement has a range of potential developments from an initial level (i.e. recognising one another) to a mature level (i.e. sharing knowledge and a common identity). The key elements of civic engagement were identified in chapter five. They include: strong ties between individuals and social groups, which involve frequent and intimate interactions; flexibility in social relations, which are often provided by weak ties; and transparency in social relations, which is a requirement for sufficient information flows and matured relationships. Strong ties provide stability and maturity in social systems while weak ties provide flexibility in social systems and increase mobility of individual social actors. Those properties are also valuable for the ‘embeddedness’ from individuals’ perspectives.

In reality, the concept of civic engagement appears in various policies and initiatives at different levels from local to national. Some of policies and initiatives are led by international organisations such as the United Nations, others by the UK government, that is, different departments of the government and local governments. Who are affected and how they are affected vary between different policies and initiatives. For example, the Supporting People initiative led by Housing Services is targeted at vulnerable people including older people. It contributes to civic engagement at a fundamental level by providing preventative housing related services to support an independent life for those whose independence might have otherwise been threatened. The Neighbourhood Renewal programme is another example, which is operated in selected neighbourhoods involving residents of different generations.

Similarly, civic engagement practices also vary in size, targets and mechanisms. Among the examples in the London Borough of Greenwich, lunch clubs are for older people in particular neighbourhoods while day care centres are restricted to fragile older people in a wider area within the borough.

Civic engagement is an inclusive concept, in which the concept of “citizen” can be extended beyond the national boundaries reflecting the idea of ‘universal citizenship,’ and which relates to civil, social, political and cultural aspects of life. However, individual policies, initiatives or practices do not affect every person or every aspect of life. Nor need they. As demonstrated in the models in chapter five, civic engagement practices at all scales and of all sorts can eventually create multiple layers of civic engagement in society.

On the other hand, in reality some civic engagement initiatives or practices are more successful than others. Some civic engagement practices I examined did not fully exploit their potential and the civic engagement opportunities offered by those practices were more limited than they might have been. In particular the case study of the failed Greenwich BGOP project illuminated the missing elements for a success of the project or better civic engagement. As I discussed in chapter six and seven, key elements of civic engagement emerged through reviewing individual practices.

At the end of the day, one of the functions required of the strategic level is to make sure that individual civic engagement practices work well and to monitor the overall civic engagement in a society. In this sense, the UK policies and initiatives promoting civic engagement of older people are not sufficient. They may be effective for local authorities or other organisations at local levels that are motivated and resourceful. However, there are no supplementary systems to monitor what have been done. There seems to be plenty of spaces to further improve an overall level of civic engagement at all levels in the UK.

It would be too easy, however, as the conclusion of this study, to just dismiss the policies and initiatives led by national and local governments and to criticise their incompetence and

inefficiency. I would like to go beyond mere criticism and discuss the further implications of this study on the civic engagement of older people. In-depth exploration of the concept of civic engagement and thorough examination of the reality of civic engagement practices have suggested a new typology of values in social interactions and offered a better understanding of the concept of ‘embeddedness,’ which has been the centre of my research interests over the past 10 years. The first half of this chapter summarises the implications of this study discussing them in relation to new values in social interactions and the concept of ‘embeddedness,’ or more generally the perception of relations between individuals and a society. In the second half of the chapter, I will discuss what this study achieved in relation to the two areas of academic study that I specialised in, Architecture and Sociology as well as to my research career.

10.1 Summary: a concept of civic engagement and the ‘embeddedness’ of older people

10.1.1 A new set of values emerging from the concept of civic engagement

In this study, based on discourses on citizenship and on transactional relationships between human beings and their environments, I defined civic engagement as a dynamic process in which people are involved in public affairs to shape a society. The concept of ‘civic’ stands in between the collective and the individual as well as the public and the private spheres. Accordingly, civic engagement is related to relationships between individuals and a society, which they share and form. It is to do with ‘our’ issues, which are neither ‘theirs’ nor ‘mine.’ Civic engagement is not only about politics but also embraces economic, social and cultural relations, which are all part of social activities as well as individuals’ daily life.

