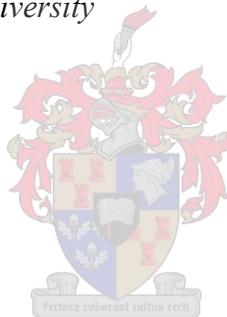


Ageing, Gender and Class: Differences in experiences and Livelihood Strategies of Ageing Populations in Harare, Zimbabwe

By

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April 2022

Declaration

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Abstract

This study explores ageing as experienced by ageing populations of Harare, Zimbabwe, while raising questions about what constitutes the very category ageing. The study also explores the class and gender dimensions of ageing on the livelihoods of older populations. The research focuses on older people from the age of sixty-five who are heads of households. The study is designed from the perspective of an Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) in combination with Narrative Analysis (NA) situated within the theory of Social Constructionism, Intersectionality, and Theory of Practice by Bourdieu. The study draws on qualitative data collected from nine older people (both male and female) from three different localities of Harare: Epworth, Glen View, and Mt Pleasant. This research departs from common ways of viewing ageing people as passive and docile subjects, engaging with them, instead, as active agents who construct the social worlds they inhabit, albeit in material contexts which shape and constrain their agency. This means engaging with them as authorities about themselves, their everyday lives, their pleasures and anxieties and the relations and identifications they make. In adopting this research approach, my study generates new understandings about ways in which Zimbabwean ageing populations in the study construct and experience ageing, which debunked stereotypical associations of “ageing people” with intellectual and physical impairment. Indeed, one of the key findings which emerged from this research is that older people need recognition within research, not only as subjects to be used for knowledge gathering, but also as a populace with active personhoods. The findings of the study carry important implications for developing social policies to promote sound policies for ageing populations and the creation of opportunities to shape the lives of older people.

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

ILO	International Labour Organisation
IPA	Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis
NA	Narrative Analysis
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
UNDESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UN	United Nations
WHO	World Health Organization
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
SADC	Southern African Development Community

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CHAPTER 1

1. INTRODUCTION

1.0. Setting the Scene: first-hand experience with ageing populations

In introducing my research interest on the topic of ageing, I begin with an account of a meeting I had with an older lady in Zimbabwe in April 2017:

On a humid afternoon in April 2017, I met an old lady in her late sixties or early seventies in Harare, near one of Zimbabwe's largest hospitals called Parirenyatwa. She looked so weak and in tears. This caught my attention, and after a brief chat with her, she revealed that she had lost her husband due to Cancer and was in dire need of transport money to go to her rural home in Chipinge, about 500km South-east of Harare Central Business District (CBD). Though I could not help the woman with enough money, I contributed \$2 (United States dollars), and we parted. About two weeks later, I met the same old woman in another street in the CBD, clad in different clothes, but I recognized her. She stopped me and narrated the same story. Astonished, I asked, “How many times have you killed your husband in the name of seeking help?” And she responded, *Ndingararame sei nhai muzukuru?* (How else can I survive, grandson?).

Using this vignette as an opener into a conversation about ageing, gender, class, and livelihood strategies in Harare, I grappled with the following questions: Why should this old woman go through this to survive? What other choices does she have? How are older populations of different gender and class surviving in Zimbabwe? What are their experiences of ageing? What role does the state play in providing for the needs of older people? With traditional expectations that when one reaches old age, he/she should reside in rural areas, why and how has it changed now? These are some of the key questions I pose in my research, and, indeed this narrative served as a motivation for researching ageing populations in Harare.

My study examines the meaning of ageing from the perspectives of ageing populations. The thesis also examines the lived experiences of older populations to understand what ageing means to them. I also explore the class and gender dimensions of ageing on the livelihoods of older populations. In other words, various avenues of which class and gender interact to shape the

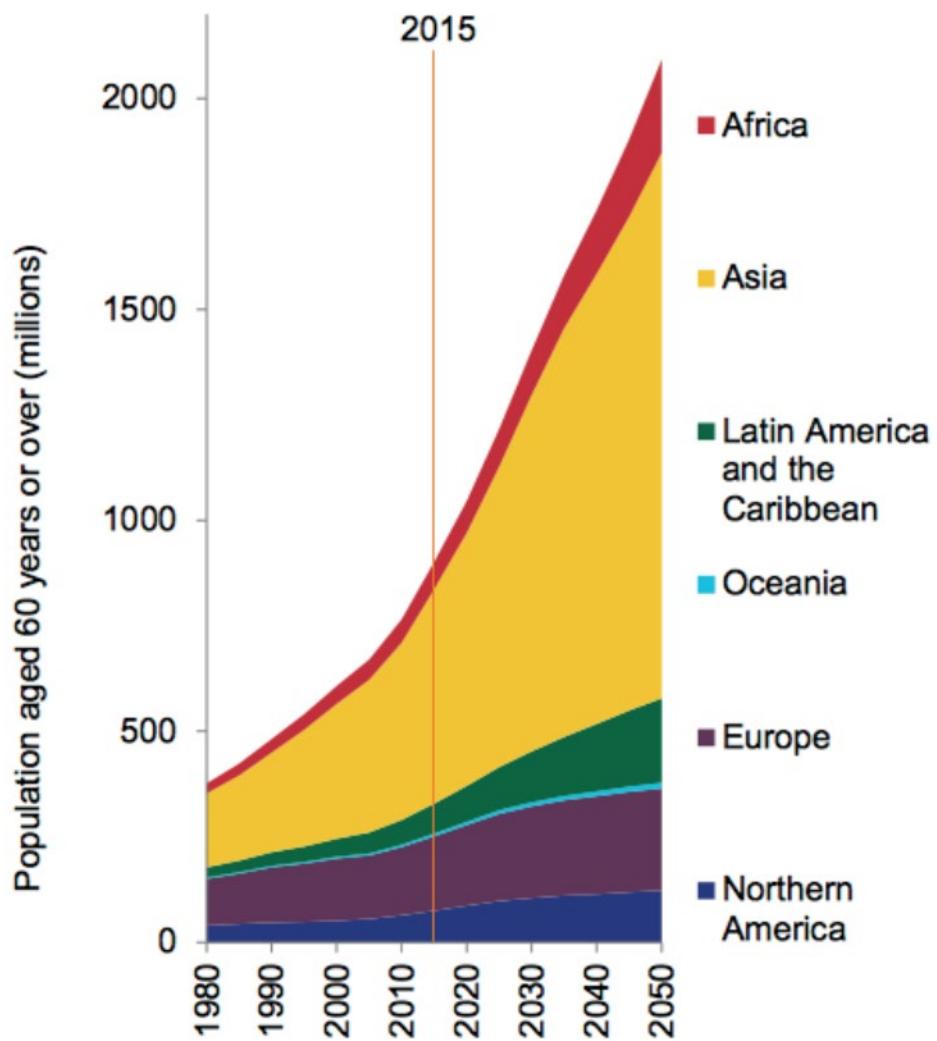
multiple dimensions of the older population's experiences. Therefore, the research investigates the interconnections between three key phenomena in the 21st Century: ageing populations, gender, and class. These phenomena are often spoken about in parallel, yet in so many ways, the three phenomena are interwoven or “intersect” with each other. My research challenges the characterizations of older populations as passive and docile subjects “left behind” to complement the focus on youth or younger adults in research.

In this research, I study the active embeddedness of older populations within the urban city, how they engaged with different forms of sociality (including other different forms of livelihood activities), activism and politics, and their integral role in familial care practices. The research adopted a qualitative approach allowing for the understanding of older population’s livelihoods while moving beyond the demographic and medico-technical approaches that dominate interventions of ageing (Harris et al., 2015, Garcon et al., 2016). As a result, the study is informed by an Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis in combination with Narrative Analysis conducted with nine older people living in Harare, Zimbabwe. My research is influenced by Social constructionist theories which engage with individuals as active agents who construct their own realities and attach meanings to their actions. Drawing on a social constructivist perspective, I explore the social worlds of ageing populations as they construct and experience ageing.

The research is also informed by the Theory of Practice by Bourdieu (with particular focus on Bourdieu’s understanding of habitus, capital, and field) and critical feminist contributions to theories of Intersectionality (focusing on how social and political identities work in combination to create either discrimination or privilege).

1.1 Background of the Study

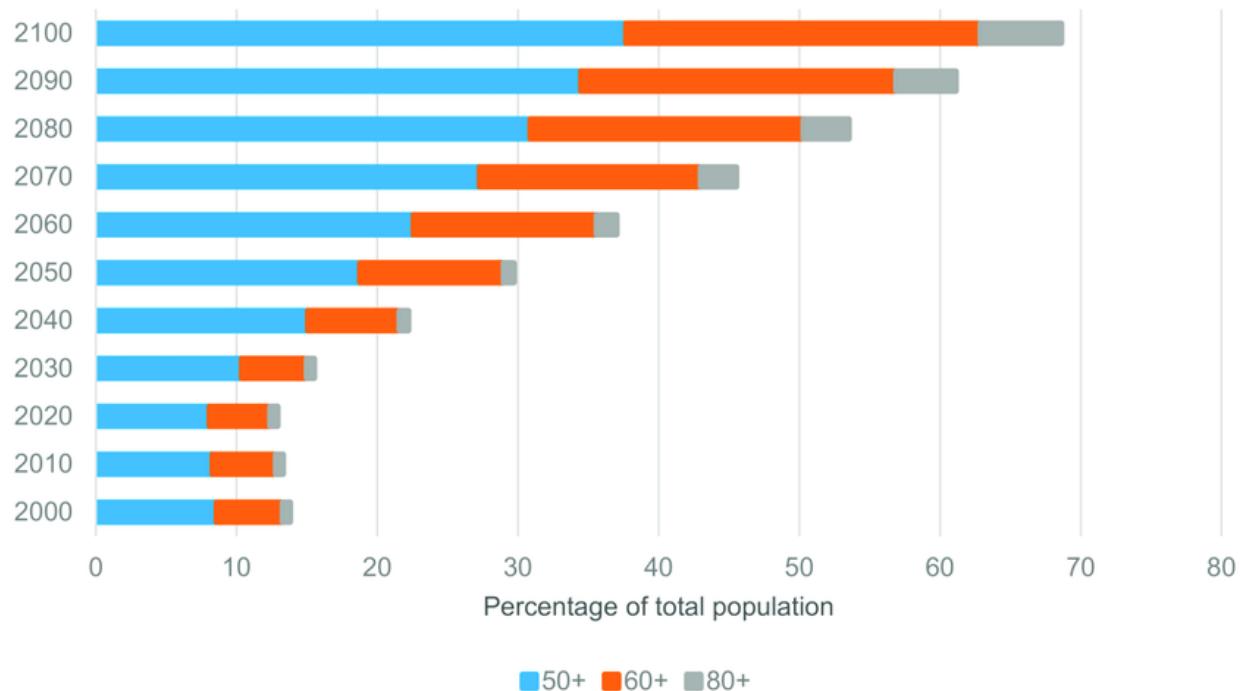
Figure 1.1 : Regional Demographic projections of ageing populations



Source: United Nations (2015)

The world is moving towards significantly older populations and projections suggest that the number of older persons aged 60 years or over is expected to be over 2 billion by 2050 globally (UNDESA, 2015). As of 2015, the number of ageing populations globally stood at 901 million meaning to say by 2050, the number will be more than double (UNDESA, 2015). The diagram

above in Figure .1.1 shows regional disparities in demographic transitions of older people. There are some marked increases in some regional areas and on others; it has been gradual and steady. Figure 1.1 shows the demographic transition in the 70-year period between 1980 and 2050. In this diagram, it is clear that developed regions of the world such as North America, Europe and the Pacific Oceans will continue to have an increased number of older populations during this period. However, as shown in the diagram, the number of older persons is expected to be higher by 2050 in Latin America, Asia, and Africa. The United Nations also notes that two thirds of the global populations of older cohorts are presently in Asia, Latin America, and Sub-Saharan Africa. Sub-Saharan Africa is expected to experience one of the most rapid demographic transitions in the future, with the number of people aged 60 years and older reaching about 215 million by 2050 (Help Age International, 2013, United Nations, 2013). A projection about Africa by scholars such as Ndabeni (2014) contends that those aged 60 and older would be more than children who are under the age of 14 by the year 2045. Another projection suggests that 4.5% of the population in Africa will be aged in 2022, and this could rise to 10% by 2050 (Nabalamba & Chikoko, 2011). According to the Zimbabwe Census (2012), 7.1% of the total population of Zimbabwe was aged as of 2012 and according to demographic projections by United Nations (2012), older people will constitute 12% of the population by 2050. Therefore, Zimbabwe, just like many other countries in the world, is experiencing, and will continue to witness, the growth of its ageing cohorts. However, ageing in Zimbabwe is taking place at a time when the country is experiencing an increase in poverty, political turmoil, economic crisis, and the changing family structures (Makore & Al-Maiyah, 2021). Below is Figure 1.2 showing the projections in the proportion of older cohorts in Zimbabwe.



Source: United Nations, Department for Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2015).

Given these demographic projections, Finch and Crimmins (2004) cited by Sudharsanan and Bloom (2018) provide four distinct factors that drive population ageing. First, mortality reductions can result in a rising elder share by allowing a greater fraction of individuals to survive to older ages. Second, the reduction of fertility contributes to an increased aged cohort by reducing the percentage of younger people in the population. Third, the ageing of cohorts of individuals into older ages can affect the population distribution if the cohorts entering the 65+ age group are large relative to the rest of the population. Finally, migration can negatively or positively influence population ageing, depending on the age composition of migrants.

The growing trend towards ageing populations worldwide and an aged population brings its own challenges and questions. In this context, this study focused on ageing populations living in Zimbabwe and documented livelihood strategies of elderly heads of households in three suburbs of Harare (Mt Pleasant, Epworth and Glen View). Zimbabwe is faced with an economic quagmire and in a situation such as this; older populations are faced with particular vulnerabilities. Whilst “ greying of society” (Mullan, 2000, p.1) is attributed to declining mortality and fertility rates, the impact of the HIV/AIDS pandemic in Zimbabwe has further

contributed to a growing aged cohort in society. The younger population is particularly at risk and this has resulted in many older people taking care of young family members especially grandchildren orphaned as result of HIV/AIDS. The number of people living with HIV in Zimbabwe ranged from 1.2 million to 1.4 million in 2016. In 2016, the number of orphans in Zimbabwe as a result of AIDS stood at 570 000. These difficulties facing older people are further worsened by the abortiveness of traditional safety net of the extended family because older people become breadwinners and caregivers of orphans who have lost either one or both parents as a result of HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS, 2016). The economic policies of Zimbabwe since independence have also impacted on the livelihoods of older populations. Five major economic periods can be identified: the welfarist model of the 1980s, the international-finance development model of most of the 1990s, the decline that has occurred throughout the political and humanitarian crises since the turn of the century, the partial recovery from 2009 to September 2016 and more recently, the deflationary period.

It is against this background that the study seeks to understand ageing based on the lived experiences of ageing populations. This kind of research is lacking in literature, a gap this study seeks to fill. Clearly, there has been a paucity of literature on studies focusing on the intersection of ageing and other markers of identity such as class and gender in Africa in general and specifically Zimbabwe. On the basis of this discussion, the research questions below were formulated.

1.2 Research Questions

1. Accordingly, the research questions this study seeks to answer are:
2. How do older generations understand ageing?
3. What livelihood strategies do older people adopt and how does gender and class uphold or reshape particular understandings of livelihoods of ageing populations?
4. In an increasingly diverse nation, how do older people navigate class and gender differences? And does this enable freedom or impose constraints on them? If so, how?
5. What do we learn about older generations through a particular participatory process of doing research?

What opportunities, networks, and institutions are there to support and shape the lives of ageing populations?

1.3 Conceptualization of Key terms

1.3.1 Social construction of Gender and Ageing

The study takes a gender perspective which focuses on old men and women in Harare, from the age of 65 and above. Such a perspective critiques normative assumptions that sees masculinity and femininity as fixed, unitary and homogenous classifications and argues instead that they are relational and constructed. Butler (1990, p.136) sees gender as social construction. She argues:

“The gendered body is performative, it has no ontological status apart from the various acts, gestures, movements, enactments which constitute reality. Such acts, gestures and enactments are performative in the sense that the essences that they otherwise purport to express are fabrications manufactured through corporeal signs and other discursive means”.

Gender is rooted in social relationships at all echelons, from individual interfaces and personalities to established or institutional processes. In a societal setup, there is an organization that takes place on the basis of gender and as a result there is division of labor because there is an organization of what people take to be masculine and feminine. Although society expects older people to retire from formal work, some continue to work, and this raises the question about the impact of gender on older people who are formally and informally employed. Moreover, gender identities conserved in social interaction tend to give men an advantage over women, even if people try to resist natural gender differences and meanings (Casalanti, 2010). The study therefore seeks to understand the situation of both older men and women because one cannot understand one group without reference to the other. In other words, you cannot understand older men without implicit reference to older women.

Age personalities are constructed socially through the transitional notions of what being an “older person” is conceptualized and how they should be understood as an idea. From a social constructionist point of view, there is a certain behavior that is expected of different ages and behavior with which older people are anticipated to follow (Fealy et al., 2012, Fields et al., 2018). Writing about the social construction of ageing, James and Hockey (2003, p. 46-47) cogently summarize the current position and write:

"In social construction, the body is seen, in and of itself, to initiate or construct the ageing process. Rather, the ageing of the body is regarded as a continuous process that takes place outside such structures, occurring too slowly for us to catch it in the motion-no matter how watchful we might be in front of the bathroom mirror. Age has, therefore, to be stamped by the society, in order for us to 'know' or 'experience it' through the symbolic marking out of differences between 'then' and 'now'."

It has been argued with respect to childhood that the very category childhood is constructed in relation to adulthood as an implicit norm, with children being constituted as "adults in the making" (James & Prout, 1997). But in this study, I argued that, like childhood, the category "old age" is constituted in relation to an implicit norm of adulthood. According to Hockey and James (1993), in adulthood, the age of an individual does not establish a facet of social identity in the same way it did when one was "growing up" nor as it will when one "grows old". From the age of 20 to 50, adulthood is taken as a kind of ageless, homogenous norm against which not only children are characterized as "other", but also so-called ageing adults (Pattman, 2015). This raises questions about how and why age suddenly becomes a source of identification in later adulthood and how this is experienced and understood by so-called "ageing" women and men. The perspective the researcher developed, draws inspiration from the social construction of childhood and ageing adulthood as age-related categories in an adult-centric world, and raises questions about the operation of power in adult-centric societies through the infantilization of not only children but "ageing adults" as well.

Hockey and James (1993, p.158) gave an example of children and older people and argued that while children may seek to "grow up" by adopting the behaviors of older teenagers, adults themselves may be relatively silent on the topic of their chronological age, and older adults may draw on resources ranging from the body modifications offered by cosmetic surgery to resistance to the infantilization strategies of younger adults. Within many social interactions, the ageing process in later life is not something readily enquired about, referred, or declared. As Laclau stresses that the apparent objectivity of dominant categories or identities is affirmed "only by representing that which threatens it" (cited in Hall 2000, p.18). This raises questions of why and how these threats differ from one person to the other in terms of gender. An example by Sontag (1978) brings to light the losses women face in their old age and how their sexual and

reproductive roles are seen as transient. For men on the other hand, the concentration is mainly on their work identities and the society judges them less when they are pensioned off, and reproductively, there is no cut-off point to their capabilities because biologically men can reproduce till death. For women, their adult bodies are possibly monitored for emblems of “old age” almost as soon as they have made a changeover from “youth” (Sontag, 1978)

1.3.2 Engaging with the social relativity of age and developing a local perspective on ageing

Despite its seemingly simplicity in understanding, ageing has been defined widely and variedly in literature. There has been a continuous effort to define and distinguish amongst “ageing, aged, old, elderly” (WHO, 1999, Human Mortality Database, 2017). While these terms may sound dissimilar from a definitional perspective, their difference in terms of years of an individual is trivial (Scherbov & Sanderson, 2019). It has also been advised that when defining ageing, it is important to differentiate between population ageing as “the process whereby older individuals become a proportionately larger share of the total population” (UNDESA Population Division, 2002) and individual ageing which refers to the process of individuals getting older (UNDESA Population Division, 2011).

In defining ageing, two major components have been used: age or number of years lived, and transformations in health or physical changes. According to Singh and Bajorek (2014) from a clinical point of perspective, ageing is understood as a progressive and generalised deficiency of function leading to loss of adaptive reaction to stress and in a growing risk of age associated sicknesses. This understanding of ageing relates to impairments that take place to an individual due to duration of survival. It thus goes back to the understanding of ageing from a perspective of number of years lived by an individual. At a biological level, WHO (2015) states that ageing is related with the gradual accumulation of a wide assortment of molecular and cellular damage, which over time result in decrease in physiological reserves, an increased risk of many illnesses and ultimately a general deterioration in the capacity of the individual. United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) (2017), integrates the two components (number of years and physical transformations) to define ageing. According to UNECE (2017), ageing is a consequence of the relationship of a lengthier life and decline in fertility.

In terms of number of years lived, while the United Nations (UN, 1999, UN, 2018) has not yet adopted a standard criterion for defining ageing, it generally uses 60 plus years to refer to the

older population. From the perspective of age, WHO's (2015) definition of older people starts from 65 years. Taking a leaf from these definitions, most countries, especially developed ones, use the chronological age of 65 as a criterion to refer to an older person (Kowal, 2001). Based on the above-mentioned definitions, Africa accepts both 60 and 65 years as standard criterions to refer to old age. The Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Older Persons in Africa (2014) sees an older person as an individual from the age of 60. For this protocol, older persons shall be interpreted to have the same meaning in the African setup. According to Southern African Development Community (2010), Older Person means a person aged 65 years or above. In its Older Persons Act (2012), Zimbabwe similarly defines an older person as one aged 65 years or above.

Apart from the aforementioned understandings of ageing, in some countries, developing and developed, ageing has been associated with retirement (Murphrey, 2017). Once one retires on account of age or incapacity due to physical transformation, that person is considered an older person (Mason et al., 2017). While this understanding has drawn the attention of some sociological scholars, it has often been dismissed by other schools of thought such as Murphrey (2017) as it still goes back to issues of age and physical deterioration discussed above. In less developed countries, especially those with huge agricultural populations and without formal social security systems such as in most African countries, old age is not connected to this notion of retirement, but to the point when an individual's ability to contribute actively to survival falters (International Labour Organisation (ILO), 2001).

This research study does not follow a fixed or universal definition of ageing set by the United Nations (UN). However, it acknowledges the statistical cut off used by the UN that defines ageing populations as comprising of persons from 60 and above. At the same time, the research follows an argument postulated by Johnson-Hanks (2002) that as result of institutional project life stages develop; their consistency should be an object than a supposition of ethnographic probe. Therefore, the research recognizes the socio-cultural and historical meanings of age in different societies. Danley (2016) argues that ageing is a fundamental process connected to other stages of the life course. This approach goes beyond age as simply a biological transition and rather as a category to be navigated and negotiated. Writing about what it means to be an older person, existing research from scholars found out that the term "elderly" has been reported to be

viewed negatively by older populations (Walker, 1993, Avers et al., 2011). By using terms, “the elderly”, “the aged”, it shows there is “othering” of this particular group of people. Therefore, this study does not use these terms in the analysis chapters because as mentioned by the above scholars, they are fraught with discriminatory connotations. Instead, the study utilizes the terms “ageing populations” or “older people” interchangeably.

It is evident that sociology, anthropology, and other related disciplines in the social sciences are well placed to capture the nuances of what ageing means in different local and trans-local contexts and how this relates to questions of the body, personhood, class, and intergenerational reciprocity (Amrith, 2018). A global perspective on ageing which is Eurocentric can be "unsettled" by arguing beyond the view of the West (Lamb, 2015, p.42). Retirement as an example may not hold water because it excludes those who have been involved in informal activities during the entire course of their life and have never worked in a formal sector. This view is not aware of the fact that belonging to a particular generation may carry social significance or status than reaching a particular age. To Cohen (1992), gerontological discourses of ageing as a science and as a medicalized category often diverge from the everyday lived experiences of older people. For example in India during the 20th century, before the realization of age as a social and demographic inquiry of itself, it was seen to be related with absence of family and changeable generational roles rather than as a discrete chronological period and challenge (Sivaramakrishnan, 2014). Therefore, the meaning of ageing is not monolithic because social and cultural meanings of age change over time; new dimensions of experience are brought in and previously held understandings are reshaped, negotiated and reasserted. At the same time, age intersects with other aspects of people's identities and identifications, which are themselves not static (Amrith, 2018). Moreover, life expectancies vary widely across different countries, and this has an impact/bearing on what ageing means.

In Zimbabwe, there is no general chronological definition for old age. Rather, there are several popular notions, such as *mudhara/harahwa* (old man) and *chemberekadzi* (old woman). However, the word *mudhara* is problematic in that even young adults, especially men, use the word to depict someone they accord respect who is still in his youthful age. There is also the opinion that the conventional age that has been established for withdrawal from official labor force reflects the recognition of old age in Zimbabwe. The compulsory chronological age at

which a person should retire from the formal sector in Zimbabwe is set at 65 years. Therefore, since the cutting-off age is 65 years, I shall use this as the determinant to old age. This study defines old age as a point when an individual is no longer fit to be part of the active labour force. While this may be true, as noted in the discussion, a number of ageing populations in developing countries continue to be involved in paid and unpaid labor. This might be partly due to poverty in developing countries and the organization of their social structures.

1.3.3. Defining Class

Why do we have classes in a society? In other words, why are societies stratified? This question is important because it has been widely debated by various scholars. Spencer, who is regarded as one of the earlier sociologists and a champion of the evolutionary approach, argued that society developed through an evolutionary process where there is natural selection and there is “survival of the fittest”. Those who profit from this natural selection came out on top. For the purposes of this study, it is important to clarify the meaning of class as expounded by different scholars. Class as a category is rooted in social stratification. In other words, without stratification there are no social classes (Wright, 1993). Social class is often viewed as a relational concept, according to Wright (1993), where classes are defined and ranked relative to one another. Bourdieu (1987, p.12) stressed that the upper and lower classes are distinct because they are “situated at extreme ends of the distributions,” such distinctions become “evidently less effective in the intermediate zones”. What it therefore means is that without a lower class, there is no upper class. The Marxist point of view is that economic position is the primary conciliator of one’s position in the stratification system. To Marx, class differentiation is the crucial determinant of social, economic, and political inequality. There is always the dominant class and the subordinate class from a Marxist point of view. Weber’s most detailed discussion on class is found in *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft* (1921-22), and the Weberian perspective states that social stratification is multidimensional and that power, prestige, and wealth are relevant. Sociologists such as Anthony Giddens (2000), pointed out the difference that is there between class and status by illuminating that,

“Whereas class is objectively given, status depends on people’s subjective evaluations of social difference. Classes derive from economic factors associated with property and earnings; status is governed by the varying styles of life groups follow”

According to Jackman and Jackman (1973), the Marxist standpoint also illuminates that classes are well defined and that individuals strongly identify with their specific social class. Therefore, these definitions from different scholars have an impact on how I have operationalized class as a category in my study. In this thesis, I focus on both social class as a subjective position in a stratified society as well as social class as an objective position defined by income, education, and occupation (Wright, 2005, Giddens, 2000). These positions, as emphasized by both Marx and Weber, influence life chances.

1.3.4 Conceptualizing Livelihoods

The question, “what is a livelihood?” is difficult to answer because the concept is multidimensional and difficult to differentiate. For example, if one postulates that it is “to make a living”, or another that it entails “provision of support to the family”, both define what constitutes a livelihood. This difficulty in unpacking the definition of the concept can only be solved by postulating the concept from a scholarly point of view. Although there are different definitions, this study embraces a definition by Chamber and Cornway (1992) who argue that a livelihood comprises the capabilities, assets (including both material and social resources) and activities required to make a living. The difference between Chambers and Cornway’s illumination of livelihood and that of other scholars is that their definition includes the requirement that for livelihoods to be considered sustainable, they should contribute net benefits. Therefore, my study adopts this definition by Chambers and Cornway (1992) because it is arguably more realistic.

1.4 Rationale of the study

The research seeks to enter fields that are seemingly less proximate, including gerontology, demography, and policy-oriented debates so as to fully understand the multi-faceted interplay between ageing, class, and gender. Globally, studies examining intersectionality have multiplied across academic disciplines and in interdisciplinary fields in the social sciences. For example, there are a growing number of researches on the intersection between ageing and migration by different scholars (Walsh & Nare, 2016, Walsh & Baldassar, 2017, Dossa & Coe, 2017, Karl & Torres, 2016, Horn & Schweppe, 2017). All these studies examine the intersection between ageing and migration in different geographical contexts and the notable emphasis is on Europe, North America, and East Asia, given that these regions are considered among the most “aged”

(UNDESA, 2015). Yet it is equally important to investigate these social and cultural dynamics in Africa and in this case Zimbabwe (even if these are not societies widely perceived as 'aged'). These studies have undoubtedly advanced a productive interdisciplinary conversation that brings together a range of conceptual and methodological approaches. Nonetheless, there is still plenty of room for attention to the intersections between ageing and other forms of social stratification in a way that captures the contradictory and multi-layered dimensions of ageing in people's lives. On these points, by narrowing the study to Zimbabwe, and deepening ethnographic attention, the study makes its unique contributions to a dynamic field. The research focuses on three areas with older people from different socio-economic statuses.

This scholarship is crucial for aiding debates on the notion of ageing and life in general for ageing populations. Within the framework of participatory policy processes, the representation of older population's views is necessary (Dankl, 2017, Mets & Gorus, 2016). As noted by Walker and Foster (2013), ageing populations should be responsible for shaping the meaning of ageing from their own perspective. Thus, the lived experiences of ageing populations are presented in this study, and this has extrapolations for policies that are meant for ageing populations. Therefore, the study adds to an imperative facet of policy deliberations on how ageing population's voices can be integrated into actions of policy.

In this thesis, I have presented arguments that repose on the supposition that ageing populations are not a homogenous group, their experiences of ageing differ from one place to another and between populations. Therefore, ageing populations cannot be bracketed as people who require the same services (Canadian Library Association, 2002). The policies and programs of ageing require a targeted approach to the adaptation of policy meant for ageing populations. As shall be noted in the study, ageing in Zimbabwe is unique on its own way; hence, it requires a plan to demographic ageing which is specific to the context under study. The generation of contextual information is important in establishing the meaning of ageing from the perspective of ageing populations and this information may be used for future studies.

In a nutshell, this research contributes to a growing body of knowledge about the current ageing experience and livelihood strategies of ageing populations. Uniquely, findings from this research offer insight into the lived experience of ageing populations. With this information, the study has aided in understanding the holistic needs of older adults, particularly those ageing in Zimbabwe.

In practical terms, the identification of social factors are important in maintaining good health and wellbeing in older adulthood, and insight into the decision making processes by those participating in ageing programs, may be used to inform existing and future policy decision-making and models of best practice towards promoting positive ageing. Subsequently, this research informs existing and future policy structures through the identification of previous omissions, misconceptions and outdated assumptions regarding ageing and the issues facing ageing populations. Moreover, this research contributes to understandings of ageing as a process of development involving positive choices and providing new opportunities rather than focused solely on the declines typically associated with ageing (Harzan, 2000)). Foremost, the findings contribute to the building of a more holistic understanding of the ageing experience and provide evidence that ageing is a socially constructed and therefore a modifiable experience.

1.5 Problem Statement

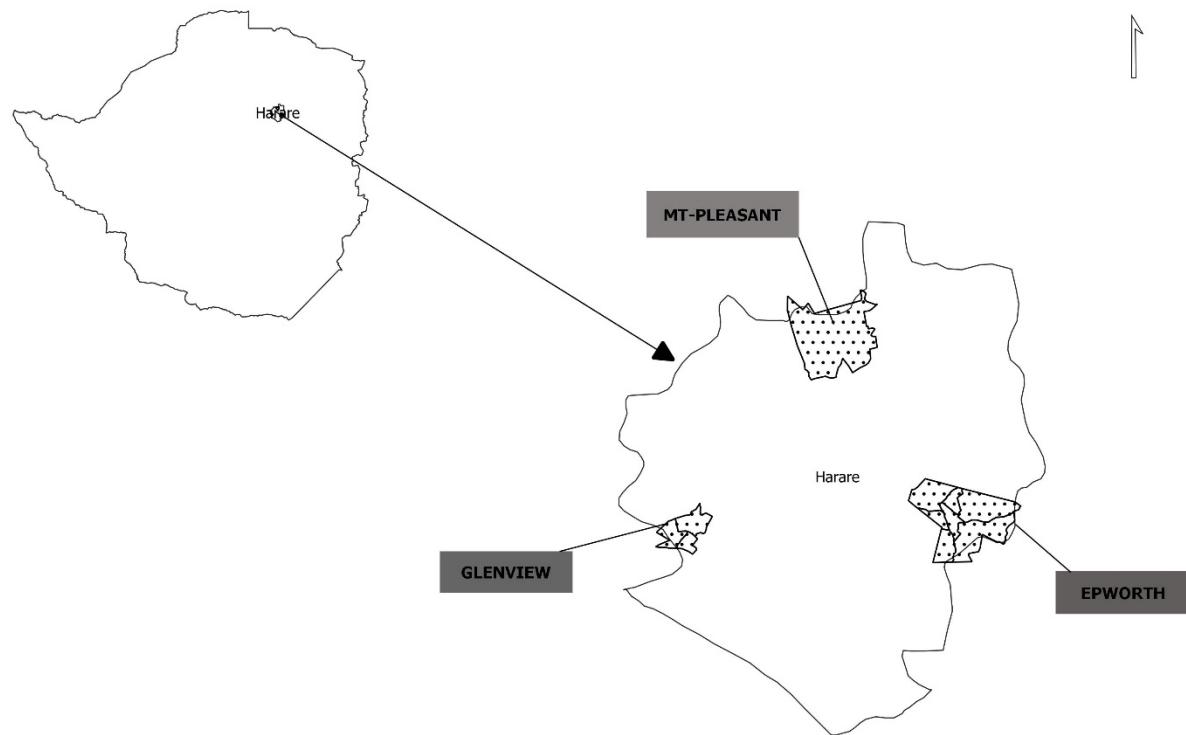
Ageing populations and the increasing life expectancies that they reflect are called on the one hand, ‘a triumph of development’ by international organizations (United Nations Populations Fund & HelpAge International, 2012). On the other hand, they are framed in many debates as a policy problem or even a crisis, generating social and economic anxieties about a shrinking labor force and increasing strains on health and care services (Amrith, 2018). This focus on ageing as a social problem and older people as vulnerable, withdrawn and unproductive, however, overlooks the fact that this is a very diverse heterogeneous group, whose experiences represent vastly varied life trajectories (King et al., 2017, Palmberger, 2017). Added to this difficulty, is also the inability of older people to take part in formal employment because of their age. As a result, they rely on savings, state pensions, and remittances from their families. A number of ageing populations are also faced with a burden of taking care of grandchildren who have lost their parents or whose parents have migrated in search of green pastures and leave their children behind.

Although both older women and men face discrimination in their lives, older women bear the brunt of gender discrimination in their lives such as limited access to land and decision making. Therefore, in order to implement policies that are meant to improve the lives of ageing populations, it is important to understand what ageing means from their perspective and the strategies they employ to make a living. Literature examining the links between ageing, class,

and gender on the livelihoods of ageing populations has been less prominent in research agenda in Africa, and specifically in Zimbabwe. Often perceived as “young societies” or as those providing labor services to ageing populations somewhere, the research seeks to understand how these societies are witnessing processes of ageing. The paucity of literature means that ageing is poorly understood and as such, not many resources are allocated to meet the needs of the older populations (Biritwum et al., 2013).

1.6 Characterization of study sites: Epworth, Glen View, and Mount Pleasant

Figure 1. 3 (Map of Three Localities under study)



The study was undertaken in three selected localities of Harare as illustrated on the map namely: Epworth, Glen View, and Mt Pleasant. The three areas were selected because ageing populations from these areas have different socio-economic statuses. The table below shows the year each suburb under study was established.

Figure 1.4: Years of Establishment of Suburbs under study

Suburb	Year of Establishment
Epworth	1890
Glen View	1979
Mt Pleasant	1954

Profile of Epworth: Informal settlement

Epworth is located about twelve kilometers from the Harare Central Business District. Housing structures range from semi-permanent to temporary makeshift houses and these are a dominant feature in the unplanned sections of Epworth. The Epworth settlement was established in the 1890s through the Methodist church led by John White (Chitekwe-Biti, 2010). Three farms were acquired by the church, and these are Epworth, Glenwood, and Adelaide. The settlement grew as a church mission throughout the colonial years and it consisted of two villages namely: Chiremba and Chizungu (Chitekwe-Biti, 2010). However, in the late 1970's, the area witnessed a surge in the population as people fled the liberation war which had heightened in the countryside. More importantly, after independence in 1980, people moved from rural areas to cities in search of economic opportunities. As a result of this growth in the population, the church donated part of its Epworth land to government so that they become an establishment of local government

structure. This led to the creation of Epworth Local Board in 1986 with the aim of administering and regulating the growth of the settlement. The creation of the Local Board led to the unveiling of regularization and formalization initiatives. This formalization resulted in Epworth becoming more attractive and the influx of people became more rampant. The net effect of this led to the emergence of more informal settlements as people occupied the remaining open spaces. It is this situation that saw Epworth having 70% of its 300 000 families staying in informal settlements and the remainder in formal areas (Zimbabwe Homeless Peoples Federation, 2009)

Epworth can be said to be a complex humanitarian crisis driven by institutionalized poor governance, corruption, and politics (Chenga, 2010, cited by Chirisa, 2011). Since the late 1970s, it has attracted a large number of poor homeless people (Chirisa, 2011). Numbers have grown from about 20 000 people in 1980 to 123 250 by 2002, and presently the local board has lost count, but as of 2010 rough estimates put the population at around 500 000 (Chenga, 2010). It is against this milieu that Epworth has arrived at a situation whereby 70% of its 30 000 families are staying in informal settlements with the remainder in formal areas (DSHZT, 2009). There are no street names, but most of the plots are numbered. The community is divided into suburbs that are demarcated by dust roads.

Profile of Glen View: High density suburb

Glen View is a high-density suburb in Harare, Zimbabwe. It is located in the South Western parts of Harare at a distance of 14km from Harare's Central Business District to the North East. It is one of the most populous agglomerations in Zimbabwe (Zimbabwe Census, 2012). Houses in this area are generally smaller and more tightly packed together. Glen View is a high density suburb in Harare, Zimbabwe.

