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Chinese older adults are a growing part of Auckland's ageing population; yet language, unfamiliarity with planning processes, mobility constraints and institutional settings may limit how they participate in conventional urban consultation. My doctoral project, *Healthy Ageing in a Smart Urban Future*, uses participatory, future-oriented workshops to explore how this group imagines more inclusive urban futures. This presentation asks how participation is enabled or constrained before participants enter the workshop room.

Focusing on the pre-fieldwork design stage, I examine decisions about timing, venue, language, recruitment, consent, catering, activity structure, transport and parking. Although often treated as logistics, these decisions shape who can attend, how safe and comfortable participation feels, what forms of expression are supported, and whose contributions become visible.

The analysis is situated within methodological literature on participatory research and uses critical reflexivity to examine how researcher decisions, assumptions and institutional conditions shape the possibilities for participation before fieldwork begins. I analyse ethics documentation, workshop plans, recruitment materials, participant-facing documents, and researcher memos. Together, they form a methodological decision trail that allows me to critically examine how participatory intentions were translated into practical design choices. Using critical reflexivity, I consider the tensions within this design process. Planning for accessibility requires anticipating older participants' needs, but anticipation can become stereotyping. Tea, Mandarin-language materials and relational facilitation may support comfort and trust, but they may also reflect researcher assumptions about culture, ageing, family support and vulnerability. A university venue may offer practical resources, while also carrying institutional authority.

The presentation contributes a provisional pre-fieldwork accessibility framework across temporal, spatial, sensory, linguistic, cognitive, relational and ethical dimensions. I argue that participatory research does not simply happen in the workshop room. It is partially made before the room is entered, through design choices that need to be documented, questioned and revised through participant experience.

This unclear. Is it ethical guidelines for participatory research? Or something else?

Thank you. I have clarified that this refers to ethics documentation produced for the study, rather than ethical guidelines or ethics as a general theoretical framework. I now describe ethics documentation, workshop plans, recruitment materials, participant-facing documents and researcher memos as a methodological decision trail.

### **Keywords**

co-design, pre-fieldwork reflexivity, ageing and migration, methodological design