The concept of civic engagement itself poses a question to the common perception of a society that places individuals and institutions, such as the state, in opposition to each other. It reminds us that there is no actual separation between public and private, individuals and a society, and the political and cultural domains. Public and private co-exist in time and space. There is no society without individuals. The political, economic, social and cultural domains are all interrelated; we experience them all in a continuous time and space. We, human beings, have developed languages to distinguish one from the other and to describe

different concepts. However, we must not forget that languages are merely tools for us to communicate and develop ideas but not to decide how the world is. Differences do not necessarily mean irrelevance or independence from each other.

The concept of civic engagement, re-connecting those domains and uniting them in a single sphere of reality, proposes a new set of values, which generally make social relations in a hierarchical society more dynamic and make individualised social relations more integrated and stable in a network society. Those values include, as introduced in chapter five, sharing, mutual efforts and mutual trust in social interactions. These values can always be found in interactions at an individual level but are seldom found at a societal level in a hierarchical society or a highly individualised networked society.

The concept of civic engagement is egalitarian in principle. As I argued in chapter four, power shifts from structures to systems in a networked society where power is maintained through social relations within civic engagement practices rather than held by individuals who are involved in the practices. Although the transformation of power undermines hierarchies as a dominant social structure, the concept of civic engagement does not completely deny hierarchical structures. Instead, it offers a way to change how to interact with others within the hierarchical structures of organisations. Professional status, for example, is significant if it is linked with unique professional knowledge, skills and experiences but not because of its supposedly high position in a hierarchy. In other words, interactions between you and your boss can still be equal and collaborative rather than imperative if differences of positions are seen as varieties in specialties rather than grades in a scale.

While most public bodies still have a hierarchical structure internally, which acts as a resistance to civic engagement, they are also exposed to networks of individuals and other social actors where the values of civic engagement are better recognised. The inconsistency of principles in internal and external relations is an obstacle for those public bodies with a hierarchical structure having transparent relationships between individuals within their organisations. As mentioned in chapter five, transparency is crucial for dynamic relationships that could offer higher mature levels of civic engagement. The consequences of a non-dynamic approach are

shown by the example of a consultation event in the London Borough of Greenwich, where results of the event were somehow dissolved in interactions within the council and those who attended the event never heard anything back about feedback. From the perspectives of those attending, the council as a consultation event organiser was an awkward social actor which seemed to have thrown the communication ball first but never returned it once the participants threw it back.

In addition, civic engagement increases the level of integrity and stability in social interactions when compared to social interactions in a highly individualised networked society. As explored in chapter four, in a highly individualised networked society, social interactions are dynamic, fragmented and complex. In this type of society, individuals are allowed to have various channels, which are not interrelated to one another. Norms are shared in fragmented networks and constantly edited and re-edited by its members. Civic engagement, on the other hand, requires mutual understanding and mutual trust through sharing knowledge and experiences. It requires an effort to understand each other from multiple angles rather than only from a single aspect. Civic engagement requires stable rather than temporary interactions.

This study rediscovered the values including sharing, mutual efforts and mutual trust in social interactions that have been buried under the power of hierarchical institutions and the sea of networks. These values have been confined to the private sphere and neglected in the public sphere. In other words, these values were the language of family and friends rather than that of social networks beyond those immediate circles. The concept of civic engagement suggests the importance of a sense of common that is not ‘mine’ (inside) or ‘theirs’ (outside) but ‘ours’ (common). It requires the willingness and efforts of both older people and those who are involved in civic engagement practices to create a space for a common sphere for which they are all responsible.

10.1.2 Dynamic relationships between individuals, behaviour and a society

In addition to the rediscovery of those abandoned or neglected values, there is another outcome of this study, which is related to a number of disciplines including sociology, anthropology

and psychology. That is a clear view on relationships between individuals, behaviour and a society from a perspective of 'embeddedness.' As introduced at the beginning of this thesis in chapter one, the 'embeddedness' of older people has been at the centre of my research interests. In my previous research project, the 'embeddedness' of an individual older person was analysed and described based on a person-in-environment model. On the foundation of such understanding of individual older people's 'embeddedness,' I sought in this study an answer to a further question as to how to describe the 'embeddedness' of older people at a societal level.