Glen View borders with other townships like Glen Norah and Budiriro. It is divided into sections 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, Area 8 and earlier extensions. Chirisa (2011) noted that Glen View is slowly encroaching towards wetlands due to bad governance by local authorities and land barons. There is a number of public and private institutions operating in the area, from kindergartens to primary and secondary schools. Zimbabwe's Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education governs up to ten schools which are: Glen View 1 Government Primary School, Glen View 6 Council Primary School, Glen View No. 1 High, Glen View No. 2 High and Glen View No. 3 High. Zimbabwe Republic Policy is the only visible safety providing entity within Glen

View. In the 2000s and 2010s there was a wave of politically induced violence in Glen View. Among other incidents, in 2011 the police went in to break-up an opposition party (MDC-T) rally, resulting in a riot, and the death of a policeman (Human Rights Watch, 2011).

The City Council of Harare puts its efforts in maintaining the health of the population by it providing clinics, waterworks and the collection of refuse. Frequent water crisis hit this area sparking disease outbreaks (The Zimbabwean, 2011)

Home industries established in the area have posed a threat to the environment despite efforts by the council. Glen View has community halls in areas 1 and 3. They are commercially open to the public by renting out for social activity such as religious gatherings and others. The centers are local-government-owned and at times used for public information and information gathering. Government schools have provided facilities for larger gatherings like elections due to their security and space.

Profile of Mt Pleasant: Low Density suburb

Mt Pleasant is a low-density suburb in the Northern part of Harare, and it is 7km from Harare's Central Business District. Mount Pleasant was originally a farm, also named Mount Pleasant, and until it was developed for residential housing beginning in 1902 (ZimStats, 2012) .Little is known about the genesis of Farm No 10, which was called Mount Pleasant, as the original owner is not known. John Kiddle sold it to Mollie Colenbrander for £100 after owning it for just five days. However, because of water issues, no development took place until 1902 when it was acquired by the Cape Town property developer and recent immigrant Alfred Blackburn, who also acquired and subdivided Avondale, and developed both areas into residential subdivisions. By the end of the Second World War, Mount Pleasant had become an extremely desirable place to live and was forever changed by the opening of the University of Zimbabwe in 1953.

The neighborhood is well preserved and maintained; however some of the historic homes have been torn down, renovated into businesses, or transferred to institutional use. The northern part of the neighborhood is dominated by the University of Zimbabwe. In the post-war years the area was home to affluent Anglo-African families evidenced by churches such as All Souls Anglican Church on Westcott Road and Northside Community Church on Edinburgh Avenue. Today the population is more diverse, albeit with a plurality of upper middle class as the wealthiest former

inhabitants moved further eastward to Glen Lorne and Borrowdale or emigrated entirely. Left behind were mostly middle-class white Zimbabweans, and a mix of incoming Shona and Indian Zimbabweans along with a transient expatriate population. Today, upper middle-income Zimbabweans of various ethnicities form a majority of the population. Mount Pleasant is home to three universities, three secondary schools, and five primary schools, including both public and private educational institutions. Mount Pleasant's location as the academic and intellectual centre of Harare as well as its large population of well-to-do residents have made it an important cultural and bohemian hub of the city, noted for its independent bookstores, including the Book Club and House of Books Coop bookstore, on Redhill Road. Nearby Bond Street offers numerous restaurants, bakeries and cafes, along with small grocery stores, hair stylists, and dry cleaners, which add much to the vibrancy of the area. It is home to different Embassies. It is referred to as the "Leafy North" because of pretty tree-lined streets and gardens found in the area. The houses are generally big and spaced (ZimStats, 2012).

1.7 Contributions of the study

The study provides unique contributions in the following interlinking ways:

- Drawing on theories to understand lived realities of ageing populations in Harare.
- Contribution to the current literature that centers on the experiences of older people.
- Offers unique, new findings and analysis.
- Studies the realities of older populations in Harare in unique ways and by doing so, providing new ways to examine how older people act, think and make agentic choices in Harare.
- The use of qualitative research methodology to illuminate lived realities of older populations in Harare.

1.8 Structure of Thesis

The thesis has nine chapters, and this current chapter is an exposition of the background of the study, bringing to light demographic projections for ageing populations who are from the age of 60 years and above globally, regionally and locally. Questions for the research, research problem, and rationale of the study and conceptualization of key terms such as gender, age, and livelihoods are delineated in this current chapter. The characterization of sites where research

took place is also illuminated. The Chapter also presents the dissertation structure and the aim of every chapter in this study.

Chapter Two: *Thinking about ageing, gender, class and livelihoods research within Intersectionality, Bourdieu's Theory of Practice and Social Constructionism*, discusses Intersectionality, social constructionism, and Bourdieu's Theory of Practice which I draw upon in my analysis of ageing population's construction and experiences of ageing. In addition, I assess the role of gender and class in upholding or reshaping particular understanding of livelihoods of ageing populations. In illustrating the above perspectives, I draw on research that applies these theories to understand the meaning of ageing and livelihoods research.

Chapters Three and Four discuss the literature that informs the study.

Chapter Three: *The Social Construction of Old Age and Challenges associated with ageing*, discusses arguments about the meaning of ageing from different contexts and the challenges facing ageing populations. Literature on ageing and the challenges associated with ageing from a gender and class point of view is illuminated in this chapter.

Chapter Four: *Livelihoods strategies and social protection systems of ageing populations*

This Chapter reviews literature on livelihood strategies employed by ageing populations in order to make a living. Also presented in the chapter are the different approaches to care of ageing populations in the present-day world. An exposition of social policies meant for ageing populations around the world are illuminated, including their impact on shaping their lives. The Chapter also stresses the policies and programs on ageing that are specific to the Zimbabwean context.

The fifth Chapter presents the methodology of the study and, as shall be seen, I have used Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) and Narrative Analysis (NA) as my research designs. In this chapter, there is also a discussion of my sampling procedures, unit of analysis, data collection, and data analysis methods. In addition, ethical considerations are discussed in this chapter.

In Chapter Six: *Reflections from fieldwork experience with ageing populations in Harare, Zimbabwe*, I reflect upon myself as a young man, conducting research among older people. I

document challenges that I faced (such as safety and vulnerability) and how I overcame these challenges. Emotional aspects that surfaced during the research process are also discussed in the chapter. Finally, lessons learnt through a particular participatory process of doing research among older generations are highlighted in the chapter.

The Presentation of the findings of the study is illuminated in chapters seven and eight.

Chapter Seven: *Social Construction of aging: Presentation and Discussion of findings on research with ageing men and women in Harare, Zimbabwe*, reveals findings on the meaning of ageing from the perspectives of ageing populations. The data from participants shows that there are differences and similarities between ageing populations on what they define as ageing based on gender and class.

Chapter Eight: *Do Gender and Class Count? Livelihood strategies, opportunities and institutions of ageing populations*, present the livelihood strategies, opportunities, and institutions important in shaping the lives of ageing populations. This Chapter enabled an understanding of the avenues in which ageing populations in different contexts exercise their own agency and utilize different capitals in order to earn a living.

The Ninth and final chapter is the conclusion of the study. In this chapter, there is the synthesis of key findings of the study informed by the research questions. This chapter puts forward some propositions for future research and policy implications. Moreover, the original contribution of the study is discussed in this final chapter.

1.9 Summary of the Chapter

The first section of the chapter was a narration of my experience with an older person, an encounter which became the motivation for undertaking this study. The focus of the research, background of the study, conceptualization of key terms, research questions, rationale of the study, problem statement, characterization of research sites as well as the structure of this thesis are outlined in this chapter. My analysis of how older populations construct and experience ageing, and their livelihood strategies is informed by Intersectionality, Social Constructionism, and Bourdieu's Theory of Practice. The following chapter focuses on these theoretical frameworks, and I illustrate the relevance of these theories to my study. A review of these theories and drawing on selected research studies that used these theories helps to understand the

complex and dynamic ways in which ageing populations attach meanings to the notion of ageing and how they engage gender and class in their everyday forms of social interaction and livelihood activities.

CHAPTER 2

TOWARDS A THEORETICAL UNDERSTANDING OF AGEING POPULATIONS' LIVED EXPERIENCES AND LIVELIHOOD RESEARCH

2.0 Introduction

Gender, class, ageing, and livelihoods are situated within the theoretical lenses of the Theory of Practice by Bourdieu, Social Constructionism, and Intersectionality in this chapter. These combined theoretical lenses provided the necessary tools with which to analyze complex mechanisms through which ageing populations ascribe meanings to the notion of ageing, and their livelihood strategies that they employ to ensure their survival bearing in mind the impact of gender and class. However, a distinction between these theories is shown in the chapter, revealing the reasons behind the choice of these theories for this study. This chapter is divided into three parts. Firstly, Bourdieu's theoretical discussion on Practice is explicated in conversation with the reviewed studies that have used this particular theory to facilitate nuanced understandings of the complex undertakings through which people are engaged in different livelihood activities. Through reviewing these studies that adopt grounded approaches to understand livelihoods, the theory illustrates the meaning of the view that individuals are engaged in livelihood activities. The three elements of Bourdieu's theory of practice are discussed in this chapter with the aim of clarifying their jurisdiction in study. The second section deals with intersectionality. The third and final section of the chapter deals with social constructionism. The three-pronged theoretical approach adopted for this study crucially helps in the understanding of the lived experiences of older people. For Hepworth (2000), ageing is a dynamic process that encompasses transformations of the self, body, and society. I have a particular interest in examining how ageing populations understand ageing from their own experience.

2.1 Bourdieu's Theory of Practice: Understanding Livelihoods

The French sociologist and philosopher Pierre Bourdieu made enormous contributions to the discipline of sociology (Ozbilgin & Tatli, 2005). Bourdieu's main work on the Theory of Practice led him to study the Kabyle people of Algeria in 1958 and 1963. The theory of Practice by Bourdieu (2003) is categorized as one of the grand theories in Sociology. According to Skinner (1985), grand theory is a descriptive theory that explains the conduct and nature of

humans. One of the most important contributions by Bourdieu expressed in his theory of practice include the harmonization of the dualisms of agency against structure, freedom against determinism and constructivism against structuralism as well as micro against macro (Bourdieu, 1972). All these have a bearing to this study. This study complements intersectionality with the Theory of Practice by Bourdieu (1985; 1989; 1990; 1993). This is done through illuminating the intersectionality of ageing population's experiences of inequality in intersected structures in which there is the production of inequality as signified by how resources are distributed within local contexts and within ageing populations themselves. The following section brings to light the three aspects of the Theory of Practice by Bourdieu which include: field, habitus, and capital. A review of literature that has utilized this particular theory is illustrated in the next section.

2.1.1 Older People's way of behaving: Habitus

According to Jenkins (1992, p.74), the term habitus was taken from Latin and it refers to something that is of a typical state and habitual in outlook or form. Pierre Bourdieu (1970, 1991) was the first to clearly define and utilize the concept of habitus; however, the rationale of it can be traced to Aristotle's work as well as the work of Weber, Hegel, and Durkheim. This concept of habitus has been widely used in educational research since Bourdieu focuses on social class and how it affects social mobility. However, to Connolly (1997, p.71), the work of Bourdieu is applicable to wider scenarios as a tool for analysis which can be used for the understanding of the behavior of human beings and how different discussions have a bearing on the individual. Habitus, according to Bourdieu's words refers to:

“Structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures that is as principles which generate and organize practices and representations that can be objectively adapted to their outcomes without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operations necessary in order to attain them” (Bourdieu, 1990, p.53).

Illustrations of such “structuring structures” include experiences of ageing populations residing in informal settlements in a developing country and this may have an influence on how they view themselves. Informal settlements are known to be characterized by tenuous dwellings and bad infrastructure in general. Consequently, there might be a singular narrative of inferiority and underachievement. With this in mind, one is able to theorize that the predispositions of several generations of ageing populations is organized or modelled by such experiences and represents

the actual way that they regard themselves in (Connolly, 1997, p.71). Adichie (2009) would thus relate that showing people something leads them to become that thing. From these precepts, it can be noted that predispositions are a sure aspect of the process of socialization in which all things that are experienced by people are classified in accordance with past experiences which they underwent in childhood (Jones, 1997). This is important in that it develops an array of mental representations which communicate the way people perceive the world and informs ways they respond in diverse situations (Swartz, 1997).

The writings of Bourdieu regarding social practices and habitus have been used by several scholars to overcome ordinary comprehension of livelihoods as consequences of strategic decisions that are rational (de Bruijn and van Dijk, 2005a, p.5, de Haan and Zoomers, 2005, p.40, van Dijk, 2011, p.104). Power (1999) regards habitus as a strategy by Bourdieu to provide explanations of formalities concerning behavior that is attached to social structures which include ethnicity, class, and gender without necessarily making social structures to determine behavior or lose sight of individual agency.

How does the concept of habitus facilitate refined understanding of older people's livelihoods in this study? The adoption of Bourdieu's "logic of practice" perspective, (Bourdieu, 1993, p.147-179), enables older people's livelihoods to be emphasized, thereby casting attention to inborn reasoning of social practices. Nathan (2008), for instance, examined risk perception as a social practice and highlights that people undertake risk perception strategies that are mediated by habitus, which leads to adaptation of what is expected to opportunities. In a research on people dwelling in the slums of La Paz, Bolivia, where they were prone to landslides, the scholar explicates the decisions made by these people to dwell in such a risky place which is influenced by their subaltern position in society. Though, the study was focusing on the general populace in La Paz without a specific focus on older people, the logic of practice sheds light on older people's choices and decisions. For instance, for older people residing in informal settlements, the question is on why they put themselves in risky environments. Do they perceive the hazard they are exposed to, and do they adopt protective measures? It is known that informal settlements are punctuated by overcrowding, tenuous dwellings, insufficient access to proper sanitation and adequate water supplies (UN-Habitat, 2008). In this sense, intersectionality comes into play because older people residing in slums can experience non-conducive living conditions which

are punctuated by insufficient water supply, poor living conditions, poor sanitation, as well as insecure tenure, and exposure to acute health risks, unlike those who reside in low and high density suburbs of Harare.

Additionally, the concept of habitus and social practices helps to conquer the tug of war between creativity and constraint, agency and structure, through reflecting the gaps through which marginalized people, in this case ageing populations, can make informed choices without failing to capture the causal structure of marginalization (Staples, 2007b). De Haan and Zoomers (2005, p.40) thus propose the word “style” to operationalize an understanding of livelihoods that is informed by habitus: through style, quality of specific livelihoods as clear-cut characteristics of groups using and occupying particular prospects, knowledge, social positions, interests and cultural repertoire is emphasized. Livelihoods are thus integrated in relations within society and connected to wider social structures which include markets or institutions that can provide access to particular opportunities for livelihoods, but can also limit the availability of others. Livelihoods are concurrently glued in and patterned by the dispositions embodied by actors, their particular manner of valuing and perceiving the world which can, for example, shed more light on why some opportunities may not be considered by some groups. The changing interaction, which makes up the “livelihood styles”, is exemplified by Staples’ (2007a) examination of the social activities of begging. In a study focusing on a particular group of older South Indian beggars who frequently migrate to Indian metropolitan cities to execute their livelihood (begging), he clearly demonstrates how this intense peripheral cluster positively used the possessed stigma and social organization through which they are oppressed as a way to livelihoods security and self-respect, which is most often withheld from them.

Habitus as the changing natural writing of socialization and shaped by the social and physical environment, Bourdieu (1977) maintains that this is in two forms: primary and secondary. The chief habitus concerns incorporating the outward as the type of thinking, behaving, and feeling of the parent are connected to their position in the social sphere and are incorporated into the habitus of their children. Bourdieu (1977) terms this “class habitus”, which shows the dissimilar positions that people take up in society leading to the attainment of differing tastes and lifestyles by different social classes. The secondary habitus is built on the primary habitus and is a result of one’s education at school and university, but also from other experiences of life. However,

Chudsikowski and Mayrhofer (2011) are of the view that both primary and secondary habitus should be referred to as one habitus because they are, time and again, transformed and strengthened by the experiences of life.

To continue gaining an understanding of these key elements, the next section is an exposition of the concept of field and its relation to habitus.

2.1.2 Field as a place of power relations

Habitus operates within the contexts of fields. Swartz (2013) sees fields as power spheres and because of this it is important to comprehend the power contained in these fields. For instance, there are fields such as those of education, politics, and numerous other social establishments in which there are continual battles for preservation of such positions and power. The following definition summarises the meaning of field by Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992, p.16):

“A field consists of a set of objective, historical relations, between positions anchored in certain forms of power (or capital)”.

The concept of field is an analytical instrument (by Bourdieu) through which livelihoods are entrenched to allow a politicized examination (Didero, 2012; Etzold et al., 2009; Obrist et al., 2010). The constituents of society include a system of semi-independent fields (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 2006). Fields are established by power-loaded associations between subordinate and superior actors who are unevenly gifted with different types of capital (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 2006, p.127). The actors, in this case are ageing populations who battle and contend for power, access to goods, positions, and resources. Each field contains its peculiar rules (which are usually contested in the field by different actors) and logic (Bourdieu, 1998b, p.25). Such rules concurrently constrain and facilitate their practices and moderate the worth of their capital in their specific field.

Field analysis helps to map out the livelihoods of ageing populations within a web of power-laden social relations, as it requires various guiding questions to be addressed: how is the field constituted? What is at stake in the field? What actors have an interest in the stake of the field? What is the relation of the “vulnerable” older people to other actors in the field? What are the “rules of the game” in the field, which determine the value and exchange rate of capital? By addressing these questions, the embeddedness of livelihoods within a web of power relations can

be emphasized. Through addressing such questions, the entrenchment of livelihoods in a circle of power associations is emphasized. Didero's (2012) analysis of the Zabbaleen waste collectors' group in Egypt (Cairo) in a transforming restricting regime is an illustration. Using field analysis, she demarcated the field of solid waste administration and drew out several actors at alternating scales who held interests in the solid waste-stake. Apart from the Zabbaleen, the solid waste management field is made up of interactions of various other actors, which include groups of non-formal waste pickers that are in competition for waste as their primary method of making a living.

The study by Didero highlights the significance of rules that govern the exchanges and social relations within fields. By so doing, this brings the question of production and reproduction of establishments as sets of rules regulating relations in the field (Etzold et al., 2012, p.187). Generally, Bourdieu (1998a, p.48–51) states that such rules are constituents of the battle between actors. Actors in power can set rules which may be recognized or contested by subordinates. Etzold (2013) thus suggests that an analytical differentiation of macro and micro level analysis is influenced by actors who possess power and their rule-making power. On a smaller-level, field relations are regulated through social criterion, non-formal institutions, and personal relations as well as negotiations. Small-political dynamics and practices play a crucial function at this level (Wilshusen, 2010; Zimmer, 2011). A case example is of Etzold (2013) who advocates for this through his study of food vending in the streets, and the battles for public spaces in Dhaka, Bangladesh. His study illustrates how, through discursive and regulative power, the state patterns the play in the field. The study also draws attention to the street politics as well as how the lives of vendors, their successes and failures in business, and their encroachment to public space, are all hinged on the norms and rules in their daily encounters with state representatives.

2.1.3 Capital as primary cause for distinction

Capital has a critical function to play in the Theory of Practice by Bourdieu (1986). Although certain symmetrical between the concept of capital by Bourdieu and assets by the Livelihoods Framework can be singled out, the understanding of capital by Bourdieu clearly addresses – as pointed out by Wilshusen (2012) – the aspects of power, context and rationality, and therefore deeply confronts the major problems of mainstream non-embedded, ahistorical and stationary aspect of possessions in livelihoods studies (Van Dijk, 2011, p.106–108).

Utilising a Bourdieusian concept of capital for livelihoods research shifts the focus of analysis away from conducting snapshots of households' stocks of capital and draws attention to the dynamic and temporal dimension of capital. Ulrich et al. (2012), for example, advocate for change and continuity in the structuring of the portfolio of capital for small-scale farming households in semi-dry parts of Kenya over a 13 year period. Although they clearly draw attention to the notion of capital by Bourdieu, it is still taken as a fairly autonomous and addition for the analysis of livelihoods analysis. Van Dijk (2011) points out that a Bourdieusian approach considers accumulated capital as an outcome of power struggles in unequal social fields and reflects the necessity to address concerns of how capital is created, shared out, and destroyed. This is well illustrated in Sakdapolrak's (2010, p.151) examination of slum dwellers' health vulnerability, in South of China.

The exploration of the manners through which the various forms of capital are converted and exchanged is a critical aspect in which the application of a Bourdieusian perspective widens the livelihoods research scope. An illustrative example is that of a research study by Wilshusen (2009, 2010), who reflects on Bourdieu to examine capital exchange as a mechanism through which power relationships can be analyzed over time. His detailed case study on timber-marketing funds and community forestry in southeastern Mexico reveals that through the enactment of social capital in everyday interactions and negotiations, which have created a dynamic web of power relationships, elites within the community were able to divert money from the timber marketing funds in a way that exacerbated inequalities and so strengthened their dominant position within the community.

By centering on capital and how it is converted, he explicitly communicates capital as a way for the maintenance of unequal power relations. Similarly, Thieme and Siegmann (2010) discuss the role of social capital in networks of migration from the perspective of gender and show how social capital maintains the masculine domination structure and a gender-differentiated model of vulnerability.

The alteration of the value of capital within and between fields is another area of investigation for a Bourdieusian capital analysis. As Bourdieu points out, capital does not have an intrinsic value, but rather its value is linked to the logics of fields (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 2006:132). Changing rules in the field can therefore lead to changes in the value of capital. In the case of

Didero (2012), a privatization drive led to the devaluation, or more precisely, the annulment of waste collection licenses (institutionalized cultural capital) held by small waste companies, which had used to resell their licenses to the Zabbaleen. The informal ties (social capital) and money (economic capital) of the Zabbaleen, through which they gained access to waste collection, were thus also devalued within the changing field configuration. The field specific value of capital, and its devaluation in changing social fields, is most vividly illustrated in studies on international migration (see e.g. Thieme, 2008; Kelly and Lusis, 2006). A case in point is the work of Bauder (2003) who examines the exclusion of international migrant workers from upper-segment labour markets in Canada through the devaluation of their capital (e.g. institutionalized cultural capital in the form of education certificates) in the social field of the receiving country. These studies point to the rules governing the value and exchange of capital, which determine constraints for livelihood opportunities.

Social Capital forms the bedrock of exchange processes among actors. In a study by Mudege and Ezeh (2009), among older men and women in Nairobi, friendship ties afforded them economic and social security related to basic needs such as food. They also found out that elderly women have the ability to form ties that are stronger with fellow women in communities that they reside in. This is due to the fact that some women opt to work near their homes in order to manage jobs and domestic demands. Absence of social trust undermines social capital formation most specifically for connecting social capital, which includes establishment of relationships of exchange that are different to one. Sidhloyi et al. (2015), exploring the lives of elderly women in Ngangelizwe Township in South Africa, noted that ties based on friendship are grounded on experiences that are shared and these were a common challenge because there was lack of reciprocity. Elderly women ended up eventually bonding with only those who were like them. These types of bonds have shortcomings as revealed in participant's livelihoods since not even one of them managed to secure sufficient resources for survival in such disadvantaged conditions (Sidhloyi et al., 2015). In addition, social capital is entrenched in interpersonal relations that include give and take scenarios over the life course. Older people, for example, can provide education (cultural capital) to their children in return for social capital at a later stage. For example, a study by Childs et al (2011) established that daughters, who do not reside with their elderly parents in rural Tibet China, provide for them. The study views some daughters with parents in rural Tibet as the ones that benefit from the investments that their parents made, which

enabled financial independence, and a result, daughters are seen as an advanced social capital form that the elderly draw support from.

In a nutshell, there is consideration of livelihood strategies of ageing populations in this study in relation to their capital and how this links with earning a living. Therefore, by considering a combination of livelihood activities in relation to the participant's capital, the theory of practice by Bourdieu becomes relevant to the study.

2.1.4 The Interplay between Habitus, Field, and Capital

The concepts of capital, habitus, and field are inextricably linked, and Bourdieu in *Distinction* (1977/1984) expressed this in a formula. The formula certainly invites discussion and various scholars commented on this equation. Scholars such as Maton (2014, p.51) point out that, this puzzle can be solved by elaborating how the practice of one is a product of the associations of one's habitus and capital, within the current state of play of that social arena (field). Wacquant (1992, p.27) in commenting about this issue stated that the work of Bourdieu was very catholic in scope and intention and has been appreciated minimally and integrated piecemeal. Grenfell (2014) argued that by considering these aspects, the whole can be approached because, definitely, all of them are part of one epistemology. In a nutshell, the discussion by the scholars mentioned above shows that there is a unanimous agreement that three concepts are interconnected as noted in the equation by Bourdieu: Habitus + Field + Capital =Practice

2.2 Intersectional Analysis

The trope of intersecting concepts was pioneered by and later detailed by Kimberly Williams Crenshaw (1989, 1991), who was one of the founders of critical race theory in the American legal academy. Hancock (2011) sees intersectionality as a model for current feminist research and theory. Within feminist theory, there is an assertion that the lives of women are formed through numerous intersecting groupings of subjugation. Such an insight springs from the feminist antiracist critiques of the assertion that the suppression of women can be pictured via a gender analysis alone (Carastatis, 2014). However, intersectionality is proffered to theoretically remedy this assumption facing contemporary feminist research because it merges other forms of stratification such as class and race. The premise of intersectionality is that social differentiation is attained via composite reciprocations between the symbols of differences such as gender, race, and class. In other words, intersectionality explains power relations that result from the

intersection of multiple identities. As shall be explained below, the framework is useful for the study because it answers questions of how older men and women's access to economic, political and social institutions is differentially experienced, thereby, analyzing how gender, age, and class intersect and interact.

Crenshaw originally utilized the concept intersectionality to analyze aggregate and converging discrimination underwent by women of African-American origin in America (Crenshaw 1989, 1991). Summarily, she pointed out that antidiscrimination law in America was not protective of African-American women since when forming legal action against their employer, they would be left with no option than to select between their gender and race, although the discrimination they faced came at the intersection of these two categories. For her, discrimination against African-American women is based on their colour and this discrimination happens in a different way for African-American men or white women. This theory, as a result, becomes useful to this study because when analyzing discrimination and the experience of it on the older people, differences within groups should be considered. What it means is that such discrimination must not be viewed as similar to ageism coupled with class and gender or vice-versa, but as discrete discriminations that are a conglomerated system that generates discrimination. As noted by Cooper (2016), several theories treat discrimination as mainly falling on a single marker of identity, but intersectionality holds that all facets of the identity of one should be explored as concurrently reciprocally acting and influencing the perception of one in society. This shows that these facets are not simple to observe separately (Cooper, 2016). Collins (2015, p.2) resonates with this view and puts it; "the various facets of the identity of one are not mutually exclusive single entities, but mutually patterning phenomena". These identities intersect to result in a whole which is antithetic to constituent identities.

Crenshaw's (1989) analogy stresses that political, economic, social, and cultural fields should be recognized as connecting routes in which age, race, class, and gender, converge creating a scenario where the realities of women are negotiated. She suggests that this convergence is seen through big policies which configure the formation of socio-economic associations and through arrangement of members of society in locations where actualities are constantly negotiated. What this means is that places habited by older people convey historical, political, racial, and gendered meanings (Segalo, 2015). Such meanings are construed through economic, social, and cultural

rules through which they are formed as representative spaces. Segalo (2015) thus highlights social sections within contexts of power dynamics and the state as pivotal in positioning people's realities within the field where their ambitions are both imagined and negotiated. Collins (1990) proposes that intersectional meanings are entrenched in theorizations that are meant to govern the field. What it means is that these fields are full of various and mostly class-patterned gendered meaning and they corroborate old people's complex realities. Intersecting occurrences of different types of inequality often characterize old people's realities in their locations, especially those in the informal settlements (Anthias, 2012, Brah & Phoenix, 2004, Crenshaw, 1989, Collins, 1990). These varied experiences of unequal access to resources are evident at both community and institutional levels and they have their roots deeply planted at the macro levels at which the rules of cultural, economic, and social engagements are created. It is because of this view that intersectionality becomes an important theory as it facilitates an apprehension of how social, cultural, political, and economic systems of domination are connected to subjugating patterning schemes which encompass gender, age, class, and race, dominant in the field.

According to Segalo (2015), intersectionality identifies fields in how they are informed by intertwined constitutive building blocks whose multifaceted structuring is transferred to people through socialization. In doing so, intersectionality brings to light inequalities, hierarchies, and power that form the base of the different ageing realities of populations in different locations or areas. Collins (1990) thus argues that through the matrix of domination, there is a reflection of how constituting structures are grounded in concurrently increasing types of social control which moderate social order. Collins (1990) argues that these types of power, which structure the prepotent fields, are transferred to social institutions and they are filtered down to members of society. Collins (1990) avers that inequalities are rooted in cultural production fields.

In differing with theories that take discrimination as the only identity marker for individuals, intersectionality holds that all facets of the identity of an individual should be explored as concurrently interacting with each other and impacting on the perception of one in a society. In addition, some of these aspects of identity cannot be simply separately identified (Cooper 2016). The various aspects of the identity of individuals are usually not single mutually exclusive and unitary aspects but reciprocally forming aspects (Collins 2015, p.2). Such identities interact to form a whole which is not identical to the constituent identities. In simple terms, intersectionality

asserts that to comprehend the identity and experience of an individual, there is need for one to firstly recognize the connection of each identity marker to other markers (Crenshaw, 1991).

For example, let us consider a case of a woman, who is simultaneously an old person, female, and over the age of 65. These identities do not exist in vacuum, but rather are intimately connected to how the world perceives this particular individual. However, intersectionality simply does not argue that for instance individuals such as ageing populations have identities that are intersecting but should be taken as a nuanced perception of one's identity. Minda (1995) thus postulates that through the aspect of difference, intersectionality notes how some identity groups are excluded whilst others are included through an inherent privilege in their society. These differences can be noted amongst ageing populations as a result of location, gender, and even race. One thing to note is that there are differences not only between groups but also within each group. Cho et al. (2013, p.75) thus notes, "What makes an analysis intersectional is its intersectional is its intersectional way of thinking about the problem of sameness and difference and its relation to power"

2.2.1 The fascinating link between Bourdieu's theory and Intersectionality

The theory of intersectionality raises questions about power dynamics involved in the field as a result of categories which include race, age, class, and gender. The notion of power has numerous definitions and there is no universally accepted definition because the notion is not a monolithic concept. For the purposes of the study, Bourdieu's concept of power is used to reveal the link between his ideas and those of intersectionality. For Bourdieu (1991) symbolic power refers to the relation between those who practice power and those who are subject to it, that is in the field's structure through which there is production and reproduction of belief. Important to note is that, since representations formed from depictions such as the color of the skin, skin texture, quality, among others, construct people in a particular manner, those who exert control over symbols are also in possession of societal political power that creates results that are real. These consequences usually take the form of attitudes against specific groups of people which can encompass, for example, bad attitudes towards ageing populations culminating in specific attitudes against older populations that are then repeated in the whole society.

This reveals that the discourse and language of specific communities can eventually be legitimized as community members believe that the discourse is objective. For example,

members of the community might treat ageing populations right or wrong. As Maxim (1998) puts it; community members can fail to recognize that the discourse is inwardly subjective through agreeing to what is offered, and the reality accumulates huge persuasive power over that community. Bourdieu (1991) avers that the production of language is deliberately planned and it is used in ways that attain the goals of the powers behind it. According to Bourdieu (1986) accessing cultural, financial, and social capital differs for various people within a society. Bourdieu and Passeron (1990) thus give an 'example about the trouble of access, which makes it hard for students coming from poor socio-economic backgrounds to possess social and economic capital to get into educational institutions. The same can be said about older populations who lack social capital and economic capital, and this will definitely affect their livelihoods. As Broner and Paulus (2017) argue in relation to cultural capital, the less cultural capital possessed by a person, the more difficult it becomes for them to transit between social strata. This increases inequalities in the community. For Bourdieu (1987), this technique unites the stratified social order and facilitates internalization of how society is ordered since available capital organizes the perception of the social world.

Intersectionality demonstrates this relationship between the various groups in society and also examines the power relations (Bronner & Paulus, 2017). Through this examination of the effects of power in particular societies, intersectionality brings to light the functioning of privilege. Walgenbach (2017) thus illuminates how the intersectionality concept makes considerations of the differences among the individual identities while on the other hand, it takes into account social power structures and the social inequality that results from them. Therefore, intersectional analyses evoke the linking nature of oppression and subordination on the basis of sources of social disadvantage such as class, age, and gender. Using Bourdieu's (1991) approach, social classifications such as gender, age, race, and class are cultural constructions that are arbitrary and can be used to explain the differences that exist in a society. In a nutshell, intersectionality is important for this study because of two variations provided by Carastatis (2014). First, the phenomenological standpoint captures how subjugations are simultaneously experienced. Second, there is a claim by ontologists that shows how this framework can theorize the convergence, co-constitution, imbrication, or interwovenness of systems of oppression (Carastatis, 2014).

2.3 Social Constructionism: Understanding ageing as socially constructed

Chapter One contained definitions of the concepts of ageing and gender and I elucidated meanings of the phrase that; gender and ageing are social constructions. I argued from Butler's (1990) point of view which treats gender as something that is performed and learnt rather than something that people possess. To Cranny-Francis et al, (2003), the term gender refers to ways in which one presents and behaves himself or herself in line with norms and what is expected of femininity and masculinity in given societies. I also argued that ageing is socially constructed and put forward Fealy et al (2012) and Fields et al.'s (2018) point of view that there are socially delineated behaviors related to age that are expected of older people. Diehl et al., (2014) are of the view that language takes an important role in influencing subjective ageing and ways through which individuals view their own process of ageing under the influence of societal structures, personal experiences, and cultural values. The integration of existing literature emphasizes several cardinal pillars related to social constructionism. Some of these assumptions are that reality is a social construction and historically in the here and now through everyday forms of interaction mediated discursively by certain norms and values (Berger and Luckmann, 1966, McNamee & Gergen 1992, Cojogaru & Bragaru 2012). Therefore, the way ageing is perceived differs depending on population (because of gender and class differences) and crucially plays a function in structuring social power. Utilizing social constructionism gives room for an understanding of ageing that is theoretically informed by the view that ageing forms a crucial part in social change and social development processes (Appleby 2010, 2011 cited in Fields et al., 2018). As shall be noted below, the word and language choices are important to the social constructionism theory and what is meant by ageing. Social constructionism is useful to elicit the personal meanings of ageing from the viewpoint of ageing populations. Therefore, using this theory is not meant to produce the meaning of ageing that is fixed and universally valid.

One of the main social constructionist sociological influences is regarded as Berger and Luckmann (1996) who penned a book on *The Social Construction of Reality*. Their argument of social life is anti-essentialist, and they argue that humans sustain and co-create social phenomena using social practices. Berger and Luckmann (1996) are of the opinion that the fundamental processes accountable for such include: internalization, externalization and objectivation. Humans as social beings externalize through social actions of their world and because of this, they create artifacts or practices. Illustrative examples include having an idea that ageing

populations are physically weak and then you externalize this by book writing or storytelling. This gets into social realms, and once it is accepted through re-telling the story and writing other books, it takes another independent life. The expressed idea then becomes an object of consciousness in society and objectivation comes into play. Future generations that are ushered into a world with this idea in existence internalize it and it becomes a part of their perceptions of the world and their consciousness. An account by Berger and Luckmann (1966) reveals that social practices by people can construct the world. They argue:

“In writing this book and ostensibly describing it, I am contributing to its objectivation in the world. And in the future, students who will read this and other books about social constructionism will tend to think of it as an arena of knowledge that has been discovered rather than an effect of social processes. In writing this book, then I am contributing to what might be called “the social construction of social constructionism” (Cited in Burr, 1995, p.7)

To McLeod (1997 cited in Galbin, 2014), social constructionism has various features. Social constructionists discard traditional stances of using positivism to understand knowledge as these approaches lack reflexivity. Social constructionists also adopt critical approaches to often despised viewpoints about the social world as they are regarded as supporting dominant groups in society. Social constructionists also support the assumption that how the world is perceived is an effect of interactions and negotiations between groups of people down through history. It is also evident that the main goal of research for social constructionists is appreciating what is possible rather than knowledge production. Lastly, social constructionism represents a movement toward redefining psychological constructs such as the “mind,” “self,” “emotion” as social constructed processes that are not intrinsic to the individual but produced by social discourse

Gergen and Davis (1985) and McNamee and Gergen (1992) writing on social constructionism showed that there are several cardinal pillars related to social constructionism. Such pillars include that: there is emphasis on reflexivity, there is social construction of reality, sustaining of knowledge is through social processes, and realities are constituted by language. Society is seen as thriving both as objective and subjective reality. In addition, social constructionism pays more attention to power and meaning. Meanings are constructed and Cojocaru and Bragaru (2011) note that meaning is the result of enduring cultural structures of social, symbolic, discursive and

linguistic practices. Ageing populations mixing with other people in a social system, they form over time mental representations of the actions of others. These actions become important in how they eventually habituate into mutual functions that are acted out by the doers in connection with each other. Cojocaru (2010) argues that the functions are availed to different societal members to get into and spread out; the mutual actions that are regarded as institutionalized. With this procedure of commitment, meaning becomes entrenched in society. To Berger and Luckmann (1996, p.75), conceptions of reality and knowledge become entrenched in the organizational fabric of society. Social constructionism is interwoven with postmodernism as the lenses that apply a consciousness of the manner the world is experienced (Hoffman, 1991).

Owen (1995) states that social constructionism holds that human consciousness is a creation of cultural and societal instructions as well as the metaphysical quantities that are often taken for granted. This consciousness is acquired from surrounding people. The social constructionist perspective treats language as something that serves more purposes than just connecting people. People dwell in language and Gergen and Gergen (1991) argue that focus should be on social interactions through which language is created, maintained and discarded. According to Berger and Luckmann (cited in Speed, 1991) reality is socially constructed as people agree and share meaning via language in communications. Scholars such as Anderson and Goolishan (1988) agree that based on the social constructionist approach, no actual outside entities can be precisely captured. People involuntarily give up their loved positions of “knowing” and it is assumed that there exist facts which these people should “know”. These realities together with some opinions and suppositions are socially constructed and are of interceded discourse. Gergen (1985) notes that social constructionists are not of the view that they provide truths but argue that many times, the standards that are used to classify behaviors, entities and events are largely delineated by social contexts, culture, and history. This theory is thus useful for this study as noted by Anderson and Goolishman (cited in Hart, 1995) who state that the world we live in is of a conversational narrative and our understanding of ourselves and those around us is influenced by the changing self-descriptions and changing stories.

