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Growing Old in the Tanzanian Periphery: Elderlies' Voices on Wellbeing and Ageing

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Author of cover picture: Melanie Deter. The image shows an elder man at his working place, the water pump, in the background an elder woman fetching water. Both were participants in the research of this paper.

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Abstract

This thesis explores different life situations of elderly people in rural Tanzania. It carves out how the process of ageing impacts these elderlies' lives, highlights the heterogeneity within Africa's older populations and thereby calibrates the "dominant narrative of Africa's older people as homogeneously disadvantaged" (Aboderin 2017: 644). In order to do so, this thesis highlights the disparities in capacity and privilege that exist within this population by taking a relational perspective: it views the elderlies' lives with regard to their life-courses, in relation to inter-generational aspects as well as in interconnections with social markers, particularly class and gender.

In rural Tanzania, many family structures change due to the out-migration of younger generations to urban centres. Thus, the elderlies "lives and well-being are fundamentally impacted by the emigration of their children" (King et al. 2017: 185). Applying a mobility perspective, this thesis is concerned with translocal (im)mobilities of elderlies' families, especially with how care work and support are arranged within those translocal networks. The thesis further pays attention to the mobility of the ageing people and their bodies – to how ageing of the bodies impacts the elderlies' interaction and movements through the environment and how this coins the elderlies' everyday lives.

Not only in political terms, the elderly in Sub-Saharan Africa seem to be a marginalised group, but also in science, many scholars speak of a lack of research in this field (Maharaj 2013; Hoffman & Pype 2016; Cohen & Menken 2006). This thesis contributes to this research gap by presenting qualitative insights into some elderlies' perceptions and experiences of ageing. Importantly, the starting point of this thesis is not the interest in the elderlies' old age security alone but overcomes this vulnerability-oriented perspective on their lives: it highlights what actually matters to the elderlies – not only for their livelihood security but for their individual wellbeing.

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III. List of Abbreviations

NRT	Non-representational theory
SSA	Sub-Saharan Africa
TASAF	Tanzania Social Action Fund
UNDESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
URT	United Republic of Tanzania
WHO	World Health Organization

IV. List of Swahili Words

<i>bajaj</i>	three-wheeled, motorised rikshaw
<i>chai ya asubuhi</i>	tea in the morning; breakfast
<i>duka</i>	kiosk; corner shop
<i>fipa, wafipa</i>	ethnic group in Rukwa region
<i>mahojiano</i>	interview; confrontation
<i>mandazi</i>	sweet, fried bread balls

mzee

nguvu

shamba

elder person

strength

field

1. Introduction

“Today, I went to see Mama Seba¹. In our conversation, she elaborated upon how the society has changed. In former times, the elderly used to stay together with their children and now, they move out. According to her, many people think “kizazi kibaya, wanakwenda na wakati.” – “the parents are bad, they will leave us soon.” And now, “everyone minds his/her own business”. Mama Seba said that she heard of an elderly home in Tabora² and the way she talked about it showed me that she did not like the imagination of elder people not staying within their families.

For herself, this is not the case, even if most of her children stay far away from her. Her children visit her from time to time, call her and send her money now and then (...). She underlined how important relatives are for care. During the conversation, her neighbour, Mama Evas, joined us. They told me that they are close friends, cook together, support each other in their households and even look for each other’s grandchildren. But if Mama Seba got seriously ill and needed a person to care for, Mama Evas wouldn’t do that: “Haiwezikani, ataniachia” – “That is impossible – she would leave me alone!” (Mama Seba: 10-12)

Mama Seba understands families as the central element in securing elderlies’ livelihoods and providing them with care. On the first sight, this ‘generational contract’ seems to be a “human universal all over the world” as in certain phases of the life-course, people act more as care-providers and in others more as care-receivers (Häberlein 2015: 159). Especially in Western countries, the imagination of elder Africans growing old in the midst of their loving and caring family members is prevailing (Häberlein 2015: 161). But even though elder people are still relying upon the support of their family members in wide parts of Tanzania and in different socio-economic classes, these structures are transforming. Similar to how Mama Seba puts it – everyone minds his/her own business – researchers state that “with capitalism, the individual at its centre, less extended families exist. The care for elder people within families is smashing” (Sungusia in Jaeggi 2014, own translation). In a wider context, these transformations are characterized by demographic changes and simultaneously proceeding social restructurings and changing lifestyles. As Mama Seba speaks of

¹ Mama Seba is an elderly woman (64 years old) and stays together with her husband and four of her grandchildren in Sumbawanga.

² Tabora is a middle-sized town in central Tanzania.

children moving out and migrating to other places, several authors mention migration processes of younger generations to urban areas as the major driver of these transformations (van Eeuwijk 2016; 2018; Steinbrink & Niedenföhr 2017).

Different from elder people in the Global North, the ageing society in the Global South is not equipped with a comprehensive social policy, health and care infrastructure (Rust 2017: 362). In Tanzania, the majority of elderlies cannot rely upon state support as only 4% of the elderlies (60 years and above) receive a state pension (HelpAge 2018b). The Tanzanian government states that “the family will remain the basic institution for care and support for older people” (URT 2003:10) and clearly assigns the responsibility to the lowest level. But when elderlies cannot rely upon either their families or government support, they have to seek for alternative ways of how to deal with insecurities and uncertainties in their later lives. As the above elaborations by Mama Seba indicate, the obligation of family members caring for their elderlies is inscribed with societal norms and values; opening up for alternatives, such as personal care provided by neighbours or living in old people’s homes, requires acceptance by the society and a deeper change in attitudes.

Research Interest and Methodology

Against this backdrop, the general aim of this thesis is to investigate different life situations of elderly people in rural Tanzania and to carve out how the process of ageing impacts these elderlies’ lives by conducting a case study. I am particularly interested in how the elderlies’ lives are embedded within family networks and which care and support practices take place and how they are arranged. As several authors have pointed out, the elderlies are not only receivers of care, but they also support their families in various ways. Thus, this thesis aims at grasping the elderlies’ agency within their families by reflecting their personal perspective. As mentioned before, alternative ways of caring for and supporting elder people slowly emerging. Hence, I will pay particular attention to if these different care and support arrangements are emerging and how they look like. When only regarding elderlies in the context of support arrangements, they might easily be depicted as passive recipients of help. However, a remarkable proportion of 73 per cent of the elder Tanzanians are economically active, most of them are engaged in small-scale farming (HelpAge 2012). During my field trip, one of the research participants pointed out “to be dependent upon my children only, that is impossible to me!” (Research Journal: 7). Therefore, this work

will also examine the individual practices that the elder people pursue. Importantly, the starting point of this thesis is not the interest in the elderlies' old age security alone; I particularly aim at overcoming this rather vulnerability-oriented perspective on their lives. Thus, I aim at highlighting what actually matters to the elderlies by grasping further everyday practices that are meaningful to the elderlies as well – not only for their livelihood security but for their individual wellbeing.

Given the fact that the population in SSA is ageing and simultaneously, socio-demographic transformations are taking place, the ways in which elder people age in SSA will diversify and undergo profound changes in the next years/decades. Despite the growing importance of this process and the increasing urge to act, SSA politics widely overlook the aged and provide only basic support programmes for them (Jaeggi 2014). Not only in political terms, the elderly in SSA seem to be a marginalised group, but also in science, many scholars speak of a lack of research in this field (Maharaj 2013; Hoffman & Pye 2016; Cohen & Menken 2006). With this thesis, I strive to contribute to this research gap. The aim of this thesis is not to give a representative account on the elderlies' lives in rural Tanzania, but rather to present a qualitative insight into some elderlies' perceptions and experiences of ageing. In order to grasp these perceptions and experiences, this thesis follows a qualitative approach of grounded theory, combined with elements of ethnographic research. The case study is based on a fieldtrip to Sumbawanga, a middle-sized town in Tanzania's Western periphery in March/April 2018. I applied methods of (mobile) participant observation, narrative interviews and more informal talks. These ethnographic methods allowed me to investigate the elderlies' personal voices and experiences in depth.

Research Perspectives and Research Questions

As this thesis is inspired by grounded theory and follows an ethnographic approach, I delved into field research without any pre-defined research questions, but with a broader research interest in mind, I stayed open to what emerges as important in the encounters with the elderlies. In a hermeneutic process of conducting research in the field and simultaneously deepening my theoretical understandings, certain theoretical and conceptual perspectives turned out to be particularly insightful within this research context.

This thesis aims at complying with Aboderin's urge to confront the heterogeneity within Africa's older populations which implies to "calibrate the all-too-often dominant

narrative of Africa's older people as homogeneously disadvantaged" (2017: 644). In order to do so, this thesis highlights the disparities in capacity and privilege that exist within this population by taking a relational perspective. This relational perspective views the elderlies' lives with regard to their life-courses, in relation to inter-generational aspects as well as in interconnections with social markers, particularly class and gender.

The second angle arises from a relational perspective as well. In rural Tanzania, many family structures change due to the out-migration of younger generations to urban centres. Thus, the elderlies "lives and well-being are fundamentally impacted by the emigration of their children" (King et al. 2017: 185). Hence, this thesis works with the idea of mobility to capture not only migration but also the more transient and fluid forms of mobility in and through places (Amrith 2018: 11). Within this perspective, this thesis is concerned with translocal (im)mobilities and pays attention to mobility in terms of the ageing body; to how these bodies interact and move through the surrounding environment impacts the elderlies' everyday lives.

Based on the process of constantly negotiating the relations between the theoretical and conceptual departures (which will be further lined out in the following chapters) and the research data gained in the field, the following research questions have emerged:

- How do the elderlies' everyday lives look like and how are they coined by the process of ageing?
 - How are these everyday lives coined by aspects of intergenerationality/family networks?
 - In how far are the family networks impacted by migration?
 - What everyday practices are meaningful to the elderlies?
 - How does conducting them
 - stand in relation to the bodily process of ageing and mobility?
 - intersect with other social categories (e.g. gender, ability, social class)?

Structure of the Research

This thesis is structured in three parts and nine chapters. **Part I – Situating the Research** gives an overview of the theoretical and conceptual departures (chapter 2), the current state of research on ageing in the Global South and more particularly

Tanzania (chapter 3), the research context (chapter 4) and methodological considerations (chapter 5).

Part II – Empirical Findings consists of three chapters. Chapter six starts with delving into the elderlies' own perspectives on ageing. Chapter seven explores what actually matters to the elderlies in their lives by focussing on the developments of their life-courses whereas chapter eight finally delves into the elderlies' everyday lives.

Part III – Conclusions comprises a summary of the main findings (chapter 9), methodological reflections (chapter 9.1) and an outlook that provides considerations for further research as well as for practitioners (chapter 9.1).

PART I – SITUATING THE RESEARCH

The following chapters in Part I lay the foundation for this research. In chapter two, I outline my theoretical departures with regard to ageing in geographical research as well as I discuss different conceptualizations of ageing. Based on this, chapter three briefly provides an overview on the state of the art on ageing in Sub-Saharan Africa with a focus on works on family networks and care arrangements and interconnections between migration, mobility and ageing. This is followed by chapter four in which I elaborate on the regional context of Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) and in particular on Tanzania. The last division of Part I, chapter five, provides a discussion of methodological issues. As this thesis is inspired by grounded theory, I particularly discuss how the theoretical departures come into play in this thesis. It further contains a debate on the process of gathering data in the field, including reflections on my positionality which I consider as highly relevant for this ethnographic research endeavour.

2. Theoretical & Conceptual Departures

In the following chapter, I outline the theoretical and conceptual foundations of my research. Even though I chose an approach inspired by grounded theory, the research was not undertaken without any theoretical background. Strauss, one of the founding fathers of grounded theory, even emphasized the usefulness of such pre-knowledge and theoretical grounding when working with grounded theory (Strauss & Corbin 1994).

Through my studies, I have many theoretical approaches implicitly in mind; even when not actively recalling them, they still impact my perception in many ways. Similar to Hackenbroch's approach in her dissertation on *the Spatiality of Livelihoods in Dhaka, Bangladesh*, my research is coined by certain theoretical orientations (2013: 25). Nonetheless, I consider it as a grounded theory research as for the generation of research findings, I was guided by the empirical material and critically reflected upon my theoretical background with the help of the findings evolving from the empirical data.

The theories that serve as an inspiration for this paper do not come in one neat package. Following the ideas of the grounded theory, I aim at keeping "open all the lines of enquiry" (Shildrick 2009: 102) and try to combine different theories. As different theories are suitable for different things, they make us "travel in different directions, ending up in different locations, from which the outlooks on the world are different" (Sandberg 2011: 40). I think that academic writings should aim at showing new and different ways of understanding the world. Thus, this thesis aims at providing multifaceted ways of thinking about elderly in Tanzania: in intersections of age, bodies, families, migration, mobility and space.

2.1 Geography and Ageing - The Emergence and Development of a Marginalized Discipline called Geographical Gerontology

In this chapter, I shed light on the development of the interdisciplinary conversation between geography and gerontology which started more than 30 years ago (Warnes 1981; Rowles 1978, 1983). As the field of "geographies of ageing" has undergone some profound changes since it emerged, I sketch the developments and approaches within this field whereas in the end of the chapter, I highlight this thesis' theoretical departures within Geographical Gerontology.

Broadly, the discipline of geographical gerontology can be understood as “a burgeoning body of interdisciplinary scholarship encompassing the application of geographical perspectives, concepts and approaches to the study of ageing, old age and older populations” (Skinner et al. 2018: 5). The publications belonging to the research area of “geographies of ageing” are positioned within a wide range of philosophical and methodological frameworks, including positivism (Warnes 1981), phenomenology (Rowles 1978), post-structuralism (Harper & Laws 1995) and critical social geography (Hopkins & Pain 2007). The discipline of geographical gerontology dates back over three decades to a number of ‘landmark’ studies. In 1981, Warnes set an initial broad agenda for geographical gerontology that focused on the spatial aspects of population and the location and movement of older people and associated services (1981: 322ff). He stressed that there “are innumerable geographical aspects to human ageing and the elderly population” (ibid.: 329), such as the relationships between the elderly and their environment or the influence of location, distance and spatial arrangements on their lives, most of them “are unexplored but deserve our attention” (ibid.: 329).

In contrast to Warnes’ more positivist perspective, Rowles (1978; 1983) attempted to set a more comprehensive agenda for geographical gerontology and focused on “ageing from a transactional perspective, emphasizing the relationship between the older persons and their environments at various scales” (Andrews et al. 2007: 152). Standing out as foundational for humanistic geographical gerontology, the early works of Rowles put emphasis on the value of human experience, values, subjectivity and agency and their realisation through ‘places’ (Skinner et al. 2018: 14). The early work by Rowles on livelihoods of elderly in urban and rural areas (Rowles 1978; 1983) as well as Harpers research on place and kinship networks (Harper 1987a; 1987b) paved the way for humanistic gerontology. Harper and Laws (1995) suggest that, in contrast to positivist approaches, the humanistic tradition requires geographical gerontologists to listen to older people’s voices and their concerns, because they are “best placed to reason and articulate their own circumstances and lives” (Skinner et al. 2018: 14).

2.1.1 Thinking Relationally of Ageing and Space

A major critique of the above-mentioned understandings of space and place is that they generally understand place as somewhat discrete and static; space and place

are conceptualised as isolated areas or concrete places (Andrews et al. 2018: 17). In contrast, relational thinking evokes an image of spaces and places emerging not only 'in situ' but through their connections within networks of interactions. In other words, "spaces and places are thought to be highly related to, and produced by, many other spaces and places at multiple scales" (ibid.: 17). In line with this 'relational geography of ageing', Wiles et al. (2009) illustrate the elderlies' physical, emotional and imaginative experiences of – and relations to – places across time. Relational thinking does not only apply for the concept of space; it renders attention to the dynamic and relational character of ageing as well. Viewing it as a process that is subject to "historical and cultural processes" (Wyn & White 1997: 10) shifts the focus from regarding age and life-course stages as independent variables to acknowledging their relationality and socially constructed character.

Scholars which are interested in relationality and networks tend to focus on families, generations and interactions and situate people of particular 'ages' within these contexts (Hopkins & Pain 2007: 289). Thus, **Intergenerationality** has become a keystone concept of relational geographies of age, referring to the relations and interactions between generational groups. Studies investigating ageing and intergenerationality focus on generational relations on intra-family scales. For studies concerning the Global South, Young and Ansell's (2003) investigation of families affected by HIV/AIDS in southern Africa stands out by sketching in detail the complexities of intergenerational relations when traditional family structures are disrupted.

To advance geographers' understandings of age in different places and times, Hopkins and Pain (2007) plea for applying the concept of **intersectionality**. The ways in which age is lived out are likely to vary according to different markers of social difference; the everyday experiences of people belonging to particular age groups are diverse and heterogeneous (Hopkins & Pain 2007: 289). In order to grasp this diversity, Hopkins and Pain urge human geographers to "explore the ways in which various markers of social difference – gender, class, race, (dis)ability, sexuality, age, and so on – intersect and interact" (ibid.: 289). Although some scholars have made contributions to such understandings (Dwyer 1999; Nayak 2003), much work is ahead to reveal the intersections of particular age, generational and other identities and their spatial specificity on a larger scale.