In my previous PhD thesis in Architectural Planning, I proposed methods to describe and analyse the 'embeddedness' of older people at an individual level. The model of 'embeddedness' explains the interrelations between three dimensions of psychological, physical and socio-cultural elements on an individual's side and between other people as well as physical and socio-cultural elements on his/her environments' side and the transactional relationships between the individual and his/her environments via his/her behaviour (= transaction). The model explains the mechanism in which an individual's experience of physical and socio-cultural environments and interactions with others is internalised and reflected in his/her behaviour that impact his/her environments.

This study explored the concept of 'embeddedness' further and suggested a view on how individuals are embedded in a highly networked society from sociological perspectives. As discussed in chapter four in a highly networked society, social relations are dynamic, fragmented and complex. Social status and social norms are respective and flexible because they are directly linked to social relations. A networked society is almost like a self-regulative organism whose structure is highly flexible. From an individual's perspective, one has a number of channels, which he/she has chosen consciously or unconsciously. Each channel is connected to a certain social network with a unique set of norms that are potentially changing via constant transactions between him/herself and other social actors. Social networks are rather fragmented and the relations between all of his/her channels may or may not be significant or consistent. Nevertheless, all of his/her social networks are integrated in his/her experiences on a single string of time and space.

One's 'embeddedness' is sought in such dynamic social relations rather than in the solid structure of a society. One's self-identity is externally a dynamic status and its consistency, continuity and integrity have to be internalised. As discussed in chapter four, lifestyle is one of the expressions of such a self-identity, which is not otherwise evident. One's 'embeddedness,' how one is related to one's environments, is also a dynamic status that has to be maintained through continuous transactions with others and with physical and socio-cultural environments. 'Embeddedness' constitutes part of self-identity and similarly requires consistency, continuity and integrity internally because those properties cannot be expected of the environment. As with self-identity, one has to design one's own way of 'embeddedness' and steer oneself through the sea of networks to achieve it.

Civic engagement policy is a powerful tool to re-embed individuals who are lost and floating in the sea of dynamic, fragmented networks. As discussed above, civic engagement values, sharing and mutual trust, create integrity and stability in social interactions and therefore in social relations without losing their dynamism. Those values and properties of social relations provide a sense of belonging and security, which are important elements for 'embeddedness.' As mentioned in chapter four, social relations have generally become increasingly dynamic in a highly network-oriented society. Ways of being embedded in society have also been driven to change accordingly. 'Embeddedness' in a network-oriented society is a dynamic status and does not require a solid social structure with clear boundaries, norms and rules, which provide a map of the structure to show where you are embedded. Instead, it requires transactional and transparent systems through which one can keep developing one's social networks around cores of social relations, like family and close friends, which provide integrity and stability for one's social relations and self-identity.

In an attempt to achieve such dynamic 'embeddedness,' 'weak ties' play an important role. As discussed in chapter four, 'weak ties' open up possibilities to develop social networks further or to create new relations while 'strong ties' provide cores of social relations. 'Weak ties' may not be inclusive social relationships involving every aspect of individuals. By definition, there are few shared elements between those who are connected with 'weak ties.' Although civic engagement is a holistic, multi-disciplinary concept, such partial or shallow

ties are also essential to obtain dynamic stability and integrity in ever-changing social relationships between individuals.

10.1.3 Civic engagement and older people

In this study, I have analysed and discussed the concept and the reality of civic engagement with a focus on older people. The concept of civic engagement is not age- or generation-specific. As we discussed in chapter five, it stands on the foundation of the concept of universal citizenship. This concept is relevant to everyone as a citizen of the globally networked society regardless of his/her age, ethnicity, social status, education level, religion and so on.

There are possibly two questions in regard to the civic engagement of older people as distinct from that of other generations. The first question is whether civic engagement is more important for older people than any other generations. The second question is whether there is inter-generational civic engagement.

Civic engagement is a dynamic individual-society relationship through which people form a society that in return provides a sense of belonging, security and common identity. It is no doubt equally meaningful and significant for all generations. The overall mechanisms of such interrelationships, which can be explained using a person-in-environment model, are the same for all generations. Yet, for example, children do not have the same responsibilities to society as adults have. They are given a period of time to learn about how a society works and to get themselves prepared for adulthood. As for older people, older age does not make them more or less responsible than adults aged under 50 or 65 years old. The difference between older people and younger generations is that older people have more history in their lives and therefore more experiences of successful and unsuccessful civic engagement. People build up their expectations based on their knowledge and experiences. Therefore, older generations may have expectations towards civic engagement based on their experiences of a less flexible, less globalised and less network-oriented world.