In summation, social constructionist inquiry presents a move away from traditional positivist psychological concepts that claim an objectively knowable world, (through observation, prediction and control) (Gergen, 1985, 2001) and focuses on explicating the processes by which

people come to describe and account for the world in which they live (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2009; Gergen, 1985, 2011). As such, the nature of this inquiry assumes that knowledge is constructed not discovered by the mind and reality is reflected in a contextualised way (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2009; Schwandt, 2003). If we are to give older adults “a voice” (Rappaport, 1995) to discuss their own experiences of ageing, it seems appropriate that a social constructionist approach be employed to inform this exploratory study especially considering that it encourages the challenging of assumptions about how meaning is formed (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2009; Gergen, 1985, 2011)

2.4 Summary of the Chapter

This Chapter examined the suppositions of social constructionists, intersectionality, and the theory of practice by Bourdieu in relation to ageing and livelihood research. Social constructionism interacts with ageing in ways that question essentialist views about ageing and instead states that all social phenomena are a product of human creation and sustenance through social actions. Interesting is the link that exists between the Theory of Practice by Bourdieu and Intersectionality. The next chapter is the literature review on the social construction of ageing and the challenges associated with ageing.

CHAPTER 3

SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIONS OF OLD AGE AND THE CHALLENGES ASSOCIATED WITH AGEING: A LITERATURE REVIEW

3.0 Introduction

Conventional wisdom illuminates that social phenomena is shaped by history. The question that comes into mind is on why human ageing looks like a static process. How do we perceive of and converse about ageing in the contemporary world? Just like all social processes, ageing is socially constructed. This chapter is an exposition of the literature related to ageing, gender, class and differences in experiences of ageing across the world. The aim of this literature review is to appreciate existing scholarships and debates around this subject so as to enrich the study in question. Studies by other scholars and institutions across the world, related to research questions and objectives of this study, are systematically investigated. This study examines ageing, gender and class, and differences in experiences and livelihood strategies of ageing populations in Harare, Zimbabwe. Perceptions of ageing from the viewpoints of different age groups and different regions such as Asia, Europe, and Africa are examined using key literature. The chapter also examines health, social, and economic challenges associated with old age in different settings. The concluding section of this chapter specifies the significant gap in the overall studies discussed, which certifies the need to undertake this research.

3.1 The Gender Dimension in the Context of Ageing

In Chapter One, I highlighted the global, regional, and local trends in as much as ageing populations are concerned. However, it is important to stress the gender dimension in the context of ageing because “gender” is one of the important variables in the study. Across the globe, it is claimed that women form the greater part of ageing population and facts show that men do not live longer than women (United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and Help Age International, 2012), UNDESA, 2013, WHO, 2007). This resonates with what Lyn Seagal in her book “Out of perils and pleasure of time” (2013, p.35) stresses that women outlive men in the developed world and in many developing nations as well, and women can live up to 10 years more than men. This gender difference is more vivid among those who are very old as evidenced that there are more women centenarians as men worldwide. Although men and women are at a ratio of 50:50 for those aged 64 and below, after the age of 64, there is a large transformation with more women

living longer than men (UNDESA, 2011). In 2010, for persons aged above 65, there was a 25% difference between women and men, with women being more than men, and this scenario is uniform elsewhere in the world (UNDESA, 2011). Notably, such statistics may be the opposite or differ from place to place. For example, evidence emerging from recent gender equality studies highlights that there is high mortality in developing countries in the African continent (World Bank, 2011). In Sub-Saharan Africa, the main cause of this could be elevated death rates which are worsened by poor access to healthcare due to poor health sector investments. Such shortcomings of the system lead more women to fail to get to the age of 65, an age that is usually easy to reach in a well-functioning country (World Bank, 2011).

According to HelpAge International (2002), ageing evolves into differing significance to men and women as they age. Henrard (1996) described this as a double standard of ageing. It has been established that psychologically, physically, socially, and emotionally men and women age differently. Nonetheless, gender and sociological discourses disregard the impact of life course gender discrimination against older women and men (Dhar, 2001). Greater focus has been on girl children's rights and younger 'productive' and 'reproductive' women's rights (HelpAge International, 2002). Evidence has shown that older men experience fewer disadvantages than older women. The likelihood of being widowed and having lesser access to property is greater for older women (Dhar, 2001). More so, lack of access to labour markets and services as well as nutrition and education exposes women with little resources and poor health as they get old. Due to this, Lewis and Butler (as cited in Gibson, 1996) stated that ageing in women can be a dubious privilege since they are disadvantaged socially, financially, and psychologically during younger ages leaving them poorly positioned to endure more years of living. In this sense, gendered disadvantages for the older people are as a result of gendered inequalities that accumulate in the life course of one. In a study done by Age Platform Europe (2019), on ageing in Europe, it was revealed that older women were experiencing the combined effect of ageing and sexism resulting in different inequalities in areas such as access to employment, healthcare, and adequate social security.

3.2 Traditional view on the meaning of ageing

To understand the present and future of ageing, we must first understand how ageing was viewed during the traditional era. By traditional, I am referring to the way ageing was viewed in the past

during the pre-colonial and colonial era. Traditional African societies typically hold beliefs that older people are the link between the present world and the world to come as they represent the creators and ancestors as well as safeguard the cultural traditions of their societies. Such beliefs were the reason for people taking care of them as well as according them greater status in life. Among Africans, old age is believed to be a blessing from ancestors that is given to people who lead righteous lives. Culturally, young able-bodied people are expected to take care of older people who are no longer able to take care of themselves if these young people endeavor to grow old. The extent of support and care that young people render to the aged determines the capacity of the aged to survive transformations in social activities, health, and income. In African societies, the young usually look after their elderly parents and relatives regardless of the feelings and perceptions of these elderly people. The failure to cater for one's old relative(s) carries the penalty of social sanctions. Commaroff (1985) stated that perceiving aged people in a negative manner was a separation from highly powerful source of ability in life. The Esan of Southern Nigeria were of the belief that their ancestral spirits always blessed and favoured those who cared for their old relatives and parents and those who neglected their aged parents were punished (Okojie, 1994). Evidently old age in traditional Esan society was believed to be a blessing, with those who cared for their old parents receiving the blessings.

Some studies have highlighted that the power and legitimacy to knowledge of the elderly is questioned in some societies although these elderly people are usually highly esteemed and believed to possess power and vast knowledge (Diop, 1989). Amosun and Reddy (1997) postulate that in most African societies, old age is regarded as an emblem of blessings and the aged are revered and highly esteemed. Apt (2000) highlights that old age in many African contexts is verbalized in various languages denoting an aged person as a big person. Illustratively, in Zimbabwe, the Shona people regard the aged as ancestral spirits as noted by Apt (2000). Societal inclusivity and seniority among the aged in African societies is stressed by Kenyatta in his landmark work; *Facing Mount Kenya* published in 1965. Kenyatta particularly stresses that men attain more prestige as they age based on the number of age grades passed. The seniority of older persons accords them an indispensable position in communities. Their presence is needed at all community functions, and they hold supreme authority in religious ceremonies. Traditions of people require that elders must be accorded their deserved esteem and honor (Kenyatta, 1965).

Beliefs regarding elderly persons as mediators between the current world and the world to come accorded the elderly prestigious positions through conferment of priest and witch doctor roles (Hooyman & Kiyat, 2002). Sagner (2001) discovered that the elderly people are taken to be the guardians of cultural customs and makers as well as representatives of ancestors among the peoples of Xhosa culture in Southern Africa. Ageing is conceived as a wisdom and experience-creation process that also leads to adulthood perfection. In Sagner's (2001) view, emphasis on seniority and age is strengthened by Xhosa religious perceptions. Sagner (2001) observed that as per Xhosa tradition, approaching ancestors concerning rituals was a preserve for genealogically senior elderly males of a particular line of descent although sometimes women could as well approach the ancestors. In this light, alienation from the older people means alienation from powerful and influential origins of competency in life (Commaroff, 1985). Removal of constraining limitations was done for middle aged women in a typically gender stereotyped Xhosa society. Brown (1992) observed that the power and status of aged and middle-aged women is similar to that of men.

Studies on how old age and the elderly are perceived are traditionally grounded on the supposition that pessimistic perceptions and attitudes are common in many societies (Butler, 1969) and several research studies have observed undesirable perceptions of old age and the aged (for example Allan & Johnson, 2009). For instance, the ancient civilizations in Greece and Rome left art and writings that provide a good portrait of their experience and perception of old age and aged persons (Thane, 2005; Minois, 1989). Then few people reached what would now be called old age, as 80 percent died before what would now be considered the middle age. The older citizens of ancient Greece and Rome were highly respected for their wisdom, and councils of elders helped rule Greek and Roman society.

However, during those times most people died before middle age and only few attained old age. Older Greek and Roman citizens were accorded great respect for the wisdom they possessed. The elder's councils advised Greek and Roman rulers. Notably, the fifteenth century ushered in an era where reverence of old people declined due to their being depicted as of declining physical and mental ability. Youth-hood was cherished as the prime time in life. Reflections on such Greek mythology reveal a negative portrayal of the aged in contrast to youthfulness of the gods. In one myth Ethos, the goddess of dawn, fell in love with a human named Tithonus. When

he became old and weak, she left him and turned him into a grasshopper! This change in the view of the aged was reversed about two centuries later, when old age in ancient Greece reacquired its respect and influence, and ancient Rome followed suit (Hooyman & Kiyak, 2011).

Young people constitute the largest proportion of people who possess such negative perceptions as noted by Woolf (2006) and Cottle & Glover (2007). In addition, Brown (1999) in a Ghanaian study highlighted that the bad conceptions about old age have come to be possessed by the old aged as well. In his study, the aged describe their view of old age as punctuated by many problems such as weakness and pain, misery, ill health, ostracism, misery, and several other challenges. They thus generally view old age in a negative light and construe it as marked by social exclusion, redundancy, and pain. This time is marked by declining sex drives, the setting in of andropauses, and natural control of fertility.

According to Hooyman and Kiyat (2002), although positive attitudes toward the young-old were widespread, non-supportive or death-threatening behaviour was shown toward those who survived beyond an “intact” stage of life in Roman and Greek cultures. They explain that the stage of old-old age was often-referred to in Roman and Greek cultures as “sleeping period”. It was not surprising that those who were no longer able to contribute to common welfare and look after themselves were seen as “useless”, “over-age” and “already dead” and were sometimes treated brutally. Those who outlived their usefulness were regarded as heavy burden in societies that existed close to the edge of subsistence, particularly those in harsh climate with little agriculture, or with no system of social stratification (Barker, 1997; Glascock, 1997). It was not unusual that in Sophocles’ tragedies, which existed during the middle of the fifth century, old age was depicted as distasteful, a time of decline in physical and mental functioning. Sophocles describes youth as the only period of life characterized by true happiness. That was why, in Euripides’ plays, older people were described as wise and weak.

Shakespeare in a play titled “*As You like It*” depicted old age as associated with declining importance in society and uselessness. This exposes that the aged were perceived as burdensome to communities troubled by aspects like young soldiers, high infant death rates, and food shortages. Illustrations of death acceleration practices in historic times are evident in literature where for instance, in certain rural areas of pre-modern Japan, carrying the aged into mountains and abandoning them there to die was practiced (Hooyman & Kiyat, 2002). Among Eskimos,

the aged would walk off into the snow when their tribes were burdened by diseases and famine. The Ojibwa Indians situated along Lake Winnipeg and the Siriono in the rainforest of Bolivia would sacrifice the oldest surviving family member regarded as burdensome. In other areas in Africa such as Cameroon, old age is associated with misfortune (Diop, 1989). Diop (1989) discovered that there was a practice of slaying old kings and installing younger ones in their place once they became perceived as too weak or old to rule in order to ensure that the kingdom continued to be under able ruler-ship. In other instances, the aged who were regarded as possessing occult powers that brought misfortune and sickness to their communities were also cast out (HelpAge International, 2000). Most commonly, the elderly endured witchcraft accusations and banishment from societies in developing countries (HelpAge International, 2002).

3.3 Older People's Self-Perspectives about Ageing

Individual-conception of ageing refers to individual assessments of one's ageing (Levy et al., 2002). The self-perception concept of ageing is increasingly becoming more and more topical in literature (Levy et al., 2012). This is so mainly because individual assessments of one's personal experience of ageing has far reaching connotations for the ageing people's health (Sun & Smith, 2012) as well as for the overall lives of that population, which include behavioural outcomes, along with well-being and identity (Sneed & Whitbourne, 2005), (Sarkisian et al., 2005). Studies about self-perception of ageing in Western societies revealed that older persons who have a positive view about ageing have better memory, walk faster, and have handwritings that are more controlled (Levy et al., 2002). These aged people often have lower cardiovascular reaction to stress and have a stronger will to survive (Moser et al., 2011). More so, evidence from numerous studies of the aged shows that people who exhibit positive self-perceptions related to ageing have limited probability to look for precautionary health services as stated by Kim et al., (2014), but are more probably going to need hospitalization and urgent care here and there (Sun et al., 2017). In contrast, those with negative self-perception of ageing often experience health challenges, poor memory performance, high levels of lack of trust and feeling useless (Uotinen et al., 2005), and symptoms of depression which are related to high mortality (Cheng et al., 2009, Blazer & Hybels, 2004).

Questions have been asked with regards to the source or determinants of an individual's self-perceptions of ageing (Sun et al., 2018). Levy's (2009) stereotype embodiment theory suggests that persons are exposed to perceptions about older people and age stereotypes across the lifetime and the internalization of these perceptions and stereotypes often shape their evaluations of their own aging experience. As people progress through their lives, they come across explicit and implicit messages about the ageing process (Levy, 2009). With the passage of time, the subject matter of such messages merges as either positive or negative stereotypes (Montross et al., 2006). As one reaches old age, these internalised stereotypes gain relevance to them, and aged adults can internalize qualities of a "characteristic aged person" into the self-concept of these adults, leading to objectification of such features in their daily lives and behaviours (Sun et al., 2018). However, other experimental studies have shown that both positive and negative age stereotypes can function on an unconscious level. When older adults are primed with age-stereotypic messages, they show some changes in hearing and handwriting (Levy et al., 2006) memory and locomotion (Levy, 1996). This suggests that they may be unconscious of the effects of age stereotypes on their behaviour in real-life situations (Levy, 2009). In African culture, national, cultural, and ethnical beliefs are said to have influence on the self-perception of ageing (Barak 2009; Kotter-Grühn & Hess 2012).

A review of literature revealed that older people's perceptions of ageing differ with society and culture as well as continent (Blazer & Hybels, 2004, Cheng et al., 2009). In an English Longitudinal Study of Ageing (ELSA) done in England amongst older people by Demakakos et al., (2007), in a group of ten, nine think a lot can be learnt from old people as they have experience with life and most of them regard themselves as aged. Out of ten, 8 of them think that old age pension is a period of rest and enjoyment and 7 of them were concerned about the status of their health and 6 of them were of the view that old people are not accorded respect in society (Demakakos et al., 2007). In a similar study, on the other side, out of every five people, only one agreed that the aged people are lonely and grouchy. Given this study, it seems that old people in England have a positive perspective of ageing. This is shared across most studies that have been done in Western societies (Levy et al., 2017, Sun & Smith, 2017). According to Levy et al. (2017), in Western societies such as Europe and US, older people view themselves as critical to the society as they act as sources of knowledge. They also view that, old age is not necessarily a

time of loneliness, retirement is a leisure period but they think older people are not fully respected in society compared to other age groups (Davis et al., 2011, Levy et al., 2017).

In the context of Asia and Africa, the views of aged people about old age are mixed and in Western societies, people hold similar views. In China, in a study done by Lai (2007) on a random sample of 1,504 ageing Chinese who are 55 years or older, most participants reported less positive self-perception of ageing. In most cases, they view ageing negatively stating that it comes with a lot of challenges such as physical frailties, negativity from the society, low self-esteem, poor health, and low incomes among others (Lai, 2007). The same perception also characterise the views of most African older people about ageing (Wurm & Benyamin, 2014). These views largely peddled by national, cultural, and ethnical beliefs are said to have influence on the self-perception of ageing in Africa (Barak 2009). In a study done in Zimbabwe, 48% of the elderly who were institutionalized were found to be unhappy due to poverty and supposed uselessness in the society (Hungwe, 2010). In Kenya, a study done by Gwadamirai, (2009) revealed that some older people run away from their rural communities to escape from witchcraft accusations and the punishments that emanate from such accusations; they go to live in cities where they are exposed to poverty and suffering.

Nonetheless, on the other side, some African older people also view ageing positively. They regard it as a source of hope for youngsters, as a blessing to societies, and as a critical human resource for the continuation of culture, customs, norms, and values (Nhongo, 2002). More so, in Africa, while there have been efforts to view older people as ‘role-less’, where they do not have anything meaningful to contribute to the society as suggested by Burgess (cited in Cole, 1983), older people view themselves as important figures in society. The majority of the aged in Africa South of the Sahara, people are burdened with many things. The scourge of diseases such as HIV/AIDS make it hard for the elderly as they have to bear the brunt of looking after large families particularly after their children die from the pandemic (Monasch & Clark, 2004). This responsibility is an increasing phenomenon in many nations affected by the HIV/AIDS scourge in the southern parts of the Sahara Desert in Africa (Mudege and Ezeh, 2009).). For example, 61% of double orphaned children and single orphans not living with surviving parents in countries such as Zimbabwe, Namibia and South Africa and over 50% in Malawi, Botswana and Tanzania are living with their grandparents (Monasch and Clark, 2004). According to Monasch

and Clark (2004), about 30% of all households in sub-Saharan Africa are headed by an older person. Due to these huge responsibilities, older people, especially older women who live longer than older men find themselves an important group in the society. Due to this, their perception about aging is positive (Mudege & Ezeh, 2009).

Few studies in literature, mostly from the Western and Asian societies, have also attempted to look at how aged people perceive ageing from the gender and class dimensions. A comparative study in US and Germany done by MacConatha et al. (2003) on ageing perceptions, indicated that, from the perspective of gender, women in the two nations were worried about the transformations in their bodies that were linked to age and men seemed not concerned about the age related changes in their bodies. The study also revealed that men are less negative to ageing than women (MacConatha et al., 2003). Probably this explains why women age more quickly than men (Davis et al., 2011). From the perspective of class, research done by Zhao et al. (2017), with reference to Chinese older people, shows that people with more resources or of a superior class have lower self-perceptions of negativity to ageing compared to people with fewer resources. In a similar study, older people with white collar jobs residing in a city with a well up family who are economically independent have lower negative perceptions to ageing than their compatriots who have meagre means of living who reside in rural areas (Zhao et al., 2017).

Studies across cultures in literature show that positive self-perception of age often leads to positive health impact and good behavioural outcomes (Sneed & Whitbourne, 2005). The effect of self-view of old age on behaviour, health, and life expectancy is recorded in literature (Wurm & Benyamin, 2014). A big study of 4240 Chinese people aged 55 years and above established that individuals who have affirmative views pertaining to old age usually display good mental health and behavioural results (Lai, 2009). A study done in Malaysia among the elderly in a non-governmental home for the elderly who were between 60 and 69 years of age highlighted those affirmative perceptions towards old age are linked to an improved quality of life for the aged (Rashid et al., 2012). An Australian study done among older people aged 65 to 103 showed that aged people with affirmative perceptions of ageing lived some 7.5 years more than those who had negative self-perceptions about growing old (Sargent-Cox, et al, 2014). According to Levy et al. (2002), good self-perceptions about ageing do not only have a direct and indirect connection with the quality of life but also influences its length. On the contrary, those older people with bad

self-view about ageing are more likely to die during old age (Levy et al., 2000). It is established that poor and deteriorating health and daily functioning result in several older persons having a negative view of ageing (Warmoth et al, 2016).

Ramakuela et al (2014) researching on perceptions of menopause and ageing in the Limpopo Province of South Africa discovered that aged women suffer from discrimination and stigmatization despite the fact that some of them receive trust and respect from younger women and men. Some rural communities still accord them trust, respect, and special attention as they are viewed as veterans. However, the study revealed that some people still referred to these women as *gegulu* literally translated as ‘that old woman’ in English. Some community members perceived them as mentally and physically unstable and they were often regarded as useless, sick, and old. There was also lack of trust and respect among old women who drank alcohol and were promiscuous. They were also stigmatized, discredited, and discriminated against when they fell ill.

3.4 Young People’s Perspectives and Attitudes about Ageing

It is imperative to look at how young people across different backgrounds around the world view ageing and older people (Mendonca et al., 2018). Conceptions of the perceptions of young adults and children on old people are important as they bear on how older people survive. For Levy (2009), the perceptions about the aged are internalized at an early age and endure throughout one’s life. Notably, these perceptions and attitudes differ with culture and nation as well as continent. In most Western societies, four major young people’s perspectives about older people prevail; (i) older people are largely depressed, are lonely as they do not have close friends or a family and hence suffer from disorders related to moods; (ii) The aged make up a uniform group that is one directional and multidimensional; (iii) the aged people depend on others and are sick and frail; (iv) the aged people have psychological and cognitive limitations (Whitbourne & Sneed, 2002, Swift et al., 2016). These perceptions are largely negative and stereotypical.

A number of studies that have been done have revealed that being exposed to bad views and stereotypes about elderly people as ‘forgetful, ill and nearing death’ have adverse impacts on lives of the elderly in aspects that include the will-to-live, memory performance and stress levels (Levy, 2003, Marques et al. 2014, Mendonça et al. 2016). According to Swift et al. (2016), these undesirable perspectives are expressed at both institutional and individual levels. For example,

there is evidence on ill-treatment of the aged people in organisational settings, the media, as well as the healthcare fraternity among others (Marques 2011; Mendonça et al., 2016). More so, according to the research studies that have been done across United Kingdom (UK), US and across Europe, it was found that, the society and young adults are likely to perceive aged people as weak, dependent, and people who have low social status (Gatz & Pearson, 1988). For example, a study done by Seefeldt et al., (1977) highlights that many US young adults view aged people as passive people who are helpless and in need of care. Similar research affirmed the findings by demonstrating that young adults pointed out that they preferred not getting old (Burke, 1981).

Other findings show that people who are 70 years and above are viewed as burdensome since they make little economical contributions, are consumers of resources through pensions and social security, and are being ‘burdens to health services’ (Higgins et al, 2007). Given these views, according to Mandonca et al., (2018), understanding how depictions and perceptions of the aged crystallize during young ages due to societal beliefs is critical for enhanced conceptions and interventions in this regard. These negative views about older people have some adverse impact on them. According to Swift el al. (2016), there is evidence that age stereotypes, whether one’s own perceptions to ageing or through perception from others can have an adverse effect on the ageing processes by influencing health and wellbeing. However, it is important to note that perceptions of ageing in Western societies are not all bad. According to Carers UK (2016), there are also some positive and constructive perceptions in the UK and across European citizens as they are often associated with wisdom, experience, and morals compared to young adults. More so, studies done for Age UK in 2006 revealed that the society has a clear perception of the actual capabilities of aged and young people, with quite a number according favour to people who are older. A case in point is the comparison of an ideal young person aged 25 years and an ideal 75 year old. The 75 year old has better chances of being regarded as an efficient dispute settler, courteous, accommodative and eating healthy food than a 25 year old. (NHS Information Centre for Health and Social Care, 2010).

Lyn Segal (2013) argues that ageing and age can seem complex and elusive if viewed from individual conceptions but in societies they are time and again organized in line with battles of generations. In the USA, in 2010, generational conflict was made popular through the airing of a

reality TV show called Battle of Ages. In UK, that same year, there was scapegoating of older generations, and they were mockingly labelled “The Baby Boomers” as they were held responsible for all the woes of young people. The indictment was promulgated at government levels, with the high profile Tory MP David Willets publishing his emotive polemic with the title “ The Pinch: How the Baby Boomers took their children’s future-and why they should give it back” (Lyn Seagal, 2013)

The perceptions about older people found in the Western societies kind of differ compared to perceptions found in Asia, Middle Eastern societies, and Africa. In the Middle Eastern society and Asian countries such as Japan and China, the ageism or discrimination on the basis of old age is often less pronounced. For instance, in a study done by Musaiger and D’Souza (2007) with reference to Kuwait, older people still maintain an important status within the typically Kuwait family and are treated with respect and dignity in their social, economic and health affairs. Similarly on the African continent, older people are perceived to be holding special positions within the society (HelpAge International, 2002). To the majority of young people in Africa, older people direct and lead their families and societies, they lead rituals and ceremonies, and they ensure cultural practices’ survival, existence and continuity (Nhongo, 2004). More so, older people are involved in the socialisation of society and ensure the attainment and passing on of society’s knowledge, values, and norms from their generation to the other (Nhongo, 1998, Nyanguru, 2000).

Nonetheless, since recent years, in some African settings, just like in the other Western societies, young people’s views on older people are increasingly changing. Some Africans now hold some negative perception of older people (Nhongo, 1998, Nyanguru, 2000). On the negative side, from an economic perspective, older people are viewed as burdens on society who have nothing to contribute, they need less income to live and they do not need to save for the future (UN Economic Commission for Africa, 2007). From a social standpoint, older women are viewed as witches and that older men deserve better social status compared to their older women counterparts (Okoye & Obikeze, 2005). From a health viewpoint, older people are viewed as frail and that there is no need for long-term healthcare and government programmes on health for older people (UN Economic Commission for Africa, 2007).

3.5 Challenges Associated with Old Age

Older people across the world face several challenges related to their ages and other issues such as society and economy. In most developing countries, a large number of older citizens are finding it difficult to survive independent lives due to different reasons which include lack of access to social security, unaffordable healthcare facilities, inadequate infrastructure both in their homes and in public, and lack of psychological support among other things (Mahishale, 2015).

3.5.1 Health Deterioration and Poor Access to Healthcare

Aged people face several health problems compared to those that are younger (WHO, 2007). Common health problems associated with old age include among others; hearing loss, visual impairment, dizziness, back and neck pains, chronic inflammation, osteoarthritis, diabetes, cancer, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, depression, osteoporosis, and dementia (Middleton et al., 2015). With old age, there is a likelihood of experiencing more than one of these conditions at the same time. These health conditions normally require instant and constant attention as they can be harmful if left unchecked (Middleton et al., 2015). While these diseases are universal, studies have shown that they are more prevalent and have their impact felt more in developing countries. In developing countries, such as the majority of African countries, age-related fragility and disability that is either cognitive or functional are increasing worries for the elderly people (Kisoli et al., 2015). For instance, results in Tanzania and South Africa shed light on how most aged people fall prey to different types of health challenges (Wandera et al., 2014). Dementia and depression are also common among older populations in Africa. Depression among older people in Africa has often been associated with absence of good family and societal relations (Kisoli et al., 2015). For instance, studies in Nigeria showed that the severity of depression among older people is related with unavailability of social and family support. The family and the society have strong influence on older people's lives in the African setup (Baiyewu, 2009).

Health challenges in Africa are often worsened by the absence and inaccessibility of good quality healthcare facilities. A review on countries that provide healthcare security to older populations such as South Africa and Ghana shows that free access to healthcare programs has a positive impact on the lives and health of the aged (Baiyewu, 2009). South Africa, for example, has a large group of aged people who have comprehensive access to medical cover and this

substantially helps them solve the problems faced by older people in accessing healthcare (Bohman, 2014). There is a correlation between provision of good quality healthcare and longevity (Bohman, 2014). Nonetheless, studies have also shown that in the greater part of Sub-Saharan African countries, elderly people are excluded from access to good quality healthcare, and this has devastating effects on their health (Kisoli et al., 2015). Of the efforts that have been done by some governments to enrol older people into free health provision, very few have yet reached the goal of covering all elderly people. Countries still struggle to implement social health schemes for older people.

A study in Western Cape Province, South Africa by Kelly et al. (2019) highlighted the dissatisfaction of aged people concerning the health care standard availed to them as they are of the view that their requirements as elderly people are not met. Results highlight the marked differences relating to incomes relating to quality and access of care and quality of care.

In the African setup, negative attitude towards ageing, otherwise known as ageism, has worsened the health of several older people. Some family members may neglect older people and leave them to suffer from different types of sicknesses due to negative perception of the elderly (Essuman, 2018). Ageism is common among older women. For example, it is common in some African societies to blame elderly people for family bad luck and some are believed to be practising witchcraft. This perception is strengthened by cultural, superstitions and religious beliefs found in most African societies ((Essuman, 2018). Some youngsters are of the view that the elderly who have mental disabilities and dementia are possessed by evil spirits.

According to Muruviwa et al (2013), a major limiting factor for livelihoods construction among the elderly in Mubaira, Zimbabwe is in the form of their declining physical capacities. The study findings further illustrate that the elderly in Mubaira, Zimbabwe, are vulnerable to illnesses and diseases as a result of deteriorating health care in Zimbabwe. The economic restructuring implemented by the government of Zimbabwe in the 1990's led to the removal of primary health care subsidies leading to increasing health fees. It was found in this study that health care is expensive for the elderly in Mubaira who lack income to cover themselves. The most common health problems of the elderly include frailty, arthritis and declining eyesight. Such sicknesses prevent them from performing activities to earn a living as they are usually bed ridden. Rose and Bird (2008) found that the elderly in Zenzele village, Matabeleland are very frail and suffer from

painful and swollen legs. Asiazobor (2013) in his study of the elderly female headed-households in rural Nigeria found that the elderly face challenges of constant illness and poor access to basic health-care.

3.5.2 Socio-economic Challenges

Older people encounter a number of socioeconomic challenges in their lives. These challenges found in literature can be put into different spheres such as poverty, education, and housing, access to food, HIV / AIDS, employment and income, among other things (HelpAge International, 2012). There is ample evidence that shows that older ages in both developed and developing countries are usually associated with poverty though it is prevalent in the latter (Mapoma, 2013). In most countries, both developed and developing, poverty levels for older people are higher than that for other populations (Mapoma, 2013). In a study done among 15 countries in the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, it was found that older people from the age of 65 going up have greater chances of falling into poverty than the rest (OECD, 2019). In such nations as Italy, Germany, France, Finland, and Denmark, the average poverty rate among old aged people is around 22% compared to 14% of the total population (OECD, 2019). In G20 countries such as China, Canada Brazil, India and Germany, poverty rates among old aged people range from 8% to around 40%. Poverty rate among older people in India is 23% and 39% in China, which is too higher compared to the wider population (OECD, 2019).

In Africa, South of the Sahara, where HIV/AIDS is prevalent and where older people have to take care of the children left by this pandemic's victims, poverty among older people is much higher (Kakwani & Subbarao, 2007). Asiazobor (2013) in his study of elderly women head of households in rural Nigeria cited this challenge and argues that this is caused by out-migration of off-springs and the death of their children who live their children behind. A study by Mots'oene (2014) of the elderly survival strategies in an increasing urbanizing city of Maseru, Lesotho in the period 2009 to 2012, found that the burden of caring for orphans particularly among households headed by females exposes them to more poverty. Research done on households headed by elderly females in rural Nigeria by Asiazobor (2013), notes that children's absence due to HIV and AIDS exposed elderly women to lack of physical, financial and emotional support. A study by Muruviwa et al. (2013) found that the scourge of HIV and AIDS resulted in

poor livelihoods for rural women of Mubaira in Zimbabwe. The burden of caring for grandchildren left behind fell on the grandparents. Muruviwa et al. (2013) observes that loss of livelihoods owing to the succumbing of parents due to the scourge of HIV and AIDS is rampant among the aged in Mubaira.

Poverty in Sub-Saharan Africa among the aged includes little or no income, less income, poor access to food and a place to live, healthcare and education for grandchildren, (HelpAge International, 2012). In Sub-Saharan Africa, poverty among older people is worse. There are poor economies, poor social protection support systems and climate change-induced hunger, among others. Studies done by Kakwani and Subbarao (2007), HelpAge International (2012), and Mapoma (2013) reveal that poverty among older people affects older females than it does older males. This has been attributed to gender inequalities that are inherent and deeply embedded into the society starting from young age (HelpAge International, 2012).

Aged people living in first and third world countries come across several housing challenges ranging from social accessibility, affordability, and physical accessibility. In African countries, housing challenges for older populations are high and prevalent. According to UNDESA (2011), in the case of urban areas, affordable houses for the older people are often very small and lack basic facilities such as water, electricity, toilets, and roads. More so, Bloom et al. (2011), assert that in many countries, older persons encounter several challenges such, poor income, absence of physical care, poor health, and insecurity. Generally, the rate of unemployment in African countries, south of the Sahara, stands at 7.6% which puts elderly people's lives at stake. Older people also consist of the highest employment susceptibility in all developing regions, with high informal employment and lack of social protection (San Bilal, 2014) and making their socio-economic lives more difficult.

3.5.3 Sexual Dysfunction

More literature on sexual dysfunction among the aged is emerging and it encompasses a couple of study reviews on the sexuality of older people. A current comprehensive study by Traen and others (Træn, Carvalheira, et al., 2017; Træn, Hald, et al., 2017), focused on multiple points of discussion which included bodily image conceptions, sexual difficulties and functioning, among the elderly. Other studies dwelled on sexuality in elderly care homes (Mahieu & Gastmans, 2012, 2014), how to prevent HIV and AIDS (Milaszewski, Greto, Klochkov, & Fuller-Thomson,

2012), sexual challenges faced by people of other sexes, and the absence of health services for such people (McParland & Camic, 2016) as well as old age sexual healthcare (Foley, 2015). Some of these reviews were qualitative in nature but they failed to provide summations or assessments of the standard of these studies. Gott and Hinchliff (2003) utilized face to face interviews and questionnaires for small samples of 44 elderly people between the ages of 50 and 92 in the United Kingdom to explore the importance of sex to the elderly. Fascinating findings were discovered as the qualitative interviews showed diverse experiences among the elderly. The experiences included that of a 73-year-old woman who relied on sex aid after the death of her husband and another who after the death of her husband also experienced the death of her sexual desire. Generally, younger participants had more interest in sex than older participants aged 70 years. In Zimbabwe, a study by Gutsa (2011) on older people in Dzivarasekwa district of Harare revealed that sexual exploits among old people were diminishing with age and male participants illuminated that they would use *vhuka vhuka* to counter sexual dysfunction.

3.6 Impact of Covid-19 on ageing populations

3.6.1 Social isolation

A study by Pant and Subedi (2020) in Nepal elucidated on the impact of Covid-19 and cited social isolation as one of the challenges facing ageing populations. Social isolation is a state in which the individual lacks a sense of belonging socially, lacks engagement with others, has a minimal number of social contacts and they are deficient in fulfilling and quality relationships. Social isolation among the elderly is a serious public health concern. Measures taken, to control the spread of COVID-19 like physical distancing, movement restriction and home quarantine for the suspects, all contributed to the increase in social isolation for all ages, especially for the elderly. Moreover, governments advised old people to stay at home and avoid contact with other people as much as possible, in order to prevent getting infected themselves (Pant and Subedi, 2020). As a result, they were unable to meet their family and friends. This did not only emotionally deprive the elderly, but also caused significant impact on their daily lives. Some older people were incapable of supporting themselves in isolation and were dependent on family for doing their daily chores. Similarly all over the world, long-term care facilities banned or limited visits by family and friends, as a strategy to minimize the risk of spreading the virus. This has again deprived elderly from having a sense of belonging and has caused emotional distress and feeling of loneliness. To Pant and Subedi (2020), the feeling of social isolation can cause

problems with physical, mental and cognitive health of individuals. It can lead to symptoms of depression, decreased quality of sleep, cognitive decline, decreased functioning of the cardiovascular system and impaired immunity at every stage of life.

Similarly, another study by Grolli et.al (2021), isolated older people may have or worsen mental health conditions due to isolation and health concerns. In this scenario, a SARS-CoV-2 infection may progress to more severe disease. Conversely, COVID-19 can predispose or aggravate psychiatric disorders, as it induces a cytokine storm, causing systemic hyper inflammation. Another study by Lekamwasam and Lekamwasam (2020) resonates with Pant and Subedi (2020) and noted that although social distancing could save the lives of older people, it also adds to their loneliness. Social constraints subsequent to social distancing and isolation lead to significant limitations of daily activities, inaccessibility to health workers on whom the older people are reliant, financial constraints, and difficulty in adjusting to new social barriers created in activities such as online shopping. Older adults who engage in frequent social interactions such as social groups, societies, and frequent visits to relatives have far lower morbidity rates than individuals in isolation. The ability to engage in these social activities is severely reduced during social distancing.

3.6.2 Financial Hardships

The compulsory measures taken to protect people against COVID-19 pandemic has severely impacted economic activity globally and in 2020 it was projected that the economy will contract to a level worse than the 2008–09 financial crisis (National Council on Ageing, 2020). As a result of this, many people have lost their jobs, some face losses in business and share investments, and others have had difficulty in receiving pensions. For those who do not get a pension, the problem is even worse. With the extended lockdown, they have spent most of their savings on daily necessities such as groceries and medicines. In lack of a steady source of income and insufficiency of savings, many face financial crises.

A study by National Council on Aging (2020) estimated that the economic crisis created by the COVID-19 pandemic will lead between 1.4 and 2.1 million elderly in America into poverty, and among them, those with the least wealth will be worst hit. In India, elderly constitute about 9 percent of the population and 50 percent of them are very poor. This current pandemic is likely to push them into financial crisis. In Nepal, 18.7 percent of the total population is already living

below the poverty line. Rapid assessments of socio economic impact of covid-19 in Nepal by UN (2020) showed that elderly people were among the vulnerable group that would be disproportionately affected by the pandemic.

3.7 Summary of the Chapter

This chapter has outlined a review of literature related to the experiences of older persons. The chapter referred to related previous research which focused on elderly people and their experiences of ageing. Some of the critical areas presented in the chapter include the global trends of ageing people, the gender and class dimension of ageing, perspectives of ageing from both older people and youth, and challenges faced by older people across the world. In this review, it was shown that across the world, the number of ageing people is increasing at an unprecedented rate. It was also revealed that gender and class issues that are evident in the society when growing up worsen as people grow. In terms of perceptions, the views of older people about ageing are mixed. Some view ageing with a positive eye while some view it negatively. These views are occasioned by different issues which include embedded stereotypes within the society, childhood experiences, as well as cultural beliefs. Moreover the views of young people about elderly people are mixed. Some perceive ageing positively while some perceive it negatively. The chapter shows that older populations face several challenges which range from health to socio-economic. The review of literature on ageing shows that the discussion lacks important aspects of the ageing experiences. The crucial question that still needs answers is the gendered and class dimension of ageing populations. This gap in current literature warrants further studies and highlights the need for further inquiry providing descriptions and explorations of the ageing concept. In this light, this research attempts to close the gap by exploring lived gendered and class moderated ageing experiences of the elderly.

