



Family and Community Life of Older People: Social Networks and Social Support in Three Urban Areas

Miriam Bernard, Jim Ogg, Judith and Phillips, Chris Phillipson

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Family life has changed rapidly over the past fifty years and the number of people living longer increases year on year. *Family and Community Life of Older People* revisits three areas (Bethnal Green in London, Wolverhampton in the Midlands and Woodford in Essex) which were the subject of classic studies in the late 1940s and 1950s and explores changes to the family and community lives of older people. The book examines issues such as:

- *changes in household composition
- *changes in the geographical proximity of kin and relatives
- *the extent and type of help provided by the family
- *contact and relationships with neighbours
- *relationships with friends
- *involvement in social and leisure activities
- *experiences of minority ethnic groups.

These questions are explored through a unique set of data including census material, and survey data from interviews with over 600 older people. A key finding is that over the past 50 years we have moved from an old age experienced within the context of the family group to one shaped by personal communities in which friends may feature as significantly as immediate kin and relatives.

Family and Community Life of Older People is a major contribution to the sociology of the family, of ageing, and of urban life and points up the social policy issues for an ageing society.

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