The Road to Resilience:
A comparative life course examination of ageing in the US and England

Bram Vanhoutte

Simon Research Fellow in Sociology
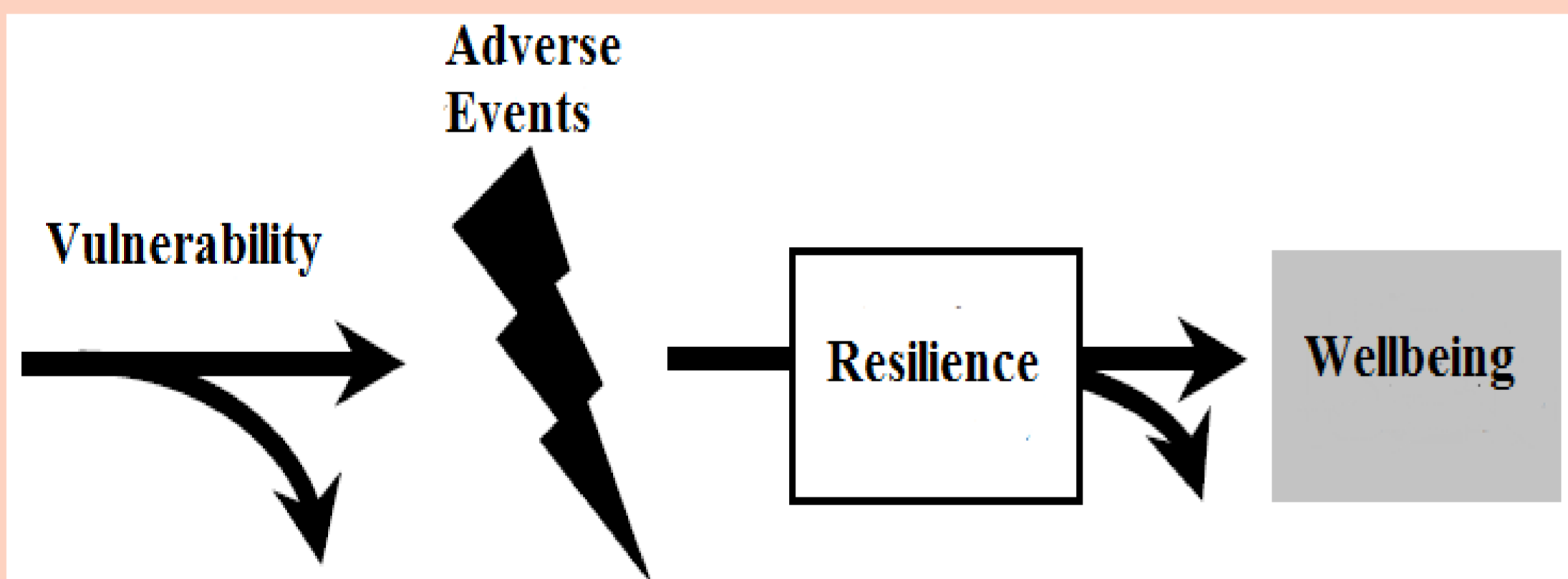Cathie Marsh Institute and Manchester Institute for Collaborative Research in Ageing

INTRODUCTION

Ageing in the public eye is often distilled to a limited number of adverse events, such as loss of health, partnership and wealth. While these events are a part of "normal ageing", they do not happen uniformly at the same time point in the life course for everyone. Some people manage to limit the impact of these events on their wellbeing substantially, which in a context of population ageing with scarce public resources, becomes even more important.

AIMS

To understand how resilience to common shocks associated with ageing comes about, this project focuses on four distinct conceptual aspects of how events have an impact: vulnerability, adverse events, resilience and wellbeing **vulnerability**, **adverse events** and **resilience**, by using a multidimensional approach to **wellbeing** in a **comparative** life course perspective.

The project will highlight novel ways of maintaining wellbeing in the face of adversity by examining material and life course resources mobilised to foster successful ageing.

METHODOLOGY

Each aspect of our research project requires specific methodology.

I.Vulnerability. To examine the extent to which vulnerability differs between cohorts, I will make use of survival analysis.

II.Events. By creating statistical profiles the project contextualizes when and to whom these events happen. Through a series of in-depth interviews, the everyday experience of these transitions will be examined.

III.Resilience. As resilience cannot be observed directly, but is inferred from empirical trajectories, I use a latent class approach such as growth mixture modelling.

IV.Wellbeing. I will examine how the groups found in the previous step differ from each other in terms of both their prevalence when looking at different types of wellbeing and the composition of resources using a multinomial logistic regression.

OUTPUTS AND IMPACT

This research project will deliver **academic, policy and media output**, aimed at both decision makers and society at large.
*Academic output: At least 6 articles in highly ranked social science journals, and presentations at conferences will make my peers aware of my research and approach. This includes a visiting scholarship to expand academic networks as well as spread findings broader.

*Policy output: A large conference will be organised in collaboration with Age UK and the Manchester Institute for Collaborative Research on Ageing (MICRA) to disseminate findings to a mixed audience of policy makers and academics. I will write up a policy report of my findings in collaboration with Age UK and use the Policy@Manchester University blog to highlight the implications of my findings. Cooperation with the University's media relations office to ensure coverage of our findings.

*Media output: Infographics about adverse events based on the contextualised statistical profiles, together with interview quotes will be a key deliverable to media and third sector partners

CONTACT DETAILS
bram.vanhoutte@manchester.ac.uk