CHAPTER 4

LIVELIHOOD STRATEGIES AND SOCIAL PROTECTION SYSTEMS FOR AGEING POPULATIONS

Introduction

The previous chapter is an exposition of literature on how ageing is socially constructed and the challenges of ageing in different societies and contexts. This present chapter presents literature on livelihood strategies and social protection systems meant for ageing populations. There are two main sections in to the chapter. The first section conceptualizes what social protection is and illuminates various social protection systems that are meant for ageing populations from a global point of view and specifically in Zimbabwe. The particular focus from the global point of view is on the following policies meant for ageing populations: Public Social Security Pensions/ Social Assistance, National Social Insurance, Healthcare security and Institutional Care. Specifically for Zimbabwe, the following policies meant for ageing populations are discussed: Public Assistance Scheme and Social Insurance. The second section deals with the livelihood strategies employed by old people for survival and the following strategies are discussed in detail: informal savings, begging, agriculture, vending and small scale trading.

4.0 Social Protection for Older People

The concept of social protection is an old phenomenon. However, there is no a widely agreed upon definition of the concept. In the African Union's Agenda 2063 framework (2010), "The Africa We Want," social protection is acknowledged as both a social and an economic requirement, necessary in promoting comprehensive, people-driven and sustainable economic development, reducing inequality, eradicating poverty and creating resilience to any forthcoming shocks. African Union Commission (2010), defines social protection as a range of public actions or measures that give support to all citizens in need and assists individuals, households, and communities to better manage any risks. According to Norton et al (2001), social protection is the community actions taken to respond to levels of susceptibility, risk and deprivation considered socially deplorable in a given community. Responding to the challenges faced by older people, different kinds of social protection initiatives have been implemented by governments (Bloom, 2011). These include among others; social insurance schemes, public social security pensions, health insurance schemes, tax breaks, transport subsidies or free fares

and, direct cash payments (Bloom, 2011). In the African context, most governments have adopted these social protection schemes to support older people. Nonetheless, according to Bloom and McKinnon (2013), the majority of these social security schemes lack comprehensiveness regarding capability to provide benefits and lack of adequate funding sources to sustain the provision of benefits continuously. This failure, according to UNDESA (2016), has implications on the successful attainment of Sustainable Development Goal of eradicating poverty in Africa to all by 2030.

4.1 Public Social Security Pensions/ Social Assistance

In the contemporary world, public social security pensions (non-contributory), also known as social assistance, to older populations are significant organizational ways to ensure security of income in older ages (International Labour Organization, 2014). There are many reasons why public social security pensions are necessary. According to ILO, Policy Brief (2014), public social security pensions are important methods which ensure that elderly women and men who are 65 years and older have income in their lives. This income, for ILO (2014), along with access to healthcare, is required for the dignity as well as the welfare of older people. For UN Human Rights Council (2018), pensions are a strategic component of a minimum social security package that supports fundamental rights for older people. In addition, public social security pensions have proved to be an important way to reduce poverty among vulnerable older persons (HelpAge International, 2006). According to UN World Population Division (2019), by the year 2050, people who are aged 65 and above are predicted to reach an estimated 1.2 billion worldwide, and above two-thirds of these stay in third and low income countries. Under such circumstances, institutionalising public social security pension provision is integral for social security and poverty reduction strategy among the aged (ILO, 2014).

Evidence reflects that most countries are in need of public social security pensions because of the ballooning figures of vulnerable elderly (HelpAge International, 2016). Among OECD countries such as France, Finland, and Denmark, non-contributory public social security pensions constitute the largest income sources for above 50% of the vulnerable older people (ILO, 2014). In third world nations such as most of those that are in South Asia and the Sub-Saharan parts of Africa, less than 20% of the older population receive contributory population, and institutional non-contributory public social security pensions become necessary for the 80% of older people

who, most of them are vulnerable (ILO, 2018). Most of the elderly men and women in the aforementioned developing nations are employed in informal sectors during their active years and thus are left out from contributory pension schemes also known as social insurance (ILO, 2018). In Africa, several countries provide tax or donor-financed public social security pensions to older people. On a positive note, Africa possesses a wealthy tradition of providing social security to older people with Old Age Grant of 1927 in South Africa being the oldest (Pelham 2007), followed by Namibia (1942), Mauritius (1950), Seychelles (1979), Zimbabwe (1980), Botswana (1996) (Stewart and Yermo, (2009), Lesotho (2004) and Swaziland (2005), Tanzania (2016) Kenya (2018) and Uganda recently (HelpAge International, 2017, ILO, 2018, Help Age International, 2019). Unlike in most African countries, the South African social security pension programme is regarded as quite a successful and a comprehensive social security pension programme (Barrientos 2004; van der Berg et al., 2011). Most of these counties implement what has come to be known as universal social security system.

According to HelpAge International (2019), evidence has shown that social security pensions or social security can have positive effects in reducing poverty and removing barriers to healthcare for older people. There is strong evidence that suggest that there is evidence between social security pensions and living a good life among older populations. From research done by Case (2001), in South Africa it was established that older populations that receive this type of social security has significantly resulted in better health status and better living conditions for older people. Case and Wilson (2000) postulate that the status of South African women's health improved dramatically when they attained the age that makes them eligible for social pensions. However, it has been established that in most African countries, governments such as Zimbabwe (Dhemba, 2013) have failed to honour their policies of providing social assistance to older people, thereby leaving them more and more vulnerable and poverty-stricken (HelpAge International, 2017). Statistics by ILO (2015) show that only 16.9% of elderly people benefit from social security of this nature in Sub-Saharan Africa combined. Compared to other countries such as OECD countries, evidence has indicated that African governments take the aspect of social security pensions for granted and this has been a consequence of bad budgets, bad institutions as well as lack of political will coupled with poor policies (Kaseke & Olivier, 2010, Oundo & Ouma, 2018).

4.2 National Social Insurance

Countries across the world have also implemented the aspect of national social insurance as means to address age-related income and social challenges (ILO, 2017). According to World Bank (2008), national security insurance is a contributory type of social security where active employees are mandated to contribute national security arrangement and benefit after they retire. National social insurance is meant to give earnings-related packages and benefits after someone retires (World Bank, 2008). In Sub-Saharan Africa, countries that provide this type of social security to older people include Seychelles, Angola, Mozambique, Democratic Republic of Congo, Madagascar, Mauritius, Namibia, Mauritius, and Zimbabwe among many others (OECD, 2011). In the case of Zimbabwe, this national social insurance was introduced and is managed by the National Social Security Authority. Due to its contributory nature, this type of scheme only covers employees in the formal sector (Dhemba, 2013). Nonetheless, this type of insurance has often been criticised because it does not cater for everyone as it caters for those in the formal sector who would have contributed during their active days. For example, in case of Zimbabwe as noted by Dhemba (2012), some older people will not be covered by this scheme due to high unemployment rate in the country that is estimated to be at more than 70% (ZimStats, 2015). As a result, the majority of older populations are left to bear the economic burdens that come with growing older.

Across literature, it is found that the idea of national social insurance, especially in developing countries in Africa benefit older men more than older women (World Bank, 2008). In developing countries, it is men who are often formally employed while women are either in the informal sector or function as home workers. According to Floro and Meurs (2009), in developing countries women have lesser chances of getting formally employed and they are more concentrated in the informal employment (ILO, 2013). Consequently, most of the women are excluded from this type of social security.

4.3 Healthcare Security

Since older ages are usually related to sicknesses such as hypertension, diabetes and visual impairment, including healthcare provision cannot be overemphasized. The idea of healthcare provision to older ages is becoming more and more important across the world (Aboderin, 2010). In a 2015 WHO initial publication on health and ageing, there was emphasis on the need for

healthcare security for older ages across the world (WHO, 2015). In 2016, World Health Assembly adopted a worldwide approach and action plan for health and ageing that gives a comprehensive aim for action on ensuring healthcare provision to older ages (WHO, 2016). More so, countries took up the Agenda for Sustainable Development via the United Nations that guaranteed that there was no one to be excluded from issues of social inclusion (UN, 2015). These initiatives emphasize the need for major reforms to healthcare systems for older people. A review of policies in Sub-Saharan Africa reveals mixed results in terms of seriousness of governments in Sub-Saharan Africa in dealing with healthcare issues to older ages (Aboderin, 2010).

After a study on African governments' commitment on promoting healthcare for older ages, Nabalamba and Chikoko (2011) concluded that policies and initiatives to promote access to healthcare for elderly people who are based in countries that are located south of the Sahara are discouraging. Most Sub-Saharan African nations lag behind when it comes to covering older people on health insurance (Nabalamba and Chikoko, 2011). For instance, Nigeria, a country with the biggest population of the Sub-Saharan aged people, does not possess a policy dedicated to providing free healthcare to older people (Mohammed et al., 2013). Only countries such as Senegal, South Africa, and Ghana have introduced free healthcare services and exempted the elderly persons from making health insurance contributions (Nabalamba & Chikoko, 2011). Universal provision of healthcare to older populations goes a long way in assisting older people to meet their healthcare needs.

In the case of Zimbabwe, according to Kaseke (2013), there is almost total lack of healthcare provision to older people. Elderly people are often left to bear the burden of accessing quality healthcare for themselves. Although there is a free healthcare for older people, accessing these at clinics and hospitals is cumbersome since free medicines are always in short supply and medical personnel for the elderly are also in short supply (Dhemba, 2013).

4.4 Institutional Care

Institutional care as means to enhance the lives of older people is being implemented across the world. De-Graft Aikins and Apt (2016) postulate that the term institutional home refers to a place where elderly people who may need nursing care to cope with ageing challenges are kept. Most western countries have now resorted to the use of institutional care to address the challenges of

older people. Although this arrangement seems a Western phenomenon, most African countries have since adopted and implemented this arrangement (WHO, 2017). The idea of relying on family care has not only been found to be inconsistent with providing good quality care to older people, but it has also burdened family members, hence, the adoption of institutional care (Apt, 2012). Given the rapid increase of number of older people in Africa, institutional care has become important (WHO, 2017). In Africa, the increase in the requirement for institutional support for older people is becoming more and more imperative due to a number of reasons such as inability to self-care themselves, loneliness as a result of family relations loss, urbanisation, globalisation, and migration (Apt, 2012). Recently, the number of abused, neglected, and abandoned older people has been on the rise. In the case of Zimbabwe, Dhemba (2013) notes that there are more than 100 old people's homes across the country, which is indicative not only of high levels among older people, but also the disintegration of supported systems that are family based (Apt, 2012). While, the idea of institutional care has its weaknesses in the case of Africa, it seems an imperative and effective social support system for older populations.

There are notable examples of ethnographic work on ageing and mobility in regions of the world such as India. A study by Lamb (2016) about ageing in India and the growing presence of old people's homes brings to light how such homes are regarded as "travelling institutions" reflecting ideas and imaginaries of ageing across borders. According to Lamb (2016, p.178), such "institutions are widely interpreted as signs of pervading processes of Westernization, globalization, or modernity contrasting historically traditionally family-centered care practices, they are in fact unique local institutions creatively forged and interpreted, critiqued and expanded, opposed and embraced by local actors". Another ethnographic study on ageing and the Indian diaspora by Lamb in 2009 demonstrates how "elder care" is being reconfigured in transnational families and how ageing populations are embracing and critiquing such profound changes in their lives (Lamb, 2009). Meyer (2017) similarly studied ageing in India, in a context of urbanization and globalization. She argues that the elderly people craft new means of securing a living in urban areas and they contribute to processes that lead to change. Meyer (2011, p.11) talks about "elderscapes", which are cultural sites and places which emerge by and for the aged people and encompass market spaces, residential spaces and leisure spaces.

4.5 Social protection systems meant for ageing populations in Zimbabwe

4.5.1 Assistance for the Public

In Zimbabwe, Public Assistance Schemes furnish people with maintenance allowances that are non-contributory for the poor, including ageing populations. However, the main challenge with such a scheme is the fact that it is run based on the residual approach which supposes that the needs of an individual are mandated to be secured by the market system and state assistance only comes in when such systems crumble. There is thus a means-testing that is done to ascertain whether one is eligible for receiving public assistance and, as usual, there is denial of public assistance to the elderly based on the erroneous assumption that extended family systems are still functional in Africa. The reality is however that those extended family support systems have been paralyzed by the destabilizing urbanization, industrialization and modernization, together with recent globalization (Mupedziswa, 1995, Dhembra 1990, 2013).

Furthermore, the \$20 per month public allowance for elderly people falls short of the United Nations “official” US\$1.25 per day poverty datum line. The other challenge with this scheme is that transport costs are a deterrent for potential beneficiaries since social welfare offices are usually located far away from where the elderly reside. This is exacerbated by the fact that there is erratic disbursement of benefits due to underfunding of the Department of Social Services. Evidently, lack of information regarding the presence of the public assistance scheme is also a reason many public assistance potential beneficiaries are failing to apply (Kaseke et al., 1998).

4.5.2 Social Insurance

A compulsory Pensions scheme which facilitates the provision of an income in old age is run by the National Social Security Authority in Zimbabwe. This Pensions programme was initially put in place in 1994 and it only provides for employees that are formally employed due the structure of how people make contributions. In addition, pension payouts are only pegged at 40 United States Dollars per month for a greater portion of the pensioners; hence it is referred to as peanuts by labour Unions. Consequently, a large proportion of the elderly are not covered by the scheme due to high unemployment rates coupled with widespread informality. The rate of unemployment sits at 95% (Dhemba, 2012, ZimStats, 2012).

4.5.3 Other forms of SP for older people

Apart from the aforementioned social protection initiatives, countries across the world have created and implemented different social security forms which can make a difference on the lives

of older populations. One of those initiatives is the introduction of free fares or transport subsidies for older people (Bloom et al., 2011). This means that in public transport, older populations may have exemptions from paying fares. Access to free transport is considered as a major element to realizing a good standard of living in old age. More so, in some countries, older people can be exempted from paying some taxes. In addition, the notion of cash transfers to older populations has been introduced in several countries to alleviate older people from poverty (Bloom et al., 2011).

4.6 Self-Invented strategies of ageing people for survival

Due to the limitations and weaknesses associated with government-led social protection initiatives, older people in developing countries have either resorted to conventional measures for support of elderly people or devised a way for them to survive (Kaseke, 2003). For several years, older people have relied on traditional measures for their care and support ranging from social, psychological, to economic support (Dorfman, 2015). According to Oundo and Ouma (2018), until recent past, the family has been an integral pillar for elderly people's incomes in most African societies. For Kaseke and Oliver (2010), schemes in Africa largely rely on family support and links. Among African systems, an extended family could take it within its responsibility to accommodate an elderly person who needed support. Over the years, the practice of family support has been at the core of supporting older persons (Kaseke and Oliver 2010). Apart from the family, community, tribal, and kin support has been another crucial reservoir of support for African elderly people (World Bank, 1994). The family and community at large may be responsible for providing basic commodities such as food, shelter, and housing to the elderly. Nonetheless, it is important to note that due to increased modernisation and globalisation, there have been changes in this system and this has resulted in reduced support to elderly people from family and community (Cohen 2006, Kaseke, 2013). These changes have left older people vulnerable to poverty than ever before. As a result, some elderly people have come up with their own survival strategies (Cohen 2006, Messkoub, 2009).

In some parts of Africa, communal savings and levies, as well as mutual funds have been adopted as means of social protection for older people (Dorfman, 2015). In their active days, young people contribute funds at communal level and these funds may increase in value through the system of giving credits and adding interests (Cohen 2006). These ways can be effective if

they are organised and structured well. In some parts of West Africa, traditional savings mechanisms such as *osusu* in Sierra Leone and *susu* in Ghana savings schemes have proved to be some of the effective ways that provide income which can be used during times of need and illness at old age (World Bank, 2010). Nonetheless, these methods have proved to be weaker as they only focus on specific products and services rather than broad coverage schemes that can be helpful when someone becomes older. They only provide little social protection to older people and are not long-lasting (Dorfman, 2015).

Informal savings and loans are also cited by HelpAge International's (2011) study of elderly people in three Ethiopian cities. The elderly in these societies had only two types of loans and savings. There was a collective savings society for funerals and self-help groups that were community based named *idir*. The study established that mostly urban based people participated in *idir savings*. To be a member, one had to initially pay 300 birr (equivalent to US \$21) and then will start to make 2 to 10 birr per month (US \$0, 14 to 0.71 *birr*). When an *idir* elderly member dies, the *idir* pays for funeral related aspects such as the funeral ceremony and the attendant responsibilities of ensuring that mourners get something to eat. Homelessness and lack of fixed places of residence, together with failure to ensure monthly contributions, led older people residing in institutions failing to keep their membership with *idir*. Although there are some monthly payments done at the *idir*, it is not a savings scheme but a form of death insurance that makes sure that the family members of the deceased can afford to remember their loved one through an expected and culturally appropriate death ceremony. While *idir* membership does not provide a mechanism for livelihoods, it creates an avenue for one to access livelihoods. Through *equb/iqub*, a self-help group, community members find an informal mechanism of saving money. The *equb*, provides each member with a chance to save particular *birrs* each month that tallies with the number of months tallying with the number of members. Every member is on a monthly basis awarded a certain percentage of shared savings until every member receives their share. Such an *equb* functioned to provide every member with cash flow for the group members' requirements, more often for women. Being a member to an *equb* is limited to individuals who are able to provide sufficient proof of ability to make payments on a monthly basis to the lifetime of the group. This practicality does not include elderly people who are not economically active and those who rely on erratic incomes which encompass begging as a livelihood strategy. Sidhloyi and Bomela (2015) in their study of elderly people in a South African community

named Ngangelizwe Township, Mthatha, revealed that borrowing money is apparently another common strategy for earning a living. They undertake in such a degrading and costly undertaking because they are unable to secure enough money to make ends meet on a monthly basis and cannot save for future times of need.

More so, older people located in rural parts of African countries south of the Sahara lead lives and embark on several activities for self-reliance and adaptation to the challenges that come with old age. For instance, according to WHO (2019), older people in rural areas are involved in agricultural activities, they cook and clean for themselves, and obtain financial gains from buying and selling as well as other ways such as manual production of mats for selling (Baiyewu, 2015).

A study of ageing populations in Ethiopia by HelpAge International (2011) shows that the elderly people of Addis, Dire Dawa and Awassa, Ethiopia, apart from working to earn an income, relied on the livelihood mechanism of begging. Begging as a livelihood strategy was carried out at churches, mosques, and on the streets. Respondents openly pointed out that begging in the streets, at churches, and mosques was a mechanism that they used to secure the necessities of life. Begging as a livelihood strategy is also highlighted by Asiazobor (2011) in his study of elderly women head of households in rural Nigeria. The study reveals that the elderly women head of households employed alms begging as a survival strategy when they have no one to turn to. A study by Eboiyehi and Akinyemi (2016) discovered that, unlike in the past where the elderly were cared for by their children, begging for alms is now an upcoming development among the Esan people. The burden of caring for the elderly was discovered to be gradually shifting from family to care providers. Those without relatives to look after them resorted to begging for alms to survive. A study by Togonu-Bickersteth (1997& 2014) among the Yoruba of the southwestern parts of Nigeria concurred that the elderly who do not have relatives to look after them resort to begging for alms for survival. The study particularly revealed that the practice where the elderly resort to begging for alms was in the past regarded shameful and disgracing for the members of the family.

Research by HelpAge international (2011) in three Ethiopian cities (Dire Dawa, Addis and Awara) discovered that the livelihoods of elderly people who had mainly been involved in Agriculture before moving to urban areas were pathetic. While older women were involved in

activities that society regarded as reserved for women (for example cooking, collecting firewood, brewing, and washing) men were into jobs regarded as reserved for men and these included carpentry, construction, and trading. According to HelpAge International (2011), daily labor wages for men ranged between 15-20 birr/day (US\$1.15). Generally, women received less rewards for their work. Taking part in petty trading has also been noted by Ezeh et al (2006) as a useful survival tactic in their research on elderly men and women in Nairobi, Kenya (Korogocho and Viwandani). Older women in the study took up tasks such as petty trading and or part-time work such as washing people's clothes, work that enabled them to stay closer to their homes while still earning some income. It also emerged in the study that most of the female petty traders were involved in the selling of vegetables and cooked food, activities that they could carry out at home or within the same community. On the other hand, the elderly men took up informal jobs such as selling firewood and working as landscape gardeners. Dimanin (2011) study of two groups of urban poor in the city of Kampala in Uganda, street children and older people highlighted that livelihood strategies employed to ensure survival include petty trading and street vending. Dimanin's (2011) study of two groups of urban poor in the city of Kampala in Uganda (street children and older people) highlighted that livelihood strategies employed to ensure survival include petty trading and street vending.

Small scale trading and vending are in tandem with Asiazobor's (2011) research on how elderly female heads of Nigerian rural households survive. The findings of the study reflect that under threats from economic challenges in the country, coupled with outmigration of relatives and offspring, high inflation and unemployment, elderly female heads of households encountered difficulty in securing livelihoods. Consequently, they adopted several strategies such as vending, petty trading and soliciting for support from religious groups and family members. In Zimbabwe, a study carried out by Ndiweni et al. (2014) focused on informal economy as a source of livelihood for the elderly in Bulawayo Metropolitan Province. The informal economy was found to be playing a crucial role in livelihood strategies of the elderly as it created employment and enabled many elderly people to be able to secure food. The study revealed that the informal sector is mostly made up of women because most of them do not have formal education and skills. This can also partly be caused by the Zimbabwean society's patriarchal inclination. In addition, culturally regulated activities such as operating mini restaurants, food vending, and tailoring were a preserve for women, and on the other hand, trading, furniture manufacturing,

and metal fabrication were a preserve for men, thus reflecting the gendered nature of survival strategies.

Bird and Prowse (2008) researching on the elderly in Zenzele Village that is situated in Matabeleland South, Zimbabwe, discovered that the most crucial source of livelihood for the elderly is *maricho* (casual labor). However, it is associated with the lazy poor who do not plan their retirement. Additionally, most of the participants engaged in artisanal activities such as blacksmithing and carpentry. Elderly women particularly generated income through the brewing and selling of beer. In addition to that, vending of wild fruits, bananas and oranges was also practiced at the local shops and the rural service centre.

4.7 Summary of the Chapter

This review of the literature on livelihoods aimed to assess the current situation and the knowledge gaps to be filled. This was attained by reviewing applicable texts on livelihoods of the ageing populations in Africa and specifically in Zimbabwe. While it is not exhaustive, literature on livelihoods provided adequate background for the study. Literature on livelihoods is quite substantial in Africa in general. In Zimbabwe, there have been numerous livelihood strategies that were carried out, but there is paucity of urban studies on livelihoods. The previous chapter illuminated that older populations face several challenges which range from health to socio-economic challenges. In addressing these challenges, governments across the world have implemented social protection initiatives which range from social security pensions, social insurances, to health insurances and transport subsidies, among other things. Due to the limitations and weaknesses associated with these initiatives, older people have resorted to other means of survival such as seeking support from family members, vending, farming, and begging, among other things. This review has highlighted the fact that there is an underrepresentation of older people's concerns and voices in programs and policies that undertake to secure their welfare. Resultantly, this study attempts to close the gap by exploring the life experiences of the aged using a sample of older people. The study also explores their livelihood strategies and the social protection systems that address their needs. Older people are different because of gender and class, hence their needs are different. In the next chapter, I discuss the methodology adopted by this study

CHAPTER 5

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

5.0 Introduction

The methodology employed by the study for data collection is presented in this chapter, paying attention to different themes and questions relevant to the study. Since the study uses the Theory of Practice by Bourdieu to understand the experiences of older people, Intersectionality, and Social Constructionism, it is important to design the research in a manner that catches and analyzes what ageing populations have experienced during their lives, focusing also on the meanings of ageing to them. The first part contains a discussion of the research design. The research design section of narrative analysis as well as a phenomenological analysis that is interpretive in nature is explained. The second section contains a discussion on the processes that I went through to select participants. The participants were selected from areas such as Epworth, Glen View and Mt Pleasant. The use of life history interviews and observation methods are also justified. Other sections discuss data analysis methods, the process of transcribing and coding, and ethical considerations. How the data were analysed including information on the following phases of thematic development: getting familiar with the data; generating initial codes; searching for themes; reviewing themes, defining and naming themes; and producing a report are also reviewed.

5.1 Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis and Narrative analysis as research designs: towards understanding ageing

Babbie and Mouton (2008), postulate that the research design is the guiding plan that spells out how a study is to be carried out. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2011), a research design is a strategy of inquiry. Creswell (2009) resonates with Babbie and Mouton (2008) by arguing that research designs contain the strategy and blueprint that states what is to be exactly done during the process of collecting and analyzing data. Bryman (2014) opines that a chosen research design shows the rationale behind the choice of data collection method(s). The reasons may include the need to: (i) clearly express how different variables are related, (ii) generalize the findings to wider networks of groups and individuals, (iii) understand human behavior and its motivations, (iv) have short term appreciations of phenomena in its social settings and the interconnections between different social phenomena. Therefore, the study is interpretively phenomenological in

nature and it combines narrative analysis and from a theoretical perspective, the design draws on the constructivist epistemology where there is an assumption about meaning and knowledge of phenomena as made up of the ideas, interactions and experiences of participants (Fosnot, 2013, Merriam and Tisdell 2016, Bryman, 2014). For Yin (2003), the constructivist epistemology emphasizes the dominance of subjective meaning. The ageing construct in this study is grounded on the life experiences reported by the older people situated in their natural contexts. Next is an exposition of interpretive phenomenological analysis centering on the origins of phenomenology and characteristics attached to it.

5.2 Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA)

Gallagher (2012), views phenomenology as a way of understanding and a theoretical framework that helps to shed light on how social reality is constituted and circumstances which are comprehended within individual awareness. Husserl (1970), an advocate of phenomenological concept postulated that phenomenology encompasses the study of real life and personal experiences of people contributing to factual depictions of the aspect under study. For Merriam and Tisdell (2016), the doctrine of phenomenology brings with it attention to lived experiences and how the process of experience morphs into awareness.

Phenomenologists do not have an interest in the effort by the science of nowadays to group and simplify occurrences. IPA is critical of forms of positivism which apply the methodologies of the natural sciences seeking to identify law like generalizations in human behavior, without any attempt to engage with the meanings which people attach to their behavior. Put simply, phenomenologists are interested in our “lived experiences” (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016). Phenomenology represents a way to have access to the world before thinking over it. Experiences before reflection are normal everyday experiences that people dwell in for the greater part of their lives.

Phenomenology helped me when I was carrying out fieldwork in that I explored my own experiences so as to be conscious of self-biases, points of view, and suppositions. This exploration process is termed *epoché*, which is a Greek term that refers to abstaining from judgments. The process of Epoche entails setting aside preconceived beliefs and ways of understanding in order for aspects to be looked upon in a fresh unbiased manner as observed by Moustakas, (1994). Therefore, as a researcher, I had to set aside or bracket prejudices and

assumptions that I had over ageing populations in Zimbabwe before embarking on my study. I did this in order to examine consciousness itself. For example, I was completely aware of the subconscious stereotypes young people hold about older people.

Besides Epoche, other schemes such as horizontalization and phenomenological reduction that are common to studies that are phenomenological in nature can be used (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Phenomenological reduction includes continued reverting to the occurrence to bring out the hidden meaning of the experience. Horizontalization on the other hand entails putting all the gathered data for assessment, treating all the data as one and equivalent. I treated my data as being of equal weight during the initial stage of analyzing the data. I went on to categorize the data into clusters. Moustakas (1994: 96) avers that during horizontalization:

“There is an interviewing of a person, conscious experience, and phenomenon. In the process of explicating the phenomenon, qualities are recognized and described, every perception is granted equal value, non-repetitive constituents of experience are linked thematically, and a full description is derived”

The IPA stance has gained momentum as a methodology in past research on ageing. Clare et al. (2008) utilizes the IPA approach to explore experiences of people living with dementia in care homes in Wales and England. In a similar study, Danivas et al. (2016) utilized IPA to explore the experiences of the elderly people living with dementia in the Southern parts of India. These empirical studies bring to light the fact that IPA is a useful theoretical approach that can be used to explore the lives of the elderly. This made it a suitable approach for this study, which aims at tapping into the experiences of ageing people from different backgrounds and their livelihood strategies. This study used the IPA approach for collecting data pertaining to the meaning of ageing from the perceptions of the elderly people in Mt Pleasant, Glen View, and Epworth, and the extent to which their experiences differ.

The way a phenomenological study is conducted is different from the way other qualitative studies are done. Various authors such as Moustakas (1994) and Van Manen (2014) provide an example of how a phenomenological study should be conducted. There are several strands that fall under the banner of phenomenology. However, the critical aspect that must be understood is that the philosophy of phenomenology impacted on this study as highlighted in the preceding section. More important to note is that IPA is rooted on basically three philosophical anchors

which are ideography, phenomenology, and hermeneutics, as observed by Shinebourne, (2011) and Pietkiewicz and Smith, (2014). The difference between traditional phenomenology and IPA is noted by Larkin, Watts, and Clifton (2006) who opined that classical phenomenology seeks to detail a phenomenon and IPA extends the detailing with ideography and hermeneutics. Hence next is a discussion of hermeneutics and ideography.

5.2.1. Hermeneutics

Hermeneutic philosophy focuses on interpretation (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). A precise definition is illuminated by Patton (2015) who quoted Palmer (1969, p.136):

“Hermeneutics provides a theoretical framework for interpretive understanding, or meaning, with special attention to context and original purpose. Hermeneutics offers a perspective for interpreting legends, stories, and other texts. To make sense of and interpret a text, it is important to know that the author wanted to communicate, to understand intended meanings, and to place documents in a historical and cultural context”.

From the above passage, there is a clear connection that is there between narrative analysis and hermeneutics in that they both focus on interpreting stories. The only difference as noted by Patton (2002) is that the origins of hermeneutics are rooted in early studies on written scripts and written texts as well as narrative analysis, including creative nonfiction, in-depth interviews, historical memoirs, and life history narratives. The hermeneutics viewpoint puts specific emphasis on contexts and interpretation of narratives in order to inform studies that are narrative or interpretivist in nature (Patton, 2002)

5.2.2. Ideography

Ideography relays to the description of phenomena at individual level as noted by Pietkiewicz and Smith (2014). Larkin et al (2006) propose that a crucial aspect of a study that is IPA in nature is the idiographic level. Next I provide a discussion of the narrative analysis as a research design.

5.3 Narrative Analysis

Narratives that are also known as stories are a popular data source in qualitative studies. The crucial aspect in such a qualitative study is its usage of stories as data and most crucially the first-person narratives detailing individual experiential accounts in story format specifically

detailing the beginning, mid-point, and end of the story (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016). Oral history, biography, and life history are the other common terms that are usually associated with experiential stories. Jonassen and Hernandez-Serrano (2002, p.66), point out that those narratives are the most known sense making stories in their natural form since long back. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) argue that the ways through which people come to know about the world around them, how they make sense of their world, and how they communicate constitutes their experiences. Daiute (2014) explains that the power of narratives is not so much that it is about life but that it interacts in life. A number of researches have utilized narrative analysis as a research design. For example, Brockenbrough (2012) afforded his five male participants opportunity to recount and construct their life stories through his study.

McAdams, Josselson and Lieblich (2013) (cited by Merriam & Tisdell, 2016) recollected the narratives of people at transition point of their lives such as dealing with divorce in mid-life, transitioning from school to the world or work Lim (2011) explored the shifting interconnected identities of groups that were marginalized which involved women of ethnic minority paying particular attention to the life histories of two Korean mothers living in the United Kingdom. What is interesting about these studies is that they focus on periods of transition and how these are socially constructed by participants who have experienced these. These studies have paid attention to the stories people associate with these and how they view and place themselves in relation to these periods of transition through narratives. In other words, when doing narrative analysis in research, researchers engage with the stories participants tell, not simply as descriptions of particular moments in their lives, but as media through which they present and construct themselves in particular ways and are often quite emotionally charged. And of course, in my own life history study, I paid close attention to the narrative accounts of my participants not just as reflections of lived experiences, but also as media through which they construct their identities and negotiate their lives in the here and now. Therefore, life stories have proved to be the right research design for my study that focuses on differences in experiences of ageing populations and their livelihood strategies. The next section illuminates the characteristics of research sites that I purposively selected to carry my study

5.4 Defining Research Population

5.4.1. Stage One: Selection of participants in Glen View

The first stage involved visiting a camp meeting at a Seventh Day Adventist church in August 2019 under Glen View, enabling me to meet participants. The camp meeting is an annual spiritual retreat for Seventh Day Adventist members and it takes place during the summer in August for seven days. Through this, rapport was created with participants and contacts were made and a follow up on participants was made. This part entailed using purposive sampling to carefully select individuals from Glen view to take part in the study. The main principle behind use of purposive sampling was that individuals that met the criteria of the study were willing and available to take part in the study as highlighted by (Onwuegbuzie & Collins, 2007, Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

5.4.2 Stage Two: Selecting participants from Epworth

The criterion that was utilized to select research participants from Epworth was different from Glen View in that I had an informal conversation with a youth who then took me to an elderly person from Epworth. From there, I made contacts with the elderly woman who then referred me to people she knew in the area who were best suited to be participants.

5.4.3 Stage Three: Selecting participants from Mt Pleasant

In Mt Pleasant, having lived in the area for seven years during my undergraduate, postgraduate studies, and working at the University of Zimbabwe, I succeeded in transitioning to independent access quickly. During my days at the University of Zimbabwe, we had a place where we would rent, and it was called *kwaGogo* (loosely translated as “At an Elderly Woman”). At this house, there is an old woman who rents out rooms for university students. Though I could not interview her, she referred me to other older people she knew who live around Mt Pleasant.

5.5 Sampling Procedures and Unit of analysis

Basically, probability and non-probability sampling are the main sampling techniques that exist in research. While probability sampling facilitates the generalization of the study results to the main population from which the sample was taken, non-probability sampling does not allow such (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Since generalization in a statistical sense is generally not required and cannot be justified for qualitative research, this study utilized non-probability sampling. The choice of a non-probability sampling method is crucial for this study because my study did not use data to answer questions such as “how much and how often” but to answer the “what and

why” question. The chosen sampling method that I have used in my study is called purposive. Patton (2015) argues that purposive sampling is premised on the reasoning that the researcher is geared at gaining insights and understanding a certain phenomenon and therefore there is need to pick a sample that can help achieve the most in terms of learning. Patton (2015, p.53) also argues that the strength and rationale of purposive sampling draws from the fact that it is based on facilitating in-depth analysis of information rich cases. Therefore, in this study, I got information-rich cases and from such cases, I learnt a lot concerning critical issues that were under investigation (experiences and livelihood strategies of ageing populations).

To begin purposive sampling, I determined a criterion that was essential in choosing my participants in what qualitative researchers such as Lecompte and Schensul (2010) referred to as criterion-based selection. The following attributes were used to select participants:

- i). Age (Sixty-five years and above). This is so because sixty-five years is regarded as the official age retirement in Zimbabwe and thus it reflects old age.
- ii). Head of Household. Therefore, the unit of analysis is an individual (an older person) who is the head of household.
- iii) Availability and willingness to take part in the study.

To reduce biases related to selection, I used a plethora of sources of referrals. These included snowballing as well as recommendations by individuals in Harare. The major disadvantage of purposive sampling is that of bias concerning the sample. For instance, the use of referrals for contacting research participants can potentially lead to the selection of what Gabor (2007) referred to as “cronies”, meaning those participants that are totally biased towards the views of those that have referred them. Therefore, I mitigated the bias by using multiple referral channels instead of solely depending on an interviewee who will refer me to another person.

I stopped collecting data upon reaching the ninth participant and this was due to pragmatic reasons (limited resources and time). I conducted some of the interviews during the lockdown and I later utilized telephone interviews, which proved to be an expensive method. Even though narrative and IPA studies do not have specific rules concerning the size of samples, a small sample was important since it provided a good chance for idiographic study as noted by Pietkiewicz and Smith (2014). These two authors forwarded that IPA sample sizes have to be

guided by important considerations such as: the practical limitations which one can be working under, the way researchers want to contrast or compare single cases, and the richness of one case. In view of these restrictions, a sample size of nine was deemed necessary.

5.6 Data Collection process

5.6.1 Life history interview: Its genesis

The Life History method was first used by anthropologists, and sociologists took it up in later years. In the 1930's, the Chicago School of Sociologists started using the Life History Method. Particularly, Thomas and Znaniecki popularized the method in their study on Polish peasants in Europe and America. The two scholars used Life Histories in combination with other materials to historically trace the living experiences of Polish people living in the rural areas, particularly focusing on the changes they encountered as they transitioned from secure native villages to urban substandard housing in the United States of America (Park & Burgess 2003).

Herbert Blumer and Samuel Stouffer in their re-evaluation of the Polish peasant concluded that the use of other methods such as attitude scaling and directed questionnaires is more reliable and efficient; reasoning that the life history method is old fashioned and can be inefficient sometimes. With time, this view came to be discarded as scholars slowly began to realize that multivariate methods were not always reliable and led to loss of much information, although they were sometimes efficient. Chiefly, they failed to respond to questions pertaining to providing explanations and understanding of human experiences. Additionally, questions related to longer time frames can only be sufficiently answered using the Life History method as survey research fails to answer such.

Clifford Shaw's The Jack-Roller is another work that illustrates the Life History Method. Founded on deep interviews with a teenager whose living was derived from stealing jack-rollers, Shaw enunciated how the young man gradually drifted into a solitary life on the streets as he became more disorganized and unstable. Similarly, Thomas utilized the Life History method to capture the increase in young prostitutes on the streets during the First World War. Driessen, (1998) observes that in the beginning of the 1980's, the life history approach was rumored to be out of favor. Nonetheless, the life history approach became popular in the 1980s. In recent years, the approach has gained significance as revealed by its widespread use in various disciplines which include sociology, anthropology, education, psychology, economics, linguistics, and

education. The section below discusses the process of collecting data using life history interviews to elicit information regarding ageing and livelihood strategies of ageing populations in Harare, Zimbabwe.