As we have seen in chapter six, some civic engagement practices directly encourage inter-

generational interactions while some others are initially confined within a certain social group, such as the retired people, older patients and day care centre users. Nevertheless, all of those practices are somehow related to a wider society through layers of civic engagement as discussed in chapter five. Therefore, conceptually, any civic engagement practice should eventually involve multiple generations. However, from older people's perspectives, those two types of practices, (inter-generational and older-people-specific) do not feel the same. Naturally, the former provides more immediate awareness of inter-generational interactions than the latter.

10.1.4 Civic engagement policies and initiatives for older people in the UK

In this thesis, I investigated the UK government's policies and initiatives promoting civic engagement of older people from multiple perspectives. I offered explanations for why they are not effective in improving older people's 'embeddedness' despite their potential and aspirations. I argued that the failure of the government's policies and initiatives is largely related to the problems that institutional organisations are generally facing due to the transitions of socio-cultural norms from hierarchies to networks.

Civic engagement is experienced by individuals as dynamic processes of interactions between individuals and society. Through such interactions individuals are embedded in a society and the way they are embedded is individually different reflecting the diversity and flexibility of their socio-cultural backgrounds and conditions, personal preferences and abilities as well as their physical and spatial conditions in a networked society. For civic engagement policies and initiatives to work effectively, they need to be designed to accommodate such diversity and flexibility. They need to support or create systems that allow and encourage different ways of involvement.

However, in the culture of bureaucracy and legitimacy, which institutional organisations are obliged to comply with, it is difficult to value properties, such as diversity and flexibility, because it is difficult to objectively evaluate how well these properties are accommodated by each policy or initiative. As a result, although these properties may be acknowledged in policy documents, they are rarely followed by action plans which actually encourage valuing

these properties in practices.

This thesis is not intended to offer the UK government or local governments an instruction or guideline to improve their performance or the quality of public services. Rather, it offers an alternative way to understand relationships between older people and those who are involved in services for older people or their activities especially in public sector. Civic engagement is not about what to do but about how to do. I hope and believe that the deliverables of this thesis are regarded as sociological as well as social policy contributions.

10.2 Space, society and ‘embeddedness’

Here I summarised the outcomes of this thesis in relation to the initial research question as to how the UK policies and initiatives promoting civic engagement of older people impact on their ‘embeddedness.’ Before ending this thesis, I would like to consider additional outcomes of this thesis in a wider context. As well as seeking practical implications for civic engagement policies and initiatives for older people in the UK, this study also pursued answers to my long-term research question of the past ten years, which is related to the concept of ‘embeddedness’ in a wider context. The examination of the concept of civic engagement shed light on a new set of values in social interactions, or more generally in individual-society relations, which are fundamental not only for older people but also for all generations.

This section has three parts. First, I will discuss the ‘embeddedness’ of older people based on the whole series of my research projects that began in 1998. Secondly I will highlight the unique position of this thesis linking Sociology and Architecture. Finally, I will summarise my arguments on the future of civic engagement and the ‘embeddedness’ of older people.

10.2.1 Variety of ‘embeddedness’

The transition of socio-cultural norms from those of hierarchy to those of networks affects older people’s behaviour and attitudes in relation to civic engagement and therefore eventually their ‘embeddedness.’ As we discussed in chapter four, in a highly individualised

and networked society, individuals are inevitably responsible for developing their social networks as part of their 'reflexive project' (Giddens, 1991: 32). The difference in skills and strategies for such development results in the diversity of 'embeddedness' in type and extent.

The diversity of 'embeddedness' does not only depend on individually different skills and personalities but is also sensitive to the physical and socio-cultural environments that individuals live in. Thus one might naturally suspect that there are some differences between Japan and the UK expressing each nation's culture beyond the diversity of individuals. My research series on 'embeddedness' both in Japan and the UK provide an opportunity to compare older people's 'embeddedness' between urban and rural areas in Japan and the UK providing different environments physically, spatially, socially and culturally. The comparison remains speculative because the data on older people in the two countries are not exactly comparable due to the different methodologies between the two sets of research.