Focussing on the process of ageing from a relational perspective makes visible that, rather than following fixed and predictable life stages, we live dynamic and varied life-courses (Hopkins & Pain 2007: 290). The term **life-course** has “been adopted as a way of envisaging the passage of a lifetime less as the mechanical turning of a wheel and more as the unpredictable flow of river” (Hockey & James 2003: 5). Studies within geographical gerontology focussing on the life-course are particularly interested in how particular stages of the life-course differ over time and space (Hopkins & Pain 2007: 291). They focus on transitional moments within life-courses, such as experiences of retirement or impacts of critical health moments (Obrist 2016a; Obrist 2016b). Not only these sudden-onset events are of relevance, but especially in later life, difficult-to-identify gradual change is also critically important. For instance, Ziegler (2012) describes how the slow change of streets from sites of face-to-face encounters with neighbours to car-dominated spacetimes made it much more difficult for elderlies to participate in social networks. In short, the challenge for geographers examining ageing through a life-course lens is “to keep continuity and discontinuity in dialectical tension” (Schwanen et al. 2012a: 1294).

Within these three concepts of intergenerationality, intersectionality and the life-course, geographical gerontologists render specific attention to the importance of the relation of age and place: places represent and make older people and the other way around, older people make places (Andrews et al. 2018: 16). Referring to the same relationality, Schwanen et al. (2012a) speak of “the co-construction and co-evolution of old age and space”; they describe their relations as

“a complex amalgam of processes in which space – or rather spacetimes – and old age are not simply co-produced but co-evolve. Both are continually being made and remade in different ways across geographical space. Both are spatially differentiated ‘entwined becomings’.” (Schwanen et al. 2012a: 1294).

2.1.2 The Elderlies’ Everyday-Lives: More-than-Representational Thinking, Ageing and Space

In the last years, a new paradigm of post-structuralist relational thinking called non-representational theory (NRT) emerged in human geographies. According to Andrews et al. (2018: 19), the NRT helps geographers to think about how relationally constructed space and place is itself relationally performed. NRT arose partly as a reaction to the representational mainstream in human geography and social

sciences more generally (Thrift 2008). On the one hand, Thrift observed a tendency to take a predominantly retrospective perspective that “freezes the world’s events to think about and articulate them as if they were static, discrete and complete” (Andrews & Grenier 2018: 65). On the other hand, NRT scholars criticise the tendency to heavily theorise and interpret events, to “endlessly peeling off layers of words and actions to find their underlying mechanisms, consequences and meanings” (Andrews et al. 2018: 19). From the NRT perspective, these mainstays have led to neglecting the moment, the immediate and active, the detail of what is taking place in space and time (Thrift 2008). Therefore, the NRT places the ‘basic raw performance’ of individuals at its centre. McCormack notes that “humans do not always consciously reflect upon external representations – signs, symbols, etc. – when they make sense of the world” (McCormack 2008: 1824).

Particularly relevant to geographical gerontology is the fact that NRT focuses on the everyday events in life and the everyday places where they occur. Everyday events are the routine things that people do (e.g. working, walking, preparing food, gardening, etc.) that constitute their daily lives and help them to live a good life. The everyday practices where these events take place (e.g. working place, the kitchen, market, bus station) often remain outside the individuals’ full consciousness as they move in and through them (Andrews & Grenier 2018: 66). Thus, the key argument of NRT is that everyday events and places should not be overlooked by academic scholarship because life happens all the time and everywhere, not just in the specialised areas prioritised in much research. A wide range of happenings and forces make up the active world, such as onflow, processuality, relational materiality, practice and performance and movement. Especially when investigating ageing, a focus on movements is particularly helpful as it can deepen the understanding of ageing practices and experiences in motion.

As mentioned before, this thesis is intended to stay open to how the elderlies experience ageing in their everyday lives. In order to explore these in a differentiated way, I consider it fruitful to investigate these experiences through a relational perspective with a particular focus on the enmeshments of intergenerationality, intersectionality and the life-course.

Even though this thesis does not strictly follow non-representational theory, the NRT with its focus on the everyday, described as “*the geography of what happens*” (emphasis in the original; Thrift 2008: 2) inspires this thesis as well; particularly as

it helps to focus on the practices of everyday life – the mundane and routinized of everyday living. Like grounded theory as a methodology, I consider the NRT as inspiring for this thesis as it is not a theory itself but claims that one has to go beyond theory as a good part of what is actually happening in space and time is lost in theoretically driven interpretative searches for meaning and significance (Andrews et al. 2013: 1352).

2.2 Conceptualizations: What is Ageing?

Ageing is an interdisciplinary phenomenon, cutting across not only the full range of social sciences but also the humanities and the health and natural sciences. This creates a wide range of theoretical angles and methodological approaches for studying the process of ageing. As the previous chapter threw a geographical perspective on how to investigate ageing, this chapter aims at grasping the concept of ageing as such. This is particularly important as the definition and conceptualisation of ageing is a contested and slippery endeavour with “major disagreements in the literature about how it should be analysed” (King et al. 2017: 183).

In society, the understanding of age in calendrical terms is probably the most common: when people get to know each other, their first questions concern their name, profession and calendrical age. Thus, it is widely accepted that, after entering a certain stage in their lives, people are labelled as ‘aged’, ‘old’ or ‘elderly’. Regardless of its arbitrary nature, chronological age is continuously used to define this threshold (ibid.: 183): it is the most widespread societal marker of age and therefore very powerful. Enrolment to primary schools, taking one's driving test, getting pension – access to these events or services is determined by fulfilling certain chronological age (van Dyk 2015: 13). In contrast to the chronological definition, the biological perspective understands age as the state of development of an organism whereas *ageing* is regarded as an irreversible physiological process, finally resulting in death (ibid.: 12). For almost two decades, critical gerontologists have criticised the dominance of these bio-medical models in understanding ageing and plead for an integration of social and cultural dimensions into our ways of conceptualizing ageing (Sandberg 2013: 16).

2.2.1 ‘One Is Not Born, but rather Becomes, Old’: Old Age as a Social and Cultural Construct

In the phase of literature review, I came across the statement “one is not born old, one becomes old” (Sandberg 2011: 44). It can be read as a paraphrase of Simone de Beauvoir’s commonly cited phrase “one is not born, but rather becomes, a woman” (De Beauvoir 1973: 301), highlighting that it is also possible to think of old age as culturally and socially constructed. For a long time, gender studies have debated on the natural existences of ‘men’ and ‘women’. Butler pointed out that “sex is understood to be the invariant, anatomically distinct, and factic aspects of the female body whereas *gender* is the cultural meaning and form that body acquires” (Butler 1986: 35, emphasis in original). Therefore, men/women and masculinity/femininity must be understood as social and cultural constructs rather than mere biological matters of fact (Sandberg 2011: 44). However, ageing and old age are still mainly treated as ‘natural facts’ and little contested, resulting in a lack of discussion on how we are ‘doing age’ as we are ‘doing gender’. Important contributions within studies of ageing have stressed that, rather than simply being driven by biological processes of ageing, we are just as much “aged by culture” (Gullette 2003). Thus, one can understand ageing as something that becomes meaningful relationally; through culture and discourse:

“Old age does not merely refer to chronological (or biological) age, but is just as much a matter of social positioning, for example how we are situated in relation to working life, family/reproduction etcetera, and age relations (young/middle-aged/old).” (Sandberg 2011: 45)

As pointed out, the emphasis on ageing as a social phenomenon rather than a biological process has “tended to leave the ageing body with the natural sciences” (ibid.: 16) and resulted in a socio-deterministic perspective on ageing. Social gerontologists such as Twigg (2004) and Tulle (2008) have consequently challenged the tendency of reinforcing the Cartesian split of body and mind but instead, they proposed ways of understanding ageing as embodied.

2.2.2 Embodied Ageing

Similar to the debates in feminist and gender studies on whether the focus on social and cultural aspects of gender led to the extinction of the material, lived and fleshy body, parallel discussions on whether the material, ageing body is overlooked took

place in social gerontology (Sandberg 2013: 16). From this critique, theorizations of embodiment have emerged; acknowledging both the bodily materiality and how bodies emerge as cultural and symbolic representations. For example, Grosz conceptualised the body as an “open materiality” - as neither a culturally inscribed product of the social nor as simply a part of nature bodies (Grosz 1994: 191). The body as an open materiality exists in between the binary poles of the nature/culture dichotomy (ibid.: 17). In a similar way, Haraway theorizes bodies as ‘naturecultures’, hinting at the equitemporality of nature and culture and thereby at processes in which the physical-material cannot be separated from the discursive-cultural (Haraway 2003: 12).

As the experience of ageing is intricately linked with the body (Obrist 2016a: 96), focusing on the ageing body appears as a useful starting point. Taking into consideration the above-discussed perspectives, I regard bodies neither as effects of culture nor as natural facts alone, but I follow the notion of the body as “a dense matrix of nature and culture” (Casey 1998: 208).

2.2.3 Embodied Geographies

Representatives of feminist approaches in geography have pleaded for a stronger consideration of the body in space-related theory-formation for a long time (Marquardt & Strüver 2018: 38). Since the early/mid-1970s, feminists in geography have been engaging in a critique and reconceptualization of the discipline. A central critique targeted the prevailing body-blindness, only including some dimensions of the body and not others – such as its messiness (Longhurst 2001) – or including some bodies but not others (as in racialized bodies or fat bodies) (Pulido 2001; Longhurst 2005). Scholars argued that a further excursion into feminist theorising on the body could “offer new challenges to, and exciting possibilities for, human geography” (Longhurst 1995: 101). Within the recent years, geographers have engaged with the body in different ways, as an “analytical tool, scale, site, space of representation commodity and physical organism with its own dimensions and that is subjected to other processes” (Mountz 2018: 761). In each of these analytical perspectives, the embodiment of the subject is central; with the body moving through space and time (Cresswell 2006). Regarding embodiment, both phenomenological perspectives and social constructionist understandings of the body have advanced in human geography (and geographical gerontology).

Phenomenological perspectives highlight the lived experiences of ageing and Merleau-Ponty's (1992) concept of the lived body. This concept grasps the body not as the body one has but as

“the body one is – the body through which one participates in the world and that emerges from the interactions between the physiological body and the people, artefacts and other forms of materiality it encounters.” (Schwanen et al. 2012a: 1293)

This understanding of the lived body is in line with Deleuzian models of embodiment, grasping bodies as open materialities and through a focus on what a body can do. What a body consists of is not a priori defined but is “composed of an infinite number of particles” and defined by “relations of motion and rest, of speeds and slownesses between particles” and its capacities for affecting and being affected by other bodies (Deleuze 1988: 123). This way of thinking brings the relations of bodies and spaces into sharp focus: it emphasizes how that what an ageing body can do and become changes when it moves through the situations and spaces that make up everyday life and when it engages specific technologies, built environments or meets other people (Schwanen et al. 2012a: 1293).

2.3 Age and Ageing Discourses: Going beyond the Decline and Success-Narratives

Similar to the conceptualization of ageing bodies in the nature-culture-dichotomy, dominant narratives represent old age and ageing in similar dualistic ways – either in terms of a decline narrative or through discourses of positive and successful ageing (Sandberg 2011: 11; Ziegler 2014: 7).

Connotations of being old with inflexibility, dependence and decline are deeply ingrained in how people speak about and respond to encounters with older adults (Schwanen et al. 2012a: 1292). Gullette discusses how decline discourses have established as “the truth about aging” (1997: 7), which not only affects those labelled old, but people already start to ‘counter-act’ the process of ageing in their midlife (Sandberg 2011: 49). Old people are constituted as the opposite of young people – as if “their futurity is inevitably running out until it hits the frail ‘old-body’ of vulnerability” (Lulle & King 2016: 4). Conceptualizing older people as ‘futureless’ fits into capitalistic practices which regard older people and their wealth as resource that should be exploited more effectively by specific products such as anti-ageing

face creams. At the same time, their physical bodies are understood as resources that should be exercised and thereby made more productive through various body-improving techniques (ibid.: 4).

The decline discourse has been criticised for overlooking experiences of increasingly healthy and engaged ageing people and thereby reinforcing negative and stereotypical images of later life (Sandberg 2011: 13). In order to make space for filling old age and ageing with a more positive content and thus to create a counter-narrative, Rowe and Kahn (1987; 1997) introduced the influential concept of “successful ageing”. According to them, successful ageing consists of “the avoidance of disease and disability, the maintenance of high physical and cognitive function, and sustained engagement in social and productive activities” (Rowe & Kahn 1997: 433). Successful ageing not only became influential in academic debates but also entered policy-making, community work and grey activism in Western societies (Sandberg 2011: 49). Recognizing the normative overtone of ‘successful’ which implies that one can also age unsuccessfully, many critiques of the concept emerged. Torres criticized the concept for being too narrow and its universalistic stance despite a clear western, culture-specific understanding (Torres 2001: 334). Liang and Luo state that, whereas decline discourses on ageing are closely tied to negative conceptions of the ageing body as one in decay, successful ageing discourses overlook the specificities of the ageing body and the material processes of ageing (Liang & Luo 2012: 327f). Thereby, discourses of successful ageing reinforce ageism, despite their initial attempt to challenge the stereotype of old age as decline: the strong focus on remaining active overlooks the inevitable changes that occur in ageing bodies (Calasanti 2003, Calasanti & King 2005). Calasanti and King conclude that ageing successfully means fighting all signs of ageing by staying active:

“Successful aging means not aging and not being old because our constructions of old age contain no positive content.” (Calasanti & King 2005: 7)

Instead of following either the narrative of ageing as a success or ageing as a decline, this paper seeks for alternative ways of conceptualizing old age that go beyond the above-mentioned binaries. Sandberg proposes the concept of affirmative old age which relies upon the notion of bodies as open materialities and

“does not aspire agelessness or attempt to reject and fight old age, but instead seeks a conceptualization and acceptance of old age in all its diversity.” (Sandberg 2011: 51)

Following this understanding, in this paper, I aim at acknowledging the (material) specificities of the ageing body and at theorizing the ageing body in terms of difference without understanding it as marked by decline or lack. For making visible the diversity that exists in old age, I consider the relational perspectives lined out in chapter 2.1 as particularly useful.

2.4 Grasping What Matters to the Elderlies: Wellbeing in Later Life

Scholarly interest in what matters to people in their lives and what they consider as important for ‘the good life’ dates back to at least the ancient Greeks (George 2000). More current research has grasped this ‘good life’, inter alia, under the concept of wellbeing. As an attempt to define what wellbeing actually encompasses, Ziegler and Schwanen state that

“wellbeing has been considered both an objective phenomenon related to people’s living conditions (e.g. level of income, neighbourhood type, housing situation) and a subjective phenomenon that describes an individual’s experience of how well she is or lives.” (Ziegler & Schwanen 2011: 763)

One influential perspective on wellbeing as a subjective phenomenon is provided by the approach of subjective wellbeing. George (1981: 359) defined subjective wellbeing as “subjective perceptions of life quality”, arguing that it encompasses life satisfaction and happiness. Life satisfaction refers to people’s long-term cognitive assessment of life quality; and happiness refers to the short-term, affective judgments of wellbeing (Ziegler & Schwanen 2011: 763). However, understandings of subjective wellbeing have been criticized for being little theoretical and incomplete, particularly uttered by the tradition of psychological wellbeing. One of its most known representatives, Carol Ryff, developed a theoretically grounded model of psychological wellbeing, comprising six dimensions: autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations with others, purpose in life and self-acceptance (Ryff 1989a).

Another research tradition on wellbeing works with lay conceptions – older people’s own understandings – of wellbeing and quality of life (e.g. Bowling 2005; Ryff 1989b). Gilroy (2007) showed that studies from the U.K. following this lay approach produced – despite their diverse methods and research interests – some consistent

domains of well-being in later life: good health, sufficient income to participate in society, a strong social network, the capacity to make a contribution to the community or society, a secure home and the ability to access information and activities.

Against this backdrop, it becomes clear that this thesis is, by aiming at grasping the elderlies' personal experiences of ageing and their later lives, also aiming at grasping their own understandings of wellbeing. As I apply a grounded theory approach in this thesis, I reject the above-mentioned pre-defined understandings, prescribing the domains that constitute wellbeing in later life. Thus, whenever I apply the term wellbeing in this paper, it broadly refers to what actually matters to the elderlies in Sumbawanga - these aspects will be carved out in the empirical part of this thesis.

3. State of the Art: Ageing in Sub-Saharan Africa

As we are approaching the empirical part of this paper, it is also time to spatially focus on elder people located in the actual research area. In this chapter, I address current debates on ageing in the Global South with a particular focus on Sub-Saharan Africa and Tanzania.