5.6.2. Data Collection: Life History Interviews

Primary data collection for this study was done using life histories where old male and old female participants took part in life histories that were carried out with the aid of a life-history interview schedule. By inviting the narrator to look back on his/her journey through various stages of life, the life history interview examines “the inner experiences of individuals, how they interpret, understand, and define the world around them” (Faraday & Plummer, 1979, p.776). Chamberlayne, Bornat and Wengraf (2000) stresses that through this recognition of the importance of personal meaning, the life history interview offers a vital medium for studying groups of people whose lives have been almost invisible in official and academic discourses.

Individual life histories were conducted with research participants, and these were targeted at facilitating an understanding of lived experiences of the elderly people and their livelihood strategies. I encouraged participants to relate their life stories pertaining to the process of ageing and livelihood strategies. I also tapped into the contextual issues concerning the lives of participants. The interviews were conducted using Shona (vernacular language) and interviews were conducted at the places of residence of the participants. Everything was audio taped to enable the capturing of every detail. I also carried along a field diary. Each interview was carried in approximately 45 minutes to 1 hour. The interviews were three-fold as I made a follow up to participants to get more information. In other words, after having a first encounter with an interviewee, I arranged to meet him/her again for the second time and the third time too. This helped in having a follow up especially on issues that were of interest that would have arisen in the previous meeting. In the first interview, I would allow a participant to tell me everything about themselves without too much probing. This was different from the second interview where I would probe on issues which a participant would have raised in an earlier interview so that everything becomes clear. The third interview was different from the first and second in that the third time was mainly for confirming and validating the earlier interviews and observations too.

5.6.3. Why life history interviews? Their strength and pitfalls

The life history interview according to Yow (2014) is a common means of documenting an individual's account of their life. As a methodology, I utilized it in order to amplify individual actors' voices (aging populations) and privilege their insights on ageing and their livelihood strategies. One of the major strengths of life history method of interview is that my presence as an interviewee and my effort to guide the interviewee's reflections was minimal. Though my presence and the interest I showed contributed to forging a relationship with my participants, which (according to them) encouraged them to reflect upon themselves in the life histories that I conducted, the idea that qualitative researchers should try to elide themselves when conducting their research is based on the assumption that research is about extracting information from participants rather than establishing relations with them, which encourage them to open up about themselves. At this juncture, I draw on critical feminist theories such as Anne Oakley's (1981) who argue for thinking about interviews in research as social encounters (with research and participants) rather than modes of extraction.

This study brings to light the combined creation effort of the interviewee and the interviewer as a result of life history interview (Jessee, 2018). I experienced life histories as co-creations especially on participants such as David because he opened up a lot about his life. As shall be explained in the next chapter, I developed a close relationship with David who was the primary caregiver to his wife who was suffering from Stroke. To Frisch (1990, p.12), historians take this process of collaboration as shared authority entailing the difficult process of self-discovery based on what Abrams (2016, p.27) referred to as "a re-imagination of the past that is being shared between the narrator and interviewer". As a result of this, researchers usually disregard the life history interview method as they consider it to be less reliable concerning information about the past (Jessee, 2018). I engaged with the subjective and intersubjective nature of the method to further determine the ageing and the livelihood strategies from the perspectives of ageing populations in Harare, and this provided in-depth information. Because of these factors, the life history interview was ideal for this study since the research questions sought have a consolidated understanding of the participant's subjective worldview.

The other strength of life history interview, as noted by Jessee (2018), is that the people's narratives can come to influence the public as they share their experiences as a way to make

sense of them. The understanding of the symbiotic relationship together with its impact on collective and personal experiences may help offer rich insights into history production through successive governments in different countries.

Life history interviews with ageing populations enabled me to discuss personal issues as shall be noted in Chapter 7 where older male people discussed issues of sexuality. This area was out of context in the interview guide; however, it turned out to be an interesting issue. Therefore, life history interviews enabled participants to be comfortable in illuminating their stories related to sexuality.

Although the life history interview had much strength, it also had its own potential pitfalls and complications. Notably, it consumed a lot of time and involved long discussions with participants. I engaged with my participants from September 2019 to May 2020 (8 months). Another weakness of the life history interviews is when you are dealing with people whose memories may have encountered distressing experiences (Thomson, 2010).

For Jessee (2018), because of the aim of the method to provoke thick life stories that are noted down over extended periods of time in various sessions, the ability of the researcher to maintain privacy might be questioned. Although Jessee (2018) illuminated this as a challenge, I made sure that my participant's confidentiality was maintained throughout the fieldwork process and even after. Another closely related pitfall by Jessee (2011) points to how the individual aspects which often come out during life history interview enable participant's family, friends, and others to ascertain the pseudonym the researcher would have used even where audio recordings and photographs and videos were not present. In order to ameliorate this challenge, I ensured that information that could personally identify the participants was edited out from the interview recordings and my transcripts. Moreover, as shall be discussed under the "Transcript and Coding" section of this chapter, transcripts were delivered to the 4 participants who could read and write. This was done in order for them to vet these documents and ensure that they were satisfied with the final contents of the outcome and were contend with the level of confidentiality maintained.

One of the limitations of life history interviews is the lengthy process and given the traumatic nature of the events experienced including the death of one of my participant's wife, developing rapport and trusting relationships is critical. Conversations need to be carefully and sensitively

carried out after such incidences. The transcripts created a lot of data which takes time to record and analyze. The ability as a researcher to textualize the life of another person for unknown readers seems to be a daunting task when dealing with life history interviews especially deciding which aspects to highlight and which to omit.

From a methodological standpoint, life history is a dynamic and recursive process between researcher and participant. This methodological process is faithful to the assumptions behind life history research; it allowed my participants to have considerable agency in depicting and understanding life experiences. In addition, life history interviews allowed me as a researcher to develop relationships with my participants. That explains why I needed to adopt a writing style that embraces reflexivity, empathy and thick description (Tierney & Lanford, 2019) as shall be noted in the next chapter on reflections in the field. Next is an exposition of observation as a method that I used to collect data.

5.7 Observation

The reason why I have chosen observation is that it made it possible for me to record behavior as it happened during an interview process. This resonates with Merriam and Tisdell (2016) who stressed that context (to particular behaviours and incidents) and knowledge are provided by observation, and these can serve as points of reference for interviews that follow after. Another reason is that observations triangulate emergent findings (Patton, 2015). I used observations together with interviews to substantiate the findings. Observation enabled me to see things firsthand and I used my knowledge to interpret what I had observed.

What I observed

Observations are influenced by several factors. According to Merriam and Tisdell (2016), observations are influenced by what is under observation, the problem that is under investigation, as well as questions of interest. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) also noted that the orientation of the researcher can often influence definitions of a problem. As a doctoral researcher with a background of sociology, I was interested in observing symbolic and connotative meanings of words from my participants. I also observed my own behavior, and these became “observer comments” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016), an important part of field notes.

Here is the checklist of things that I observed:

- i) The physical setting/environment.
- ii) Symbolic actions.
- iii) Furniture.
- iv) Water supply.
- v) Electricity supply.

One of the criticisms leveled against using observation to gather data relates to its subjective nature which makes it unreliable and subject to bias (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Because human perception is very selective, I made sure that I became ‘objective’ by ensuring that I captured everything on my checklist as part of gathering in-depth data. The very idea of ‘objectivity’ in research is a complex one and has been highly critiqued by feminist writers and critical anthropologists on the grounds that it assumes that research is simply a process of extracting information from the researched, and this process should not be influenced by the researcher. But as you can see, in my life history research, it was not possible to exclude myself from this process and that indeed my active presence helped to facilitate a dynamic which generated very rich data. Indeed, I reflect on the relationships that myself and participants established and how this promoted such rich data and how too this impacted on myself as a researcher and deconstructed views which I had about “old people”

5.8 Analysis of Data

According to Flick, (2014) data analysis entails the categorization and subsequent interpretation of visual or linguistic matter in order to create explicit and implicit depictions of the meaning making structures in tangible and intangible representations. To Merriam and Tisdell (2016, p.202), data analysis involves making sense of gathered information. This usually involves consolidating, reducing, and interpreting the information that researchers have seen and read as part of the meaning making process. This study utilized thematic analysis for data analysis. Gibson and Brown (2009), state that thematic analysis entails doing data analysis using differences, relationships, and commonalities in the data set. Braune and Clark (2006) define it as a process of identifying themes or patterns within qualitative data. Thematic analysis was

chosen because it facilitates insightful analysis that can help answer the questions of the study. Additionally, thematic analysis is complementary to the research questions as it facilitates investigations of interview data from twin perspectives. Firstly, it enables questioning of interview data from data driven perspectives and from the research question perspective. This helps in checking whether there is consistency between the research data and the research questions (Jugder, 2016).

5.8.1 The Utilization of the Six Phase Approach by Braune and Clarke

Familiarity with the data

Prior to, and during the conducting of interviews, the researcher became familiar with relevant technical literature in the field of ageing (i.e., journal articles, policy documents, previous research) to enhance sensitivity to subtle nuances arising in the interview data (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Certain concepts continued to appear in the data their importance could be noted in relation to comparisons against already existing concepts in the literature (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Corbin & Strauss, 2008). This allowed me as a researcher to track thought processes and to remain cognisant of the reasons for the familiarity of certain concepts. More importantly, this also allowed the researcher to “bracket” personal subjectivities in order to maintain sensitivity to the raw interview data (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Husserl, 1931) and to build a list of similar and contradictory constructed meanings by participants (Liamputpong, 2009a). The main form of questioning during this audit of information was how concepts were the same as, or different from, those discussed in the literature (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). After the interviews were conducted, they were transcribed verbatim by the researcher and also to ensure accuracy of each participant’s responses and to stay true to the interviews original nature (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The second stage involved sending my transcripts to four participants who could read and write (Chiedza 68, George 73, John 75, and Joseph 80). For the remaining 5, I politely asked my best friend Shelton (Masters Student at National University of Technology, Bulawayo, Zimbabwe) to carry out a validation of my transcriptions. The participants and my best friend unanimously confirmed the validity of the transcript. I carried out this task because it is an important procedure to make sure that there is rigor during a study that is qualitative in nature (Bryman, 2015). The final stage of the transcription involved sifting through the interview transcriptions and at the same time listening to the audio recordings in order to make sure that there was

consistency between the audio files and the transcripts. This process was also used for reflecting upon all the gathered data and preparation of manual coding.

This provided a valuable way of becoming familiar with the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Flick, 2006). Additional written notes were also made during and at the end of the interview in order for the researcher to record her own understandings and potential biases (Creswell, 1994; Elliott & Timulak, 2005). This approach allowed me to document thoughts and insights as they occurred during the interviews and also acted as an important validation strategy for checking understandings and interpretations of the data (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998). In order to become familiar with the depth and breadth of the content, I immersed myself in the data by repeatedly reading the content of the transcripts in an active way (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Upon the first reading, the entire data set (all 9 interview transcripts) were read in their entirety and initial ideas, thoughts and analytic interests noted and any biases and questions arising for the researcher also continued to be noted (Elliott & Timulak, 2005). This process facilitated reduction of the data later in the analysis into smaller units to assist in the search for factors that contributed to participants' experiences and construction of meaning (Creswell, 1994).

By reading the data , I read the words actively, analytically and critically, and I started to think about what the data mean. This involved asking myself questions like: how does this participant make sense of their experiences? What assumptions do they make in interpreting their experience? What kind of world is revealed through their accounts?

Generating initial codes

Phase 2 involved the systematic analysis of the data, through coding. Codes are the building blocks of analysis: if your analysis is a brick-built house with a tile roof, your themes are the walls and roof and your codes are the individual bricks and tiles (Bryman, 2015). In considering the theoretical and epistemological focus of this research, coding of the data was dictated by a particular interest in themes that related directly to the research questions (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Analysis within a constructionist paradigm focuses on the identification and examination of underlying ideas, assumptions and conceptualisations that shape and inform the content of the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Through this approach, there is a focus on how meaning and experience is socially produced and reproduced within a wider socio-cultural context (Braun &

Clarke, 2006). As description is basic to conceptual ordering (organisation of data into discrete categories according to perspectives and dimensions) (Creswell, 2007), first an initial list of ideas about what was in the data was recorded (Elliott & Timulak, 2005; Liampittong, 2009a). The researcher then re-read the transcripts but this time produced initial codes from the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Codes are labelled units of meaning that allow the data to be thought about in new and different ways in relation to the context). These meaning units are parts of the data that communicate sufficient information to provide a piece of meaning to the reader (Elliott & Timulak, 2005). This was achieved by identifying features of the data that appeared interesting or pertinent to understanding the experiences of the participants. As a result, coding was done by highlighting and writing notes, significant concepts, statements and interpretations directly onto the relevant section of the transcripts (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Liampittong, 2009a). This process is important to any qualitative research as it allows for the organisation of data into meaningful conceptual groups (Braune and Clarke, 2006). The entire data set was worked through systematically as outlined above allowing full and equal attention to each transcript. This also formed the basis for repeated patterns or themes to form across the data set (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Liampittong, 2009a). This systematic process minimised the risk of generating themes from only a few vivid examples and ensured that the coding process was thorough and inclusive (Braun & Clarke, 2006). I conducted this process manually and as a result, I was able to identify themes. Contradictions in the data were noted and this is especially important in qualitative research as this can ensure that the uniqueness of people's experiences and stories are represented as opposed to overvaluing generalisation of these accounts. To Liampittong (2005), this is important for facilitating credibility and trustworthiness of the research findings as condensations and abstractions of the data are more transparent meaning the established arguments for the most probable interpretations presented are made clear allowing the reader to look for alternative interpretations

Theme development

A theme captures something important about the data in relation to the research question, and represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 82). Following the identification of codes within the data, the underlying meaning of these codes eventually requires linkage on an interpretative level (Elliott & Timulak, 2005). The

underlying threads of meaning through codes are called themes, and they aim to describe aspects of the structure of experiences that are not objects or things but rather answer the question of “how” (Liampittong, 2009a). In order to re-focus the analysis on the broader level of themes rather than the detail of codes, I utilised a question-ordered matrix to further reduce the data into a manageable working size and to represent the key identified information across participants’ responses (Miles & Huberman, 1994). One of the advantages suggested for the use of a matrix include the ability to reduce the data and display it in a logical way allowing the researcher to systematically view the responses and further note any patterns, themes, commonalities and or contradictions across the questions and data (Banyard & Miller, 1998). Essentially this allowed analysis of the already identified codes to be compared and considered in combination to form overarching themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Elliott & Timulak, 2005). As potential themes were considered, they were placed with already identified similar themes with significant statements allocated to categories or listed under relevant themes (Liampittong, 2009a). In looking at the relationship between codes, themes and different levels of themes, some codes were found to fit into more than one topic area, which prompted the generation and organisation of master themes containing sub-themes and this process further assisted in the verification and re-defining of any existing themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Despite having a sense of the significance of themes at this point, no data were abandoned as it was uncertain whether the themes would remain or whether further separation or combining and refinement would be needed (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Furthermore, as qualitative research is interested in the different aspects of the examined phenomenon, idiosyncratic aspects were retained to allow the opportunity for them to inform the study in different ways (Elliott & Timulak, 2005).

Reviewing themes

Concepts and themes derived from data provide the foundations for analytic method representing impressionistic understandings of what is being described in the experiences (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Concepts were then used to group and organise data through varying levels of abstraction. Lower level concepts relating to higher order concepts or categories of meaning were devised and a primary goal of reviewing the data set in this way was to identify higher-level concepts which feed directly back to the data bringing with them the detail of description (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Elliott & Timulak, 2005). Themes were initially identified within the explicit or surface meanings of the data but the analytic process then progressed from description to

interpretation whereby the researcher began to theorise the significance of the patterns and their broader meanings and implications (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Patton, 1990). This process also involved identifying the features that gave the themes their form and meaning with broader assumptions, structures and meanings theorised as underpinning what was articulated in the data (Elliott & Timulak, 2005). Themes were assessed as to whether they made sense in regard to the entire data set which also allowed for the identification of any additional data within themes that had previously been missed at earlier stages of coding. Re-coding and refinement of the themes continued until the researcher considered that the themes provided an overall representation about the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

Defining and naming themes

By this stage of the analysis, the central themes had been identified and allocated working titles but it is through this last stage of refinement that names used in the final analysis was decided. This was achieved by analysing the data within each theme, identifying the essence of each theme and determining what aspects of that data each theme captured (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Defining and naming the final themes involved identifying what aspects of the data each theme captured; identifying what was of interest about the content of each of the collated data extracts presented; and assessing why this was of particular interest (Braun & Clarke, 2006). For each individual theme, a detailed analysis was written and assessed for how it fitted into the bigger picture of the story that each theme expressed in relation to the research questions. This allowed the researcher to identify any overlap between themes and to see if further sub-themes could be identified within any of the themes. Identified sub-themes were added to provide structure to complex themes, which demonstrated a hierarchy of meaning within the data. Through the above process, the scope and content of each theme could be described and themes could be clearly defined for what they were as well as for what they were not (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Previously extracted quotations from participants considered of significance, were then compiled to illustrate meaning reflective of the described themes. Therefore, dependability and credibility of the data was demonstrated through various means of peer debriefing and verification as discussed previously (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, 2008). Authentication of the data and further preclusion of researcher bias was also achieved through giving transcripts to older people who could read and write

Producing a report

Descriptions may seem objective but are not, as they reflect some personal, political or organisational stance and can carry moral judgements (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Key to a phenomenological study is the researcher taking the data through several step of reduction and ultimately developing a description of the experiences about the phenomenon that all individuals have in common (i.e., the “essence” of the experience) (Creswell, 2007), as well as identifying contradictory information across the groups (Erikson & Erikson, 1997). The analysis consisted of identifying a phenomenon to study that is ageing; livelihood strategies, acknowledging and positioning the researcher’s own experiences; collating data from several persons who have experienced the phenomenon; analyzing this information by reducing it into significant statements and/or quotes; developing a “textural description” (that is what participants experienced in terms of ageing) (Creswell, 2007; Moutsakas, 1994). Furthermore, given the influence of a social constructionist perspective, this process also involved identifying the features that gave the themes their form and meaning in regard to how they were influenced by social processes and the broad assumptions, structures and meanings theorized as underpinning what was articulated in the data. Therefore, through the outlined processes above, I was able to produce a composite description of participants’ experiences and livelihood strategies. As a result, I was able to compile a discussion on the findings and interpretations which is presented in Chapter 7 and 8 respectively.

5.8.2. Ethical Considerations

I strictly followed the principles relating to ethical protocols regarding studies with human subjects. Ethical procedures were followed in order to ensure privacy, confidentiality, and gaining informed consent from the research participants. Therefore, I abided by the ethical guidelines as outlined in the *Policy for Responsible Research Conduct at Stellenbosch University*. I provided all the research participants with information letters prior to the beginning of the data collection process. Participants who agreed to take part in the study were asked to sign informed consent forms before the beginning of the study. I also informed participants of their right to withdraw from the study at any moment that they feel like doing so. In order to ensure confidentiality, I stored the data in a locked cabinet and on my laptop and hard drive that are protected by a password. At the end of the research, I will ensure that all confidential data is

deleted from the hard drives and computers and all printed material containing confidential data will be shredded. I collected all the data alone, hence there were no field research assistants. In this research, I did not use original names of participants, instead, I used pseudonyms. My friend Shelton who I gave the task of validating my data was not given any information that could identify the research participants. Before handing over the voice notes for transcription, the researcher assigned unique codes to the voice notes that were only known by him to ensure privacy and confidentiality during the data transcription process.

5.9 Summary of the Chapter

This chapter provides the research methods utilized by the researcher. While these methods are framed within the qualitative research procedures, they are important in that they are distinctive in nature because of the amount of time spent in the field. As shall be explained in the next chapter on my experiences in the field, this peculiar feature of ethnography enabled the researcher to create close relations with the research participants. These good relations enabled me to have a better understanding of the livelihood strategies and experiences of ageing populations. The following Chapter deals on my experiences during fieldwork.

CHAPTER 6

REFLECTIONS FROM FIELDWORK EXPERIENCE WITH AGEING POPULATIONS IN HARARE, ZIMBABWE

6.0 Introduction

This chapter mirrors on insights of doing fieldwork for my study with older women and men over seven months, across September 2019 and May 2020. The first introductory chapter discussed my involvement of working with ageing populations before the commencement of my doctoral studies in South Africa and this created a context for and preceded my research. The first section of this chapter is an exposition of the data collection method (Life history interviews) that I utilized in my study. In this section, I bring to light how my participants answered interview questions and how this affected the interviewer-interviewee relationship. There are cases where demarcations were set by participants, and this resulted in changes within the data collection process. This social research involved the researcher's engagement and interpersonal attachment with participants in the study. The aim of this chapter is to answer one of the study's research questions of what we learn about older generations through a particular participatory research process. In this exposition, I argue that adopting a life-history approach allowed older people to bring to light the dynamic and fluidity aspect in their lives, before and after they have grown old. The death of one of my participant's wife is illuminated and how I attended the funeral during the lockdown in Zimbabwe. I argue that ageing populations need recognition within research, not only as subjects to be used for knowledge gathering, but also as a populace with active personhoods. This is part of the lessons learned during the process of carrying out fieldwork.

6.1 The use of life history interviews: Fieldwork Insights

Although I faced some challenges here and there as shall be explained in this chapter, the fieldwork process was not a difficult terrain because I was a cultural insider. Banks (1998) argues that there are two main categories of researchers: cultural insiders and cultural outsiders. These two categories of researchers differ in terms of beliefs, behaviors and knowledge (Banks, 1998). As a cultural insider, I had commonalities with my participants because I shared the same

culture and language with them. As a result, I was better accepted by my research participants because cultural insiders exhibit traditional behaviors and manners that are deemed appropriate in a given context (Al-Makhamreh & Lewando-Hunt, 2008). However, although, I describe myself as a cultural insider, on this trait, I somehow struggled as shall be explained in the chapter on my first encounter with a participant called Miriam (76). Be that as it may, as a cultural insider, I knew how to show respect when meeting with participants and I behaved in accordance with native ways. This allowed me to cultivate trusting relationships more quickly with my participants and this is different to researchers who are regarded as cultural outsiders (Limuttong, 2010). However, there are possible problems of being a “cultural insider”; for example, there is a possibility that my participants may not have elaborated on other aspects of their lives with me in life history research precisely because they might have presumed that as a “cultural insider” I am already familiar with those aspects.

To gain a “thick description” of the lives of aging populations, as expounded by Geertz (1973), I adopted the method of life history and I drew on utilizing observations as well. This enabled for a non-intrusive way of observing my participants. I had a set of questions to ask as guided by the interview guide and my first questions would be, “tell me about yourself, your history and up to now”. Then in-between I would probe my participants with questions of interest from my interview guide. Within areas such as Glen View, attending a camp meeting in August 2019 enabled rapport and trust building when I talked to the old people. In Epworth, I also participated in a church service to meet my participants. Informal conversations with the youth in the area also proved fruitful as they referred me to older persons they knew. As explained in the previous chapter, in Mt Pleasant, having lived in the area for my studies and work, I quickly transitioned to independent access. The place called *kwaGogo* (loosely translated “At an Old Woman”), where students would rent out rooms was my point of reference. At this house, there stays an old woman and though I could not interview her, she referred me to other older people she knew who live in Mt Pleasant.

All interviews took place at participant’s homes, and they lasted for 50 minutes to an hour, and conversation with the participants lasted at most three days. Because I had not completed my fieldwork before the outbreak of the Covid 19 pandemic, I opted for telephone interviewing with participants who did not feel comfortable to converse face to face, and I did this in order to

minimize the risk of contracting the disease and also putting my participants at risk. However, when lockdown restrictions were eased and movement was allowed, I carried out face-to-face interviews. All Covid related protocols were observed, including social distancing, sanitization, and wearing a face mask.

In my interviews, the first question was met with mixed feelings. Some would repeat to make sure that they heard it right, and some would laugh in nervousness. Even after explaining to them, aims and objectives of the research, this question would always be followed by questions from participants such as “How is this of help? Why are you interested in knowing all about this?” I would then explain the reason for the second time, and I was met with questions such as “Are you sure you want to know about this?” “What if you are going to ask difficult questions?” “What if we can talk about something else?” After realizing such a dilemma, I then moved to a time where I gave my participants time to speak about whatever they wanted without probing questions, and then I would come back at a different day with a set of questions that would have arisen from their previous stories and probing questions in a way that captured their accounts in detail. I told my participants that I am a doctoral student who is intending to put their accounts into a thesis and that this study would be an outcome of my higher studies at Stellenbosch University. I also explained to them that this thesis would be beneficial to researchers and the general populace as they would know the experiences of ageing populations. After postulating this, my participants were now eager to tell me more about their lives because they were excited to know that they will be featured in my research.

An interesting part of my fieldwork was when participants would ask me a question about my life. After appreciating the time, the participant has given me a detailed account of their stories, I responded to the question, “Tell me about yourself too?” This was important, putting myself in the picture like this, not in a self-indulgent way, but in a way which enabled insights that I report on here about my participants and how they construct themselves in relation to myself as a researcher. Some of the participants, such as John (75) and George (73), asked me questions about my family, partner, and getting married. I responded to them by sharing details about my family, my partner, and when I am expecting to get married. The response of when I should get married was met with advice from John, who in his life story jokingly said, “I will open a marriage consultancy company soon for advice.” I also shared my personal accounts with

George (73). When I shared with them my life, I could see them becoming so relaxed, and they even asked me other questions that were personal. This led to the developing of a relationship between myself and research participants that was non-hierarchical, as research participants came to the realization that I was prepared, as Oakley (1981, p.41) illuminated, “to invest my own personal identity in the relationship”. Therefore, the use of life history interviewing enabled rapport and friendship that was based on reciprocity between me and my participants as I could ask them about their life and they would ask about mine as well. This relationship has developed to the extent that I communicate with my participants regularly, some asking me how I am doing with my studies and coping with the Covid 19 pandemic.

George (75) illuminated how he felt about the opening question when concluding the interview, and he said, “It is good for you also to tell me about your life after I have opened mine to you, Mr. Gweru.”

This statement illustrates how my involvement with ageing populations subverted power dynamics of old-fashioned interviewing where the interviewer had authority over participants. This experience enabled George to see me as “more than an instrument of data collection” (Oakley, 1981, p.48). I was open with George with everything from my profession to family and personal life. Life history interviews as a method enabled my participants to be comfortable in illuminating more personal issues as highlighted in my previous chapter. The other important aspect that should be raised in relation to my interview with George, a former Lecturer who is a holder of a PhD is how I positioned myself considering that I was talking to someone who was more powerful academically and an individual who had interesting insights on the economy and the politics of Zimbabwe. I positioned myself as a researcher who was interested in knowing everything about his life and other aspects affecting ageing populations and as a former academic. George enabled this, and more credit is given to the life history interviewing method for allowing such a transition.

The following section illuminates the interruptions and or disturbances that occurred during my interview process with participants.

6.2 Interruptions during interviewing and the establishment of boundaries

During the day, my participants who were involved in vending at home would halt the interviewing process whenever customers showed up. It is of paramount importance to note that the interviews were held with the acknowledgment that they could be interrupted. Although, this was an important aspect to know and respect, there was difficulty in maintaining continuity of the interview process when disturbances took place. From the beginning of the fieldwork to the end, my intention was not to allow my participants to suffer any losses because of their involvement in my research study, and they appreciated this. I vividly remember that an interview with Isaac (88) was prematurely interrupted on the first day when he was phoned that there is now sugar at a local shop, and he had to abandon the interview. During the first lockdown in March 2020, sugar was a scarce commodity in Zimbabwe, and one would endure to get it as there were long queues to acquire it.

The first instance of boundary setting occurred when Miriam (76) refused to be audio-recorded, citing that she does not feel comfortable because I would go out there and tell people how pathetic her life was. More importantly, I was told to present myself in a good haircut and not an Afro kink hair. I obliged to her wishes. A second demarcation was not to undertake interviewing during the morning because some of my participants were preoccupied with their daily routines in the morning

6.3 The Singing of Adventist Songs and Intercession with participants

In my previous chapter, I elaborated on how I selected some of the participants as a result of attending a church camp meeting in August 2019. Before engaging in an interview, some participants such as Olivia, a devout Seventh Day Adventist would request that we have a short session of music and a brief prayer and she constantly reminded me of Matthew 33:6, “Seek ye first the kingdom of God and everything shall be added unto you”. This is one of the verses she would always quote for me, and she would say before engaging in an interview, it is important to have a prayer and singing. Her favorite song was Hymn 5 entitled “How far from Home”. One of the lyrics in the song illuminates *Husiku huri kupera, kwakuda kuedza. Usacheme kurumidza, mutewere kusimbira. Muchasvika mukupenya, hakuna kupera.* (Loosely translated, “The long dark night is almost gone, the morning soon will break. Then weep no-more but speed thy flight. With hopes’ bright star thy guiding ray, till thou shalt reach the realms of light in everlasting day”). This song, she said, depicts hope to her as a Christian and it encourages her to keep going

no matter the struggles she faces in life. After constant repetition of this **song**, it became my favorite. How was this important to my research? By accepting what my interviewee requested, I gave her power to also control this research process shelving the traditional view where the interviewer should have control over the interview process. It was easy for me to adapt to the situation because I was raised up in an Adventist setup since my mother is a devout Adventist.

6.4 The important gesture: Food and Sitting position

The participant determined where interviews would take place, and I held all interviews at the research participant's homes. Growing up in Glen View and studying and working in Mt Pleasant, I was not familiar with Epworth. In Epworth, an informal settlement area, my participants were much more visibly relaxed when carrying out interviews with them at their homes, and I needed an adjustment to a location that I was unfamiliar with. The participants made sure that I was comfortable and they are the ones who dictated where I should sit. This was an important gesture because it allowed transfer of power to my participants as I would heed to their call of where to sit before, during, and after the interview process. I was made to feel at home with the provision of food in Mt Pleasant and Glen View at Chiedza's (68) and Joseph's (80) homes. I accepted the food in order to show them that I appreciate their services and I listen to them too. More importantly, I was bound to accept the food because, in my Shona culture, there is a proverb that says, "*Ukama igasva hunozadziswa nekudya*" (A relationship can only be fulfilled when people eat together). The next section discusses how I attended the funeral of my participant's wife and how this impacted my research study.

6.5 The death of David's wife: Attending the funeral during the lockdown

On the 15th June 2020, at 10:45 am, I received a phone call from David, one of my Epworth participants. He said, with a somehow low voice, "*Ndifonere muzukuru handina mari muphone*" (Call me my grandson; I do not have enough airtime in the phone), and he hung up. Immediately, I phoned him, with a shaking and stammering voice, he said, "*Eehhh muzukuru Mwari vaita kuda kwavo, ambuya vako vashaika mangwanani kuma7 nhasi* (*The Lord has done his will, and your grandmother has passed on today around 7 am in the morning*). I was equally disturbed after receiving such news and the only thing I vividly remembered saying is, "*Sekuru Mwari vakunyaradzei, regai ndiuye ikoko*" (*Grandpa, may the Lord comfort you and let me come there*). I am a resilient character, but this was a massive blow to me considering how David narrated his

account during an interview with him; he had so much grief when his wife was alive and what more now that she was no more.

One of the most challenging aspects of grief is facing the reality of loss and accepting that this has happened. So, seeing someone before they have died is a good thing, but saying goodbye when they have already died is not an easy thing. Knowing that a funeral is an integral part of grieving, the last chapter in someone's life, and a physical experience of sharing loss, I presented myself at David's residence 2 hours after receiving the message. With a stressful face, David said, "*Vazorora nokuti vanga vatambura kwenguva refu*" (She has finally rested; she suffered for a very long time). I passed my heartfelt condolences message to him, and I consoled him with *mari yechema*, which is a token to assist the bereaved with funeral arrangements

Despite the lockdown rules that a funeral should not have more than 50 people, the case was different with David's wife's funeral. The Epworth community played a huge role as they showed solidarity. There were approximately more than 100 people at David's wife's funeral, and this was in defiance of the lockdown rules. I did not feel safe because of the huge crowd, and after I finished talking to David, I immediately went back home. The next section discusses how methods of data collection changed as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.

6.6 Changing Methods: The Use of Cellphone

In Zimbabwe, the lockdown resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic was implemented at the end of March 2020, which impacted on my process of conducting fieldwork with ageing populations. Fortunately, participants had shared their mobile phone numbers with me before the genesis of the pandemic. This unconventional interviewing method was important given the volatility of undertaking research when Covid-19 was a threat, especially to ageing populations. Though costly, this method enabled me to effectively communicate with participants regularly, and some of them who owned smartphones would send voice notes through WhatsApp just to check on me during the lockdown. Additionally, through WhatsApp, some would share songs and news related to Covid-19, and I would reciprocate by sharing news and songs too. This enabled for a form of intimacy and friendship to be maintained. This method also allowed me to keep in touch with my participants, and whenever there were emerging issues, I would phone them for clarity. With all these changes at hand, I learned a lot through conducting research with elderly people. My next section is an exposition of the lessons learned from this participatory research process.

6.7 Lessons learned from a participatory research process

As a young man on a scholarship from the Graduate School and studying for a doctoral degree in a “perceived” better country of South Africa, my interactions with my participants, especially old people residing in informal settlements with their level of literacy perceived to be low, was bound to be intrinsically unequal. However, I adopted life history interviewing, and this generated a space where my research participants could avail “accounts rooted in the realities of their lives” (DeVault, 1990, p.99).

As noted above, the ethnographic fieldwork had boundaries or demarcations attached to it and one of the participants’ requests, especially from Epworth and Glen View, was not to have interviews carried out in the morning because they would be engaged in their daily activities. In the absence of interviewing, I would observe home environments in the morning and the routines of the elderly people because Epworth has more non-gated houses. However, I accepted this based on the following interlinked reasons:

- 1) I needed information from them, and there was no reason for me to oppose this.
2. My culture as a Shona black person requires me to respect the wishes of older people, and my experience and beliefs as a Christian compel me to “Honour your father and thy mother so that your days on earth will be increased” (Exodus 20 vs 5).
3. As a researcher, I was not supposed to disturb their livelihood activities, considering there was no monetary reward involved.

During the morning hours, talking to my participants from Epworth and Glen View would potentially lead to the loss of revenues or detract them from carrying out their daily chores. Therefore, it became imperative for me to respect their wish and postpone carrying out fieldwork to afternoon hours, which enabled a plethora of fruitful discussions that did not disturb the livelihoods of my research participants. Through this, I learned that I should recognize the well-being of the lives of participants and not prioritize research “excellence. Even during the afternoon, when customers came, I paved the way for them to get a service from the interviewee. Therefore, my fieldwork experience revealed that the researcher does not always determine the life history interview agenda. There are many times I would schedule interviews with participants and would find them engaged in other activities. In such situations, I would explain

to the participants that I cannot interview them but would only ask them to be allowed to observe while they are engaged in their activities. After being granted permission to carry out observation, this helped me to analyze the narrator's life and check the life history data.

Another lesson that came out of my experience in the field is that the type of dressing and the way one presents himself/herself to aging populations is of paramount importance, including the haircut, the way one speaks, and the language one speaks. In one of my first encounters with Miriam from Epworth, a stern warning was given when I presented myself with an Afro kink hair and was told I was not serious with life and should come when I have a decent haircut. In order, to get information from Miriam, I had to present myself with a very good haircut and a nice clean shave. I was thankful for the advice, which had implications on my research outcome because Miriam became comfortable, and she discussed with me her life.

Respecting culture and religion is also an important aspect when engaging with older people. Another boundary was set by participants from Seventh Day Adventist not to undertake interviews on Sabbath (Saturday), the day that they regard as holy and as a day of rest. With this at hand, I learned that regardless of circumstances, it is important to respect the wishes of participants even if it runs counter to your own wishes.

More importantly, I learnt that to research ageing populations is to heed and to understand the experiences of ageing populations taking into cognizant the context of their lives. This goes further than the typical questioning we carry on them and conversations that are there only to inform policy or to fulfill research aims and objectives. It is a process that involves allowing research participants to speak without any hindrance. It involves enabling participants to establish demarcations and practicing silence when they speak their wishes (Jackson, 2012). It means flexibility as a researcher and allowing changes to occur, even if it means that those changes would lead to missed research opportunities. For example, the use of an unconventional research method such as "telephone communication". Another example was when Miriam said she was not comfortable speaking about the meaning of aging from her own perspective.

In this research, I also realized that to be neutral in relating with research participants is difficult. And that the very concept of 'neutrality' in research is highly problematic since it assumes that research does not or should not involve the establishment of relations between researcher and the researched. In the three areas that I conducted research, I was not perceived as a researcher, but I

was viewed as a visitor. There is an African principle called *Ubuntu* where every older person sees a younger person as a grandchild and not as a researcher. For example, I was being addressed as a *muzukuru* (grandchild) by the interviewees. Therefore, it became difficult to maintain an impartial standpoint because I was regarded as part of the family. Some participants started turning to me for assistance with problems emanating in their families and also personal problems. A story about David that I narrated above is a clear example. A glimpse of David's face told me that he was filled with grief when he was explaining how he tried by all means to make his wife's condition normal but to no avail. In such circumstances, it became difficult for me as a researcher to remain neutral while sympathizing with research participants. More importantly, when listening to David's story, I struggled with emotional responses (Sherry 2013, Von Benzon & Van Blerk, 2017). When David saw that I was struggling with this, he tried by all means not to illuminate more of his traumatic experiences. On our second interview he said, "*Handikwanise kukutaurira zvese nokuti zvimwe zvacho zvinototyisa asi ndozvionoita upenu. Pamwe hunokupa sugar pamwe hwokupa munyu*". (I cannot tell you everything because some of the things are scary, but such is life. At times, life gives you sugar and sometimes salt). After an interview with David, I was hesitant to accept that I was emotionally affected, and I pretended to be in a good state so that I would not exhibit vulnerability and unprofessionalism (Melrose 2002, Thomas & Walker, 2002). I then realized at a later stage that by suppressing the stress, I had affected my health because on that day I could not sleep, and I had constant headaches for a week. Therefore, this was a lesson in that there should be an acknowledgement and expression of emotions because this enhances the quality of the research and facilitates the research journey (Thomas & Walker, 2010).