Overall, older people's attitude towards ageing and older people seems to be one of the main socio-cultural factors that effect individuals' 'embeddedness' strategies as to how to design and achieve their own 'embeddedness.' In this regard, the UK seems to be more advanced than Japan in tackling the culture of age discrimination, supporting older people's independent life and advocating a more positive image of ageing and older people. Such positive movements can be perceived in the political sphere as well as in the voluntary sphere.

For example, Age Concern, which we reviewed in chapter six, is one of the largest voluntary organisations working with and for older people in the UK. Part of their service is to provide support for individual older people to understand and make use of public services. Their bottom-up approach complements the government's top-down approach and together they create socio-cultural environments that encourage older people to be positive and proactive about ageing and their life in a later life stage.

There were also differences in attitude towards ageing and older people between rural areas and urban areas. My previous research suggested that older people's relationships with their children tended to be different between rural areas and urban areas. As expected, older people in rural areas were more likely to live with their children or at least they tended to live in the same town/city, whereas older people in urban areas tended to live separately from their children. The relationships with their families seemed to affect the foundation of the 'embeddedness' not only in terms of actual support that they may receive from their children, but also in terms of the perception of their 'embeddedness' in a wider society. In short, for older people living with their children, their children are their window and anchor to a wider society. Those who do not live with their children needed to relate to a wider society by themselves. Individuals' abilities, skills and potential resources affect their 'embeddedness' even more. Some are proactive and develop their 'embeddedness' strongly and extensively, while some others fail to do so and suffer from isolation. I expect such differences also exist in the UK. However, in this research project, I did not have an opportunity to investigate individuals' 'embeddedness' to the same depth as my previous research in Japan.

10.2.2 Bridge between space and society

In my previous PhD I focused on behavioural and spatial aspects of the 'embeddedness,' as opposed to socio-cultural, as well as on individual older persons, as opposed to a social group of older people while recognising dynamic relationships between those different aspects. In this study, I looked at its socio-cultural aspects while acknowledging the involvement of psychological elements and analysed the concept in relation to a networked society rather than solely in relation to individuals' lives. My previous PhD thesis showed that 'embeddedness' was behaviourally and spatially expressed as their daily activities, including social interactions and their locations. Psychologically and socio-culturally, 'embeddedness' can be expressed as a sense of belonging and common identity, which civic engagement can enhance.

As the person-in-environment model suggests, individuals' perceptions influence and are influenced by their environments through their interactions. A sense of belonging and a common identity can only be developed through the experience of physical and socio-cultural

environments through daily activities. Socio-cultural environments as well as space provide opportunities and constraints for such experience. Needless to say, physical environments and socio-cultural environments are inseparable from each other.

This thesis, on the foundation of my previous PhD thesis, considered the multiple aspects of ‘embeddedness.’ Furthermore, I would like to emphasise, once again, the importance of the inseparable interrelationships between aspects including behavioural, physical, perceptive, psychological and socio-cultural. It is particularly important for creators or designers of physical environments including architects, developers and planners to understand the relevance of the socio-cultural elements of ‘embeddedness’ to built environments; and for those of socio-political environments including politicians, councillors and policy planners to understand the relevance of the physical and spatial elements of the ‘embeddedness’ to social policies and initiatives.

The interdependence between these aspects seems to be obvious in our daily life but not necessarily so in the world of specialism, such as in the fields of academics and professionals. It was my intention to bridge two fields of specialism, sociology and architecture, to work together in collaboration.

10.2.3 The future of a highly individualised and networked society

As I repeated throughout this thesis, civic engagement, like ‘embeddedness’ is a dynamic concept transforming itself alongside socio-cultural changes. Civic engagement and ‘embeddedness’ in our contemporary society, which is characterised by individuality, globally extended networks and flexibility, are both defined as dynamic processes of interaction between individuals and their environments as opposed to a stationary state of their relationships. Such dynamic concepts reflect the directions of our contemporary society.