Compared to elder people in the Global North, ageing in the Global South takes place in a context of considerable economic, infrastructural and personal strain (Rust 2017: 362). According to Maharaj, population ageing in Africa is occurring in the environment of “widespread poverty, instability and conflict, changing household structures, a high disease burden, inadequate health systems, and weak or poorly managed political institutions” (Maharaj 2013: 1). Given the fact that the population in SSA is ageing and simultaneously, socio-demographic transformations are taking place, the ways in which elder people age in SSA will diversify and undergo profound changes in the next years/decades. Despite the growing importance of this process and the increasing urge to act, SSA politics widely overlook the aged and provide only basic support programmes for them (Jaeggi 2014). Not only in political terms, the elderly in SSA seem to be a marginalised group, but also in science, many scholars speak of a lack of research in this field (Maharaj 2013; Hoffman & Pype 2016; Cohen & Menken 2006). In an issue of *Journals of Gerontology* in 2017, Aboderin remarks that the very same issue is the first one that contains two publications from and on ageing in SSA; describing this as a landmark that “offers an opportunity to reflect on developments in research on aging in Africa and to speculate on perspectives for the years ahead” (Aboderin 2017: 643). Within the last decades, researchers observed a growing body of literature dealing with the topic of ageing in Sub-Saharan Africa. The spectrum of areas addressed by researchers on older people in Africa spans from aspects of their living arrangements, family and intergenerational relations, experiences of care receipt and provision to work and migration patterns as well as elderlies’ exposure to poverty, exclusions and abuse, and emergency (ibid.: 643). Cohen and Menken remark that only recently, researchers have started to ask how different socio-economic-demographic factors, changing cultural norms and values, changing levels of formal and informal social support, are affecting the well-being of elder people in SSA (Cohen

& Menken 2006: 11). The growing research on Africa's elderlies seems to strengthen their advocacy and impact policy makers:

"The broadening body of evidence on the circumstances of older Africans has helped underpin an increasingly robust advocacy endeavour on this population, leading to calls to (a) develop legal frameworks that enshrine the rights of older adults and (b) redress the omission of older people in sector-specific strategies." (Aboderin 2017: 643)

Despite its empowering effects, many publications still retell the dominant narrative of Africa's older people as homogeneously disadvantaged and negate the disparities in capacity, privilege, and power that exist within this population. More and more scholars, especially those inspired by critical approaches, aim at calibrating this all-too-often dominant narrative by acknowledging the heterogeneity within the group of elder people. As only a few publications fully investigate the diversity of ageing experiences in SSA, Aboderin calls for research that thoroughly considers the axes of gender, rural/urban residence, social position and ethnicity (ibid.: 644).

3.1 Care and Family Arrangements

Within research on ageing in SSA, most studies focus on family structures and care arrangements (Hoffman & Pype 2016). Against the backdrop of socio-demographic changes, many scholars are interested in how current care arrangements are structured, how they have changed and how they will develop in future (van der Geest 2016; Freeman 2016; Hoffman 2016). Predominantly, ethnographic case studies from different regions of the continent provide insights into how local and global transformations affect the ways that older people receive care within familial or societal contexts (Hoffman & Pype 2016: 2).

Häberlein investigates care arrangements in Western Togo and stresses that idea of the 'generational contract' seems to be a "human universal all over the world" as in certain phases of the life-course, people act more as care-providers, in others more as care-receivers (Häberlein 2015: 159). She deeply engages with the Western imagination of elderly in Africa living in the midst of their numerous caring and respecting family members. Based on the findings of her research in Kabre (a village in northern Togo), Häberlein disagrees with this one-dimensional imagination of a "I care for you because I was cared for when I was a child"-solution:

„On the one hand it is quite effective as a normative discourse, but on the other hand practice sometimes results in divergences from this norm – not only because of failures of will but also because of failed capacity. Younger relatives cannot always care well and sufficiently for their elders, sometimes because of migration processes, sometimes because of the form of settlement in the Kabre area.” (Häberlein 2015: 161)

In contrast to Häberlein’s findings, Obrist discovered in her research project on elder people, care and health in Tanzania that most actions of care were organized by family members, in both the rural and urban research areas and personal care by non-family members was considered as a great shame by the research participants (Obrist 2016a: 109). Her research results showed evidence that in Tanzania, caring for elderlies is a gendered practice as mainly assigned to either wives or daughters (ibid.: 102).

Van der Geest investigated in how far families in Ghana will continue to care for elder people and concluded that future Ghanaian families will “become even more mobile, will have fewer children, will live increasingly in nuclear families and will grow older” and therefore, “future families will find it more difficult to provide good care” (van der Geest 2016: 36).

Van Eeuwijk showed that in Tanzania, elder-to-elder care is an emerging concept that is not in line with traditional care imaginations but due to changing family structures, more and more elderlies have to open up for these alternative carescapes (van Eeuwijk 2016). He particularly stresses that care arrangements often consist of more than the visible family members, but care networks are produced by several visible and invisible, dynamically changing care practices. These carescapes do not only consist of practices like personal care (such as washing or feeding) but are viewed in a broader sense, also including visits from neighbours or participating in community meetings. According to van Eeuwijk, old-age-vulnerability is strongly shaped by the presence or absence of these care provisions (ibid.: 71).

In contexts of poverty and HIV/AIDS, some studies do not focus on elder people as care receivers but as productive care providers. They underline their importance for families and households in providing care for sick children, orphaned grandchildren or in terms of financial support (Pillay & Maharaj 2013: 12). Many studies investigate these care arrangements from a spatial perspective, acknowledging that “attention to the production of spaces of care is critical to the study of older people’s life-words” (Hoffman & Pype 2016: 6). With the ageing process, older people’s mobility slows

down, impacting the availability or unavailability of care opportunities in a given environment. Thus, places such as the house, the neighbourhood the hospital or the retirement home come to the fore in investigations of care arrangements and carescapes in SSA.

3.2 Ageing, Migration and Mobility

With acknowledging that in SSA families become more mobile and their members live in different parts of their lives in different places, relational and translocal perspectives on ageing are becoming more and more popular and researchers start to examine the relationships between ageing, migration, space and place (Sampaio et al. 2018: 1).

Within geographical gerontology, discussions have developed on the diversity of older migrants (Warnes et al. 2004), transnational ageing (Horn & Schweppe 2017), ageing in transcultural contexts (Zubair & Norris 2015) and policy implications of ageing as a migrant (Ciobanu et al. 2017). Despite their thematic richness, Sampaio et al. accuse these discussions to have “failed to fully engage with the spatial dimensions of the ageing–migration nexus” (Sampaio et al. 2018: 1).

At the same time, scholars from migration research who are investigating migration, mobility and translocal households in SSA have only paid little attention to the elder populations so far. Steinbrink and Niedenführ state that „Africa is on the move” and urge to acknowledge migratory movements as well as space-spanning network relations as a normality of life-reality in African societies (Steinbrink & Niedenführ 2017). In their publication on migration and mobility in Africa, they describe that especially the young to middle-aged men migrate from more rural places to cities in order to work which leads to an imbalanced age-structure in both places of origin and places of destination (ibid.: 126). Nevertheless, in most of the studies, the focal point of investigation are those young people who leave their homes instead of the life situations of those ‘left behind’ (Youngstedt 2013; Steinbrink 2009). Further studies also elaborate upon the migrant’s wish to return home when they retire or grow older (Devereux 2006; Greiner 2008). As Sward has pointed out, in some contexts, this seems to be a “Myth of return” as many elderly return home out of the societies expectations to do so rather than out of their own wish to move back (Sward 2016).

However, in both geographical areas of research – geographical gerontology and migration/mobility studies – the respective other has remained marginalized, both have

been “prolific on their own, their crossings have remained underdeveloped” (Sampaio et al. 2018: 2). Lulle and King argue that ageing should be incorporated into migration research (and the other way around) not only because of demographic trends towards an ageing society but “as an intrinsic factor of life and livelihoods” (2016: 3), with far-reaching consequences for well-being and inter-generational relations. Regarding the processes of ageing and migration as entwined trajectories, Sampaio et al. speak of an ageing-migration nexus that must be further investigated in human geography (2018: 1).

3.2.1 The Ageing-Migration Nexus

So far, this ageing-migration nexus is investigated in six different thematic fields of investigation: older people left behind by migration; older family-joining migrants; affluent international retirement migrants; older economic migrants; older return migrants and ageing-in place migrants (King et al. 2017: 185). For this thesis, the research on older people left behind by migration which are not “older migrants as such but “their lives and well-being are fundamentally impacted by the emigration of their children” (ibid.: 185) is of particular relevance.

Most studies of those ‘left behind’ focus on children but within the last years, there has been a significant increase in research on older people ‘left behind’. Toyota, Yeoh and Nguyen (2007) criticise the term ‘left behind’ as it is connotated with negative images of abandonment, helplessness, absence and loss. From this perspective, the elderlies are viewed as passive receivers of remittances and dependent upon support and long distance-care from emigrant sons and daughters (King et al. 2017: 186). But increasingly, more active roles of elder people are recognized within research, for example as care-givers for left-behind grandchildren (Bastia 2009) or as the managers and investors of remittances in housing and business (Vullnetari & King 2011).

3.2.2 The Mobilities Paradigm in Ageing Studies

Not only the ageing-migration nexus is urged to gain more attention but the broader field of the ‘new mobilities’ paradigm and ageing are brought together increasingly in studies which are critically unpacking the meanings and implications of movement in later life (Schwanen & Páez 2010; Schwanen & Ziegler 2011).

Schwanen and Ziegler argue that wellbeing, independence and mobility are “intricately connected with each another in many ways, especially in later life” (2011: 720). They understand mobility as the capacity to move through physical space and independence as independent living and show that independence presupposes that older people are at least to some extent mobile within and beyond their residence. Likewise, independence and mobility are important constituents of wellbeing in later life as mobility allows older people to engage in everyday activities outside the home that are meaningful and enhance wellbeing (ibid.: 720).

As the interconnections between mobility and well-being of elder people are widely explored for the Global North, Porter et al. argue that the mobility of elder people constitutes a major knowledge gap in development studies (2013: 161). Only a few studies are contributing to filling this gap. For example, Porter et al. (2013) explored the diverse ways in which older people’s health, livelihoods and access to transport are interconnected, the growing importance of motorcycle–taxi services for rural connectivity, and how the relationality between older people and younger generations contributes to the shaping of mobility patterns. Similarly, the researcher Esson aims at investigating the roles, livelihoods and uncertainties of older people living in Ghana by examining their mobilities and exploring how they continue to produce social and economic value on the margins of African urbanism (MPI-MMG 2018: 7).

4. Setting the Context

The following sub-chapters provide a broad overview on the context in which this research is set. It elaborates on current demographic developments in Sub-Saharan Africa and related social and political issues. The last sub-chapter particularly addresses the situation in Tanzania; it refers to by which developments the elderlies' lives in Tanzania are characterized and hints at relevant political frameworks, namely Tanzania's National Ageing Policy from 2003 and the National Health Policy from 2017.

4.1 Ageing in the Global South – an Emerging Phenomenon

The global population is rapidly ageing. According to the UN, 962 million people worldwide are 60+ today (2017) and by 2050, the global population of elder persons will more than double its size, reaching nearly 2,1 billion people (UNDESA 2017: 2). As figure 1 shows, population ageing is a universal phenomenon and according to the UN, every country or area with at least 90,000 inhabitants in 2017 is projected to see an increase in the proportion of the 60+ group by 2050 (ibid.: 1).

The process of population ageing – describing the shift in distribution of a country's population towards older ages in average – started in so-called 'high-income countries', but within the last years, low- and middle-income countries experienced the greatest changes (WHO 2018). Accordingly, figure 1 shows that population ageing is more apparent in the Global North (especially Europe and North America), but it increasingly gains importance in the Global South. Compared to other regions, many

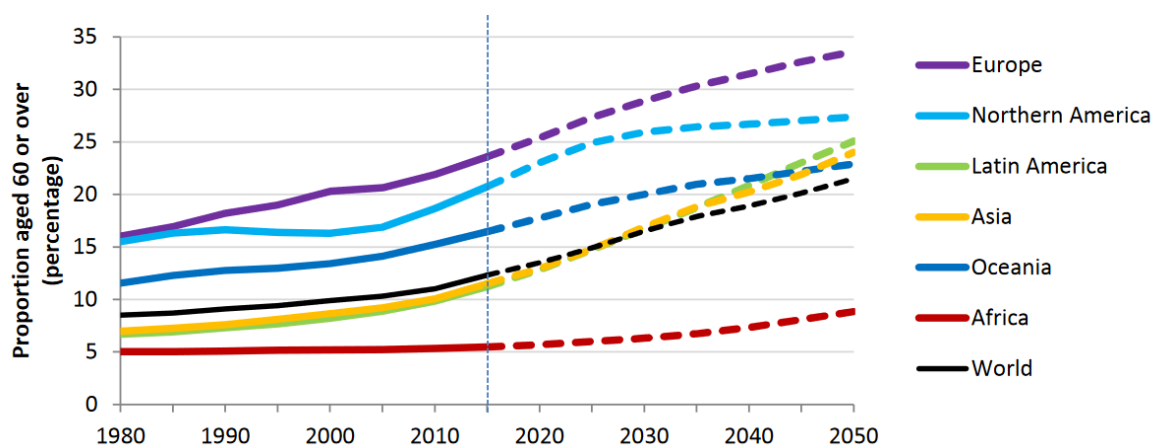


Figure 1: Proportion of the population aged 60 years and over in different continents (in percentage), estimated for 1980-2015 and projected to 2050. Source: UNDESA 2015: 2.

parts of the African continent entered the demographic transition relatively recently; from 1980 until 2010, the proportion of people aged 60 or over remained at 5 per cent. The larger population ageing process has just begun: elder persons accounted 5 per cent of the population of Africa in 2015; according to UNDESA, that proportion is projected to nearly double by 2050 to 10 per cent (UNDESA 2015: 1).

On the one hand, ageing populations and the increasing life expectancies that they reflect are called 'a triumph of development' by international organisations (Amrith 2018: 9). On the other hand, in many debates, they are framed as a policy problem or a crisis, "generating social and economic anxieties about a shrinking labour force and increasing strains on health and care services" (ibid.: 9). The dominant focus on ageing as a social problem and older people as vulnerable overlooks the fact that the process of ageing is complex and diverse with elderlies in the Global South being a very diverse and heterogeneous category of people (King et al. 2017; Palmberger 2017).

As several publications have shown, an important dimension in population ageing is gender (UNDP 2016; UN Women 2015). In average and worldwide, women tend to outlive men, thus comprising a majority of older persons. In 2015, women accounted for 54 per cent of the global population aged 60+ and 61 per cent of those aged 80+ (UNDESA 2015). At the same time, older women are more marginalized and disadvantaged than older men as evidence shows higher rates of poverty among older women in both developed and developing countries (UNDP 2017: 8). Discrimination based on the intersections of age and gender is widespread around the world (UNDESA 2015; HelpAge 2012): Inequalities in income, access to education, decent work as well as health across the life-course expose many women to poverty in old age. In some countries, this is further exacerbated by denied or limited control over financial resources and the right to own and inherit property.

According to UNDESA (2016: 2), only 17 per cent of people in pensionable age in SSA receive a pension, meaning that the majority of older persons has to rely on assistance from relatives or look for other sources of income for their social security. In most parts of SSA, retirement is a privilege extended primarily to the minority of persons who work in the formal economy and thus have access to contributory pension programmes (ibid.: 2). Non-contributory pensions are not yet implemented in most countries of the region and therefore, many older persons in SSA continue to work as long as they are

physically able (ibid.: 2). In Africa, among those aged 65+, 52 per cent of men and 33 per cent of women were active in the labour force in 2015.

In addition to their labour force participation, older men and women in SSA Africa are making other important contributions to their families and communities. Many older persons whose adult children have migrated in search of work or have died as a result of HIV/AIDS are the main care-providers for their grandchildren (UNDP 2016: 2).

4.2 Ageing in Tanzania

According to HelpAge, 2.8 million people are currently (2018) 60+ in Tanzania, which equals 4.7 per cent of the total population (HelpAge 2018b). HelpAge further predicts that by 2050, the number of elder people is expected to amount nearly 10 million, which will account 16.8 per cent of the total population, meaning that their share of the population will fourfold in the next 32 years (HelpAge 2018b). Over the past decade, life expectancy at birth has increased from 51 to 62 years (2015), with a life expectancy of 63.8 years for women and 59.9 for men (WHO 2018).