Patience is also an important aspect when interviewing older participants because most of them take their time to recall events in their life. In my case, some older people such as Isaac (88), the widowed man from Glen View, was slow to speak and he would stumble at times. Therefore, what is imperative is to be an active listener. There was also use of deep Shona words and proverbs from participants that needed a careful ear. Silence also mattered as it spoke volumes. To this end, as Freud (2013) argues, an oral historian believes that an interviewer should pay attention not only to spoken words but to silence because silence has a meaning. However, silences encountered were important as to determine why such silences are into existence. For example, when a participant genuinely forgets the events and he/she withholds important

information needed by the researcher versus respecting the interviewee's right to privacy where the question would have caused emotional harm. A case example is that of Mirriam (76) who remained silent and she made it vivid that she had no intent of discussing further about the question, "How does it feel to be old?" As a result, Freud (2013) encourages interviewers to develop what he calls an ethics of silence, where the interviewer should recognize silence as agency on the part of a participant and this should be a priority above the interviewer's wish of documenting what would have been illuminated by the interviewee during the interview process. Therefore, Freud suggests that the researcher should have time to document such silences that an interviewer would have come across. Other scholars such as White (2000) encourage researchers to question silences encountered after the interview in order to understand the reason it has happened. Effort was however made to understand the reason why Mirriam refused to be associated with the category "older person", but to no avail. By asking participants in an informal way, it does not depict coercion to respond to questions asked but it is a process that will not make the researcher give assumptions to their motives (White, 2000).

6.8 Summary of the Chapter

This account of fieldwork experiences is an effort to provide insight on what I encountered as a researcher (young-man) doing fieldwork among ageing populations in Zimbabwe. The present chapter illuminated some of the challenges that I faced as a researcher (cultural insider), such as safety and vulnerability, and how I overcame such problems. Lessons brought about through fieldwork experiences with ageing populations have been illuminated in this chapter. In this chapter, I have also argued that we should run away from the traditional way of researchers having sole control over the interview process, but that interviewees should be given a chance to control the research process in a way. The next Chapter deals with the ways participants perceive and construct the notion of ageing from their perspective.

CHAPTER 7

SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF AGEING: PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS WITH AGEING MEN AND WOMEN IN HARARE, ZIMBABWE.

7.0 Introduction

“Apparently, a great deal had been written about old age, but most of the authors who dealt with it were lads and lasses, as it seemed to me, in their late fifties or early sixties. They knew the literature, but not the life. Some of them had brought together statistics or pored over medical reports, while others had tracked down the aged with a camera and tape recorder; what they didn't and couldn't know was how it feels to be old. I knew, close as I was to my 80th birthday, and I decided that there was still room for an honest personal report” (Cowley, 1982, p.11)

The above statement made by Cowley highlights that in order to understand issues of ageing, it is important to engage with older people about ageing and the meanings this carries for them. The unfortunate part is that not everyone will have a chance to write about their own stories as Cowley did. Therefore, the findings of the study intend to signify what ageing populations view as ageing from their own experience. This chapter therefore presents and discusses finding from the study on the experiences of nine participants and the connotations they ascribe to the notion of ageing. In the analysis of the data for nine life history interviews, the IPA and Narrative process discussed in the methodology chapter led to the identification of themes presented in this chapter. In this analysis chapter, I have organized my work into themes. The themes identified are the following: acceptance and rejection of ageing as a category, sexual impotence, ill-health, treatment by the community, dependency, loss of self-esteem, and loneliness.

Findings reveal that experiences of ageing differ from one place to another and between populations. For some participants, their experience of ageing and old age seems to be an affirmative event, while others perceive it as an adverse event. In this chapter, I argue that older people are not a vulnerable group, necessarily frail and dependent, but they are active agents who craft and shape their own realities. The next section starts by presenting participants' demographic information and then a discussion of each of the themes and its relevance to the meaning of ageing as stated by participants under study and from the literature reviewed in Chapters Three and Four

Figure 7: Participants' Demographic Information

Participant Name	Age	Place of Resident	Marital Status	Education level
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John (Male)	75	Mt Pleasant	Married	Masters
Joseph (Male)	80	Glen View	Married	None
Miriam (Female)	76	Epworth	Widowed	None
Chipo (Female)	70	Epworth	Never Married	None
Chiedza (Female)	68	Mt Pleasant	Widowed	Degree
George (Male)	73	Mt Pleasant	Married	PhD
David (Male)	75	Epworth	Married	None
Isaac (Male)	88	Glen View	Widowed	None
Olivia (Female)	70	Glen View	Widowed	None

The table above shows demographic information of participants and this is especially important for this research because the information was used as a yardstick to determine a balance in terms of gender and also making sure that the required age was maintained. The other variables in the table are: place of resident, marital status and level of education.

7.1 Acceptance and rejection of ageing as a category

A significant issue that emerged from the conversational interviews with participants concerned their acceptance or rejection of old age as a category. The findings revealed differences in the acceptance and rejection of ageing as a category between participants from the three places of residence. As interpreted in the data, acceptance was often very positive, as demonstrated by the research participant's reference to being proud of ageing. Some participants who accepted ageing as a category had a lot to say. An excellent experience for Joseph (80, Glen View) is the way he has gone through ageing as a process. During the interview, the wife of Joseph was silently sitting in the background; she interrupted the interview conversation and stressed:

“These days, you are very gratified to be an old man you are now. You have been telling me this every so often” To which Joseph replied, “*True I am very proud*”

Joseph is confident of ageing because his relationship with his wife is genuinely intimate because there is a representation of trust and understanding of each other. In the presence of his wife, Joseph had this to say,

“I do not fear anything that comes by with old age because to me; this is a wonderful experience. In fact, I have graduated in what you call life. I mean, I have seen it all; I have gone through the good and bad experiences of life. I am here today thanking the Lord for taking me this far. With him, I know I will continue to age gracefully. My wife is also my support, she listens to me and I also do the same. It is important to be involved in your life with someone who is helpful in times of ageing like this”.

Isaac accepted ageing and how it brings a sense of completeness in him despite the challenges associated with it. To Isaac, ageing instills in him the old age, and the sense of completeness as he gets old instills in him the sentience of being among the fortunate ones and this entices him to remain active and lively.

“We all get old, and it is a wonderful feeling because you see your grandchildren growing up. This gives me the drive to remain active so that I will see my grandchildren’s children”.

He admired how ageing evolves as a time where you put certain needs first and the amount of wisdom acquired over the years,

“Ageing is part of being a parent, putting the needs of your children first. My children do not visit me often, I am only here with my grandchildren, but they have my back because they provide everything I need. Ageing also means you have acquired the wisdom and skills with which you can help the next generation”.

The way he is so confident of the future relates to his view of old age as an important stage of his life. He sees old age as part of his ongoing trajectory of life. He says,

“How we have lived our past determines how we will age; however, not so much is different. I have projects that I am working on and I will carry on having all kinds of projects despite my age.”

In contrast to other women, Olivia engaged in retrospection of what she has experienced in her past. While for others old age would seem to be a negative experience to replicate on their existence, her point of view on the future articulates nous of gratefulness. She said,

"I am happy despite some challenges I faced in life. I have lived my life. I have never been to the hospital except when I was giving birth to my children. I should thank God for that. I have seen my children growing up and also my grandchildren. What more could you ask for?"

Miriam's (76, Epworth) story was fundamentally different from Joseph, Isaac and Olivia's meaning of ageing. Whereas Joseph felt good to be "aged", Miriam did not feel aged because she did not want to be old. In her narrative, Miriam postulated,

"I do not feel old." When asked to elaborate on this, she said, *"Because I do not want to be old, it is a bad feeling to even think of it."* Following this statement, she non-verbally made it categorically clear to the interviewer that she had no intention of exploring further into the issue.

Chipo's (70, Epworth) sentiments about ageing resonate with what Miriam illuminated. When I asked Chipo what image or model comes to mind when I say "older woman" to her, she responded,

"I think it is a title that can suit someone else and not me."

Despite Chipo being an active old woman, she admitted her fear of aging as a result of her gender and noted,

"Well, I might be active now, but it will come a time where I shall grow old and there is nothing I can do. As a woman without a husband, my greatest fear is not getting someone to take care of me and, at the same time, giving someone the burden of caring for me. I took care of my own mother when she was very, very old, and I can tell you it is not a good experience. You make sure you bath her, cook for her and feed her because she is no longer able to do that on her own"

Overall, the central issue in the extracts, as illuminated by the two above female participants, Chipo and Miriam, is the rejection of being labeled old women. The rejection by female participants (Miriam and Chipo) to accept old age has been discussed by different scholars in the literature. For example, Yuval-Davis (2006:202), in an essay entitled "Belonging and the Politics

of Belonging,” illuminates the emotional component of people’s constructions of themselves and how their identities become more central the more threatened and less secure they feel. To Georgakopoulou (2006), refusals to tell or deferrals of telling are equally important in terms of how the participant’s orient to what is appropriate a story in a specific environment. In an interview with Miriam, she made it clear that she does not want to speak more about ageing. The reluctance or refusal by Miriam to elaborate on ageing may have been a result of how she has been raised. Social Constructionists argue that age and ageing are not reducible to biological and chronological states of development. Instead, they argue that these are historically and socially constructed categories and we learn and negotiate our identities in relation to these categories in everyday forms of interaction. The findings in the study show that lived experiences of age are highly gendered. And in the lines below, with regard to Miriam, they seem to be highly classed as well. According to social constructionist theory, time and place determine how one views social reality. Social constructionists believe that realities are constructed as a result of historical processes and negotiations that take place between individuals. To bring to light the constructionist view of history-shaping reality, Miriam illuminated that her mother was never married for the rest of her life. Miriam had no siblings, which had implications on how she viewed ageing. Thus, the refusal to be classified as old aged is influenced by Miriam’s history. She had this to say:

“I grew up without a father and mother; everything was just in a bad shape. I grew up living with my grandmother who was accused of witchcraft because she was an old woman”.

For Joseph, who views ageing as positive, this is influenced by his environment. As an adult, Joseph, in his later life, got to know about his biological father. After knowing his biological father, Joseph established a close relationship with his other brothers and sisters that he got to know at a later stage of his life. He was accepted by both his father and siblings, who even celebrated his comeback by throwing what he dubbed a “Reunion Party.” The significance and the feeling of knowing his father and half siblings were summed up by Joseph in one sentence:

“It is a wonderful feeling to know who you are and where you are from.”

For Chiedza, the way one relates to ageing depends on how one has lived in the past.

“People age differently, and this is because of how they have lived their lives in the past, including the type of work one has been involved in. Too many heavy and physical jobs can make you grow weary. The way into the future is not futile; but contrary to that we should understand that we live in the present, but answers are from the past. I am still active because I was never involved in too much manual work in my life.”

From the extracts, it can be noted that other women also rejected the category ageing and connotations and meanings it had in their societies. This shows the differences in how older women and men, in my study, experience ageing. An account of Chiedza (68, Mt Pleasant) shows how women are pressured to stay young and look young. Chiedza expresses how she goes to the gym in order to keep fit and not to age. Chiedza from Mt Pleasant is the one most interested in keeping in shape. This shows how class and gender impact participants' interest in keeping ageing at bay. However, an account of John (75, Mt Pleasant) shows that older men also take care of their bodies as he goes to the gym and shows off his muscles. However, differences are noted between male and female populations in that there is no “surveillance” (Foucault, 1982) of men's bodies. Findings reveal that women refuse to identify themselves as “older women” because this category involves stereotypes associating old age to dependency, uselessness, and unproductiveness (Hazan, 2000, Brown, 1982). As a result of this social preconception that involves older women and old age, participants such as Chiedza, Chipo, and Miriam reject it unanimously. For these three, the expression “old woman” meant what they had not yet turned into. For them, the expression old woman referred to something they had not yet become. Chiedza, Chipo, and Miriam could not categorize themselves with negative connotations of old age such as fragility and loss of physical capacity because this, they claimed, did not replicate their own experience. Chiedza seems to be apprehensive about remaining active in her everyday life. She had this to say:

“Personally, I do not think reaching the age of 65 is an issue as it used to be if you are still fit, notwithstanding the fact that your health deteriorates; being less agile and articulate. Long back, a woman at 60 will be quite an old woman because of their lifestyle. They would not go to the gym or carry out aerobic activities, did they? Now we represent that generation that goes to the gym (she laughs) and the one that wants to keep fit. I personally wake up every morning at 5:30 am for 30 minutes road run before I get engaged with babies who would be left here by

their parents in the morning between 7:30-8:30 am. That explains why I am free from any disease. I know a number of old women in and outside this community, you see them and you would say to yourself, "I am of the same age with this one." Do I look this old? It is because they do not care about their bodies. I always encourage a lot of people to follow me and be active so that they age well".

The mundane reasoning about types of ageing and lifestyle being associated with geographical location was elaborated much more explicitly in Chiedza's narrative when she highlighted:

"I also acknowledge that they are getting more aged because of where they stay. Here in Mt Pleasant, we are privileged to have gyms and some sports clubs where one can go and do their exercising. So, I will grow old when I feel I have to (laughs)."

This extract from Chiedza shows that one's social construction of ageing may result from one's class. Chiedza has all the resources available for her, and as a result, she views ageing positively. From the perspective of class, research done by Zhao et al. (2017) with reference to Chinese older people shows that people with more resources or a superior class have a tendency to report a low rate of recurrence of self-perceived negativity to ageing compared to people with fewer resources. In a similar study, older people residing in urban cities with managerial professions, good family, and financial independence, have a lower negative perception of ageing than their counterparts with lower resources and living in rural areas (Zhao et al., 2017). Another study by Lai (2009), cross-sectional in nature with 4240 older Chinese people from the age of 55 years and above, established that individuals who view ageing through positive lenses have a better mental health, and they display better behavioural outcomes. Because Chiedza goes to the gym and Chipo does exercises, they are still fit. Although those with resources tend to view ageing positively, this is not solely true because even Chipo, who resides in an informal settlement, contended that an ideal old woman is the one who remains active in her later years:

"I keep in shape because I am a woman who refuses to be old, and I am always active. I make sure that I do exercises for 20minutes every day and that keeps me fit. At church, I sing in a choir and that alone to me is therapy. Besides that, I do garden here. It is not healthy to do nothing at all" (Chipo).

The above narratives show that being active appears to be necessary to a serene anticipation of old age. For women, they are pressured to look young and stay strong. This resonates with Sontag (1978) who postulates the losses women suffer in old age and how their bodies are likely to be monitored for signs of old age. A comparative study in the US and Germany done by MacConatha et al. (2003) on ageing perceptions indicated that, from the perspective of gender, women in these countries were more anxious about physical changes as a result of their age than were men. The findings above can be linked to the social constructionist perspective, especially the notion of language used by old women to reject ageing as a category. By engaging social constructionism to these findings, one may note that language is important, and it is more than just a way of connecting people. Scholars such as Burr (2003) and Gergen (1994) argue that language advances its meaning, and from a social constructionist perspective, language is more than just a way of connecting people. People ‘exist’ in language. Language gains its meaning from its usage in context. As a result, the emphasis is not on an individual but on social interaction where language is generated, sustained, and abandoned (Gergen & Gergen, 1991). From the perspective of Berger and Luckmann (cited in Speed 1991), people socially construct realities by engaging agreed and shared meanings communicated via language. Therefore, our views about the world are social creations. From a social constructionist point of view, Anderson and Goolishian (1988) argue that there are no “tangible” entities from the external that can be accurately drawn. Therefore, we are forced to resign our cherished position as ‘knowers’ and our assumptions that there are ‘facts’ that we can come to know. These ‘facts’ and other ideas and assumptions are social constructions, an artifact of socially mediated discourse. The extracts from women bring to light that they miss days of their youth, their physical strengths and unwrinkled skin. However, an important aspect to them currently was the happy times they are having with their children and grandchildren, who are irreplaceable.

7.2 Ill-Health and Ageing

On this theme, sexual impotence at old age emerged as another important condition in the data pertaining to participants' meanings to ageing. The theme “sexual impotence” appeared in the research participant's extracts to show the decline in the need for sex. Thus, ageing appeared to affect men and women differently inasmuch as sexual attitudes and behaviors are concerned. Ageing was seen as a stage where the decline in sexual desire appeared. In this study, a significant number of men experienced erectile dysfunction as a result of age.

George's (73, Mt Pleasant) story expressed his desire for sex, but he does not remember the last time he had sex. This was also evident with David (75, Epworth) experiencing erectile dysfunction. However, he spoke about fighting this transition to old age through the use of "Congo dust" (an aphrodisiac).

George summarised his fear and anxiety on ageing by highlighting the following. He lowered his voice in order to avoid being heard by his wife, who was cooking in the kitchen, and he said,

"Currently, I do not even remember the last time I had sex because of loss of sexual potency. My wife is also now old, and she also does not have any sexual appetite. I now have diminished physical health and I cannot perform as I used to be when I was young."

In the presence of his wife, David somehow lowered his voice (this was done to avoid being heard. However, his wife seemed to concentrate with getting warmth from the fire) to register his anxiety over how sex becomes affected when one grows old. He noted how he somehow lost interest in sex because; he is no longer able-bodied. An important part of the conversation was when he highlighted that sometimes he feels that he wants to have sex but cannot perform sexual intercourse with his wife because of her condition. To counter the challenge, David said sometimes he leaves his wife and seeks the services of commercial sex workers around Epworth to quench his desire for sex. David has erectile dysfunction, and he uses Congo Dust to counter this challenge. Therefore, the substantiation of suffering erectile dysfunction also denotes an initiate to self-defining as old noted in George and David's narratives.

The idea of not being sexually active due to old age was in sharp contrast with Joseph's (80, Glen View) account, where he expressed that marriage as an institution remains important as a milieu for sex. His narrative shows how intimate he is with his wife are. Joseph noted that he is still enjoying sex with his second wife, who is 42 years of age, although it is no longer an everyday activity. When Joseph illuminated the importance of sex, his wife had gone outside of the house. He postulated,

"I am lucky that I still have sex with my second younger wife though not every day like I used to do when I was able-bodied. When you reach my age, it becomes difficult to have an erection without the use of traditional herbs."

Female participants did not articulate anything related to the loss of sex drive due to old age. However, they only noted that ageing is the genesis of the end of reproduction, commonly referred to as menopause. From the findings, it can be noted that women may find it challenging to discuss their sexuality with a young man. Or for men in a patriarchal society, becoming less ‘competent’ in sex carries more stigmas. Or maybe because heterosexuality, as Chiedza says, may incur certain costs for women in a patriarchal society. Hence, this explains the reason for their reservation on the subject. Female participants such as Chiedza noted that being in a post-menopausal state was liberating because one can manage her own sexuality. Chiedza’s account reflects the importance of post-menopause and widowhood as a limited responsibility to provide for the husband, unlike when one is sexually active and is married. She highlighted:

“It is liberating to know that I can do things at my own pace now, and no one can dictate the pace on me. As you know, I am a widow; I am not going to bear any child because I have passed that stage. My children are the ones taking care of me now because it is their duty to look after me now.”

There is evidence from the findings that gender plays a crucial part in arbitrating the effects of ageing upon the sexual identities of individuals. Gender underpinned participant’s deliberations of their sexual beliefs and sexual behaviours. Person (1980) contends that in men, gender seems to lean on sexuality. The need for sexual performance in men is inordinate unlike in women where gender identity and self-esteem can be consolidated by other means. The findings point to ageing being a challenging aspect to the sexual identity of male participants than female participants. Male participants pointed out that they equated sex with sexual intercourse and it is within this context that the male ability to perform was central.

This resonates with studies conducted by different authors; for example, a study by Feldman et al. (1994) of older men in Massachusetts notes that sexuality is central to existing ideas of masculinity. Person (1980) sees erectile dysfunction as a challenge to masculinity. In addition, a study by Daker-White and Donovan (2002) explored sexual satisfaction in a hospital setup among patients and they found out that erectile dysfunction represents a trigger to feeling old, even among the male youth. In this study, there was confirmation from the discussions by participants to support Person’s (1980) argument that masculinity is reliant on sexual performance than femininity. In the Zimbabwean context, a study by Gutsa on older people in

Dzivarasekwa district of Harare revealed that sexual exploits among old people were diminishing with age. A study by Gott and Hinchliff (2003) with people aged between 50 and 92 in the UK documented how crucial sex is to older people. The study showed some fascinating findings by pointing out that those aged 70 see sex as less important than the participants who were younger.

This study found out that several male participants experienced erectile dysfunction. Therefore, being able to perform sexual intercourse among old men was a means to express one's maleness or youthfulness. Impotence, as a result, became powerfully symbolic and a challenged self-identity. Sexuality is socially constructed in the narratives of men and women under study in ways that construct men as more sexual than women. This is reflected in the emphasis they attached to loss of erectile function, which some experienced and attributed to ageing and present as undermining their masculinity. This is how masculinity is being constructed as intimately tied up with the subject of a sex drive discourse and as under threat from ageing.

The conception of men and women as dissimilar and opposed was cemented in deliberations of the nature of sexual desire. Such deliberations conceptualized the sexuality of men as active and that of a woman as passive. For example, Joseph highlighted, "*As an old man, I can have children till I die, and this cannot happen to an old woman*". From this statement, the male sexual urge was constructed as a natural force over which men could exert little control, unlike women who reach menopause. From the interview extracts, male participants show that performing sexual activity despite their old age is still significant albeit suffering from erectile dysfunction. As a result, there is the use of "Congo Dust" to resist erectile dysfunction by older men. As Joseph says, "*When you reach my age, it becomes difficult to have an erection without the use of traditional herbs*".

The use of age-resisting technology by older men has been widely discussed in the literature. Gutsa (2011) on his study on older people in Zimbabwe talks about *vhuka vhuka*, a traditional herb used by older people to counter sexual dysfunction. For older women, gender identity did not seem to be dependent upon sexual performance. Ideas of ageing as emancipating women in as much as sexuality was concerned emerged. As Smith-Rosberg (1985) notes in his study of puberty and menopause in America, being in a post-menopausal state enabled lessening of suffering from the pregnancy stigma. In his study, he also argued that being in post-menopausal state freed women from managing sexuality around their fertility. A study by Brown (1999) in

Ghana reveals that older people themselves hold negative views in relation to their age. Their perception of old age is the one that sees this period as one characterized by misery, ill-health, and a burden on others. His findings present old age as a time when sexual desire diminishes, menopause sets in, and the fertility of both men and women is naturally controlled. This is theoretically important from the perspective of social constructionism in that societal attitudes towards female sexuality play an important role in influencing sexual attitudes and behaviors in old age. Society views old women as sexually innocent and cannot perform sex anymore, and this has an influence on how older women view sexuality in later life.

The central concerns construed as “ill-health” referred to participant’s mentioning of the manifestation of other diseases besides sexual impotency and the dearth of opportunities for healthcare in a time when one falls sick. The question about old age and health was an important question to participants and for some; their expression was that of frustration and fatigue. The link that is there between old age and the onset of ill-health is shown in participant’s accounts. The following extracts reflect ill-health as an important aspect in ageing:

“Pheew (he took a deep breath), I do not know where to start. But it is commonly known that most of the aged people it’s either they are in wheelchairs as you can see (pointing to his wife in a wheelchair) or they have other health problems. Old age is associated with solitude, and it is so sad to be an old person. Nothing is of interest and we take a lot of pills, and some of the pills we cannot even afford” (David).

For George, the image of an old person is synonymous with physical deterioration. It results in illness and institutionalisation.

“When you are aged, you know that health challenges become the norm and if you are well off, you can go and live at an old people’s home. Ageing is unavoidable; you cannot wear a new shirt every day forever (he laughs)”

In his story, George bemoaned how he forced himself to retire because of hearing problems that he developed at the age of 58 in 2005. He also stressed the relationship that is there between retirement and ill-health following withdrawal from paid employment. He said:

“I developed hearing and eye-sight problems as a result of Diabetes, and this forced me to retire early at the age of 58. I had no option because this affected my work. Since then, I have been

home and I ended up venturing into farming because if you just sit, you will die of stress. Before I started farming, I would always be in bed, and this led to the deterioration of my health. I suffered from depression because of that. I felt lost. So, I told myself, it is time I look for something to do before I die because I was no longer living a healthy life. Sleeping the whole day, huh?".

Isaac views ageing as a time when life becomes slow and it represents the genesis of ill-health,
"To me, ageing is a difficult moment because everything becomes slow and deterioration of health starts to be the norm."

Isaac expressed anxiety over how diseases of old age affect his role as a man:

"I am worried that sometimes I fail to carry out my duties as a man. I am responsible for running some projects here and my grandchildren are there to help me, but sometimes because of diabetes, I lie down. Because of this, I become worried since they are women and cannot do all those things."

John noted the following:

Here and there, you get sick and you become forgetful as well. Sometimes I set appointments that I even forget to honour unless someone reminds me over the phone every hour. Look at how many times you came here (he laughs) and I will tell you that I had forgotten about us meeting. So, these are some of the challenges that come with getting old"

The same feeling of forgetfulness was also mentioned by Joseph, who postulated:

Ageing also means that mentally you are no longer functional because you tend to forget a lot of things in life.

In contrast to those who have physical problems, Olivia's (70, Glen View) conception of old age reflects that she has lived a full life without health problems and is still fit. At this juncture in life, Olivia engaged in reminiscence of her past and what she has experienced in her entire life course. While being an old person would seem to be a bad time for others to mirror on their being, her elation viewpoint on the future shows a sense of appreciation. She said:

"I am happy despite some challenges I faced in life. I have lived my life. I have never been to the hospital except when I was giving birth to my children. I should thank God for that. I have seen my children growing up and my grandchildren. What more could you ask for?

Both narratives noted with concern the quagmire that comes as a result of ageing in form of health deterioration. However, Chiedza a participant from Mt Pleasant practices her agency and tries to be free from diseases by engaging herself in the gym and doing aerobics. She said:

There are problems of high blood pressure when you age, but I try to control it because I go to the gym and that explains why I am still fit."

From the extracts above, it can be noted that ill-health is associated with the presence of diseases and being healthy is associated with the absence of diseases. Scholars such as Morris (2008) argue that the concept of health is relative because it depends on who is conceptualizing it and the categories of class, gender, and age influence how one defines the concept. However, this view by Morris (2008) deviates from the findings of the study as noted in the extracts. Both male and female research participants from different social backgrounds acknowledge a link between old age and ill-health. The link between ageing and health is discussed in literature by various scholars. The findings in the study resonate with the literature discussed earlier. For example, dementia, depression, and high blood pressure are common in Africa. A study by Baiyewu (2009) in Nigeria showed that the severity of diseases among older people is related to the unavailability of social and family support. For Baiyewu (2009), the family and society strongly influence older people's lives in the African setup. Different scholars argue that ageing increases the risk of diabetes, cancer, obesity, hearing, and eye problems (Briggs et al, 2016, Ighondaro, 2016). Moreover, the increase in disability among ageing populations has been noted in developing worlds for the last 30 years (Beard et al., 2016). To Gagliardi (2016), the burden of diseases among older people has been increasing rapidly in the last ten years. In China, in a study done by Lai (2007) on a random sample of 1,504 ageing Chinese who are 55 years or older, most participants reported less positive self-perception of ageing. In most cases, they associate ageing negatively, stating that it comes with many challenges such as physical frailties, negativity from society, low self-esteem, poor health, and low incomes, among others (Lai, 2007).

7.3 Community treatment and Ageing

The way ageing populations are treated is another component that is featured in the data. This is an interesting topic because participants' accounts of this vary quite dramatically, with two men speaking very positively about this and associating this with respect which they attributed in part to their high-status position when working and how this continues with retirement. Yet participants such as Chipo, Chiedza, and others speak about the stigmatisation of older people. To Joseph, a retired politician from Glen View, substantial parts of his story involved being thankful to his community for a lot of respect to him. Respect from the community in his narrative opened a lot of possibilities in his life and he noted,

"I love my community with all of my heart. This is the community that has made me to be where I am. The people here have unity. Though I am not educated, the youth in this area respect me and I see a lot of people coming here to ask for advice. I am not perfect and that I know, but I am treated right here".

John is respected and well-treated by the Mt Pleasant community. He postulated that he does not hold any fear or anxiety because of his age. He had this to say:

"I am well respected in this community because of the position I used to hold. Besides people from my former workplace, I have young people and other middle-aged people from this community who come to me for financial, political, and even social advice. I will open a consultancy company, especially the marriage consultancy company, soon (he laughed). As a result of this, I have no fear whatsoever of being in such a state. I know personally that I am no longer able-bodied, and I am not growing any younger, but people in this community make me not fear to grow old because I know they have my back".

When John was asked what ageing means to him, he responded,

The good side of ageing is that I get first preference in most of the services, for example, in banks and supermarkets. Therefore, ageing is a wonderful feeling because I get respected wherever I go, even in my community. As you know, I had a position that was highly ranked and despite my age, most of the people from the Home Affairs Ministry come to me for advice, and that alone shows people still value me.

David's narrative shows his expression of confidence over some of the youth in the area. He said,

“We have a lot of young people here who have done well despite coming from this poor area. God usually blesses people who help elderly people. I always get help from the youth here in this area and I am respected because they greet me every time.”

George’s construction of ageing shows that he still believes that aged people are still important in society:

“Some say we are useless, and the only thing left for us is death. And I do not like how people talk about old age. Give us a chance; we are still important in this society.”

However, he expressed his aversion on the association of ageing and witchcraft where aged people have been mistreated. He thus shared a story:

You know, when one grows old, in our culture, people associate you with witchcraft and that is so bad. My mother was at one time accused of being a witch and this affected her a lot because she was chased out of her community in the rural areas of Masvingo after witchcraft accusation. I ended up staying with her here up until death. So, when you get old, you automatically become a witch? That is so bad and I hate that”.

Chipo noted the impact of social preconception against ageing populations that has led to social seclusion and stigmatization from the part of younger generations.

“I always tell my grandchildren that they should value my experience as their grandmother. When we were growing up, my grandparents used to speak and we would listen attentively because they represented a generation that has wisdom. In this day and age, the younger generation tends to shove old people into a corner and that is dangerous. Respect us”

Chiedza expressed her dismay over ageing, illuminating how her age that was used to be referred to as the “golden age” has been put into shame. Traditionally, older people have been viewed as a source of advice, and wisdom is associated with the “golden age”. She explained:

“A breakdown in our society is there now because old people are no longer valued. We have lost our importance in the society because when I grew up, it was known that older people were an “oasis” of wisdom on matters of importance such as marriage. Now some of my grandchildren were married and none of them introduced me to their spouses before they got married. You will only hear them telling you that I am getting married. Where is the person? Yea, this generation

is something else; maybe we do not know anything. My generation was the last to give respect to older people. The only thing they want is leaving me with their babies (she laughs). No one respects golden age”

Olivia lamented how the younger generation of the community lacks respect for her as an old woman and the questions she posed showed her resentment:

“My grandson once said chembere inonetsa iyi, meaning this old-lady is worrying. Whenever he starts saying this, I feel isolated. There are things that I cannot do now and my grandson should be there for me, but sometimes he complains. And this really hurts me. Yes, I am old, but why are you failing to respect me? He is like my own son; I have done everything for him since childhood because his father died when he was still young. In this community, being an old person has lost value, there is no respect from this young generation.”

In relation to the treatment she gets from her community, Miriam bemoaned mistreatment from the community, particularly the youth. She highlighted the differences that exist between her cohort and the generation of today. In her account, she brings to light how her gender is threatened. She narrated:

“The youth in this community do not even greet someone who is older than them and I feel pity for them because they are going to be terrible parents. I wonder; what kind of people are they? Is it because I am an old woman or? Because they do not do this to men, I am sure. You have heard of Shona proverb that says, “Chisi hachieri musi wacharimwa” (loosely translated as “the consequences of bad behaviour are not immediate, but they will come); that is what the youth of today should know. You know when we grew up, we knew it was a shame not to greet people who are older than you but I am surprised with the youth of today. The youth in this community have no respect for me and they are so rude. Since I live here alone, I even try to send some of the youth in the community to buy me bread at the shops and they always claim to be too busy. The generation we have today has useless people who cannot even help each other”.

From the extracts, it can be noted that there are mixed feelings over how old people are treated. It can also be noted that old women suffer the most from the mistreatment in their respective communities. Hence, the notion of gender comes to play. The extracts show that older men are content with how they are treated in their communities although they encounter the mistreatment

here and there, but it is not severe as explained by old women. From the findings, it can be noted that people are accorded respect because of their positions in the society. For example, both John and Joseph are respected because of the positions they have held before retirement. The former was District Police officer and the latter is a retired politician. In the interviews, the two noted that people consult them for advice. Therefore, one's position in the community determines the level of respect that one can be accorded. This resonates with what Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992) argued that positions are determined by the sum and structure of an agent's capital portfolio that is compared to that of other agents in the same field. John and Joseph's social capital is significant in soliciting respect from their community. More importantly, by using phrases such as "I love my community with all of my heart" in his account, Joseph showed how his emotional investment in Glen View is important.

In respect to Joseph and John, their stories show that individuals who have "done well" and shared generously during their lifetime are more likely to enjoy their later years as ones of relaxation and a sense of achievement. John and Joseph's accounts show that their services are consulted for important matters, and this alone brings to light the level of respect accorded to them. These findings echo other studies done across the world where ageing populations are viewed positively. In a study by UK Carers (2016), there are positive and constructive views of older people in the UK and across Europe where older people are often associated with wisdom, experience, and morals compared to young adults. A study by NHS Information Centre for Health and Social Care (2010) brings to light how a typical 75-year-old compared to a typical 25-year-old are more likely to be regarded as good at settling arguments, politeness, and understanding other people's opinions.

A study by Nhongo (2002) found out that African older people also view ageing positively. They regard it as a source of hope for youngsters, as a blessing to societies, and as a critical human resource for the continuation of culture, customs, norms, and values. According to Monasch and Clark (2004), one third of households found in Sub-Saharan African are headed by an older person. Due to these huge responsibilities, older people, especially older women who live longer than older men, find themselves an important group in the society. Due to this, their perception about aging is positive. For the female participants in the study, there is a general consensus of the lack of respect from the youth in their respective communities. Both women from the three

areas bemoan mistreatment; hence, there are no differences in how they are treated according to their class. Chiedza's reference to the "breakdown of the society", and the question posed by Miriam during an interview, "Is it because I am an old woman?" depict the issue of gender. The possible decline in the valuing of older people has been widely discussed in available literature. According to research that has been conducted across the UK, the US and across Europe, it was found out that young adults and the society at large view older people as frail and people who have low social status (Gatz & Pearson, 1988). The view by old women participants echoes with a study by Seefeldt et al. (1977) that revealed that 67% of US young adults see older people as generally passive, and as a result, they are not respected. Another review of literature revealed that older people's perceptions of ageing differ with society and culture as well as continent (Blazer & Hybels, 2004, Cheng et al., 2009). In an English Longitudinal Study of Ageing (ELSA) done in England amongst older people by Demakakos et al., (2007), in a group of 10, 6 were of the view that old people are not accorded respect in society. Similarly, other studies by scholars such as Levy et al.(2017), and Davis et al.(2011) of old people in Europe and the US, revealed that older people are not fully respected in society like people of other age categories.

Nyanguru (2000) postulates that some Africans hold negative perceptions of older people. There are instances where ageing populations are seen as possessing supernatural powers which cause ills and misfortunes in a community (Help Age International, 2000). In most developing countries, it was common that an older person is highly susceptible to being accused of witchcraft and would be banished from the society (Help Age International, 2002). A study by Gwadamirai (2009) in Kenya brings to light that older people, especially women, would flee from their rural homes to reside in urban areas because of fear of being labelled witches and being burnt alive in their society.

Lyn Segal (2013), in her book "Out of Time: The Pleasures and the Perils of Ageing", argues that age and ageing may appear elusive and complicated when looked at from any personal perspective, yet across society, they are monotonously orchestrated in terms of war of the generations. In this case, old women participants pointed to the youth as enablers of their mistreatment in their respective society.

There is also literature influenced by the New Sociology of Childhood (James & Prout, 1997) which argues that we live in an adult-centric society in which adulthood is taken as the norm and

childhood a process of becoming an adult. While the New Sociology of Childhood does not really engage with old age, it does deconstruct adulthood and how this is constructed through projections of ignorance and innocence onto children. One could argue that similar kinds of dynamics and power relations are sustained by adults in relation to ‘old people’, and that old people and children occupy similar “statuses” in an adult-centric world.

Thus, older people may be spoken to like children. For example, Mayall (1994) argues that what differentiates children from adults is that they are not adults, as persons and as a social group, they lack adulthood. This absence of adulthood can be conceptualized as deficiency, setback, and oppression on the part of children. The components may differ with respect to individuals and societal standpoints. What is common to the intergenerational relationship of children to adults is that children are inferior to adults and the same can be said about older people. Qvortrup (2002: 71) writes argues that, “I would suggest characterizing childhood as a minority category, the members of which are marginalized in relation to adult society and exposed to paternalistic treatment while their constructive ability is slighted.”

Ramakuela et al. (2014) studied how older women in Limpopo, South Africa, perceive ageing and menopause. The findings of the study revealed that old women continue to be discriminated and stigmatized by members of the community. However, in the rural areas of Limpopo, ageing populations are respected because they are regarded as veterans who deserve special attention in the community. Ramakuela et al. (2014), however, argued that although they are accorded respect, they are still addressed as *gogolu* which means “that old woman”.

The community would also refer to them as old women who are useless, physically weak, very old, and mentally unstable. Most of the old women who were drinking alcohol and were being promiscuous were never respected in their respective communities (Ramakuela et al., 2014). It can be noted from the interviews that there is a difference in how older women and women are treated in their respective communities as a result of gender and class. This inequality brings intersectionality into play as a theory fit for this study. Critical to intersectionality is the idea that the classifications used for human identity markers are constructed socially (Creshaw, 1991). These classifications (class and gender) generate variances between groups, which are propagated by society, and in this study, old women are suffering from mistreatment by the community. To legitimize intersectionality in the study, it can be noted that social classifications

such as “old women and old men” are indiscriminate cultural constructions that are used to explain the difference and sustain the social order in a society. Therefore, this explains why there is a difference in how old women and old men under study are treated in their respective communities.

7.4 Dependency

According to Gale et al. (2015), ageing is a stage where one witnesses some level of frailty, and it denotes a degree of dependency on the part of old people. Material dependency arises because the old cannot earn their living and physical dependency arises because the process of ageing involves a physical and even mental weakening (Brown, 1982). The challenges arise because old age is a period of increasing dependency, physically, materially, socially, and emotionally. If these special needs are not met fully, old age may become a problem to both the individual and the society (Brown, 1982). The elderly are more frequently ill than the rest of the population and they regularly suffer from physical disabilities such as partial loss of hearing, sight, and arthritic joints.