Yet here, I would like to advance the argument that in theory, civic engagement is essentially more than ‘embeddedness.’ While ‘embeddedness’ is about being part of a society, civic

engagement is about shaping a society. Being part of a society requires a dynamic process in a networked society where all social relations are constantly edited and re-edited as we discussed in chapter four. Civic engagement requires a dynamic and proactive process of transactions towards the creation and sharing of common identities. Civic engagement is not only a necessary process for ‘embeddedness’ but also it can enhance ‘embeddedness’ by creating opportunities for individuals to exercise rights and responsibilities in their own ways.

Values that emerge from the concept of civic engagement, such as sharing knowledge, resources and eventually a common identity, are after all what define society. Although the term ‘society’ is used in various ways, the concept of society implies a defined social system within which people share cultures as well as institutions. While acknowledging a danger of oversimplification, I would like to propose that this study identifies the values in interrelationships between individuals and society from civil, political, social and cultural perspectives in this individualised and globally networked society. These values of civic engagement emerged from complications and peculiarities of this society at various levels, from an individual’s everyday life to societal level.

Civic engagement values remind us of the importance of interactions and social networks in local areas and in everyday life. Any definition of a ‘local area’ is vague and can be different for each individual. What I mean here is a social and physical scale that is manageable by individuals within which they can comfortably maintain and understand their everyday life and social networks. Social and physical boundaries of a manageable size facilitate frequent and direct interactions better and more efficiently than a larger scale. Therefore, encouraging local activities and networks is more effective in increasing the density and intensity of interactions and social networks, which then form the core of ‘embeddedness.’

Civic engagement also enables the re-discovery of the value of a sense of ‘common,’ which may be forgotten or undervalued in a world of individualism and global networks. In contemporary society, the notion of society is ambiguous and does not match with the more comprehensive frames such as a town or a state. As a result, it is hard to feel oneself taking

control over society or feeling responsible for it. The notion of civic engagement reminds us that individuals are responsible for forming a society, and it encourages us to do so. For individuals, civic engagement is a necessary concept for their 'embeddedness.' For a society, it is a necessary concept as well as a mechanism that enhances individuals' contributions in forming and shaping society.

As I mentioned at the beginning of this thesis, this research is crucially interdisciplinary. Naturally, therefore, the strength of this thesis is in linking different views and aspects rather than going into detail in one field of knowledge. By doing so, this thesis was able to contribute in a new way of linking individuals and society. That is, in this study civic engagement was discussed as social dynamics without losing the sight of what happens at an individual level. This was achieved by introducing a person-in-environment model, which explains how an individual relates to his/her social and physical environments. The use of this model also enabled to discuss social and spatial aspects of civic engagement together.

Finally, although this research was driven originally by the problems of social policy as they appeared within architectural planning, rather than within classical sociology, there was also an unexpected theoretical outcome. Since Parsons (1937) first attempted a synthesis between Durkheim's functionalism and Weber's structuralism, reconciling the two has shaped much of the history of sociological theory. In looking at understandings of citizenship and civic engagement in practice, I found myself recognising stances, which I realised paralleled both Durkheim's optimism and Weber's pessimism. A dynamic theory of civic engagement tackles this dilemma in an original way. I suggest that hierarchical organisations can adapt to the culture of networks by increasing flexibility and working in partnership. If knowledge is power then I hope my thesis may contribute to the civic engagement of people and of government by providing knowledge, which could open up their choices.

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APPENDIX 1 LIST OF DOCUMENTS ON CIVIC ENGAGEMENT POLICIES, INITIATIVES AND PRACTICES

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APPENDIX 2 TEMPLATE FOR THE SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

Name Name of the interviewee,

Title, position Title, Position, Organisation

Date and time

Location

Interviewer(s)

References Any documents as references to ask questions, confirm contents etc

Draft Agenda

1. Introductions / Purpose of meeting
 - 1.1 Introductions
 - 1.2 Our strategy for the Greenwich BGOP project
 - 1.3 Purpose of the meeting
2. Policies/initiatives/services relevant to older people
 - 2.1 Definition of ‘older people’
 - 2.2 Existing policies, initiatives or services for older people
3. Perception of ‘civic engagement’
 - 3.1 Concept of ‘civic engagement’
 - 3.2 Role of their organisations in relation to ‘civic engagement’
4. Further information
 - 4.1 Other organisations to be recommended to contact
 - 4.2 (Potential) Good examples of civic engagement of older people
 - 4.3 Other useful contacts