HelpAge describes the situation of the elderly in Tanzania as vulnerable since 96% of Tanzania’s elderly do not have a secure income. Nevertheless, the majority of the elder people remains economically active (73 per cent), most of them are engaged in small-scale farming (HelpAge 2012). Numbers also underline the role that elderlies play as caregivers: in 2003, roughly 50 per cent of the orphaned children in Tanzania were

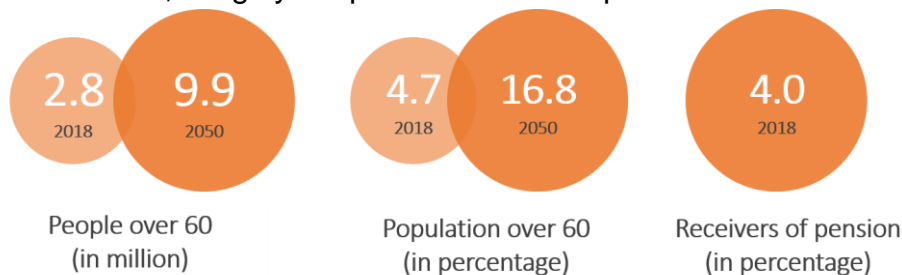


Figure 2: Numbers and estimations on ageing in Tanzania. Autor’s design. Source: HelpAge 2018b. cared for by their grandparents (UNICEF 2006: 16).

In 2003, Tanzania was the second African country (following the Comoros) that passed a National Ageing Policy (URT 2003). The Policy acknowledges the precarious situation of the elder population and amongst other reasons for this, the Policy stresses the “globalization, growth of towns and the movement of people from rural to urban areas in search of jobs have changed the formal relationship in the family and society in general” (ibid.: 3).

The general objective of the National Ageing Policy is “to ensure that older people are recognized, provided with basic services and accorded the opportunity to fully participate in the daily life of the community” (URT 2003: 7). More specifically, these objectives include recognizing elder people as a resource, empowering families for sustained support to elder people and initiating programmes that provide older people with the opportunity to participate in economic development initiatives (ibid.: 7-8).

The responsible body that is supposed to implement the National Ageing Policy are “the Central Government, the Local Government Authorities, the Voluntary Agencies, the Families and Villages” (ibid.: 17). Thereby, the Policy underlines that the society has the responsibility of providing elderly with care and support as “the family will remain the basic institution of care and support for older people. Institutional care of older people will be the last resort” (ibid.: 10). This means that the government policy anticipates the development of enabling structures but assigns the main responsibility of care and support to the lowest level (Obrist 2016b: 270).

The National Health Policy (URT 2017) as well as the National Ageing Policy (URT 2003) both stipulate the provision of free health services to older people (60+). The National Health Policy specifically addresses elderlies as it sets the objective to improve the “quality of health care services for the elderly” (URT 2017: 33). Amongst other measures, this objective should be achieved by

1. Enhancing promotion programs for health ageing for older adults.
2. Involving elderly people in every stage of provision of knowledge and information on free medical treatments in health facilities.
3. Ensuring adequate functioning financing arrangements for the elderly is in place. (URT 2017: 33)

Despite these goals, many older people still do not access these free treatment services due to inability to prove their age, the limited availability of health services, equipment and expertise (Mwanyangala et al. 2010: 37). In addition, especially in rural areas, elder people must travel far distances for reaching at the public health facilities; this involves paying transport costs which many of them cannot cover (Jaeggi 2014). Even though a contributory pension scheme exists in Tanzania, only 4% of the Tanzanian citizens aged 65+ receive a pension (HelpAge 2018b). These are mainly retired state employees and, more recently, also former employees of large international companies receive a pension. According to van Eeuwijk, Tanzania has

been discussing the issue of a non-contributory pension for more than ten years (Jaeggi 2014). In principle, the parliament has already agreed to implement an unconditional pension for all people over 60 and this pension would be accessible even without having to make a pension contribution (Jaeggi 2014). However, the project has failed so far due to problems of its financing.

As this chapter has shown, the Tanzanian state provides only little support to the elderlies. This coincides with the experiences and narrations of the elderlies living in Sumbawanga: governmental support rarely existed within their lives and when it did (as some of them receive a pension), they considered it as not relevant in their everyday lives. Thus, the governmental role within the elderlies' lives will only play a marginal role within the empirical part of this thesis, yet it is aware of the consequences of the non- to little-existent state support.

5. Methodological Framework

This chapter presents the methodological framework of this research. It begins with a discussion of positionality and reflexivity in the specific research context, this is followed by elaborations of grounded theory as a conceptual framework. Having this conceptual framework in mind, I elaborate on the spatial and temporal dimensions - the research field and its constitution as well as the temporally phased structure of the empirical part. Finally, I come to a discussion of the implemented methods.

5.1 Situating my Knowledge: towards Positionality and Reflexivity

“We must recognize and take into account of our own position, as well as that of our research participants, and write this into our research practice.” (McDowell 1992: 409) While geographers inspired by feminism or postcolonial theories understand their participants’ knowledge as situated, arguing that it is produced in specific circumstances which are shaping their knowledge, many researchers still tend to overlook the situatedness of themselves and their knowledge (Rose 1997: 305). Already criticising the blindness of researchers to their own position as well as the power relations between them and the research participants more than 25 years ago, McDowell’s plea for considering them more thoroughly in geographical research is a current and important issue.

In her article *Situating knowledges: positionality, reflexivities and other tactics*, Rose stresses the importance of the practices mentioned in the article’s title and underlines that situating oneself and reflecting upon one’s position is considered as a crucial part of a critical geography (Rose 1997: 305). According to Dowling, “power cannot be eliminated from your research” (2016: 36) and she suggests that the best strategy to respond to this state is to critically reflect upon it.

Trying to define the construct of ‘positionality’, Haraway describes the act of positioning as “the key practice grounding for knowledge” (Haraway 1991: 193), because “the position indicates the kind of power that enabled a certain kind of knowledge” (Rose 1997: 306). Apentiik and Parpart elaborate that

“Race, ethnicity, class, gender, religion, marital status and other non-demographic characteristics, including one’s worldview, often define the position and identity of the researcher in relation to the researched community.”
(Apentiik & Parpart 2006: 34)

In order to situate oneself, it is necessary “to make one's position [...] known rather than invisible, and to limit one's conclusions rather than making grand claims about their universal applicability” (Mattingly & Falconer-Al-Hindi 1995: 428-29) For making this position visible, Rose suggests a reflexivity that “looks both ‘inward’ to the identity of the researcher, and ‘outward’ to her relation to her research and what is described as ‘the wider world’ (1997: 309).

In the following paragraphs, I try to follow these suggestions by making visible my own position and relate it to my research. I am a white, young, healthy woman, grown up in Germany and currently studying in a master’s programme. With regard to the research participants, this shows that unequal and manifold power relations exist. After obtaining my A-level, I absolved a one-year voluntary service working at an orphanage and a trade school in Sumbawanga, Tanzania. I learned to speak Kiswahili quite fluently; the capability to speak Kiswahili did open several doors and allowed access to many participants without relying on a translator.

During that year abroad in Tanzania, I had a host family in Sumbawanga and made some close Tanzanian friends which allowed me to gain insights into some individual lifestyles. After that, I travelled three times back to that city and kept my connections alive. I assume that my regional, cultural and language knowledges as well as connections to local people prior to my actual research stays have a major impact on my research because it is against this backdrop that I interpret and relate my research findings. I consider being able to draw on this cumulative developed understanding and knowledge as an enrichment for this paper as it might help me to develop a deeper understanding of certain situations. Nevertheless, I am socialized in Germany and therefore cannot take off my Eurocentric view. When it comes to ageing in Tanzania, I must underline that I grew up in a welfare state in which social security is – to a certain extent – provided by the government. I do not want to go too much into detail of my research findings yet, but the narrations of the elderly, mentioning that the state is showing only little responsibility made me once more aware of my own privileges as well as my Eurocentric, normative understanding of care and the government’s responsibilities.

As a white researcher from the Global North doing research in a rural area in Tanzania, power asymmetries evolve on a larger scale. In this context, scholars need to be “attentive to histories of colonialism, development, globalization and local realities, to

avoid exploitative research or perpetuation of relations of domination and control” (Sultana 2007: 375). As a female white researcher from Europe, people in Sumbawanga often called me *mzungu*, meaning ‘white/European person’; being white is associated with a relatively high socio-economic status by many Tanzanians. In most of the research encounters, I had the impression that the elderlies talked to me out of interest and curiosity in what the white girl is doing. However, I recognized that some elderlies repeatedly stressed their need of money and support from outside and I gained the feeling that they expected more from me than simply thanking them for their participation.

What is more, the elderlies opened up to me to different extents. Those elderly who have been in contact with foreigners/white people before were generally less in fear of contact, leading to deeper conversations and richer data material. With one of the research participants, James, I had a very open conversation on the interaction with white people:

“Later in the conversation he told me that it would be strange for many Tanzanians to sit on the bed with a white woman and talk like that. He claimed that many Tanzanians could not do that, and if he told it to his friends, some would not believe him. He said that for him, this is possible, he is used to talking to white people, due to his different jobs and stays in Dar/Tanga.” (Research Journal: 26)

The above reflections showed that my positionality plays an important role in the research setting in Tanzania. Therefore, I decided to not follow a ‘formal style’ for research publications which encourages distance and at the same time makes the author and his/her positionality invisible (Butler 2001: 265). In order to actively demonstrate my personal involvement, I consciously made the decision to write this thesis from a first-person-perspective.

5.2 Grounding the Research: Grounded Theory as a Methodology

“Grounded Theory is not a Theory but a methodology to discover theories dormant in the data.” (Legewie & Schervier-Legewie 2004)

Epistemologically, this research is inspired by interpretive-hermeneutic traditions in which “the emphasis is on *understanding* rather than on *explanation*” (Marsh & Furlong 2002: 20, emphasis in original). Therefore, I apply a mainly inductive research approach in which knowledge in the form of theories and concepts is generated based

on empirical data (Dick 2008: 115). In order to explore and *understand* the everyday life realities of elderly people in Sumbawanga, I decided for the grounded theory approach. Introduced by Glaser and Strauss in the 1960s, grounded theory rejected the so-far dominant deductive approach of testing theories but called for a “discovery of theory from data” (Glaser & Strauss 1967: 1). They claimed that many books on methods of social research focus on how to verify theories; thereby the “prior step of discovering what concepts and hypotheses are relevant for the area that one wishes to research” (Ibid.: 2) was lost sight of. By generating a grounded theory out of the empirical data, the researchers arrive at “theory suited to its supposed uses” (Ibid.: 3). The grounded theory approach renders emphasis on “theory as process” (ibid.: 32), meaning that theory is an ever-developing entity and not a perfected product. Glaser and Strauss underline the dynamic character of theory by defining it as “a momentary product (...) written with the assumption that it is still developing” (ibid.: 32). When developing their approach, a strict dualism between deductive and inductive research approaches still existed. Soon, criticism grew louder that the grounded theory tends “to overstress the extent to which existing theory can be completely ignored” (Turner 1981: 228). Reading their publications closely, it becomes clear that Strauss and Glaser hold different views on the role of theory. As Glaser insists that in the process of coding, the codes and categories directly emerge from the data, Strauss underlines that theoretical pre-knowledge necessarily flows into the data’s interpretation (Reichertz 2005: 277). The applied research methodology of this paper is closer to Strauss’s understanding as I am convinced that my perception throughout the research process is inevitably informed by theoretical discussions. My position in the debate on theoretical influence resembles the one of Hackenbroch who states that “my research questions and theoretical considerations informed but did not strictly determine the categories to generate and analyse my data” (2013: 65). During the whole research process, I tried to pursue a theoretical sensitivity; to not commit myself exclusively to one specific preconceived theory but to see around and stay sensitive to towards the above-mentioned “theories dormant in the data” (Legewie & Schervier-Legewie 2004). To achieve at the inductively derived theories, the grounded theory approach suggests using a systematized set of procedures (Strauss & Corbin 1990). In contrast to deductive research designs in which the processes of delving into theories, collecting data and analysing them take place in a chronological order, the grounded theory

approach allows cycles of simultaneous data collection and analysis. Hence, the research methods, theoretical understandings as well as the analysis have undergone several transformations and were continuously modified and adjusted.

5.3 Ethnographic Perspectives

Regardless of the discipline, ethnographers explore topics that are difficult to research and ask research questions that may not be readily accessed through language (Watson & Till 2010: 122). Ethnographic research “is concerned to make sense of the actions and intentions of people as knowledgeable agents” (Ley 1988: 121). Ethnographers uncover what the respective researched group takes for granted thereby reveal the knowledge and meaning structures that provide the blueprint for social action (Herbert 2000: 550). In a methodological sense, ethnographic research denotes an extended period of fieldwork in which the researcher

“tries to integrate as much as possible into a relatively small group of people, taking part, observing, listening and documenting in order to gain an insight and make sense of the lived, routinized and mundane practices and experiences of their everyday lives” (Verne 2012a: 37)

Relating this closer to human geographic research, ethnography is especially useful in order to uncover the processes and meanings that undergird socio-spatial life (Herbert 2000: 550). Human as well as non-human agents enact these meaningful processes and thereby, they reproduce and challenge macro-structures in the everyday of place-bound action (ibid.: 550).

Ethnographers typically enter the field by exploring particular social phenomena rather than testing specific hypotheses about them. For conducting the field trip, it is of particular importance to not only reassure presuppositions by reading them ‘into the phenomena’, but to patiently delve into the research field, stay critical and thereby allow the phenomena to surprise (Verne 2012b: 193). To put it in the words of Law, it is important to “remain attentive to the unknown knocking at the door” (Law 1992: 380). With regard to the grounded theory, it becomes clear that both methodologies aim at building theory from the ground and therefore they are in line with each other. In this thesis, I bring both methodologies together as they complement each other in fruitful ways. The grounded theory serves more as a general orientation on how this thesis understands the relation between theory and data whereas ethnography provides more concrete directions of how to gain the rich, in depth-data that serves as a

necessary foundation to follow the grounded theory framework. What is more, the logic of grounded theory entails going back to data and forward into analysis and then returning to the field. Following these processes helps to overcome the danger of collecting thin, unfocused data, which is one of the major challenges of ethnographic research (Charmaz & Mitchell 2007: 162).

5.4 Fieldwork and Methods

Prior to my first research stay, I was already familiar with the research area before collecting the data; according to the grounded theory approach, this is of particular importance as prior experience and intimate knowledge of the particular research context are useful to ask the “right” questions (Hossain 2013: 94). I started to delve into general theoretical debates on ageing in the Global South/Africa in December and luckily had the chance to travel to Sumbawanga for twelve days in the end the month. I used this opportunity to talk to people who are aged as well as to those who do not consider themselves as elderlies but dealt with the overall topic in either a personal or work-related context. Thereby, I gained first on-the-ground insights. Back in Germany, I approached the first empirical data in an open way. As Hossain points out, in this process, basic theoretical understanding, cycles of data collection and analysis merge together (Hossain 2013: 94, Mattissek et al. 2013: 210). Based upon the insights

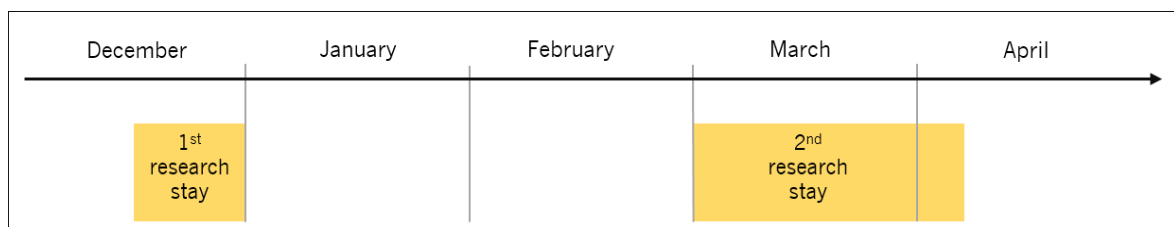


Figure 3: Overview on the research stays in Sumbawanga, Tanzania. Author's design.

gained through this first cycle, I travelled back to Sumbawanga in March and stayed for five weeks (figure 3). In this time, I was able to conduct different research methods (further described in chapter 5.4). Having a small office with internet access helped me to follow the idea of simultaneous data collection and analysis.

5.4.1 Defining the Target Group & Gaining Access to the Field

As this thesis aims at investigating diverse ways and perceptions of ageing, I stayed open to all elderlies of different socio-economic backgrounds, states of health and

gender. The main challenge was how to actually define who the elder people are. In their National Policy on Ageing, the Tanzanian government defines older person as “an individual who is 60 years and above” (URT: 2003: 3). As discussed in the theoretical chapters on ageing, I engage critically with defining age solely in calendrical terms and dividing life-courses into distinct stages of life. Therefore, I decided to consider all those people as potential participants who either regard themselves as *mzee* or were introduced by other locals to me as *mzee*. *Mzee* is a Swahili word which can be translated as “elderly/elder person” (Lazaro 2011: 322).