This observation resonates with the findings of the study where both male and female participants acknowledged that ageing results in dependence. Although the ability of ageing populations is negatively affected by ageing, it is not always the case that they are precluded from their daily functions independent of other people. Therefore, dependence is not always the case, especially for female participants who revealed a noticeable level of economic freedom. According to Brown (1982), many find it hard to accept a dependent role and fight to assert independence which they lack the means to substantiate, often in the process, alienating and exasperating the very people they depend on. The following extracts depict some form of independence on the part of old women participants:

“You see, if you are of my age, there are things that you cannot do and would want help from your children and grandchildren. I receive my pension which is nothing, but I have this baby care center here in Mt Pleasant that I run and I make money out of it. I also have a house in Glen Norah that I have rented out. I do not believe on the assumption that older people are incapable. Here and there, I would need help but I make my own decisions at the end of the day” (Chiedza).

“I have independence even now and I do not depend on anyone. I have my own money and I work with my own hands. I oversee my life, and I take control of it. I do not depend on donations that are meant for old people” (Miriam).

“I purchase agricultural produce in Mbare for resale and I have done this for a very long time. I sell cabbages, tomatoes, onions and other various agricultural produce. It is this same activity that enabled me to provide education for my children. I receive money from my children but I can even sustain myself without them because of this” (Olivia).

“Though we celebrate long life, ageing means you are now dependent on your children or other people very close to you for everything. I am sure you know there is a Shona proverb that says “Chirere chigokurerawo” (literally translated, this could be rendered as: take care of the young ones so that they may take care of you in old age). So, my children always take care of me though I feel I am not yet that useless. My children, who are based in the UK and South Africa, always make sure that they send money to me at the end of every month. (Joseph).

The excerpt from Chiedza above and other precepts from other female participants in this study highlight some level of independence. Therefore, a fundamental concern for female participants, inasmuch as independence is concerned, was being in a position to manage their financial decisions irrespective of their gender.

7.5 Loss of Self- Esteem and Loneliness

Old age has also been categorized as a threat to one’s identity. More importantly, loneliness was also identified as a theme. The story by George, where he cited that the onset of ill health as a result of ageing derailed his esteem in the society, is a case in point. He lamented:

“I now have diminished physical health and the onset of ill-health reduced my esteem in the society. I feel that I am weary because I can no longer do things that I had a passion for. To be honest with you, the confidence I used to have when I was still a Lecturer at the University of Zimbabwe is no longer there. Ageing is something that we cannot avoid; it is a very difficult moment.”

The lack of esteem on the part of old populations has been documented in existing literature. For example, in a study done in Zimbabwe, it was revealed that 48% of the institutionalised elderly felt sad because of poverty and supposed uselessness in society (Hungwe, 2010). Although Isaac

noted the exciting experience that comes with ageing, his narration captured a sense of things ending or at least getting closer to ending. Commenting on ageing, he said,

“With ageing comes the problem of loneliness. There will come a time where you will become old and cannot help yourself.”

Isaac was, however, overtaken by emotions that had been buried for a decade (10 years after the death of his wife). He bemoans the quagmire that comes when you lose a loved one because of age and he likened ageing to a boat that can sink because it is obsolete. With watery eyes, showing signs of grieving, he said,

“Everybody wants to have a long life, but what good is it when your life partner is dead (he paused), and your children are too busy to visit? The life of being an aged person is difficult when you only realise that you are heading towards death; the more you increase your years of living, the more you are drawing closer to death. It is like a boat that has grown old and anytime it can sink. Let me also say no one wants to die young and no one wants to get old. Ageing is unavoidable, and I am lucky that I am still active.”

David had this to say:

Old age is associated with solitude, and it is so sad to be an old person. Nothing is of interest and we take a lot of pills, some of which we cannot even afford”.

From the extracts above, it can be noted that elderly people have less opportunity to make new friendships and tend to depend for companionship on the continuity of longstanding relationships. As spouses and relatives of their age move away or die, old people look more and more to their surviving relatives and neighbours for affection, friendship, and reassurance. They can easily become very dependent on a small number of people for social contact. The other challenge to growing old often involves very considerable adjustments for the individual who must accept increasing physical dependency and consequent loss of autonomy and status.

7.6 Summary of the Chapter

This Chapter is an exposition of the meaning and experience of ageing from the perspective of ageing populations. In other words, the social construction and deconstruction of ageing from the perspective of older people has been discussed in this chapter. It was noted in the chapter that

there are differences in how ageing is experienced between participants under study. Intersectionality, Bourdieu's theory of practice, and the social constructionist approach were used to analyze the findings of the study. A number of themes were identified, and some key differences and similarities were noted on the construction of ageing as a result of gender and class.

It was noted in the study that old age, and notably for women, was a stage marked by perceived loss of beauty and formation of wrinkles. Taking this as a signifier of ageing, most of my women participants opposed ageing. Nevertheless, both men and women understood that old age came with physiological changes, and there was a greater incidence of diseases and declining physical conditions. The study also noted that one's social construction of ageing was a result of one's history. Social constructionists argue that the avenue to understanding the world is a product of a historical process of interaction between groups of people. This brings into the picture the interplay between this social constructionist belief and the notion of habitus by Bourdieu that sees one's actions as a result of primary and secondary socialization.

The findings also demonstrated divergences between how old men and women perceive and experience ageing. The differences are seen in how men and women are treated in their respective communities and the notion of gender comes into play as a result of these treatments, and this legitimizes intersectionality where social categories such as "old women and old men" are indiscriminate cultural edifices that are used to explain differences and to sustain social order in a society (Crenshaw, 1991). The study also illustrated how ageing was associated by some participants with loss of self-esteem and dependency. Interestingly, although the theme of dependency was identified, old women showed some level of independence by being able to manage their financial resources irrespective of their gender. The next chapter deals with the livelihood strategies, opportunities, networks, and institutions of ageing populations in Zimbabwe.

CHAPTER 8

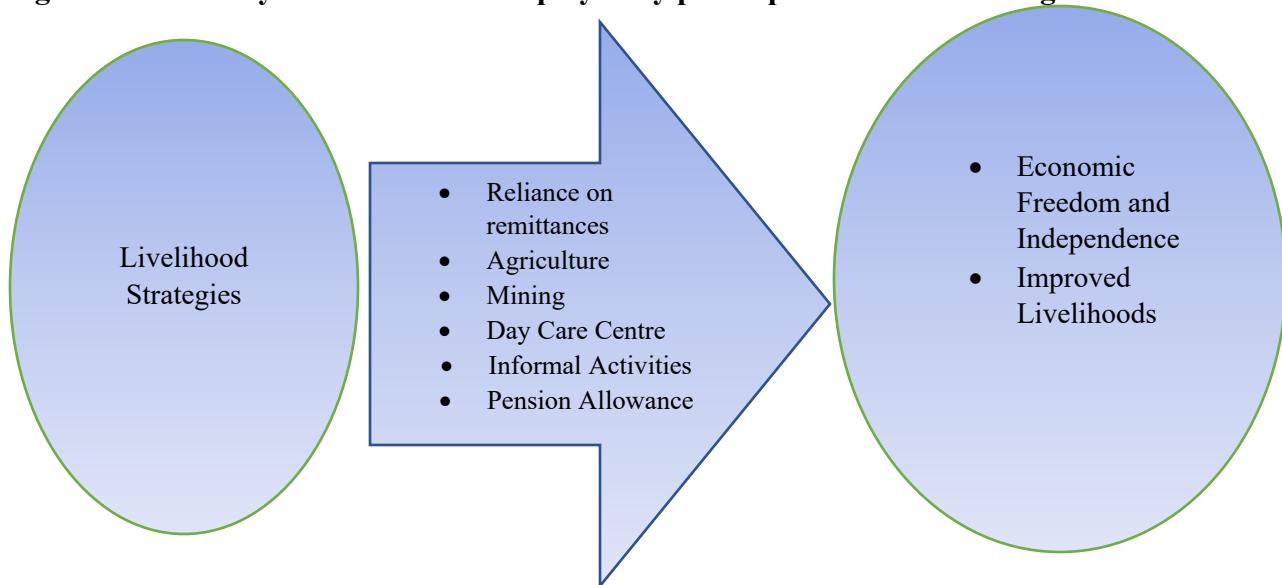
DO GENDER AND CLASS COUNT? LIVELIHOOD STRATEGIES, OPPORTUNITIES, AND INSTITUTIONS OF AGEING POPULATIONS

8.0 Introduction

Livelihood strategies, opportunities, and institutions of ageing populations are discussed in this chapter alongside the impact of gender and class on the same. . This chapter considers agentic forms of social action that are recognized as influenced by the diverse lived experiences of ageing populations in different locations of Harare. Cognizant of this, the discussion that follows attempts to provide answers to the 2nd and 3rd research questions that focus on the livelihood strategies older people adopt to ensure survival and how they navigate class and gender differences. A livelihood in this sense comprises the capital (social, economic, and political) and undertakings that are necessary for the attainment of a living. Chambers and Cornway (1992) view a livelihood as composed of people, their abilities, and the mechanisms of making a living which include assets, food, and income. It can only be sustainable when it is able to withstand and recover from shock and stress as well as ensure provisions for generations to come (Chambers & Cornway, 1992). Strategies in this discussion are seen as broad, progressively implemented, and planned to ensure one's survival. In this Chapter, I brought to light the strategies of making a living of the ageing populations in connection to the capital they possess as well as class and gender. I argue that ageing is not the end of life, but rather, there is a breath of future on the part of ageing populations as a result of mechanisms that they employ in order to take care of themselves and their families. The other argument that I have put forward in this chapter is that ageing populations devise mechanisms of making a livelihood and that their realities are not always shaped within the confines of gender and class. The study also put forward an argument that ageing populations are a populace that can act as the voice of the voiceless who can speak about the injustices taking place in the country. The study shed light on what everyday life in Zimbabwe looks like. The chapter starts by giving a summary of mechanisms employed by participants in the form of a diagram. The discussion that follows brings to light several emerging themes such as: firstly, reliance on remittances: a social contract between the child /grandchild and the parent/guardian; secondly, agriculture, mining and day-care centre: towards escaping financial poverty, thirdly, informal activities towards monetary

independence, and fourthly, pension: a functional or dysfunctional token. The last section deals with opportunities, networks, and institutions that are there to support elderly people.

Figure 8: Summary of Mechanisms employed by participants to earn a living



8.1 Reliance on remittances: a social contract between the child and the parent/guardian

Remittances are a source of livelihood for the participants, and there is a similarity between participants despite gender and class. Their children/grandchildren always make sure that they send money to their parents/guardians, which describes a social contract where one has to take care of the elderly not because it is a tradition, but because of what they have done for you. This resonates with Childs et al. (2011) study that brings to light how daughters who reside outside their places of birth make provisions for their parents who are of old age in the Chinese rural area of Tibet. The study shows how daughters give back to their parents because they have benefitted from the investments that were made by their parents which makes them financially independent from their parents. Another study by Kaninji (1995) of older women in Zimbabwe's low-income settlements revealed that older women with fewer resources largely depended on their grown-up children for survival. A study in Ghana by Darteh, Namtogmah, and Kumi-Kyereme (2016) brings to light the mutual relations of parents and their elderly parents and how this remains the best form of support for elderly people. This is regarded as "filial piety", which refers to the kind of relations between the aged and their offspring. Therefore, in this study, it can be noted that this reciprocal relationship between children, their parents and family members is a crucial facet in old age.

The following extracts from my study show the kind of relationships that are forged between adult off-spring and aged people, and how ageing populations look up to their off-springs for survival:

“Though we celebrate long life, ageing means you are now dependent on your children or other people very close to you for everything. I am sure you know there is a Shona proverb that says “Chirere chigokurerawo” (literally translated, this could be rendered as taking care of the young ones so that they may take care of you in old age). Hence my children always ensure that my upkeep is catered for though I feel I am not yet that useless. My children, who are based in the UK and South Africa, always make sure that they send money to me end of every month (Joseph)

“I receive money from my children, and it is part of the money that I use to sustain myself” (Olivia)

“My children are based in South Africa and they always make sure that they send groceries and money every month” (Miriam).

“Here and there, my children who are based in South Africa send something for me to survive on” (George)

“My children who are all here provide groceries and money to me all the time. It looks like they compete to send money to me because I am always receiving Ecocash from them” (Chiedza).

One thing to note is that, Ecocash is a mobile transaction platform for Econet (a telecommunications company) in Zimbabwe that enables people to carry out monetary transactions such as sending and receiving money from one person to another, buying prepaid airtime, and paying for goods and services.

However, the situation is different for David, who explained that his children went to South Africa and do not send him anything. Thus, he earns a living through handouts from people in the neighbouring area of Hatfield, and some of his relatives send him money here and there. Though not regularly, the neighbours and church members (where his wife is a member) bring food and money that he uses to earn a living. The following extracts are a clear indication of how David makes a living:

“There are people in this area who are aware of my plight, and most of the time, I see them bringing food and even money. My wife here (pointing to his wife) gets support in the form of money from her church members. So we survive through that.”

Prior to conducting fieldwork, I had an informal conversation with the youth and middle-aged in the area, and it seems almost everyone in the area knows the plight of David (that is, taking care of her his wife who is sick). I then realized that David has a strong social capital that is based on empathy. “Here and there”, as David narrated, there are people in the area who come to donate food for his wife and he felt grateful to be remembered in times of need by the Epworth community,

“At one time, I saw a group of young people coming and they said they know what I am going through, so they have decided to bring me some stuff. They gave me some groceries and that alone shows people in this area help each other in times of need.”

The above statements by Joseph, Chiedza, David, Miriam, and George indicate that old people are dependent and they rely on various people in their lives for assistance. Although in the previous chapter it was shown that women have a certain level of financial independence, as indicated by Olivia and Chipo’s extracts, the above extracts indicate that economic capital and social capital are central to one’s survival. For David, his survival is based on interpersonal relationships or community ties, which explains why he gets help from people around his community. In a study by Mudege and Ezeh (2009), among elderly men and women in Nairobi, friendship ties afforded them economic and social security when it comes to food and other basic needs.

8.2. Agriculture, Mining, and Day-Care Centre

Joseph benefitted from the Zimbabwean agrarian reform, a process that involved the redistribution of land from whites to blacks. The impetus behind the land reform programme was to alter the ethnic imbalance of land ownership. As a result, Joseph (a former politician), because of political capital, owns 200 ha of land in Chivhu, 144km South of Harare. He grows tomatoes and cabbages that he sells at a market in Mbare, Harare. One of the most noted achievements of Joseph is that he also owns 100 herds of cattle and feels proud since this is a symbol of wealth. He got most of his capital through what he referred to as “Command Agriculture”, contract

farming under the auspices of the government of Zimbabwe which ensures that select farmers can contribute to food sufficiency through production of targeted maize yields. He had this to say,

"I have 200 ha of land that I got as a result of the land-reform program and I grow mostly cabbage and tomatoes that I sell in Mbare. I also grow maize for commercial purposes and I am one of the few farmers who have been selected under the scheme of Command Agriculture, which is a noble idea. I am also into cattle ranching and this is where I invested heavily because even if I am to fall very sick, my cattle will sustain me. My two sons got married and I gave them cattle for lobola".

However, he lamented the way his herd of cattle was lessened in 2019 because of a cattle disease named “January disease” that ravaged the farming community. He lost 25 cows and he is not the only farmer who was so unfortunate to lose cattle in Chivhu. Joseph explained that this challenge of losing a herd of cattle was a blow to him because his livelihood was endangered. He had this to say:

"I lost about 25 cows to a disease called January disease. Some people in this area are no longer into cattle ranching because they lost all their cattle to this disease. This was a blow to me because I would now have more than 150 herds of cattle; however, I am grateful; for not losing everything. I have always told myself that in life, we fall and we rise up. Therefore, I accepted it and I moved on".

The other participant, George, earns a living through farming and to him, the transition from a Lecturer to a farmer was a difficult moment because he knew nothing about farming.

"Farming is labour intensive as it involves a lot of hard work, and requires much responsibility, and it is not an investment where you wake up rich. When I retired, I knew nothing about farming and all I wanted was to have an extra income; I had no option, but it was difficult in the early stages. I now depend on farming for a livelihood which provides me with some financial benefits for my spirited work through the year. As you know, the Shona Proverb, "Ateya mariva murutsva haachatyi kusviba magaro" (The one who hunts mice in burnt areas does not care having dirty buttocks)".

George is a beneficiary of the land reform program and he started serious farming after he retired as a Lecturer. He grows soya beans and maize for commercial purposes. Explaining what it is like to be a farmer, George said,

“There are ups and downs with this kind of investment. Depending on the size of the farm, you might have seasonal downtime. Grain farming keeps me busy because of its intense busy periods where I have to do tillage and planting, and then I get a little seasonal break while the crop is growing until we get to harvest time”.

George expressed his disappointment over how farmers are not taken seriously and the bias of a Zimbabwean type of government-led agricultural programme termed Command Agriculture. Command Agriculture is meant to increase production among local farmers by providing agricultural imports.

“Farmers are the unsung heroes in the society. They are neglected all over, but we are the ones who provide food. Everything that is edible is a result of farmers. Farming has also been compromised in Zimbabwe because of command Agriculture that selects people based on political affiliation and not merit. We have experienced farmers, but they never get a chance to be beneficiaries of command agriculture. This program has never produced any tangible results so far.”

Challenges that George faces inasmuch as his livelihood activities are concerned, range from delays in payment by the Zimbabwean Grain Marketing Board (GMB) and the effects of climate change. The Zimbabwean Grain Marketing Board, which is a grain trading enterprise in Zimbabwe that mainly trades in grain such as oilseeds and cereals. It also specializes in supporting farmers with transport logistics for Agricultural products and inputs. Expressing disappointment, he said:

“As a farmer, I face some serious challenges induced by climate change. I depend on the rain that comes from God up above because I am not into irrigation farms. Irrigation farming is very expensive and I am not in a position to afford it. I now feel the effects of climate change because we never had enough rains last season, and this affects our yields. Besides that, late payments by GMB causes cash flow challenges and as a result, I do not pay my workers in time. I will end up using some of the money that I receive from my children to cover all those expenses”.

John is involved in mining and he owns a mining claim in Mazowe (45km North of Harare CBD), where gold is a major mineral deposit. Although John is a small-scale miner, he boasts of employing ten people at his mine who are residents of the Mazowe area. To John, mining is proving to be big business because he is earning a living through it. However, as a small-scale miner, he bemoans corruption in the mining sector involving officials from the government:

“The problem Zimbabwe is not directly benefiting from its minerals is the corruption involving government officials. It starts from acquiring a license itself to mine. The process involves a lot of bribing and corruption. The licensing process should be an easy process and cost-effective. As you know, one of the laws permits foreign companies to own 100% of a mining license for any mineral deposit, save for platinum and diamonds. This is very dangerous because we are facing stiff competition from foreign-owned companies, and the government is doing nothing to help the locals involved in mining”.

One of the challenges faced by John in his business enterprise involves the proliferation of groups of people called *Mashurugwi*. The *Mashurugwi* have a bad reputation for being the pioneers for machete violence in Zimbabwe which started as localized violence in the mining areas of Shurugwi, Midlands Province (350km south of Harare Central Business District). It is historically claimed that this area was a place of refuge for criminals who were evading the police in the late 1980s. They hid in a disused mine where they were difficult to access due to the hard terrain. These groups of men carried out illegal gold mining and often got involved in local machete wars. They earned the notorious name, *Mashurugwi*, a term that soon became a reference name for all groups of men engaged in illegal gold mining in Zimbabwe. He registers his disappointment over how these gangs caused havoc and losses at his mine:

“The challenge that I face the most is mainly with the gangs called Mashurugwi. They are always armed with machetes and they kill without hesitation. At one time, after my workers got gold, they came and robbed all the gold that we had at my mine. One of my workers who tried to resist was butchered with a machete. This has become a risky activity because anytime these guys can come and my workers are living in fear.”

To curb the robberies that come with these gangs, John explains:

"I applied for a gun ownership license at a local police station so that I become a legal owner of a gun. Once I get it, I will then use it to curb these Mashurugwi because if we do not stop them, we will continue to make losses."

Continued involvement in work appears to be Chiedza's journey, which gives meaning to her life. After her retirement as a social worker, Chiedza opened a Day Care Centre for one year to three-year-old babies at her house in Mt Pleasant. The rationale is that people are busy at work, and they would want to leave their babies being taken care of whilst they are undertaking their day-to-day activities. She takes care of 15 babies from the range of 1 year to 3 years, and because this is an overwhelming task, she employed two women who provide assistance to her. This Day Care Centre is her source of livelihood, and she echoed how this has grown over the years to become her passion. As noted in Chiedza's extract, her livelihood is influenced by her lived experiences. She stresses:

"When I got retired in 2015, I said to myself if I sit, I will die, so let me open a Day-care centre at my house, and I am taking care of 15 babies here. Although it is a difficult task, considering that I am dealing with babies, I have developed some bond with babies here. Over the years, I have developed a general fondness for my job. I do love this new role, and my helpers are incredible."

Chipo from Epworth does peri-urban Agriculture. However, she bemoans the lack of land so that she can grow for commercial purposes.

"I have a small land where I grow vegetables and I sell them, but I do not have enough land."

From the statements above, it can be noted that participants complement income they receive from their children with their involvement in Agriculture, Mining, and Day-care work. John, George, and Chiedza have been formally employed before and by involving themselves in different livelihood activities, they have shown that they consider retirement not as a closed chapter of work. They have resisted the caricature of being labeled as older people who are unproductive (Seefeldt et al., 1977, UN Economic Commission for Africa, 2007). However, the participant's approaches differ, especially for those involved in Agriculture, in that Chipo does not have access to huge, vast land for agriculture compared to Joseph and George. Although the three are involved in Agriculture, there is a difference in how they are utilizing the land.

George's focus is on growing soya beans and maize, whilst Joseph is involved in cattle ranching and the growing of tomatoes and cabbages. The evidence from the extracts also shows that not everyone can access land for agriculture. As the findings suggest, it is those from better households that are likely to have vast pieces of land because of the capital they possess. Moreover, those with former high ranks, such as John, a former District Police Officer who owns a mining claim in Mazowe and owning such claims in Zimbabwe, involves economic and political capital.

These findings are theoretically important because they bring to light the notion of intersectionality, where class is an important category. Intersectionality demonstrates the relations of force and control among varied groups (Bronner & Paulus, 2017) and it reveals the way privilege works. For example, because of political capital, Joseph was privileged to be a beneficiary of the land reform programme and Command Agriculture. On the other hand, George bemoans how his proceeds are delayed from GMB, mainly because of corruption, a situation that Joseph never postulated. George also bemoans how he is not involved in Command Agriculture. Intersectionality thus takes into cognizance the social power dynamics, social inequality, and identity differences among different groups of people (Walgenbach, 2017).

Bourdieu's notion of capital and the field also comes into play. Chipo is from an informal settlement, Joseph is from a high-density suburb, and George is from a low-density suburb. It can be noted that Joseph and George are beneficiaries of the land reform programme because of their political inclination. Joseph's political capital and economic capital is strong because he is involved in Command Agriculture. Therefore, it is imperative to note that apart from the privilege to get in a societal field, the amount of social capital that is possessed by one is a determinant of the point in social space. Positions on social fields are relative. To Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992), positions are moderated by the agent's structure of capital and volume comparing with others in relation to cultural and economic capital. By paying attention to the conversion of capital, Bourdieu clearly deals with capital as a means through which inequality in terms of power relations is perpetuated. For example, the lack of capital by Chipo is a major challenge and because of this, one can note gender vulnerability. Scholars such as Thieme and Siegmann (2010) discuss the part played by social capital in networks of migration using a

gender perspective to show how gender based vulnerability is enabled by social capital through the perpetuation of masculine domination.

Social capital's importance is noted in Chiedza's livelihood activity that involves baby care work. In this case, social capital can be viewed as an asset that has benefits which can stretch above the individual and cascade to the community. To Bourdieu, social capital in this sense is seen as an avenue through which Chiedza is making a living. It, therefore, becomes clear that one's social capital is an important determinant of one's position in a society and the status of one is most evidently resilient and an irrefutable class symbol. From Chiedza's narrative, it can be noted that interpersonal resources form the bedrock of social capital. Kilpatrick et al. (2003) state that such relations form trust that with time lead to reciprocal and cooperative transaction processes. Trust thus creates the foundation of exchange relations for Chiedza and the residents of Mt Pleasant who trust the former with their babies. The same view is shared by Kilpatrick et al. (2003), who aver that the absence of trust is inimical to social capital creation because reciprocity and cooperation are generated from trust. One can also note that social capital enactment in daily relations and transactions navigating complex power matrixes led to the residents of Mt Pleasant trusting Chiedza with their babies, and this in a way, strengthened her dominant position within the community.

In addition, Bourdieu (1986) brings to light the interplay that is there between different types of capital and how for instance there can be the conversion of cultural capital into different forms of capital. Bourdieu (1986) makes a distinction on the cultural forms of capital which are mainly in three forms. Institutionalized cultural capital relates to the attainment of agriculture. Cultural capital in its institutionalized form pertains to the tastes, knowledge, skills, and values of people. Cultural capital in its objectified state pertains to the possessed cultural goods. People with little capital find it hard to progress between the different societal strata. This leads to increased societal inequality (Bronner & Paulus, 2017). Bourdieu is of the view that this device strengthens the stratified social organization due to either knowledge or capital availability of resources which structure how the social world is perceived (Bourdieu, 1986). In this case, Chiedza is a holder of a degree in social work, and this implies that she has cultural capital in the institutionalized state and thus, she has been trusted with her baby day care Centre where knowledge is shared between babies and adults. . From Chiedza's narrative, it can be seen that

her cultural capital led to her having good social capital. In other words, it is easy for one to accumulate social capital when he/she is in possession of cultural capital. Therefore, this makes this form of cultural capital a critical part that joins the social positions of people. Challenges faced by the participants are unique and dynamic to each individual. However, the more common between Chipo and George, despite class and gender differences, is the notion of economic capital. From the extracts, it can be noted how George bemoans the delay in payment by GMB. Chipo's challenge involves a lack of land to do subsistence and commercial farming mainly because she does not have the economic and political capital. For John, the challenge is with the proliferation of machete gangs called "*Mashurugwi*", and they are responsible for the losses that John faces. However, because of economic and political capital, John planned to curb this by applying for a gun license. Moreover, John is a former police officer; hence the process becomes easy for him. In Zimbabwe, owning a gun is not easy.

Joseph lost 25 cattle due to a disease referred to as January disease, a disease transmitted by ticks and as a result it leads to high cattle mortality. His response to the loss shows resilience, "*I have always told myself that in life, we fall and we rise up. Therefore, I accepted it, and I moved on*". This alone shows that old people are resilient and can face challenges as they come by. Although there is literature that sees aged people as withdrawn and unproductive (Hazan, 2000, King et al., 2017; Palmberger, 2017), from the extracts, it can be noted that the aged practice their agency by coming up with coping strategies to counter the challenges to their livelihood activities. Furthermore, literature overlooks the fact that aged people are a diverse and heterogeneous category of people whose experiences represent vastly varied life trajectories.

8.3 Engagement in informal activities

The informal sector in Zimbabwe proliferates because of failed government economic policies. However, the government acknowledged the importance of this sector by establishing a special Ministry of Small and Medium Enterprises in 2005. Several writers concur that participation in the informal economy is a survivalist strategy for many in order to escape poverty (ILO, 2002; Ngundu, 2010). Factors that have directly contributed to the rise of these activities include: loss of employment; low capital, income diversification; supplementing low incomes; or simply earning a living in the absence of alternatives (Dhemba, 1999). The country is deep in the throes of a severe economic crisis. Its currency, the Zimbabwean dollar, has virtually collapsed, prices

of goods are rising fast, manufacturing and exports are dwindling and foreign currency is in short supply (NewsDay, 2020).

Epworth has a shortage of water simply because the Harare City Municipality is failing to supply water to Greater Harare because of overpopulation. Therefore, in Epworth, they only get water once per week. Residents are susceptible to water-borne diseases such as typhoid because they have resorted to other unclean water sources. Chipo developed a plan to make a living out of this. In order to curb water shortages in the area, she drilled a well manually at her house. These wells are drilled on human-energy-based drilling methods to access underground water. Generally, in Epworth's formation is quite soft, and groundwater is relatively shallow. Therefore, it was easy to drill a borehole at her house, and her children funded the project. She said;

“Because there is a shortage of clean water in Epworth, people come to my house for water that I sell for ZWL\$5 per 40 litres and I get around ten customers per day, making an average of ZWL\$50 per day. That is how I make money. I use this money to buy daily basics such as bread”.

One of the challenges that have come up with her livelihood activity is that the borehole requires maintenance, and it is running out of water due to climate change. However, she noted that the money she gets from her children and from selling her agricultural produce, though not enough goes a long way in maintaining this borehole.

For Isaac, one of the projects that he runs involves vending, where he sells agricultural produce at his house. He also has fowl runs at his house, where he keeps broiler chickens for sale.

“I sell fruits and maize here and the fowl runs you see houses broiler chickens that I sell. Most of my customers are from this street and also members of my church. I do all this so that I do not become a parasite to my children.”

To start these small projects, he got the capital from his children, who are in South Africa. He also boosts his financial capital by repairing shoes for people in Glen View and he does this at his house. However, some challenges come with his livelihood activities that range from debts by customers and financial challenges:

“The challenge that comes with my business involves my customers from the church and here in my street. They can buy my chickens on credit, but it takes them long to pay me, and because we

are using a “useless” currency, it is always eroded by inflation. And as a result, I run some financial losses. My children will always come to the rescue whenever I lose money in such a way.”

Despite the popular notion that old people lose their cognitive ability, this is different with Olivia, who was contented to share her livelihood activity that contributes to sustaining her household:

“I purchase agricultural produce in Mbare for resale, and I have done this for a very long time. I sell cabbages, tomatoes, onions and other various agricultural produce. It is this same activity that enabled me to provide education for my children. I receive money from my children, but I can even sustain myself without them because of this”

Olivia laughed at how her children tried to stop her from being involved in vending:

“My children always say I should stop vending because I am now old and I should rest. I am still active and as long as I am still able to count the money or see the notes, why should I stop? (She laughs). They forget that this is the avenue that has generated food and education for them. So as long God continues to bless me with life, I am not going to stop”.

Olivia faces some challenges in trying to earn a living through vending. She narrated:

“I have no access to shelter to sell my goods. I use a card box to place my fruits for sale. The problem comes when the rains approach, I pull my stuff to parts that are dry at the veranda of the shop close to my vending space. When the owner sees this, he starts to insult me and I am always given a warning not to do so. Currently, there is a shop where I leave my stock in. One day my stock was tempered with and I do not know what really happened because my stock was not the one, I had left earlier on. I only got a big sorry from the shop owner, and there was no compensation for the loss. Now I buy little stock to enable me to carry back the stock that is left and come with it the following day.”

Despite getting revenue from vending, Olivia registers her resentment over the way the Municipal police operate because they do not take old age into consideration when undertaking their operations.

“Sometimes I get my stuff confiscated by the Municipal police because they claim we are selling at undesignated places. Some of the vendors are still able-bodied and whenever the police raid us, they can get away with some of their products. Now I am an old woman and obvious that is impossible. I have countless times where I have lost my products to the police and they do not even care whether you are an old person or not. The challenge is getting a place where you can do your vending and a lot of vending sites are dominated by male people and the youth. Now, we the old people are expected to be home”.

In order to continue selling her produce in this area, Olivia highlighted,

“For you to survive in vending these days, you have to be very clever and know what to do at the right time. To continue staying at my workplace, I now provide even bananas and apples to the municipal police here and there.”

She also shared her experience of customers refusing to pay. She said,

“The place I run my business is vulnerable to customers who refuse to pay. You know during holidays such as Christmas and Easter, there will be lots of customers so I might sell fruits up to 7 pm. Most of the people in the nighttime might be drunkards, and with these people I encounter difficulties in paying for the stuff that they purchase. In this type of business, you always give customers before they pay. So, this type of people will then refuse to pay, and I am often pleading with them to pay. They do not do this to some male vendors who are here. So, whenever I run into such a problem, most of the male vendors will stand for me.”

As indicated by participants, buying and selling goods is important to them because of the monetary benefits linked to it, which allows participants to earn a living. As highlighted by participants such as Olivia and Isaac, vending liberates them from reliance on their children, which improves their self-image and boosts their confidence in ways that makes them consider themselves as not dependent but rather independent. In existing literature, aged people are seen as incapable of making progress (Hazan, 2000). Vending is cited as an avenue of old people's livelihoods survival in the 3 cities of Ethiopia namely Dire Dawa, Addis, and Awara as postulated by Help Age International, (2011). The study by Asiazobor's (2011) on the livelihoods of aged women of Nigerian rural areas, it was discovered that vending is used as a strategy for survival in the face of economic meltdown. Similarly, Dimanin's (2011) study of

two groups of urban poor in Kampala, Uganda, street children and older people highlighted that livelihood strategies employed to ensure survival include petty trading and street vending. Bird and Prowse (2008), examining the lives of the elderly South of Zimbabwe in Matebeleland, discovered that elderly people were involved in vending fruits such as bananas, oranges, and wild fruits. These fruits were sold at the service centre and local schools in the area.

From the extracts of participants such as Olivia, it can be suggested that the strategies used by women are embedded in structural bases of gender that form the background to the allocation of vending space. As noted in the extracts, Olivia registered his resentment over how vending space is dominated by men. The domination is a consequence of such entrenchment in plural points of domination characterizing the vending points where the agencies of elderly women most often place women within gendered vulnerability experiences. This signifies the prevalence of gendered power variations which point to the unequally shared power in the social spaces. The sustenance of domination is signified by the regulation by males and their continued dominance in vending spaces, while women remain compromised through not finding allocated vending space. From the discussion by Olivia, it can be noted that such gender patterned economic conditions are moderated by age in the context that older women are expected to be resting at home. It is within the awareness, as mentioned above, of how agency tends to be constrained that old women such as Olivia conceive their strategies. In conversation with Olivia, it was evident that Glen View is construed as a social sphere of gendered and age vulnerabilities. One of the problems faced by Olivia is of male customers refusing to pay because she is a woman, and here the notion of gender comes into play. The discussion by Olivia implies that old women craft various subjective strategies that they discuss at personal level in order to make do with actualities and get venues past structural limitations that characterize their actualities. Olivia is involved in vending and she does so while being mindful of her social environment, as indicated in her extract on mechanisms she employs to escape the economic constraints that outline her realities. This is an indication that old women are cognizant of the part that their lived realities play. Thus, Olivia engages in vending and she partakes in risky economic and social action (for example, bribing the police, fleeing with her goods when police approach, and male customers refusing to pay) through which she meets her goals. The notion of involvement in risky business is linked to one's habitus, according to Bourdieu (1993). For example, in a study of poor urbanites residing in the slopes of Lapaz Hills, in Bolivia, Nathan (2008) explored the

perceptions of risk that constitute a social practice and are facilitated by habitus leading to expectation and opportunity adaptation. Therefore, Olivia's decision to sell in a risky environment is linked to her habitus and position in the field. In addition, one may note that Olivia's narrative brings to light the notion of human agency in how she is taking initiatives and having control of her life, amidst the limitations and confinements that are set by government policies.

While vending is professing to be a major socio-economic development marker for such participants, the benefits accruing from it seem to be constrained by its often unsustainable nature. An example is Olivia's story about some of the losses she encounters through police. For Isaac, the widowed participant, there are customers from his church and area who buy chicken on credit and they take time to pay up the money, and because of this, he runs some financial losses only to be bailed out by his children. These challenges for Olivia and Isaac compromise the financial freedom they hope to get through vending. Thus, their livelihood becomes unsustainable as it does not make do with and recuperate from strains and blows. Hence, whenever they make such losses, their children come to the rescue. With this in mind, it can be noted that in the Bourdieusian analysis of capital, there is a change of capital value in the fields. Bourdieu postulates that there is no intrinsic value in capital but the value of capital is tied to the logic of the fields (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 2006). In other words, variation in regulations within the field can contribute to marked changes in the true value of capital. For example, when the police confiscate Olivia's goods, it means there are losses encountered, hence downward changes of her capital value. Therefore, Olivia's narrative draws attention to the regulations governing capital exchange and value and this determined constrains for her livelihood opportunities.

Olivia's challenges in vending are theoretically profound. The field of vending is constituted of other actors dominant in the field who treat vending as a primary source of livelihood. In this field, there are rules governing this site and in doing so, it brings to light why actors act the way they do in order to earn a living. In the present study, it can be noted how the state, through its regulative (Glen View Municipal Police) and discursive power, structure the regulations of the play in the playing field. Bourdieu (1998a, p.48-51) avers that such regulations are symbols of contestations between the different actors; ruling actors possess power to install regulations that

either be followed or opposed. There is a vending site in Glen View that is recognized by the police and occupation of unregulated space is deemed illegal. This demonstrates how the state through its regulative authority restructures the regulations of the play in the field.

The findings also point out the street politics and reveal that the encroachment of these vending spaces is all hinged on discussed norms and rules for everyday dealings with state agents. Olivia pays bribes to the police as a coping strategy to this challenge. What does this imply for older women? Through conceptualizing agency as an instrumental social action within coexisting experiences of disadvantage, the findings bring to light Olivia's resilience when facing difficult times. In addition, because of the politics of vending space, one may argue that intersectional connotations are embedded in the ideologies that govern this field (Collins, 1990, Crenshaw, 1989). These fields are loaded with multiple class and gendered meanings which moderate the complex realities of aged women. As Olivia noted, the vending space is male-dominated, and youth dominated. Therefore, these heterogeneous experiences of unequal access to resources are visible at both the institutional and community level. Due to this discrimination, experiences are not easily ignored in this study as shown by Olivia's demise. However, despite these challenges, data from Olivia is refuting the claim by intersectionality that realities of an individual are always shaped within the confines of markers of identity such as age (Crenshaw, 1991). I argue, from Olivia's narrative, that it is not always the case that realities of individuals are shaped within the confines of age because , Olivia as an "old woman" competes with the youth for vending space when traditional expectations are that she is supposed to be home because Older people re regarded as physically weak and unproductive (Hazan, 2000).

Olivia's ability to buy and sell shows that she has not lost her cognitive ability. This can be noted in her statement:

"My children always say I should stop vending because I am now old and I should rest. I am still active and as long as I am still able to count the money or see the notes, why should I stop? (She laughs). They forget that this is the avenue that has generated food and education for them. So as long God continues to bless me with life, I am not going to stop".

Chipo's selling of water shows that she practices her own agency and can think beyond what people think about ageing populations. In contrast to how youth perceive aged people as useless and inflexible to change (Hazan, 2000), Chipo is an active agent who creates her realities.