I entered my field research in Sumbawanga, a town which is located in the west of Tanzania and simultaneously the capital city of the Rukwa region. According to a Census from 2012, the municipality of Sumbawanga counts an estimated population of about 210.000 inhabitants. Comparing this to the about 147.000 inhabitants in 2002, it becomes obvious that the city is fast-growing (City Population 2017). In relation to the urban centres of Tanzania and with its location close to the Tanzanian-Congolese border, the town is located in the periphery. Traditionally, the local tribe *Fipa* was famous for its farming skills and still today, many inhabitants of this area make their living based upon (subsistence) farming. I decided for this entry-point out of a quite practical reason: I was able establish close connections to people in Sumbawanga during several stays prior to my research. During my voluntary year, my German sending organisation *Bistum Münster* cooperated with the diocese of Sumbawanga and Caritas International. Because of my connections to the local responsible persons, they provided me with an office in the Caritas building which is in the middle of Katandala. Spending my first mornings at the office and having *Chai*, the Tanzanian breakfast with my office colleagues helped me to establish local connections. For example, Emeratus is a part-time employee for the diocese and with his 65 years he has many plans for his retirement which he liked to share with me in our *Chai* breaks or when passing by at my office.

Two other important participants and ‘door openers’ were Mama Seba and Juma, the parents of a friend’s host family. I went to greet Mama Seba and Juma quite in the beginning of my stay and they were very welcoming and open. During my stay, a friendship developed and especially Mama Seba and I had many conversations, we cooked together and went to church on Easter. Furthermore, I have two aged and

retired friends that I planned to greet anyway. When asking them to participate in my research, they immediately agreed and were happy to support me.

Reflecting upon the different ways of accessing the field, it becomes clear that the emergence of the research field depended on the constant negotiations between myself and ‘the researched’ (Verne 2012c: 577). In the same way that I approach my empirical data in an open way, I also aimed at being open and flexible to who is interested in participating and who prefers not to do so. For a long time, the research field and its demarcation has been a rather unquestioned and uncritical dimension of geographical research (Verne 2012c: 562) and in most cases, it is the researcher who defines the field, draws the lines and determines the “in and out” (Katz 1994: 67). The relational notion of space plays a paradigmatic role in this thesis and the above elaborations on how I gained access to the field show that the research field should be thought of in a relational way; it emerged through relations. Therefore, I do not understand the field as a ‘cohesive area on a map’, but more as “a set of relations in which the mobility of actors, things and ideas and their connectedness over space and time have to be acknowledged” (Verne 2012c: 563). Nevertheless, the ‘mappable location’ of the research participants’ homes and places they visit are of importance as well as their physicalities impact the elderlies’ lives as well.

5.4.2 Narrative Gerontology - Biographic Narrative Interviews

Biographic-narrative perspectives that originate from the *Narrative Gerontology* fit well into the research design of this paper because they consequently focus on the micro scale: the perceptions and practices of ageing subjects (van Dyk 2015: 71). As “a new look at the inside of ageing” (Birren et al. 1996: xi), the Narrative Gerontology has, on the one hand, the aim

“to make visible the variety, contingency and inventiveness in any and all efforts in present life, and on the other hand, to put it all together into an analytically consistent and comprehensive framework privileging certain voices and silencing others” (Gubrium 1993: 62).

Following the aspiration to make the elderlies perspectives visible, van Dyk calls for a qualitative methodology in the tradition of the grounded theory; resulting in biographic and ethnographic methods (van Dyk 2015: 71). In the following, I describe in more

detail how I followed the principles of narrative interviews and reflect upon the occurred challenges and chances.

Table 1: Overview on the research participants.

Name	Gender	Age (in yrs.)	Living Situation	Research Methods conducted	
				Interviews	Participant Observation
Mama Seba	Female	64	With husband and grandchildren	X	X
Juma	Male	69	With wife and grandchildren	X	X
Stella	Female	81	Alone (widowed)	X	
Mama Anna	Female	73	Alone (widowed)	X	
Peter	Male	85	With wife and a daughter	X	X
Gabriel	Male	77	With wife and grandchildren	X	X
Theodor and Serena	Male & female	83 & 79	Live together (married couple) with grandchildren	X	
Mary	Female	71	With grandchildren (widowed)	X	
Kedrick	Male	68	Alone (wife lives in a village)	X	
Imelda	Female	-	With a son (widowed)	X	
Paulo	Male	72	With wife and nephews/nieces	X	X
Emeratus	Male	65	With wife and a son	X	X
James	Male	70	Alone (wife lives in Dodoma)	X	X
Filicia	Female	60	With two nieces (widowed)	X	

Narrative interviews are characterised by an open and loosely structure. Though, the criterion of openness of narrative interviews is debated: many methodological handbooks advise to conduct them without any previously developed concept, whereas Mattissek et al. (2013) dispute this ‘tabula-rasa’ idea. They claim that researchers should try to stay open to the interviewee and his/her topics but regard it as impossible to enter the interaction without any concept (Mattissek et al. 2013: 175). Altogether, I conducted interviews with 15 elderlies (table 1), of which 7 are female and 8 are male. Their ages range between 60 and 85 years and they were situated in different bodily conditions/health states, living conditions, working situations and socio-economic conditions. All the interviews were conducted in Kiswahili without a translator and they lasted from 30 minutes to several hours.

I started the interviews with a ‘narration invitation’ in which I prompted the elderlies to tell about their biography, focussing on events that they consider as important. In the ideal case, this request is followed by a ‘impromptu narrative’, the core element of narrative interviews. Thus, the main idea of the biographical-narrative interview is to generate “a spontaneous autobiographical narration which is not structured by

questions posed by the interviewer but by the narrator's structure of relevance" (Siouti 2017: 183). At a later stage of the interview, when the chronological narration arrived at the transition to living as an elderly person, I asked them to take time for these elaborations and go into detail. Thereby, I followed Flick's demand to focus on a certain thematic and temporal section of the biography which often relates to a more concrete process or change in the person's life and therefore is easier to put into words (Flick 2011: 234). Ideally, the interviewer does not interrupt the interviewee in this phase but encourages the biographer by means of non-verbal and paralinguistic expressions of interest and attention (Siouti 2017: 183). In the second part of the interview, the interview was more structured as I asked questions about the current life situation in more detail.

In most of the cases the course of the interview broadly followed the theoretical ideas of biographical-narrative interviews. Nevertheless, I encountered some difficulties. In some cases, I experienced that after my initial prompt to talk freely about their biography, some participants felt only little oriented and were confused where and how to start. After scaffolding by asking them when and where they were born and then to continue, some participants paused after each "stage" of their life and waited for me to ask another question. As some of the participants were very comfortable with talking freely and started to indulge in reminiscences, others behaved very controlled and expected a "question-answer"-structure. Reflecting upon this experience, I assume that those participants who preferred the structured versions had different imaginations of interviews and research in mind than I planned. Flick mentions that when people think of the concept of an interview, the expectation of getting asked questions one after another is a universal phenomenon (Flick 2011: 234). Therefore, he discusses whether the narrative interview should be called interview or if the simple terms 'narration' or 'talk' would cause less confusion. In fact, the Swahili word for 'interview' is '*mahojiano*', but it can also be translated as 'confrontation', which I did not intend to take place. Therefore, I decided to avoid the term '*mahojiano*' but rather used paraphrases that described the situation as a conversation on the biography and ageing of the participant.

Unlike the neo-positivist conception of interviewing that advocates a neutral role of the interviewer (Hossain 2013: 144), I took a subjective position in the conversations and showed personal and emotional reactions. Especially in the initial phase of the

interview, I elaborated on my prior experiences in Sumbawanga and my personal life situation in order to not only appear as an ‘interrogator’ but a conversation-partner. Another important aspect is the communicative nature of the participants themselves. Mattissek et al. stress that especially for narrative interviews, narrative competence is an important precondition for gaining rich and deep interviews (Mattissek et al. 2013: 174). I remember one encounter with a participant who did not elaborate deeply upon her biography and her perspectives on ageing but answered very briefly and superficially. After the interview, being worried that she felt uncomfortable in this social setting, I asked Gabriel, a friend of mine who had organized the contact and joined the interview, if I had made a mistake. He replied that this was her nature and she didn’t like to talk a lot.

In fact, in many cases, I did not exactly know why the interview did not go the way I expected. In these situations, I had to remind myself of understanding the interview situation as a social construct which is conditioned by unknown aspects that the respondents considered in the formulation of their individual responses (Hossain 2013: 114). This means that not only positionality and larger power-asymmetries play an important role, but also the personal condition of both the participant and the researcher in the very moment of the interview enter the interview situation.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, interviews do not alone constitute ethnography, because in many cases, interviewees cannot report upon what they ‘do’ – as ‘doings’ are often unconscious or unarticulated practices (Watson & Till 2010: 129). In order to investigate these practices more in-depth, I decided to complement the narrative biographic interviews with more traditional ethnographic research methods like participant observation.

Interviews do not alone constitute ethnography, because in many cases, interviewees cannot report upon what they ‘do’ – as ‘doings’ are often unconscious or unarticulated practices (Watson & Till 2010: 129). In order to investigate these practices more in-depth, I decided to complement the narrative biographic interviews with more traditional ethnographic research methods like participant observation.

5.4.3 Participant Observation & Mobile Ethnography

In participant observation, ethnographers pay close attention to, and partake in ‘everyday geographies’ so they can become familiar with how social spaces are

constituted in various settings (Watson & Till 2010: 129). Thus, participant observation allows appreciating the nuances and contradictions of people's lives while providing opportunities to engage in spontaneous interactions and conversations (Amrith 2018: 22). As this research is particularly interested in mobilities, I integrated mobile ethnographies into the participant observations. Within the last years, different forms of mobile ethnography emerged: all of them involve participation in patterns of movement while conducting ethnographic research (Sheller & Urry 2006: 217), which can involve 'walking with', or travelling with people. Novoa describes mobile ethnography as a translation of traditional participant observation onto contexts of mobility (Novoa 2015: 99). In mobile ethnography, the ethnographer not only observes what is happening, but she also has to "experience, feel and grasp the textures, smells, comforts and discomforts, pleasures and displeasures of a moving life" (Novoa 2015: 99). The mobile ethnography requires the researcher to make use of all her senses and therefore, the 'inquiries on the move' enable to ask questions about "sensory experience, embodiment, emplacement, about what changes and what stays the same" (Büscher et al. 2011: 13). This shows that mobile ethnography not only sheds a multi-faceted light on the (im)mobile aspects of the elderlies' lives in Sumbawanga; by conducting mobile ethnography, both the (im)mobility *and* materiality of the ageing body become observable and experienceable.

In most of the cases, the interview situations served as door openers for conducting participant observation. In total, I conducted participant observation with seven elder people (in six different households). Five of them lived in the same area as I did, so passing by at their homes or even inviting them to my house was easy to organize and helped to build up a relationship. In order to get an insight into their daily routines, I spent longer phases of the day with them and participated in those daily routines: preparing meals, having meals, grocery shopping at the market or carrying water. As the field visit took place during Lenten period and Easter and the majority of the research participants were deeply religious, I accompanied some of the elderlies to church services or other religion-related events. Some of the elderlies were employed, so I had the chance to visit them at their work place or to walk/travel with them from their homes to their work places. Others liked to walk around in the neighbourhood and greet friends in which I joined them now and then. Depending upon the different daily situations and practices of the elderlies, some of them allowed for a more traditional

participant observation whereas other situations involved 'moving around' and therefore enabled to investigate their mobile character.

5.4.4 Data Preparation

In qualitative research, it is common to record the interviews with a voice recorder and to transcribe the audio-data later. Despite the advantage of being able to transcribe word-by-word, I decided to not record my interviews as I assumed the negative effects to outweigh. I imagined that the presence of the voice recorder could cause the feeling to be in an interrogation and that the participants would not feel comfortable – which is of particular disadvantage in narrative interviews. Therefore, I decided to take a few notes during the elderly's elaborations and after the interview situation ended, I went to the office and took protocols on everything that I remembered. This did not only include those contents verbalized by the participants but some further details such as other persons present, mood and reactions as this information might be important for the interpretation.

Even more than it is the case for transcripts, protocols are influenced by a first interpretation of the researcher (Mattissek et al. 2013: 197). With the production of a protocol, I constructed a first level of interpretation which will serve as a basis for my later interpretation. Furthermore, researchers are much more likely to remember those things that are familiar, surprising or expected (Lamnek 2010: 558). In any of these cases, it becomes clear that my personal world view very much pre-structured what I perceived and remembered.

In addition, I reflected upon my experiences and encounters in a field journal. Comparable to Till and Watson, I used the fieldwork diary to make entries with observations, feelings, questions or sketches, make connections to theoretical readings, brainstorm, and connect impressions, ideas and interpretations. (2010: 217). As Novoa writes, ethnographers should be especially attentive of the small and quotidian details of everyday life that may contain the potential to develop or question big theories (2015: 104). In order to remember all these small details, writing a fieldwork diary was a helpful procedure to me.

5.5 Analysis of Empirical Data

As mentioned before, the concept of grounded theory provides the framework for empirical investigation, analysis and interpretation of the information gained in the field. Depending on the research framework, the process of coding has to be adapted. When having a hypothesis that leads the research process, it seems to be more appropriate to first code the data and then analyse them in a second step (Strübing 2004: 19). This procedure corresponds with Mayring's qualitative content analysis in which the researcher uses pre-existing categories (Mayring 2000). But the case is different when no strict theoretical framework exists but is developed in the process of the research (Strübing 2004: 19). Following the grounded theory, I did not pre-selected the data for the further analysis but as Glaser (2007) suggested, I considered all data. This enables to bring every information into constant comparison and thus to understand a reality in relation to an emerging theoretical construct (Hossain 2013: 94).

The analysis of the empirical data was conducted in an open and iterative process with coding as a central component. The coding process that I followed is informed by the approaches developed by Glaser as well as Strass and Corbin. All of them suggest a first round of open coding by examining the data material without a pre-defined set of categories (Hackenbroch 2013: 90).

“The analyst codes for as many categories that might fit; he codes different incidents onto as many categories as possible. New categories emerge and new incidences fit existing categories” (Glaser 1978, quoted in Kelle 1994: 313-333).

The process of open coding generates a broad and little structured access to the data material and results in having many codes which are not yet connected to each other (Strübing 2004: 21). When reading instructions on how to code, one might gain the impression that coding practices are a strongly rule-led, almost mechanical process, but Strübing underlines that codes evolve in a highly creative act (Strübing 2004: 118), and Böhm compares it with an artistic process which cannot be taught with certain recipes (Böhm 2015: 477).



Figure 4: *Main categories deduced from the empirical data material.*

According to the above elaborations, I started the analysis of the data material with an open mind without a pre-defined set of categories. When I scanned the text passages, I coded sentences and paragraphs and created as many codes as adequate to capture the meaning of the text from different perspectives (Hackenbroch 2013: 91). As the number of codes increased vastly, I grouped them under main categories. I established these main categories on the basis of the already created codes as well as on my prior knowledge. Figure 4 shows these main categories which all consisted of mainly sub- and sub-sub-categories. These broad main categories were not fixed, but always changed in the iterative process of re-organising and re-considering the codings.

In a second step, the grounded theory proposes axial coding which aims at establishing and investigating interrelations between the emerging codes and categories (Hackenbroch 2013: 91). In this process, they make use of existing theories in order to decide which linkages are meaningful for the theory building process (ibid.: 91). Different from the first step, this phase is coined by making decisions about relevance: not all identified phenomena are compared with regard to their origins, circumstances and consequences but only those are selected which – against the current state of analysis – are assumed to be relevant for answering the research questions (Strübing 2004: 21).

In the last step of selective coding, the interrelated codes and categories are subsumed into central concepts denoted as 'central categories' or 'core categories' (Strauss & Corbin 1990: 146). After this long process of coding, many researchers have difficulties to extract central important findings. Thus, I followed Böhm's advice to ask myself about the central story hiding in the data material (Böhm 2015: 483). Figure 5 presents those core categories carved out of the data and visualizes their interrelatedness.

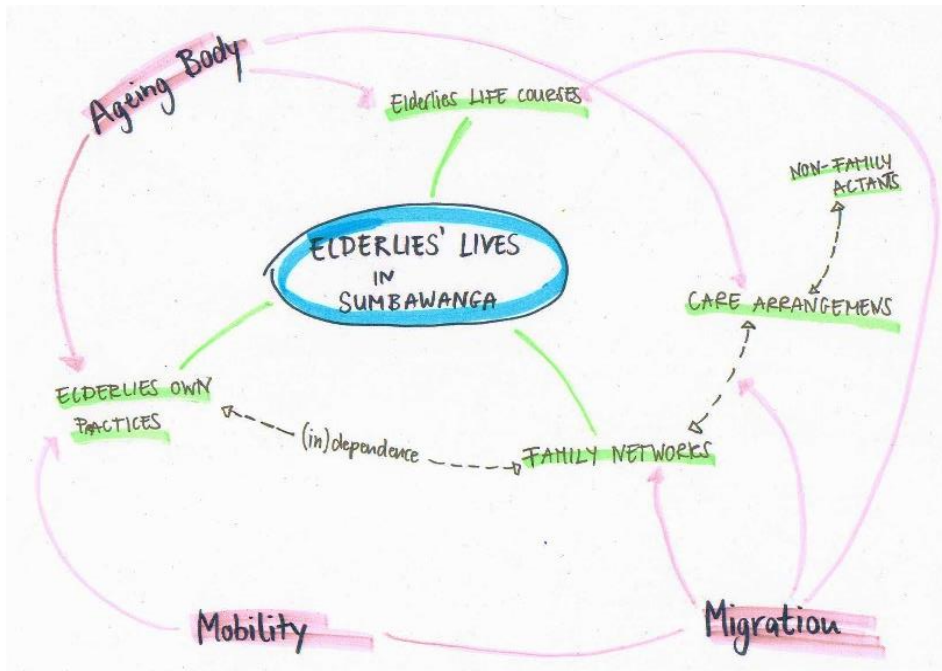


Figure 5: Core categories carved out of the data and their interrelations. Author's design.