Chipo's innovation shows that an older person has the ability to take initiative of his or her own being. Individuals make informed plans and selections on alternations as evidenced by Elder Jr, (1994). However, it is important to note the agency of individuals is influenced by the opportunities and constraints that exist in given environments. These challenges are constructed by the individual's broader economic, political, and social contexts (Elder Jr et al., 2003). In this case, Chipo's manual borehole requires maintenance and sometimes it runs out of water due to climate change. Chipo does not have enough economic capital for the maintenance of the borehole because the economy in Zimbabwe is not favorable, as explained in her extract below:

"Things are very bad in Zimbabwe and it is not easy sometimes because selling water do not give us enough money to earn a living"

8.4 Functional or Dysfunctional? The Pension allowance

Pension allowances were established to be critical in the study participants' livelihood strategies. Those who receive pension funds every month are the ones who have been formally employed before. Although it contributes to their livelihood, all participants, despite gender and class differences, registered their resentment over how inadequate pension allowance is. The disappointment registered by participants can be noted in the extracts below.

Participants such as David receive pension allowance from the government, which he referred to as "peanuts" because it is not sufficient to meet his family's needs (himself and the wife).

"Yes, I receive an allowance from the government and it is peanuts. If not for people who come here and there to donate things, I do not even know how I was going survive together with my wife".

Besides earning a living through mining activities, John, a former District Police Officer, receives money from the government since he is a pensioner. In commenting about pension, John registers his disappointment over how his pension has lost value,

"I retired with the hope that I will get money every month as a pension, but I am only getting an equivalent of US\$26, down from the US\$400 I have been getting during my first days of retirement. This money has been eaten away by hyper-inflation. It buys nothing. We also queue at the banks in order to withdraw our pensions and the queue will be very long. This is so disappointing because after working so many years, this is what we get?"

Miriam was never formally employed and is not receiving any state pension. Chipo, too, was never formally employed. She said:

"I am not a pensioner because I was never employed by the government."

For George, a former Lecturer, he summarized the conversation about his monthly allowance that he gets from the government by postulating,

"The government should be serious."

Isaac is a pensioner and receiving state pension under National Social Security Authority (NSSA). However, he expressed dismay because to him, the allowance that they receive is too little to even buy basic commodities,

I receive money from NSSA, but the problem is that it is too little. I get ZWL \$80 and as you can see, my grandchild, this money does not buy anything meaningful. It can only buy two bottles of cooking oil and a loaf of bread. When I resigned from work, I was getting US \$80, but now we are receiving ZWL \$80. This is daylight robbery, my grandchild. It would have been better if they were giving us an amount that is equivalent to US \$80.

What about Chiedza? She receives a state pension from the government every month. However, she complained about the little money that they receive, citing hyperinflation in Zimbabwe. Chiedza highlighted that the money that she gets from the government could only buy sugar and cooking oil because of hyper-inflation. It is her business that is providing her with enough income and the support that she gets from her children.

In the contemporary world, social security pensions for the public for older people are increasingly becoming important mechanisms for guaranteeing the security of incomes during older age (International Labour Organization, 2014). However, this is not solely true as noted from the above extracts, and all participants unanimously stressed that the pension allowance provided by the government of Zimbabwe is not adequate to cater for their needs. Therefore, it does not provide income security for aged people. It can also be noted from the findings that those who have not been formally employed do not have access to pension allowance and this brings the notion of intersectionality at play where class is an important category. From the findings, it can be noted that there are two classes involved here; those who receive pension

allowance because they have been formally employed, and those who do not get the allowance because they have not been formally employed. This is supported by literature such as a report by ILO (2018) that illuminates that in developing nations such as South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa; less than 20% of the older populations receive contributory and institutional non-contributory public social security pensions. These become necessary for the 80% of older people who, most of them are vulnerable. The major chunk of elderly men and women in developing nations work in informal sectors during their active years and they are left out from contributory pension schemes, also known as social insurance (ILO, 2018). Dhembra (2013) argues that most African governments, such as Zimbabwe, have failed to honour their policies of providing social assistance to older people, thereby leaving them poverty stricken and vulnerable.

Although the state pension is the foundation of their pension income for many participants, it has failed to be converted into different kinds of capital to make sure that their needs are met. Nonetheless, for women such as Miriam, Chipo, and Olivia, who are not recipients of such supplies, they have to find alternative sources for accessing income in order to survive. These means include selling of water for Chipo, involvement in vending for Olivia, and dependency on children for Miriam.

Theoretically explaining this finding, it can be noted that intersectionality provides explanations to the conception of “difference” (Minda, 1995) which depicts how there is inclusion of some groups and inclusion of some via a form of inbuilt advantage in their communities (Nash, 2008). What is fascinating to note in the study are the differences between and within the groups. For example, there seem to be differences on the amount that each participant receives, and this can be attributed to the occupation an individual had before retirement. This brings the notion of class as an important category again. John and Chiedza receive a higher allowance because the former was a District police officer, a position regarded as highly ranked and the latter is a former Social Worker. The two also reside in Mt Pleasant, a low-density suburb in Harare. Isaac and David receive a low pension because their former positions are lowly ranked and the former resides in Glen View, a high-density suburb, and the latter resides in Epworth, an informal settlement. By proffering a blanketing examination of differences that exist among populations, intersectionality reflects its utility in explaining and examining societal relations. Scholars such

as Cho et al. (2013) mentioned that intersectionality is intersectional because of the mode of problematizing the conditions of similarity and difference in connection to power. Therefore, intersectional analysis evokes multifarious and connecting facet of inequalities on the grounds of origins of societal deprivations such as gender and class. From the findings, it can be noted that class is playing a role in determining one's position in the field.

From the extracts, it can be noted that aged people are not docile subjects because they are critical of the government and its policies. For example, with precepts from George such as "the Government should be serious", elderly people are exposed to the inequalities and injustices related to the government's policies. They speak boldly as radicalized elderly people. Interestingly, the findings show that elderly people did not only think of themselves but also spoke about other social issues such as inequalities in relation to the youth. Although, in the previous chapter, it was shown that there is a rift between some elderly people such as Olivia, Chiedza, Chipo, and the youth in their community, elderly people also spoke on how the inequalities in the government is affecting the youth as well. This differs with what has been highlighted by Lyn Segal (2013); that there is a war of generations between the youth and the aged. These extracts below show that elderly people are considerate of others:

"The economy is bad to an extent that many of the youth in the area are unemployed and the majority does not know what a pay slip is. This is one thing that needs redress by the government" (George).

"We grew up when one can move from one job to another without struggle. I could leave my job today and tomorrow I will be working at another place. But today, the struggle is with our youth" (Isaac).

"I feel sorry for the generation of today because most of them are unemployed and cannot take care of themselves. I have adult grandchildren who look up to me for survival" (Chipo)

Older people were explicit in the discussion on the policies that affected them as ageing populations. They had ideas and comments about the political and economic environment. The findings point out that older people are playing a critical role of being the voice of the voiceless and they contribute to debates about ageing and inequalities in Zimbabwe. The question that comes into mind is, "why were these participants so explicit in discussing the inequalities and

injustices in the society, considering that the political landscape in Zimbabwe is highly polarized (Matingwina, 2019) and there have been incidences that involved atrocities because of politics in Zimbabwe? Why were they so comfortable in discussing notions of injustices? The reason might be due to the fact that “they have seen it all” as expounded by different participants. This shows that ageing, as a phase, involves the good and the bad things that happen along the way.

8.5. Opportunities, Networks, and Institutions that support ageing populations

This section shows the extent to which the government of Zimbabwe provides support for its ageing populations. In this chapter, it is noted that the Zimbabwean government has emerging schemes, and a very small section of these efforts deals with the demands of the ageing populations. This chapter discusses the opportunities that are there to support elderly people through a richer understanding of their perspectives and institutions that are important in shaping their lives. This is crucially relevant as it responds to the last question.

Olivia does not receive any state pension or grant from the government of Zimbabwe. Commenting on the social protection systems for the aged person in Zimbabwe, she registers her anger on the way aged people have been neglected in the country:

“We registered with the Ministry of Social Welfare and up to now I have never received anything from the government that is meant for aged people. I have never heard anyone here in Glen View saying he/she has benefited from their schemes. We only hear of NGO’s in the rural areas but personally, I have never received anything from the government. Aged persons in urban areas have been abandoned by the state for long.” (Olivia)

She, however, noted that in her church, various programmes are done to help aged persons:

“At our church, we receive donations here and there that go towards the plight of aging populations. We have always been receiving mealie-meal and other basic commodities from well-wishers.” (Olivia)

David expressed his anger on how the government is failing to cater for old people in his area and since the area is ravaged by poverty, the government must prioritize aged people.

“There is a Department of Social Welfare, they come and write our names here promising us food, but we have never received anything of that sort. You can see this during election time

because they would need our votes. The government should look into our plight and help aged people in this area" (David.)

John is aware of social protection systems meant for elderly people in Zimbabwe. However, he shared an important experience of the Public Assistance Scheme:

"I know a number of social protection systems that are meant for aged persons in Zimbabwe, but my experience was with the Public Assistance Scheme. I registered my late mother sometime in 2011 under this scheme to benefit from the government. This is a major form of security programme in Zimbabwe, but the problem is that it is not possible. This is because for you to be a beneficiary there is a lot of bribery involved. Furthermore, people who should benefit from this are not even aware of it. The other problem is that even if they become beneficiaries, the money is too little to cover the cost of one's living."

Miriam was never formally employed and is not receiving any state pension. However, she lamented how the government is not taking care of the elderly during the Covid-19 crisis:

"The councillor of this Ward came to write names of people who shall be beneficiaries of the Covid-19 allowances. I have never received any form of monetary allowance up to now and this is the third month since the outbreak of this pandemic. We have a government that does not care for its citizens."

In the unfolding of his account, George stressed the importance of cushioning all elderly people with allowances meant to support them every time. He noted the limited social protection systems that are meant for the elderly in Zimbabwe and the bias towards those who were formally employed.

"In this trying time of ageing, the government should make sure that elderly people, whether male or female, get an allowance every month that should go towards basic needs, especially food. The beneficiaries should be everyone, whether one has been formally employed or not, as long he/she is elderly. The problem is that the elderly schemes in Zimbabwe are mainly for those who have been formally employed before. What about others? My wife was never formally employed in her life and is she not entitled to schemes that are meant for elderly people?"

The aged are the ones most vulnerable to the Covid-19 pandemic and they have also been affected. George registered his frustration by advising:

“The government should provide, as far as possible, undertake to upgrade the economic and social conditions of older people in Zimbabwe because they have been reduced to nothing as a result of this pandemic”.

Isaac summed up his account by expressing his frustration on the ineffectiveness of social protection systems in Zimbabwe by illuminating:

“We do not have government that really cares for its elderly citizens. Look at how elderly people in other countries enjoy being an elderly person. It is simply because they are provided with everything. Their governments have a heart. The hospitals in Zimbabwe do not have medications and instead of getting free medication, we buy. It is not working.”

From the extracts, it can be noted that policies and initiatives to promote quality ageing for older people are not encouraging. This resonates with the findings of Nabalaba and Chikoko (2011) in their study of Sub-Saharan Africa. They noted that countries in this region are lagging in covering older people, specifically on health insurance. As pointed out by Isaac, who postulated that there is no medication in Zimbabwe's hospitals and, because of that, they are forced to buy the medication. Nabalaba and Chikoko (2011) noted that several nations like Ghana, South Africa, and Senegal have exempted older persons from paying health insurances. Kaseke (2013) in his study of Zimbabwe noted that elderly people are left to bear the burden of accessing quality healthcare for themselves and this resonates with what has been said by Isaac. Isaac's views also resonate with Dhembba's (2013) findings on his study of Zimbabwe where he found that there are constant shortfalls of free medicines and medical professionals for older people.

The notion of intersectionality is seen when Olivia registers her resentment over the bias of Non-Governmental Organizations operating in the rural areas and sidelining urban areas. As Olivia highlighted, *“Aged persons in urban areas have been abandoned for a very long time by the government”*. This shows that there are two classes of ageing populations involved. We have those from the countryside areas and those from the cities and towns. Those from countryside areas are beneficiaries of government schemes and the latter are not. Olivia speaks out on how some inequalities are realized as a result of the bias of NGO's and the government on rural areas

sidelining urban areas. Bronner and Paulus (2017) are of the view that intersectionality illustrates the difference between groups in a society, and this study shows that there are two classes involved. By examining these differences in a community, functions of privilege are uncovered by intersectionality. For example, those in the rural areas are beneficiaries of government programmes. Therefore, intersectionality evokes the connecting facet of subjugation premised on societal disadvantages such as, in this case, class. Critical to note is that this category or identity marker (class) is socially constructed and it formulates differences among clusters of people that are strengthened and maintained by social groups (Gillborn, 2015). However, the importance of the church is seen as they provide donations to their ageing populations, bringing to light that not only governments and NGOs cater for the needs of the older populations.

The lack of political will is also seen in Miriam's narrative where she highlighted that "*the councilor in her Ward in Epworth came to write names of people who shall be beneficiaries of the Covid-19 allowances and up until the time of the interview with her (third month after the outbreak of the pandemic), she has never received any form of monetary allowance*". She speaks boldly on how the government is not taking care of its citizens by stressing: "*we have a government that does not care for its citizens*". The same was noted in Isaac's narrative when he said, "*we do not have government that really cares for its elderly citizens. Look at how elderly people in other countries enjoy being an elderly person. It is simply because they are provided with everything. Their governments have a heart*". With this in mind, one sees that there is lack of a firm intention or commitment by leadership to address the plight of ageing populations in Zimbabwe. Both Miriam and Isaac, despite gender differences, unanimously brought to light the absence of political willingness on the Zimbabwean government's part.

From David's extract, it can be noted that older people are not passive or docile subjects, but they are critical thinkers who rationally and clearly think through problems comprehending how ideas are logically connected. David, in his extract, brought an important issue of how the government through the Department of Social Welfare is seen helping ageing populations in Epworth during election time only in exchange of votes. This finding corroborates with Kenyatta's (1965) finding that the wisdom of men increases as they grow older and pass a number of age grades. By postulating about the government's strategy during election campaigning, David showed that he has a probing inquisitiveness and a keenness of mind.

The role played by the church is crucial in modeling the aging population's lives. Olivia however noted that in her church, there are various programmes that are done to help aged persons:

"At our church, we receive donations here and there that go towards the plight of aging populations. We have always been receiving mealie-meal and other basic commodities from well-wishers"

A glimpse of David's face revealed that he was filled with grief when he started explaining how he, in vain, tried everything he could to make his wife's condition better. He felt let down by the doctrine of Johanne Marange, an apostolic sect and this negatively affected the health of his wife further. He lamented:

"When she suffered stroke, I went to her church hoping they would help me but instead they were giving us muteuro (literally dubbed as holy or anointed water), and they said she will be fine. They also told me not to take her to the hospital because this was just a demon that needed spiritual services. Because I had no option, I thought this was going to work but nothing materialized up until a neighbor reached out to me and advised me to take her to a local hospital. She was transferred to Gomo Hospital and her condition improved, though not much to my expectation because she still needs help. But for where she is, I thank God."

My wife here (pointing to his wife) gets support in the form of money from her church members. So we survive through that." (David)

8.6. Summary of the Chapter

To conclude, the above discussion illuminates the livelihood and coping strategies that are employed by ageing populations in three suburbs of Harare. This chapter considered different combinations of livelihood strategies and the ones that emerged in the study are: remittances, agriculture, mining, day care-Centre, pension allowance, and informal trading. Such means are explored in the context of varied socio-economic circumstances in which they are deployed, thereby revealing the multiple backgrounds that shape the agencies navigated by older people in Harare. The chapter shows that modes of living are created in the context of political, social, and economic circumstances. The study noted that most livelihood strategies are often constrained by intersectional structures that characterize different locations under study. The discussion brings

to light that the agency of older populations in Harare does not make them susceptible to the transforming structures that constitute the social spaces that they inhabit. The chapter has also revealed how gender and class perpetuate the experiences that shape the livelihoods to be employed. Although there are differences in how livelihood strategies are employed between old women and men, there is a general consensus that old people's realities are flexible in how they are modified. They continuously make sense of their agencies and the circumstances within which their agencies are devised. Therefore, deeper understanding of various means through which the aged use agency as well as capital to come up with the necessary results for wellbeing and sustenance is seen. Regarding policy implications, it was noted that the government of Zimbabwe has limited schemes for old age and pension schemes and all participants unanimously agreed that there is need for the government to address this challenge. Critical provisions, which include social protection and health-care, are a critical source of security for the aged. The next chapter is the summary of findings, contributions, and recommendations for future studies and policies.

CHAPTER NINE

SUMMARY OF RESEARCH FINDINGS, CONTRIBUTIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH PRACTICES

9.0 Introduction

This chapter concludes the research study and highlights important themes that emerged in the analysis of empirical data. The study aimed to outline the meaning of ageing from the perspective of ageing populations living in Harare. Drawing on data collected from nine older people, the study also explored the class and gender dimensions of ageing on the livelihoods of older populations. In other words, I analyzed how class and gender interact to shape the multiple dimensions of older people's experiences. Furthermore, the study looked at the institutions, opportunities, and networks that shape the lives of older people. The lessons learnt through a particular participatory process of doing research with older generations were also explored in the study.

In this study, the hope was that the research would aid in offering insights into the lived realities of research participants. This is because understanding lived realities of individuals necessitates the development of policies that will benefit ageing populations. The benefits may address challenges older people face, such as limited government pensions and old age schemes. The broad over-riding intention of the study was guided by arguments made by social constructionist theorists who argue that history and environment shape the reality of an individual (Berger and Luckmann, 1996). The research was also guided by intersectional theorists such as Crenshaw (1989), Collins (1990) and this brought to light that realities of ageing populations are shaped within the confines of gender, age, and class. These are overlapping structures that shape institutions and networks that underlie subjective experiences through the norms and values that outline the ageing population's socio-economic actions. Given this view, an examination of their livelihood strategies was fundamental to understand whether class or gender had an impact. Bourdieu's Theory of Practice (Bourdieu, 1985; 1989; 1990; 1993) also played an important role in the research by illuminating the role of capital, field, and habitus in shaping the multiple dimensions of older people's livelihoods and experiences. These theoretical choices led to my choice of having interpretive phenomenological analysis and narrative analysis as methodological viewpoints of my study. The thesis offers an original and novel analysis through

exploring the intersection of the notions of ageing, gender, class, and implications of this for future social gerontology studies in Zimbabwe.

9.1 Objectives of the study

In Chapter One, I explained the inspiration behind the study. In view of that motivation, the core objective of my study was to elicit a comprehensive account of the lived realities of ageing populations and how gender and class interact to shape the livelihoods of older populations in Harare, Zimbabwe. In addition, by putting forward an argument on the notion of structural vulnerability, risk-taking, and agency in way that shapes the lives of older populations. This then led to the adoption of intersectionality as an approach, social constructionism, and Bourdieu's Theory of Practice. Intersectionality made it possible to scrutinize the categories of age, gender, and class resulting in heterogeneous experiences of everyday life of ageing populations. This broader objective led to the development of the following research questions as mentioned in Chapter One:

1. How do older generations understand ageing?
2. What livelihood strategies do older people adopt and how does gender and class uphold or reshape particular understandings of livelihoods of ageing populations?
3. In an increasingly diverse nation, how do older people navigate class and gender differences? And does this enable freedom or impose constraints on them? If so, how?
4. What do we learn about older generations through a particular participatory process of doing research?
5. What opportunities, networks, and institutions are there to support and shape the lives of ageing populations?

Before addressing these questions, it is important to make a note on the methodological approach I adopted. This is important in that this approach informed the extent to which the above five questions were substantively answered. An ethnographic approach was adopted in the study. Usually, ethnography is associated with participant observation, and with the researcher hanging about with participants in various social contexts they inhabit. This offers opportunities for the researcher to gain insight into everyday forms of social interaction. My study focused on conducting life history interviews, and while these interviews were highly interviewee-centred

and sought to explore how my participants constructed their lives and livelihoods, they did not involve participant observation as a key research strategy. However having said that, in the process of conducting life history interviews, I developed relations with my participants which opened up opportunities for myself to develop friendly relations with them outside the context of the life history interviews (as illustrated in Chapter 6). And in this sense, my research became more ethnographic as I developed these kinds of relations with them. Also, one could argue that the life history interviews I conducted could themselves be seen as “ethnographic encounters” precisely because the kinds of questions I posed in these and the interest I showed in the participants I were interviewing turned the interviews into participatory interactive spaces where I got to know my participants and vice versa. The selection of this approach, as shall be explained below, was founded on its advantage towards meeting the objectives of this study.

9.2 The use of ethnography to approach research concerns

Ethnography facilitated an avenue of gaining an in-depth understanding into the lived realities of older populations in Harare. In order to gain this deep understanding, I constantly visited my participants and sustained a rapport and continued conversation. I stayed in the same community with participants from Glen View and this enabled me to observe research participants when they were undertaking their daily routines. This allowed me to understand their realities beyond what they would have shared in the actual interview. Therefore, having grown up in Glen View and staying in close proximity with research participants from Glen View enabled creation of rapport.

Ethnography was an ideal research approach because it enabled the researcher to create meaningful bond with different research participants. This bond was as a result of trust that I got from my participants. These ties were mostly forged because of my participation in church services and funerals. It is because of these events that I experienced the deep feelings of appreciation for ethnography. This research experience led to the successful analysis of the summarized empirical findings below and they reveal the originality of the study.

9.3 Key emerging themes

9.3.1 The meaning of ageing

The first research question sought to document the meaning of ageing for the research participants based on the reflections of their lived experiences. From the reported experiences, 6

notions on the meaning of ageing were identified: acceptance and rejection of ageing as a category, sexual potency, ill health, and treatment by the community, dependency, loss of self-esteem, and loneliness. There are instances where research participants expressed the same issues and they also differed in how they interpreted ageing basing on gender and class. For the nine sampled participants overall, ill-health emerged as the most important meaning of ageing. All research participants, despite gender and class, unanimously agreed that the image of an old person is synonymous with physical deterioration and the presence of ill-health. The research participants conceptualized ill-health variously as the presence of diseases such as Diabetes, Hypertension, heart diseases, cancer, hearing and sight problems. Health challenges that emanate as a result of ageing were acknowledged by other researchers. For example, scholars such as Baiyewu (2009), Briggs et al., (2016); Ighodaro et al., (2017); Scannapieco & Cantos, (2016), Beard et al. (2016). Although all research participants noted with concern these quagmires that come with ageing, some of the participants in the study practice their agency and try to be free from these diseases by involving themselves in physical exercises. Therefore, being active appears to be essential to a serene anticipation of old age.

9.3.2 Livelihood strategies of ageing populations: Impact of Class and Gender

The second and third research question sought to explore the class and gender dimensions of ageing on the livelihoods of older populations. The following themes were identified: Agriculture, Day care centre, Mining, Vending, and Pension Allowance. Overall, there were differences in how people were engaged in activities to earn a living. It was noted in the study that those who reside in high density suburbs and informal settlements were mostly involved in informal activities such as vending, whilst those from the low-density suburbs were involved in more capital intensive projects such as Mining and Agriculture.

9.3.3 Lessons learned during a participatory research process with older people

The fourth research question sought to reveal lessons drawn from doing this particular participatory research with ageing populations. In this study, I learnt that ageing populations need to be recognized within research, not only as subjects to be used for knowledge gathering, but also as a populace with active personhoods. Patience is also an important aspect when interviewing older participants because most of them take their time to recall events in their life. Another lesson that came out of my experience in the field is that the type of dressing and the

way one presents himself/herself to aging populations is of paramount importance, including the haircut, the way one speaks, and the language one speaks is also very important. In this research, I also realized that it is a dilemma to be neutral in relating to research participants. In the areas where I conducted this research, as would be in many parts of Africa, I was received as a visitor and not a researcher. Therefore, it is not easy to remain neutral when you are a cultural insider and more importantly, when participants get to know that you are one of them.

9.3.4. Opportunities, Networks, and Institutions for ageing populations

The fifth question addressed opportunities, networks, and institutions for ageing populations that shape their lives. The study showed the extent to which the government of Zimbabwe provides support for its ageing populations. In this study, it was noted that the Zimbabwean government has emerging schemes and a very small section of these efforts deals with the demands of the ageing populations. Therefore, it can be noted that policies and initiatives to promote quality ageing for older people in Zimbabwe are not encouraging. There is no medication in Zimbabwe's hospitals and because of that ageing populations are forced to buy the medication. It was also noted that there are some inequalities involved as a result of the bias of NGOs and the government on urban and rural areas. This illustrates the difference between groups in a society and this study shows that there are two classes involved. For example, those in the rural areas are beneficiaries of government programmes and those in the urban areas hardly benefit from both NGOs and government. Therefore, connecting facet of subjugation premised on societal disadvantages such as in this case, class is seen. However, the importance of the church is seen as they provide donations to their ageing populations bringing to light that not only governments and NGOs cater for the needs of older people.

9.4 Original Contributions

This research study is important in how it has provided practical avenues of thinking about intersectionality, bringing to light how ageing populations are seen as active agents whose experience of reality is shaped by a plethora of quagmires that inform their environment. Therefore, they adopted agencies through being productive through engagement in different activities in avenues that were shaped by the constrictions set by either policies or because of gender and class. Though this is not the first Zimbabwean study on intersectionality, this study provided original contributions in that it focused on older people's lived realities basing on

different classes as a result of location and income. Most of the studies on intersectionality have been dealing with classes not because of one's location, but basing only on income. No studies in Zimbabwe have incorporated the aspect of age, gender, and class at one goal. In addition, original theoretical contributions have also been realized through the notion of intersectionality that reveals the embeddedness of realities of ageing population. As a result of intersectionality, the study brings to light that the choices that livelihood strategies of ageing populations in Harare cannot solely be understood as sheer individual choices but these choices should be understood as results of the link between structural features that inform social spaces of ageing populations. Individual choices should also be understood as interplay between structural factors that inform economic realities that serve as the background of social agents as well as aspirations envisioned by social agents. This perspective is significant in that it reveals how structural factors act in providing opportunities and limitations within which ageing populations negotiate in the construction of their lived experiences. This study revealed that ageing populations in Harare are not only shaped by their environment (habitus), but they also shape their environment through their agencies.

The other contribution of the study is that it has debunked myths related to ageing. This study brings to light that getting older does not inevitably lead to physical weakness, fragility, and dependence. Changes in old age, such as physical weakness, can be slowed down through regular exercises or regular activities as noted where some participants acknowledged that exercising is helping them to carry through. Furthermore, some ageing populations live without fragility and remain in their activities. As noted, some participants refused the caricature of being labeled old people because of negative connotations associated with this category. More importantly, old people device ways or mechanisms to ensure economic independence, and through this, they realize different capitals in their lives. The mechanisms include vending, mining, agriculture, and baby day care, despite the dangerous terrain involving some activities. The study reveals that the traditional expectation of regarding ageing populations as dependent leads to depression of older people. Instead, involvement in physical activities plays an important role in the prevention of various illnesses.

My study demystified the essentialist point of seeing old age as an end to sex life, and this stereotype undermines old people as a group. I therefore argue that sexuality, as articulated to me

by some of the men in my study, is a fundamental part of an individual of any age and we should avoid stereotyping older populations on the basis of sexuality. Many older populations, as noted in the discussion, are still interested in sex and that explains why they brought to table this issue because it is an important aspect of life. Although, it can be agreed that menopause and impotence are common health problems encountered by older populations, they devised ways of dealing with these problems by use of “Congo Dust”, for example. Although, female participants did not bring more light in relation to this issue, possibly as a result of my gender, I put forward the argument that both old women and old men should be respected as people who still see sexuality as an important aspect of life. Therefore, we cannot conclude that male older people are the ones still interested in sex; I argue that both of them have an interest in the subject.

In a nutshell, in this study, my argument is that, we should not see ageing populations as helpless, unproductive and a burden because such negative connotations have a negative impact on their longevity. This is the time we should offer support to ageing populations and replace negative connotations with positive opinions about them, such as viewing ageing as a period surrounded by astuteness and self-realization.

9.5 Recommendations for future research

In addition to meeting objectives of the study, answering research questions, and making original empirical and theoretical contributions, the study aimed at making future recommendations. The main recommendation proposed is the need for more research that engages ageing populations from the perspective of older people. It is necessary to examine how gender and class impact on the livelihoods of ageing populations and how ageing populations from the rural areas conceptualize ageing based on their lived realities. It is necessary to examine how the structural vulnerabilities underpinning rural spaces inform the various forms of habitus through which the ranges of agencies manifest. This research would subsequently explore the specific kinds of agencies that manifest in different rural areas as shaped by the nuances that differentiate these areas. With this research, a better understanding of Zimbabwe’s rural spaces and the lived realities of ageing populations residing in them would be realized.

Secondly, there is need for a more research into the economic strategies of ageing populations who access money through illegal means. For example, in my introductory chapter, I stressed what motivated me to coming up with this research and one of them was because of my

encounter with an old woman who was lying in order to solicit money from me. Such groups of people need to be engaged in future research to forefront the voices of such ageing populations, allowing them to relate the context that underpins their criminal economic engagements. Thus, more research should be conducted on how ageing populations in urban spaces live their day to day lives, managing their vulnerabilities, and asserting their agencies in pursuing work (legal or illicit). This research is important in how it will bring to light how older people enter into spaces that are dangerous and still manage their vulnerabilities.

The present study did not consider the racial dimension of ageing because it was not part of the scope of the study. A racial dimension should be taken into account in future research on ageing. More importantly, the present study did not consider participants within the category of destitute agers, therefore, future research should also consider including samples from all categories of people with more varied life experiences.

Furthermore, a mixed method design should be utilized in future studies to explore issues related to ageing so as to capture both qualitative and quantitative data. Research needs to be done in the area of sexuality and ageing because older adults are becoming increasingly diverse as the population increases.

9.6 Recommendation for policy interventions

A policy recommendation that is influenced from the above discussion is the need for a developmental programme that targets ageing populations who are still able-bodied. A programme is needed that will offer various skills training that will equip them with more practical skills such as farming and mining. These capabilities will increase their chances of economic independence. Developmental programmes should also be implemented alongside wellness centres in communities of Harare meant for ageing populations to exercise, thereby leading healthy lifestyles. It was noted in the study that ageing populations are keen to be active and lead a healthy lifestyle through exercises.

The government should also consider increasing the pension allowance of retirees and it should align with the poverty datum line in Zimbabwe. In addition, the older people's schemes should be improved and there should be an awareness program for ageing populations to make them realize the social protection systems meant for them.

9.7 Limitations of the study

Finally, this study is not without limitations that should be considered when interpreting and analyzing the findings. First, this study drew on a small, purposive sample from a specific geographic region. Therefore, the findings cannot be generalized. The rich data generated through the interviews, however, allowed for the identification of important themes. Secondly, my sample lacked diversity and included only people from the same race. Future studies should seek to have an inquiry on the notion of ageing from a larger and diverse sample enabling transferability.

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APPENDIX 1: CONSENT FORM



UNIVERSITEIT•STELLENBOSCH•UNIVERSITY
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STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY

TITLE OF THE PhD RESEARCH PROJECT: Ageing, Gender and Class: Differences in experiences and livelihood strategies of aging populations in Harare, Zimbabwe.

RESEARCHERS' NAME(S): Mr Benjamin Gweru

What is RESEARCH?

Research is carried out in order to find **new knowledge** about the ways things (and people) work. We use research projects or studies to help us find out more about ageing populations, their experiences of ageing, things that affect their lives and their families.

What is this research project all about?

This research project explores the class and gender dimensions of ageing on the livelihoods of older populations. In other words, various ways in which class and gender interact to shape the multiple dimensions of older population's experiences.

Why have I been invited to take part in this research project?

You have been invited to take part in this research project because you are an older person residing in one of the areas under study.

What will happen to me in this study?

You will be expected to participate in life history interviews (one-on-one, face-to-face). If you agree to take part in the study, you will be asked to participate in a life history interview with the researcher. The interview will last approximately one and half hours, and will explore topics relating to livelihood strategies and your experiences of ageing, and whether gender and class have an impact. The purpose of this interview is for you to share your story in relation to the mentioned topics.

Can anything bad happen to me?

There should not be anything frightening about taking part in the research, and it should be a fun learning experience. All research activities will take place at your home. I will try to ensure that they all occur during daylight hours. This is to make sure that your safety and wellbeing is protected at all times.

Can anything good happen to me?

There are no direct benefits to the participants, because the research is for academic purposes only. However, the research might provide information about how the government and NGOs can facilitate processes towards creating policies that are meant to address the plight of aged persons.

Will anyone know who I am in the study?

No one will be able to know who you are in the study, and any information about you will be kept confidential. I will be using pseudonyms instead of your real name in the final written report, so that you cannot be identified. Your confidentiality and anonymity will be protected

throughout the study and I will also ensure that data is stored away safely and is only accessible by myself. No identifiable information of yourself will be used throughout the study. If at any point you would like to withdraw from the research you can do so. The data collected from you will be used, unless specified otherwise by yourself. There will be no foreseeable risks for you for participating in this study.

Who can I talk to about the study?

If you have any more questions about the study or about how you can be involved, please feel free to contact me, **Benjamin Gweru**, via phone: xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx, or email: benjaminingweru1@gmail.com/23438282@sun.ac.za

If you have any more questions regarding your rights as a research participant, please also feel free to contact **Malene Fouché**, via phone: xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx, or email: mfouche@sun.ac.za, from the Division for Research Development, at Stellenbosch University

Supervisors of the research project: Professor Dennis Francis dafrancis@sun.ac.za and Professor Rob Pattman rpattman@sun.ac.za

What if I do not want to do this?

You are allowed to refuse to take part in the research project and you are also allowed to stop taking part in the study at any time, without getting in trouble. If you choose not to participate, there will be no negative consequences, and it will not have any impact on your livelihood.

Do you understand this research study and are you willing to take part in it?

YES NO

Has the researcher answered all your questions?

 YES NO

Do you understand that you can STOP being in the study at any time?

 YES NO

If you are willing to take part in this study, please feel free to sign below:

Signature of the participant

Date

APPENDIX 2: INTERVIEW GUIDE



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LIFE HISTORY INTERVIEW GUIDE WITH AGEING POPULATIONS

I am conducting life history interviews with ageing populations from the three suburbs of Harare. I will introduce myself and will make sure that I adhere to all ethical principles related to the study.



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RESPONDENT'S BACKGROUND AND EDUCATION

To begin this conversation, I would want you to tell me about your family.

- How many were you in your household when you were growing up? (children and adults)
- How would you define the socio-economic status of your family?
- How did you get to live here?

So far, we have been talking about your family. Can we now please talk about you and your experiences as a child in your home?

- Did you attend school? If yes, where?
- What is the highest level of education you attained?
- How was the relationship between your household and your neighbours?
- What did you aspire to become when you were younger?

- What did you become? Feel free to tell me more about different jobs you have done at different stages of your life
- Where you formally employed? If so, are you receiving state pension?

Can we please talk about your children, spouse and your household? Feel free to tell me:

- When did you get married?
- How many children do you have?
- Did your children go to school?
- Where was this?
- Where are your children?
- What are they doing?
- How many grandchildren do you have?
- Are there any children or grandchildren you are taking care of?

Social and Economic Status Determinant

- What do you think of this area you live in?
- How did you end up living here?
- How long have you been living here?
- Where do you go for shopping?
- Where do you buy your vegetables?

Experiences and subjective meaning of aging

- What does being aged and aging mean to you? Tell me more
- How does it feel to turn 65 and above? Tell me all your experiences with the process up to this point?
- What are the challenges that come with being aged?
- Tell me more about treatment by the family and community, treatment in terms of gender and class
- What has changed and why has it changed?
- Can you please tell me about self-awareness of ageing, fears, threats and anxieties associated with aging if any?
- How does being aged affect your confidence and self-esteem?
- How have you been able to overcome challenges that come with aging?

Livelihood strategies and coping mechanisms of elderly people

- What activities are you engaged in that enable you to make a living?
- Does your activity require money to be sustained? If so, feel free to tell me how did you get the money to start this?
- Are you part of an income generating initiative in your community? (If yes, feel free to tell me what initiative is this?)
- What are your other sources of financial security?
- Any challenges you face when engaged in activities that enable you to make a living? Please feel free to tell me more
- Are these challenges as a result of your gender or because of where you reside? Tell me more

- What do you do to get through these challenges? Feel free to tell me more on this

Social Relations

- How would you describe your relationship with your neighbors?
- Would you go to them if you need any help?
- Would they come to you if they need some help?
- Is there togetherness in this community? (tell me more on this)
- Do you belong to a church?
- What does this mean to you?
- Apart from the church, are you part of any other networks?
- What does being part of such networks mean to you?
- What functions do these networks serve?

Gender and class differences vis-à-vis constraints and freedom

- How do you feel to be an old woman/men?
- How does it feel to be an old woman/men residing in this area?
- As old woman/men in this place, does this give you freedom .If yes, feel free to explain how this enable freedom?
- Does being an old woman/men in this area enable constraints? If yes, please tell me more on the how part?

Effectiveness and availability of elderly programmes/social protection systems by the government, NGO and churches in Zimbabwe.

- Are you aware of any social protection systems/ programmes that are designed specifically for old people?

- If yes can you please name and discuss them.
- Have you ever participated/ Are you involved?
- If yes, please feel free to tell me about your experience and the programme(s) you participated in.
- If no, why have you not taken part? Are there any challenges?
- In your own opinion what can you say about the effectiveness of these social protection systems/ programmes
- Tell me more, are they working and are they accessible to everyone?

Thank you very much for your time. Please remember that your responses will be included in a report, however, your name will not be used or anything that may lead to your identity being exposed. Pseudonyms will be used in the report. If there is anything you feel the researcher has left out that would add value to the study, please feel free to say it. If you have any questions, you are welcome to ask them.

Thank you!!!

APPENDIX 3: OBSERVATION SCHEDULE



STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY

OBSERVATION SCHEDULE

Observation is utilized because this study is interested less in the subjectively experienced dimensions of social action and more in reified patterns that emerge from such action. Therefore, what to observe in the research include (but not limited to):

- a) Home environment of participants (toilet facilities, electricity supply, water supply). This is important as an indicator of class
- b) The interaction old people are engaged in outside their homes (e.g. in church, community clubs etc.) and how gender is understood in the process of these interactions and the power relations involved
- c) How power plays out in the research process between a young adult researcher and old people, also between a male researcher and old people of different genders (male and female).