PART II – EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

Part II presents the empirical findings of this research. It includes three different chapters. Chapter six presents how the elderlies perceive ageing and being of old age. Chapter seven elaborates on the elderlies' life-courses, how they were coined by migration and mobility and why the elderlies moved (back) to Sumbawanga, which opens up insights into how the elderlies envisioned to live and secure their future lives in earlier stages and what they considered as meaningful. Chapter eight finally describes the elderlies' everyday lives in sub-divisions into their lives within family networks and care arrangements (8.1), their own practices of securing their lives (8.2) and further activities that are meaningful in their lives and enhance their well-being (8.3.).

6. Ageing just Knocks on the Door: Elderlies' Notions of the Concept of Old Age

The empirical part of this study begins with general questions: what does it mean to be old to the elderlies themselves? How do they experience old age and ageing? How do they view themselves and how do others see them? In the interviews or more informal talks with the elderlies, I had the chance to ask them about how they personally perceive ageing.

All of them considered themselves as a *mzee*; a Swahili word which means 'an older person' or 'an elder'. In a person's life-course, being an elder person or a *mzee* marks the stage of another phase of life and displays a difference to what has been before (van Dyk 2015: 6). When asking the elderlies about this stage of life and the difference that might come with it, they answered in diverse ways. Those elderlies who were employed mainly ascribed the beginning of this phase to their retirement. Thus, they were able to connect being a *mzee* to a certain event in their lives; their retirement is the event that made them enter the stage of being a *mzee*. King et al. describe that crossing the threshold to being an elderly person is widely defined in these calendrical terms as entering the phase of receiving a pension is often equated with entering the phase of being an elderly person (King et al. 2017: 183). Even if this division is artificial, the difference that comes with it effectively has the power to influence the lives of the elderlies. They quit their jobs from one day to another, resulting in a profound change of their everyday lives, and many of them have to look for other income opportunities. For some of the elderlies, this change created a problematic 'difference' in their everyday lives as it went along with the feeling of not having a clear task anymore (Gabriel: 21), a loss of every daily routines (Emeratus: 6) and less/no income and less security of their lives. But, as I will further describe in chapter 8.2.3, many of those elderly who were formerly employed, found satisfying and alternative tasks, such as 'retirement jobs'. These were characterized by being less bodily exhausting and or/more flexible and requiring less time a day.

When we were talking more intensively about what it actually means to age, the elderlies descriptions turned more nuanced. Especially those people working as subsistence farmers did not mention a certain event by which they entered the stage of being a *mzee* and they talked about their lives less in calendrical terms than for

example those elderlies who worked as teachers. They had difficulties with assigning dates to different stages of life; sometimes years were mentioned in confusing orders; one participant even had to look up his and his wife's birthdays. This showed me that for them, perceiving their personal ageing process is not or only little related to any calendrical understandings or official guidelines. As they live/work more or less outside of the formal working sector and the condition of their bodies is central for continuing with their everyday lives and farming practices, their understandings are mainly based upon their individual perceptions of their bodies. Many of them described that they consider themselves as a *mzee* since they can observe a 'decline or loss of strength' of their bodies (Theodor: 8; Stella: 9; Gabriel: 21). Theodor, who has worked throughout his life as a subsistence farmer, described that "there is no change in my occupation, I will continue with my job until I do not have the strength anymore" (Theodor: 9). Theodor does not see the 'difference' in what he is doing, but more in the way that he is (still) able to cultivate. In this understanding of old age, the process of the changing and ageing body is the central defining element. For Theodor, entering the stage of being a *mzee* does not happen from one day to another but is a process that takes time. What is more, this process does not take place in a linear way, but it is marked by disruptures: on some days, Theodor and his wife Serena are able to walk quickly and without breaks to their fields outside town; on other days, Theodor's legs are tired, and he needs a longer time or even has to stay at home (Theodor & Serena: 6).

Stella is an elderly woman who lives on the border of Sumbawanga town and lives from subsistence farming on a *shamba* which is located a two-hours-walk from her place. She said that she particularly considers herself as a *mzee* as she is not able to walk this distance anymore (Stella: 9). In many of the participants' elaborations, mobility is a crucial factor when it comes to managing their every-day lives. What I find more interesting about Stella's elaborations is that her definition of being a *mzee* is related to a certain distance that she has to manage frequently in order to pursue her job; if the distance was shorter or if she lived in the village just in front of her house, her perception of the physical strength of her body and thus of herself as a *mzee* would probably differ. This shows that materiality - physical distances – that must be overcome in the everyday lives stand in relation to how the elderlies perceive their strength and to how they perceive their individual ageing process.

Generally, the concept of having or losing strength was often used by the elderlies to describe the process of ageing. This strength does not only refer to the physical constitution but also implies mental qualities, as elderlies also referred to losing strength as forgetfulness (Gabriel: 21). As I will further explore in chapter 8, the elderlies do not experience being aged and losing strength as a fixed state. Rather, as van Eeuwijk and Obrist put it, their ageing bodies and minds fluctuate on the dynamic continuum from “full strength to without strength” (Obrist & van Eeuwijk 2016: 189). As the case of Peter will show in chapter 8.1.3, short phases of illness, such as suffering from Malaria and Typhus, cause bodily weakness, but Peter’s case exemplifies that elderly are also able to recover and regain their strength.

Apart from these replies referring to strength, it regularly happened that the elderlies living from subsistence farming started to laugh when I asked them since when they consider themselves as a *mzee*. About Mary’s answer, an elderly widow living in Chanji/Sumbawanga town who lives from cultivating field in a nearby village, I noted the following:

“When asking her since when she feels like a mzee, she started to laugh, paused for some seconds and said: ‘Uzee unapiga hodi tu; halafu umekuja mzee’; ‘ageing/the age just knocks on the door, after that you have become a mzee’.” (Mary: 10)

The laughing and pausing after the question can be interpreted in many ways; but it indicates that talking about since when and why she considers herself as a *mzee* is something unusual or surprising to her; something that she has little talked about so far. What is more, the description of ageing as something that knocks on the door shows that she sees it as a process that happens anyway; a process that naturally belongs to life. I tried to pick up her metaphor for ageing and asked her what the age leaves behind after knocking on the door and she replied that “*wazee* are slower and they lose their strength, they cannot walk far distances anymore” (Mary: 11) which is in line with the above-mentioned narrations.

Another interesting description was given by Mama Seba, a married woman who gave birth to eight children and was never formally employed but had many different jobs in the informal sector. Mama Seba mentioned a certain event with which she entered being a *mzee*: she considers herself as a *mzee* since she is 44 years old because then, she had her last menstruation and is not able to bear children anymore (Mama

Seba: 9). Mama Seba's conception can be read against the backdrop of Haraway's concept of 'bodies as naturecultures' (Haraway 2003: 12): the stop of Mama Seba's menstruation is a natural and biological process that normally happens in the 40s or 50s of a woman. The female body undergoes many changes, but the most relevant difference for society is that it cannot bear children anymore. Mama Seba defined her time before being a *mzee* by being fertile and being able to bear children. It becomes visible that the physical changes of the body - being in the menopause – have to be understood in relations to cultural constructions – the societal understanding of women that are not able to bear children anymore.

All in all, the personal understandings and narrations are deeply embedded in the individual biographies of the participants; being employed or being a subsistence farmer, being male or being female are some of the crucial factors that influence these individual understandings. Thus, it shows that the negotiation of what ageing means takes place in intersections with gender and social class as well as in relation to space, as the emphasis on the decline of one's ability to move in space – to being mobile – was repeatedly made. By focussing on the bodily processes of ageing, it becomes visible that ageing is an individual process; this dynamic understanding of ageing is particularly sensitive to the diversity of pathways that individuals follow during their lives. (King et al. 2017: 183).

What is more, the above elaborations mainly tell a decline-story; in the talks with the elderlies, they described that they experience ageing as a process of losing strength, mobility, fertility and health. However, in the following chapters, it is shown that these processes do not take place in such a linear way as one might presume after this first introduction, but that ageing is a dynamic process that is marked by many discontinuities.

7. The Elderlies' Life-Courses, Wellbeing & What Matters in Times of Old Age

The interviews started with a narrative on the elderlies' biographies. Except of James, who grew up in Sumbawanga town, all the other participants were born and raised in nearby villages. All of them left their home places out of different reasons, e.g. for education, labour or staying with their partners, at different stages of life and for varying periods of time. What the elderlies have in common is that at one point in their lives, they settled in Sumbawanga town, at least for a certain period of time and the time the research was conducted. These decisions on where and how to age are entwined with the elderlies' biographies, their visions of their future lives and what they experience as important. Thus, in the following chapter, I will elaborate on some of the participants biographies and their visions on their future lives; they reveal what actually matters to

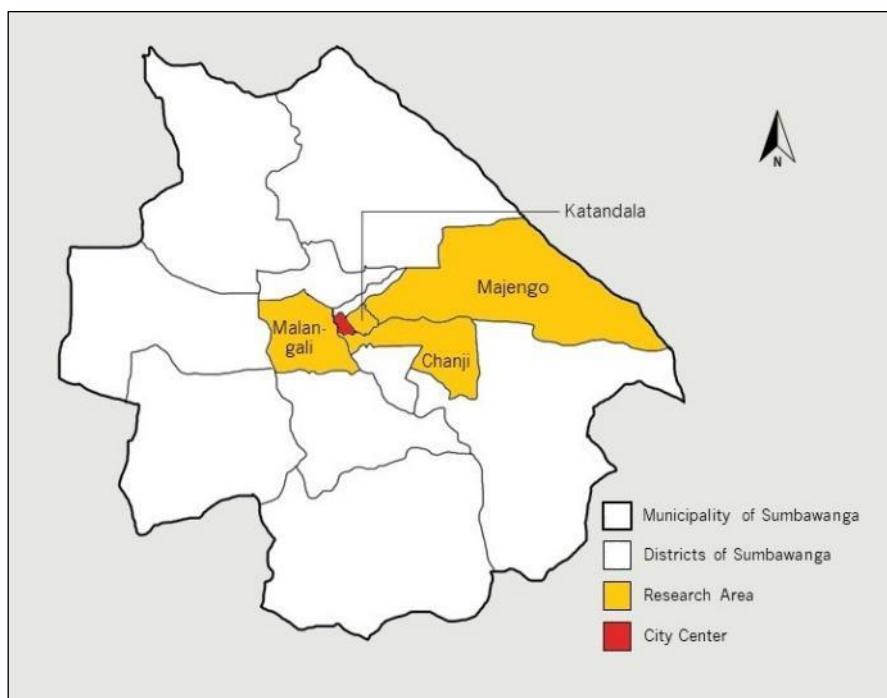


Figure 6: Overview in Sumbawanga's districts and the research sites. Author's design.

the elderlies when ageing in terms of wellbeing and at the same time, we gain insights into if and how the elderlies prepared for the later stages of life within earlier times of their life-course.

7.1 Access to Land

Gabriel is a 76 years-old retired teacher who grew up in *Milanzi*, a village close to Sumbawanga. He left this village when he was ten years old, attended different schools in different towns, finally received his teaching degree in 1969 in Dar es Salaam and then was transferred to Songea (southern Tanzania) to teach at a secondary school (Gabriel: 4). Afterwards, the government transferred him to Dar es Salaam and finally to Sumbawanga until his retirement in 1996. He said that he could not influence this decision, but he thinks that the responsible person considered that he is already ageing, so they sent him back to his home place. He was satisfied with this decision because "I found I was old enough to come back home" (Gabriel: 4). At the age of 34, he started to plan his future as a retired person in Sumbawanga: in 1975 – when he was still working in Songea – he bought a house in Sumbawanga which he first rented out and then moved in the first time in 1984. Even though his life-course is strongly coined by mobility at a national scale, he planned his return to Sumbawanga many years ahead and bought this house, which is important for social security in his later life. He receives a pension as a teacher, but he knew that this will not be enough money for his family and therefore looked for diverse income opportunities. He now works as a retired teacher and teaches French, English, German and Kiswahili language lessons in Sumbawanga. He claims that Sumbawanga is not a good place to make money with teaching these languages because there are only few people interested in learning them (Gabriel: 15). Thus, from a spatial perspective, there would have been better options or places to utilise his 'cultural capital' for making money.

Gabriel inherited fertile land in his home village which he does not cultivate himself but pays nearby farmers to do the field work. Before inheriting these fields, he had to support his parents with money. First, these fields belonged to his parents, but it was agreed that he will inherit them after their death (Gabriel: 16). In his case, access to land, which is determined by family relations, was relevant when planning where to grow old. Steinwachs explains that in translocal organized families, the male migrant members are – in most of the cases – still entitled to land in the place of origin and that is a common procedure that the migrant family members send their money to their families in to acquire land (Steinwachs 2006: 92). In addition to these economic reasons, Gabriel wanted to come back to Sumbawanga because he feels culturally attached to this region (Gabriel: 17). He is conducting research in the *Wafipa*, an ethnic

group in Rukwa region. He explained that through his stays in other parts of the country, he became aware of his cultural origins and gained another perspective which created an interest in intensively engaging with them.

Similar to Gabriel, Mary's husband – a police man – was transferred to Dar es Salaam soon after their wedding, so she moved with him. They moved back to Sumbawanga when he retired. If they had built a house in Dar es Salaam, they would have stayed there, but land in Dar es Salaam is “much more expensive and generally, it is difficult to get land there” (Mary: 5). As they owned some land in Chanji and Milanzi, they decided to come back to Rukwa region. The way Mary described this development shows that for her, returning to the Rukwa region was not determined by the wish to ‘come home’ but by the possibilities of where to have a secured life as an aged person. Lohnert describes that return migration is common in rural Sub-Saharan Africa, as “a large number of people return home to the rural areas after their withdrawal from working life” (2017: 42). By investigating the cases of Gabriel and Mary, it becomes visible that their decisions to return home are not an unambiguous process but that they have to negotiate between different options.

7.2 Changing Spatial Demands: Loving ‘Lively Big City Life’ as a Youngster & Settle in ‘Rural Familiar Sumbawanga’ as a *Mzee*

James's life-course is similarly coined by labour migration. After attending different boarding schools, he completed a training as a Police Officer in Moshi in 1966 and worked in Tanga, Dar es Salaam and Songea. During this time, the government transferred him to these places, so it was not him to make these decisions but his employer. He enjoyed living in these big cities and during one of our talks, I took the following notes:

“When I was young, oh, I really loved to live in a big city with many people, but the time came when I said no, I have to go home, back to Sumbawanga. I wanted to come back here, I came back to live here. Now I am back in Sumbawanga. I do not like moving again, no. [...] Hapa nyumbani kabisa (This is completely home). Napenda kabisa. (I totally love it).” (James: 8-9)

Different from Gabriel, James did not possess any land or did not built or inherit a house before he came back to Sumbawanga, but it seems that he is emotionally attached to this place. He told me many stories about how the area of Sumbawanga developed and how his life as a child was like, which showed me that he personally

identifies with this place. In this context, Lohnert mentions that for many migrants, the emotional and cultural connections to their rural areas of origin are very high (2017: 43). In addition, his demands concerning his living environment changed: whereas as a younger man, he wanted to have many people around him, liked to go out in the evenings and enjoyed travelling to Kenya or Mozambique, he now prefers to be in a well-known, quiet environment in which he is embedded in a network of many friends and family members. His wife works in the public sector and a few years ago, she got transferred to Dodoma. Even though she took the younger children with her, James decided to stay in their house in Sumbawanga and to wait until she retires and comes back. He said that he has become too old to move with her and does not want to adapt to a new environment again.

Even though James does not want to leave Sumbawanga physically, he does so with his imaginations from time to time. During my visits at his place, he told me many stories of his life in Tanga and Dar, how he travelled to Mombasa (Kenya) and liked to see how people are living in different places. During our conversations, he asked me a lot about my life in Germany and wanted to know many things in detail. Thus, James is travelling in his imaginations, when he looks at the pictures that he took in Mombasa, when he talks to his friend Paulo with whom he went together to the police training, when he listens to my descriptions of my life in Germany.

7.3 Sumbawanga as a Compromise - Enabling Both to Stay in Family Networks and to Enjoy Benefits of City Life

Mama Seba stayed in her home village Mwazye until she got married with Juma. He got employed at the national fabrics company in Dar es Salaam and they moved together to Dar. When remembering her time in Dar, her eyes turned shiny and she proudly told about herself as a young and independent business woman, selling *mandazi* (fried sweet bread) in Dar's crowded streets (Mama Seba: 5). They planned to stay in Dar and were already looking for a house in one of the suburbs but unfortunately, Juma got serious lung problems from working at the factory and they decided to move back to Mwazye (Mama Seba: 6). They decided so because in Mwazye, they had the smallest living expenses as they could stay with Juma's family and he did not need to work a lot but had time to fully recover. After he recovered, he looked for a job in Sumbawanga and got employed at the municipal waterworks. Mama

Seba said that after living in Dar, she could not imagine living in a village anymore, so moving to Sumbawanga was somehow a 'compromise' (Mama Seba: 7): in case she or her husband were in need of support again, the family networks are closer, but at the same time, she can enjoy the benefits of living in Sumbawanga town. The development of Mama Seba's and Juma's life-courses creates a counter example to the widespread narrative of the aged migrants' self-evident wish to return home:

"Migrants, whether internal or international, voluntary or forced (...) regard their sojourn away as temporary, their ultimate desire being to return home eventually, perhaps on retirement, to be buried alongside their ancestors."
(Adepoju 2006: 31)

The way that Mama Piji enthused about her life in Dar and how she wished to have stayed there indicates that it was not her 'ultimate desire' to return home but their decision took place in a process of weighing different pros and cons for and against the localities, which stresses that migration and the decision for or against it are ambiguous processes.

7.4 Governmental Forced Relocation under *Operation Vijiji*

Theodor and Serena left their home village Mwazye in the course of *Operation Vijiji*, implemented under president Nyerere in 1973 (Theodor & Serena: 5). Also known under the term *Villagisation*, the operation entailed forced relocation of hundreds of thousands of people from smaller to more central villages. The government wanted people to live in *Ujamaa* (socialist) villages to facilitate communal farming and common services (Lange 2008: 2). Thus, Theodor and Serena were urged to move from their village to another communal one. They were not in favour of these plans, so they decided to escape from the governments' decision by keeping some of their land and moving to Katandala, a central neighbourhood in Sumbawanga. Theodor started working with someone who produced bricks, but he "did not like this job but preferred to continue with farming" (Theodor & Serena: 5) and he did not feel comfortable in Katandala. Therefore, they decided to move to Chanji, a more rural neighbourhood of Sumbawanga which is closer to their fields outside town. From then on, they mainly lived from small-scale farming. Theodor explained that he prefers Chanji over Katandala because there are more people having a similar lifestyle to him (Theodor & Serena: 5).

According to their narration, Theodor and Serena left their village because they did not want to defer to the governments' plans. What is more, smaller scales – the town's districts – are of importance as well: being able to identify with the neighbourhood and having people around who are of a similar background were one important factor to move from one neighbourhood to another within Sumbawanga.

7.5 Wellbeing and Aspirations for a Good Life as a *Mzee*

It is important to acknowledge that the elderlies' movements or non-movements are based upon diverse and multi-layered decisions. Having had a look at the elderlies' biographies and focussing on their move back to or their staying in Sumbawanga, it turned out that thinking about their future lives, planning where and how to grow old matter(ed) in the everyday lives of the not-yet-aged participants. Many of the participants who were employed started to cultivate land as they retired; Gabriel built a house in the midst of his life; to James, being surrounded by friends and family matters when growing old; they have visions of how to grow old. These visions are sometimes, but not necessarily, place-bound: Gabriel could not access a five acres field everywhere in Tanzania but only in Sumbawanga, he possesses the necessary network. Theodor and Serena's wish to be surrounded with his family and old friends can best be met in the neighbourhood that he decided to live in.

What is more, the elderlies' lives do not always follow these visions: Mama Seba envisioned to stay in Dar but as her husband felt ill, they had to think of another plan; due to this changing context, they re-envisioned their future. This wish of staying in Dar reflects what Steinbrink and Niedenföhr (2017: 127) call a "Myth of Return". They state that the migrants' 'wish to return' goes back to the expectation of the society of origin in the first place and not necessarily the individuals will to return. Steinbrink and Niedenföhr even expect that the remigration of African elderlies to their home places – mainly in the rural areas – will decrease more and more (Steinbrink & Niedenföhr 2017: 127).

The elderlies are part of social networks and the members of these networks might have different visions for their futures: James would have liked to age in Sumbawanga together with his family, but his wife followed her transfer to Dodoma. We do not know if his wife aspired to be transferred by the government, but this example also shows that many lines of power cross the elderlies' visions – in her case, institutional power.

The same counts for Theodor and Serena whose decision to leave the village was induced by the government's plan to restructure the country.

Investigating these aspirations, it becomes visible that many of them are entwined with mobility, either with moving from the villages to Sumbawanga or returning to one's home region after phases of labour migration. As the above elaborations have shown, these (return) aspirations are not fixed in time but inevitably shifting, place-induced and context-dependent: thus, understanding the elderlies' rationales and demeanour towards (return) migration implies "realising the fluidity and complexity of migration decisions over space and time" (Sampaio 2017: 61).

7.6 Mobility as Normality & Continuing Aspirations

The life-courses of many of the elderlies are coined by moving not only within Rukwa region but the whole country. These empirical results show that migration is a normal and natural part of the lived realities of the elder people. The elderlies' biographies show evidence that mobility is not something 'new' that only recently entered the lives of these Tanzanians but already from their childhood on (starting in the 1940s), mobility was an integral part of the now aged participants' lives. Thus, these results challenge *sedentarist* views that understand stability and immobility as normality whereas change, placelessness and mobility are regarded as abnormal (Sheller & Urry 2006: 2008).

Hinting at the temporality of the phases of life, migration did not only coin the past lives of the elderlies in Sumbawanga: some of the elder people have plans for their future in which migration is a central element. In my conversations with Kedrick, a 68 years old man, I found out that he worked for the Tanzanian Army in Dar es Salaam, Zanzibar and Arusha (Kedrick: 4-5). After he retired, he moved back to Sumbawanga and worked for a security company. Unfortunately, he had a car accident in 2007 from which one of his legs never fully recovered. Therefore, he had to stop working (Kedrick: 6). Like Gabriel, he inherited some land in his home village in Sandulula district, a rural ward of Sumbawanga. When he stopped working, he bought cows, chicken and goats and his sister-in-law was responsible for keeping them. As the number of animals grew, it was too much work for her, so his wife and their children moved to the village. At the time of the interview, Kedrick stayed alone in their house in Chanji (a neighbourhood of Sumbawanga town) and regularly visits his family via public transport (Kedrick: 7).

He sends all his pension to the farm and in exchange, he can take home some of the food products. Kedrick plans to move to the village in a few months but he will keep his house in Chanji so that they have a place to stay in town.

Another person that has migration plans for her future life is Filicia. She is 60 years old and retired recently from her job as a nurse in the governmental hospital of Tanzania. As her husband died some years ago and she will only receive a little pension, she currently thinks a lot about how to organise her future life. At the time of the interview, she was in the phase of weighing her options. After she shared her plans of either opening a small shop in the front part of her house or renting out the back part to tenants, she told me about another plan:

“The day before yesterday, she talked to the manager of CCBRT Hospital in Dar es Salaam (Comprehensive Community Based Rehabilitation Tanzania) and asked him if there are any work opportunities in his hospital for nurses who are already retired. He replied that they will think about it. If she got a job there, she would move to Dar es Salaam. She has not found anything to start with, so she simply asked for it.” (Filicia: 29)

Even though Filicia has different ideas for her future and she prefers to stay in Sumbawanga (Filicia: 33), the option of migrating to Dar is a realistic plan to her. She is not only interested in this job in Dar because it secures her income, but Filicia explained that the hospital has a good reputation and she is interested in learning from them (Filicia: 30). Filicia's plans counter-narrate to two different dominant narratives in migration and ageing studies. First, her example counter-narrates to the assumption that the decision of many Africans to migrate is determined by a 'migratory pressure': economic challenges are regarded as the (single) determining influence for a migration decision (Verne & Doevenspeck 2012: 74). Secondly, her example shows that a Tanzanian widow in her 60s is realistically planning to migrate to a place that is far away from where she lives now: thus, Filicia's life does not fit into the narrative of the immobile elderlies who are stuck in place and left behind by their children (King et al 2017: 185).

8. The Elderlies' Everyday Lives

By having a look at the elderlies' biographies and their movements on different scales, we learned about what matters to them and which aspects they consider as relevant for their wellbeing: to be surrounded by their families, friends and neighbours, to generate income, to continue to work, to stay in a place that one is emotionally and culturally attached to, to participate in society, to be healthy and strong and be provided with a good infrastructure, just to mention some of the aspects. In western imaginations of elder people's lives in Africa, the image of elderlies growing old in the midst of their loving and caring families is widespread (van Eeuwijk 2018: 17). This stereotype is challenged by current research findings. In the context of her research of care arrangements in Togo, Häberlein explains that

"I care for you because I was cared for when I was a child" is a paradox. On the one hand it is quite effective as a normative discourse, but on the other hand practice sometimes results in divergences from this norm – not only because of failures of will but also because of failed capacity." (Häberlein 2015: 161)

Häberlein stresses that in some cases, the younger family members cannot fulfil their obligation to care well and sufficiently for their elders due to migration processes (Häberlein 2015. 161). In their publication *Africa on the move*, Steinbrink and Niedenföhr (2017) draw an image in which translocal households, with their members living in different places but staying connected, will become the normality in the future. This study takes these developments as a starting point and begins to investigate how the families around the elderlies are organised in diverse ways, how support and care practices are conducted and how migration comes into play.

8.1 The Elderlies within their Family Networks³ & Care Arrangements

Only few of the elderlies that I talked to live together with their children as most of them moved out. Daughters mainly moved out because they married a man living or working elsewhere, sons left their parents' house because they were looking for employments in other towns, some of the children also moved out for higher education. (Filicia: 13;

³ In Tanzania, the concept of family is rather broad and includes not only the nuclear family of parents and children but also further relatives such as aunts, uncles, nephews and nieces.

Gabriel 11-12; Mama Seba: 8). Steinbrink and Niedenföhr explain that when it comes to migration, one can observe certain patterns regarding the spatial distribution of different age groups. Amongst these, the most typical pattern is that especially younger people of employable age move to the centres of a country while the younger and the elder generations stay in the periphery (Steinbrink & Niedenföhr 2017: 124). As only few of the elderlies live together with their children and the elderlies talked about their children moving out as a process that naturally happens, the children leaving their parents' house seems to be a common phenomenon instead of an exception. When comparing the mobility habits of the elderlies to the ones of their children, it turns out that they are quite similar: In a comparable way to how the elderlies moved to more central places in Tanzania during their life-courses, their children are. This underlines that migration and mobility are and were already 'normal' in the participants lives.

In the conversations, most of the elder people supported that their children moved out, arguing that they have to start to '*kujitegemea*' - 'to become independent': Paulo, who is working at the water pump in Katandala, said in our very first encounters that only being dependent upon his children 'is impossible' to him (Research Journal: 7). Peter, a retired teacher, said that it was very important to him that his children leave the house and concentrate on building up their own families (Peter: 9). Emeratus has three children, one of them stays in Morogoro and one in Kigoma. The last one stays with him and absolves a tailoring apprenticeship. Emeratus states that it is "not a problem that the children live far away, even if the last child moves far away", but if he is very old and needs help, he can ask them to move back to him (Emeratus: 8). Mama Seba's children have left her home a long time ago and now, she cares for four of her grandchildren. One of them is Huberti; he is already a grown up and works as a driver of a motorbike taxi. In one of our talks, she proudly told me that Huberti will move out of her home next month and starts to rent his own flat. Thus, Mama Seba does not resent that Huberti leaves her house but on the contrary, she seems to be proud that he has started to become 'independent'.

As already mentioned, there is a growing body of literature on elder people who are not migrants as such, but their lives and well-being are impacted by the emigration of their children (King et al. 2017: 185). Toyota, Yeoh and Nguyen (2007) speak of a 'migration-left behind nexus' and attempt to point at the lives of these elderlies, claiming that they are even left behind by the migration literature itself. However, the

term 'left behind' seems problematic as the expression is filled with negative images of abandonment, helplessness, absence and loss (King et al. 2017: 186). The above examples of Mama Seba, Emeratus, Paulo and Peter show that even though they are 'left behind' by their children, they do not seem to feel abandoned or appear as helpless and fully dependent upon their children. On the contrary, some other interviewed elderlies face more precarious living situations and are more dependent upon their families and (further) support networks. The following chapter sheds light on the elderlies various living situations within their family networks and shows how the absence or presence of their family members – mainly their children – impacts their lives in different ways.

8.1.1 Mutual & Multi-Directional Support in Family Networks

Mama Seba is 64-year-old woman and lives together with her husband Juma in Katandala, a central neighbourhood of Sumbawanga. Mama Seba and Juma have eight children in between the age of 25 and 47 who all moved out. Two of them stay in Sumbawanga and all the others live in different middle-sized towns, including Tunduma, Morogoro, Lindi and Songea (figure 7).

Four of her grandchildren stay with them and it is Mama Seba's role to care for them. Thus, her day starts early in the morning; twice a week she attends the morning mass at 6 am, afterwards, she prepares breakfast for the children, cleans the house, fetches water, goes to the market and prepares the family dinner. In between all these duties, she likes to meet with Mama Evas, her neighbour; they talk about their children/grandchildren and the latest news from town. Many times, I have seen them cooking or having a quick cup of tea together.

As a care-provider for her grandchildren, Mama Seba actively supports her family. The mother of two of these grandchildren, Agnes, lives in another part of Sumbawanga and she passes by several times a week. As Mama Seba cares for her children, Agnes can continue with her job. Mama Seba and Juma own a field outside of town. In former times, Mama Seba and Juma regularly travelled there for cultivation, but recently, Agnes took this task over: Mama Seba explained that travelling to the farm and cultivating the field is too exhausting for her and Juma, but as Agnes still lives in Sumbawanga and even close to the field, she can fulfil this task (Mama Seba: 12).



Figure 7: Mama Seba mapped where her children stay. Mama Seba is displayed by the red figure, her children by green figures. Photo: M. Deter.

Agnes and Mama Seba are mutually supporting each other: Mama Seba cares for Agnes children whereas Agnes cultivates the field outside town for her parents, the harvest is split up between the two households.

Also, the grandchildren staying at Mama Seba's place are not only care-receivers: On their compound, Mama Seba and Juma keep pigs and ducks which they either sell or slaughter for special occasions and it is the duty of the male grandchildren to care for them whereas the female grandchild supports Mama Seba with other household duties, such as cooking and dish washing.

The parents of two of the grandchildren staying with Mama Seba live in Morogoro and Lindi. In a similar way to Agnes, Mama Seba's grown-up children in Morogoro and Lindi can continue working as they handed over the care-work for their children to

Mama Seba. By focussing on Mama Seba, an elderly woman who is 'left behind' by her children who are migrating to other places, it becomes visible that she plays an important role in enabling the migration of her children: by caretaking of her grandchildren – not only during the day but 24/7 and doing this for several years – Mama Seba's care practices set an important foundation for the ability of her children to migrate to other places.

8.1.2 Caring for Grandchildren: Supporting the Children, Staying Active & Being less Alone

Similar to Mama Seba, many of the elder people whom I talked to stay together with some of their grandchildren. In some cases, the grandchildren live with the elderlies because their parents live in a rural area without any (good) school in walking distance (Mary: 7; Theodor & Serena: 4). By letting their children stay with the grandparents, their parents can continue with their regular work and at the same time, the children are able to attend school. When visiting Theodor and his wife Serena, we⁴ interrupted them while having lunch with two of their grandchildren and their father, a farmer in a village in Rukwa district, who came over for a visit. He normally passes by once a month to see how his parents and his children are doing and explained that he was very grateful for having the opportunity to send his children to his parents' place (Theodor & Serena: 11). But even though the main reason to stay in town is the



Figure 9: An elder woman and her neighbour wearing their kitchen Kitenge, sitting in the living room. Photo: M. Deter



Figure 8: An elder woman fetching water at the nearby water pump in the morning. Photo: M. Deter

⁴ Gabriel and me.

educational infrastructure, Theodor and Serena underlined that they like to have their grandchildren around because they keep them active (Theodor & Serena: 4).

Gabriel and his wife take care for three of their grandchildren as well. They are still in pre-schooling age and thus, education was not the reason for migration, but Gabriel said that his wife Winfrida welcomed them because they talk to them and bring noise into the silent house (Gabriel: 23). Gabriel and Winfrida live alone on a spacious compound and by having their grandchildren around, they feel less alone. Thus, not only practical reasons such as disburdening the middle generation so that they can continue to work or the better educational infrastructure in the elderlies' living places play a role when elderlies care for their grandchildren, but for Theodor, Serena, Gabriel and Winfrida, emotional aspects matter as well.

Flows of Goods and Money

Back to Mama Seba and Juma's family: Two of their children live in Tunduma, a busy town at the boarder to Zambia which is a four-hour drive away. I remember one afternoon in which Mama Seba got called by her son Thadeo from Tunduma and in my research journal, I noted the following:

"Today in the afternoon I went to greet Mama Seba. She had a visit from friends and we had tea in the living room. At some point her son Thadeo, who lives in Tunduma, called her on the phone. Mama Seba assigned him to give sugar to some priests who will travel from Tunduma to Sumbawanga soon after Easter. She explained to me that she will pick up the sugar at the church and she told me that the sugar is much cheaper in Tunduma than in Sumbawanga. She regularly asks her son to bring along some sugar." (Research Journal: 21)

This example shows that the connection between Mama Seba and Thadeo is not only kept alive by regular phone calls and visits but also by sending goods now and then. As Mama Seba is a very active member of her parish, she can make use of her connections in order to get the sugar delivered even though her son is not travelling to Sumbawanga. Possessing these connections is particularly helpful as in Tanzania, the delivery of parcels is very expensive and takes a long time. Thus, Mama Seba's Parish can be regarded as another actor within her support network that seems to play a side role on the first sight but in fact, the Parish provides an essential infrastructure for the delivery of goods from her son in Tunduma to Sumbawanga.

The mobile phone is important not only for Mama Seba, but many elderlies make use of it to stay in contact with their family members. In my conversations with her husband, Juma, he explained that his children send money to them when they are in need. Especially those children whose kids stay with Mama Seba and Juma send money on a regular basis; others support them with money whenever Mama Seba and Juma are in need and ask for it, but this happens only once a month or less (Juma: 8). For the transaction of the money, they use mPesa, a mobile phone-based money transfer. It allows users to deposit money into an account stored on their cell phones and to send balances using PIN-secured SMS text messages to other users. By using this service, Juma can easily withdraw the money sent to him at a shop which is close to his home. In Mama Seba's and Juma's life, the family is an important network upon which they can rely, even though it is stretched across different places. In their case, having a spread family network is in the first place not merely problematic but it opens up possibilities: As the daughter Agnes lives closer to the families' field, she can easily reach there; the children in Tunduma can support Mama Seba with goods that are cheaper in their place. The children in Morogoro and Lindi got jobs with which they earn money and sometimes, they help their parents out. But Mama Seba and Juma do not only receive but also provide support as they care for their grandchildren: the support relations within this family network are not uni-directional but across generations, mutual and multi-directional support practices take place.

It is important to keep in mind that these research results mirror only a glimpse into family lives at a certain point of time. In chapter 6.3 I have already mentioned that Juma was very ill in the midst of his life and that he had stopped working in Dar and moved to Sumbawanga. This 'critical health moment' forced him to reorder the relations his body and self but also to other people and places (Obrist 2016b: 271). At the time of conducting my research, both Mama Seba and Juma were healthy, which shows that their bodily conditions change over time in non-linear ways: even though they stopped cultivating because they lost strength, their bodies are strong enough to conduct their daily duties. As this status is not static as well, Mama Seba and Juma will probably lose more strength in the coming years/decades or they (or even their children) will be impacted by further critical health moments, resulting in a process of constantly re-assigning family duties and re-structuring family networks.

No-one left behind?

As the example of Mama Seba and Juma has shown, some of the elderlies play an active role in their social networks. Against the backdrop of the migration-left-behind narrative, these results show that elderlies are not generally highly vulnerable when left behind by their family members, but they conduct several practices to stay independent. On the other hand, I also talked to elderlies who are less independent in their everyday lives and are in need of more intense support. Whereas we will come back to the elderlies' activities to stay independent (chapters 7.2 and 7.3), the following chapter focusses on how those support or care arrangements looked like.

8.1.3 A typical Family Care Arrangement

Peter worked as a teacher in Sumbawanga region and retired in 1989. After his retirement, he worked as a tutor for students in the afternoon. I remember that he was working in the orphanage in Katandala (where I spent part of my voluntary service) eight years ago and supported the children in doing their homework. He went there three times a day and in the other afternoons, he taught children in other places. About four to five years ago, he stopped this work because he lost his *nguvu* – his strength. At that time, he was still able to walk longer distances and the orphanage was close to his home, his body would still be able to overcome the physical distance. In his case, the term “*sina nguvu*” – “I do not have strength” refers to the condition of his mental strength: he started to become forgetful, on some days, he clearly remembered who I am and on other days, he asked me several times for my name. His wife said that he needs tranquillity and rests a lot.

Half a year ago, Peter became seriously ill: he got Malaria and Typhus at the same time and was bedridden for several weeks, he even stopped talking (Research Journal: 28). Malaria and Typhus are not age-related threats to health, but they can affect people in every stage of age. But due to his age-related weaker bodily condition, they impacted him strongly. According to van Eeuwijk, ageing in the Global South is characterized by elderly people being affected by such chronic diseases and infectious diseases at the same time – leading to multiple morbidity (van Eeuwijk 2018: 16). As the risk of getting affected by a chronological disease increases with growing age, the risk of being affected by infectious diseases increases with declining living standards, sanitary and hygienic provision and knowledge. Thus, being affected by this

multiple morbidity particularly affects elder people with less living standards or also less informed or educated people.

In this time of Peter's illness, he heavily relied upon the care practices of his wife and his daughter Betty. Betty is the youngest of the four children and stays with her parents. Whereas Betty was involved with care practices such as cooking and washing clothes, her mother Rose took over much more intimate care practices such as feeding Peter and washing his body (Research Journal: 28). This care arrangement reflects the traditional structures of family care in Tanzania where female household members care for their male kinship (van Eeuwijk 2016: 72). When investigating this arrangement deeper, more care practices become visible. For example, one of the neighbouring women is known for cooking a healthy chicken bouillon which she regularly prepared for Peter (Research Journal: 28). When bringing it to his house, she sat next to his bed for some time, talked to him and they prayed together. Peter is very religious, and his wife told me that the priest of their church came to their house two times and he prayed for Peter. In addition, the eldest daughter of Peter has a health insurance with which she can cover her parents. In order to make use of it, she had to go to hospital together with her parents and show her insurance card. As she lives in another part of Sumbawanga, she is able to come over quite quickly (Peter: 11).

On the first sight, this care arrangement appears to be quite traditional as it is the wife Rose and the youngest daughter Betty caring for their husband/father. By having a closer look, further involved actors and their care practices became visible. The priest coming to his house and the neighbouring woman providing soup probably also played an important part for his recovery. As Peter was bedridden for several weeks and even after he started to recover, he could not move far, he was strongly tied to his home. In this context, understanding the home as a 'lived space' helps us to view it as a space that is not "enclosed or clear demarcated but is rather in continuous interaction with the outside world, its cultural meanings and power structures" (Obrist 2016: 97a). Whereas under normal circumstances, his female neighbour visiting him in his bedroom would be considered a shame, spatialities, their boundaries and accessibility were re-structured in the time of his illness.

At the time of conducting the research, Peter recovered from his illness. Even though he moves and speaks slowly and rests a lot inside his house, he started working in the kitchen garden again and sometimes leaves the house to meet some neighbours.

According to his respective condition, the care arrangement around him behaves dynamically; the neighbouring woman stopped cooking her chicken bouillon and Peter daughter Betty spends less time at home supporting him and her mother. Thus, I understand 'care' or 'carescapes' as a relational and thus temporal concept: the lived spaces of care are created in the intersections of embodied people, the home and the broader society (Obrist 2016a: 97).

8.1.4 Care Arrangements: Multiple Care Givers and Care Practices

Stella is an 81 years-old widow who lives in Malangali, a neighbourhood of Sumbawanga. Her husband died 15 years ago and since then, she lives alone in her house. In the interview, she mentioned that she is suffering from many problems, she does not like to be alone and to not have a husband, she suffers from asthma, loses her strength and only has a little money (Stella: 7).

During her life, the roles between her and her husband were split in the traditional way that the man pursued a job in the wage labour section whereas the women does the domestic work. Thus, her husband worked at the court and it was her duty to do the household tasks and to care for the children. In the interview, Stella stressed that she experiences a loss of strength of her body. In former times, she used to walk to the field they own outside of town and cultivated it herself or with her husband but now, she feels that she cannot walk this distance anymore.

Different from Mama Seba, Stella is much more dependent upon the support of her family. At the time of the field stay, Stella received support from her family in various ways. The family of one of her sons (she has 5 children in total) lives very close to her house, around 100 meters in walking distance. One of the grandchildren from that family, a girl in the age of 14, sleeps at Stella's house so that she does not have to stay alone in her house during night. Now and then, this granddaughter also helps her with cooking and other household duties. Sometimes, this family also invites Stella over so that she can eat with them and enjoy their company (Stella: 5).

Stella cultivates the kitchen garden in front of her house and fetches the water from a water pump a few hundred meters away on her own. However, she also possesses a field outside of town which is a two-hours-walk away from her home. She used to walk to this field but now, she does not feel strong enough to do so and as it is located in a very remote area, there is no bus connection. Hence, there is no possible or affordable option for Stella to reach at her field. Instead of going herself, she sends her

grandchildren to cultivate the field. When Moderatus (one of her grandsons) and I visited her, she repeatedly asked him if he could go to the field within the next days and told him what he has to do (Stella: 5).

What is more, I observed that many of her relatives who still stay in Sumbawanga came over to see her:

“During the three hours-stay at her house, I could observe how many relatives came to her house to greet her. One of the grandchildren brought some oil because his mother works at an oil refinery, another one brought some food. A daughter-in-law who lives in Katusa, another part of Sumbawanga came over just to greet her and see how she is doing” (Stella: 8).

In Stella's life, being embedded in her family is central to securing her livelihood. The care network around her is not organized in a bilateral relationship between the caring and the care-receiving individual, but it involves many different people who belong to her family: some of them support her with goods, another one with help in the kitchen or doing some of her field work, other with spending time with her and talking to her. In a comparing way, van Eeuwijk speaks of grandchildren who deliver food to their grandmothers, remittances of children who work in other regions, telephone-calls by a sister who lives in a larger city. In these cases, care involves the wider spectrum of the social environment which consists of different visible, invisible, direct and indirect care practices and care actors, making up a 'care arrangement' (van Eeuwijk 2018: 17). This care arrangement goes beyond the basic needs of being supplied with food, supported with money or work on her field. As Stella mentioned in the interview, feeling lonely and being isolated are some of her major problems. Thus, being visited and talked to and having meals together with her family members are care practices that might easily be overlooked but play an important role for her personal well-being.

Even though Stella's children all moved out, they still stay in the same town or even neighbourhood. In her case, the bodily presence of her family members is very important and could not be compensated by phone calls or sending money now and then. Thus, if Stella was left behind by her children, she would have experienced what the narrative suggests – abandonment or even helplessness.

8.1.5 Against all Conventions? Elder-to-Elder Care

After having asked Mama Seba to connect me to some of her elder friends in the neighbourhood, we visited Mama Anna. Mama Anna is 73 years old and grew up in a village in Rukwa region. About her biography, I noted the following:

“Her husband was a craftsman and soon after their marriage, he was called to Sumbawanga to help building the catholic cathedral. In 1971, he was struck by lightning and died. Mama Anna and her husband had a son who was also a craftsman but died in 1982. Since then, Mama Anna has been living alone in Katandala, Sumbawanga. She made some money with feeding the pigs of the nearby motherhouse. Unfortunately, the swine fever broke out and since the sisters stop keeping pigs, she has no more work to do. Mama Anna stayed in Sumbawanga because that is the place where she owns a house. She could have a better living in the countryside because she is able to cultivate, but she cannot move there because she does not have the money to buy land.

She has a kitchen garden, where she grows pumpkins, beans and maize. To my question if there is someone who supports her, she hesitated and looked at Mama Seba. She said that the only person she receives support from is Mama Seba. She helps her with vegetables from time to time, helps her with shopping in the city and pays regular visits with her grandchildren.” (Mama Anna: 4-5)

I could not figure out why Mama Anna is not in contact with any relatives anymore, but I felt that it is a sensitive topic. When comparing the situation of Mama Anna to the other elderlies, she is the most vulnerable participant as she is in the highest need of livelihoods support, but she possesses of the weakest care network. Accordingly, van Eeuwijk states that in Tanzania, especially widows are concerned by ‘old-age vulnerability’, caused by losing their relatives or the contact to them and hints at ageing and caring as ‘gendered processes’ (van Eeuwijk 2011: 100).

Some years ago, Mama Anna applied for financial support through the TASAF⁵ project by the Tanzanian government but she got denied, which is in line with what van Eeuwijk stated about governmental support in old age: the elderlies can only expect a little or even nothing from the state as there is no institutionalized assistance program for the elderlies (Jaeggi 2014). In the ageing policy (URT 2003), the government is officially assigning the care work for the elderlies to their families. Mama Anna can neither rely

⁵ TASAF (Tanzania Social Action Fund) is a programme initiated by the Tanzanian Government and NGOs. Its aim is to enable poor households to increase incomes and opportunities by supporting them with cash.

upon these family networks nor the institutionalized support systems. In the conversation with her, I gained the impression that she felt uncomfortable to say that she receives care from an elderly woman who is not a relative. According to van Eeuwijk,

“elder-to-elder care does not comply with social norms and rules; it therefore does not conform to the ‘right’ practice of care relation and fails to comply with conventional images of eldercare.” (van Eeuwijk 2016: 87)

In her study on elderlies' social resilience in Tanzania, Obrist found out that “it was commonly considered a shame to involve neighbours and other non-related persons” (Obrist 2016: 271) in care arrangements.

Reading the care arrangement between Mama Seba and Mama Anna against the backdrop of these research findings, it becomes visible that it does not comply with the common ideals in Tanzania. At the same time, non-family support for elderlies is becoming more common due to social transformations in Tanzanian society, amongst which migration plays an important role (van Eeuwijk: 2016: 76). Thus, the out-migration of younger generations and their physical absence, but also many other factors such as the deadly impact of HIV/AIDS on younger people, lead to a significant change of the quantity and quality of elder-to-elder care (van Eeuwijk 2016: 76).

The case of Mama Anna corresponds to the observation that in Tanzania, husbands are usually older than their wives and as their life expectancy is generally lower, it happens in many cases that the man dies first (van Eeuwijk in Jaeggi 2014). Thus, van Eeuwijk speaks of a ‘feminization of ageing’: many elderly men are cared for by their wives, but it is only seldomly the other way around. Thus, authors have discussed that poverty in old age is female (Lloyd-Sherlock 2000) as in most cases, women survive their men who are traditionally responsible for generating income.

8.1.6 Intensive Care Work

Mama Evas is Mama Seba's next door neighbour. She is around 50 years old and stays together with her bedridden mother Agnes. Agnes had a heart attack some years ago and since then, she is not able to walk, speak and care for herself anymore, which is why she needs intensive care work. Mama Evas and Agnes share one bedroom so that Mama Evas can care for her even during the night. Due to the intensive care work, Mama Evas is not able to leave the house for a longer time. Therefore, she started a

business in embroidering blankets and table cloths which she can do from home. As the care work is exhausting and limiting her in her independence, she splits up the care work with her sister who lives in another part of the town. Agnes stays three months at each of the daughter's homes and then changes the location. Mama Evas also has a brother, but she explained that he could not care for Agnes the way she does because caring for a mother "is the job of a daughter" (Research Journal: 8). This care arrangement seems to fit into the way that care for elderlies is handled in Tanzania: it is common that the primary care relations are "grounded in stable patterns of interaction with close kin such as the spouse, siblings, adult children and grandchildren" (Obrist 2016: 271). As mentioned previously, normative attitudes assign the provision of care to younger generations, and in particular to women (van Eeuwijk 2016: 71). I asked Mama Seba and Mama Evas if such an intense care work could also be undertaken by a non-family member. In my research journal, I noted that Mama Seba and Mama Evas are

"are close friends, cook together, support each other in their households and even look for each other's' grandchildren. But if Mama Seba got seriously ill and needed a person to care for, Mama Evas couldn't do that: "Haiwezikani, ataniachia"" – "That is impossible – she would leave me alone!"." (Mama Seba: 13)

As supporting each other in regular household tasks is a common practice amongst Mama Seba and Mama Evas, Mama Seba assigns care work or support that is much more intense and involves personal care to family members. Mama Seba is the one also providing care for Mama Anna (previous chapter), but we can see that she draws a line between which care practices are possible and which are impossible in non-kinship care arrangements. Thus, the findings show that care practices by non-kinship, mainly conducted by neighbours, only cover certain domains of care such as visiting them, talking to them, providing them with food, running a few errands or taking over some of their everyday duties but they never implied personal and intense care or support with money.

8.2 Staying Active and Independent?

After having had a look at the elderlies within their family networks and further care and support networks, this chapter turns towards the elderlies' everyday lives beyond these structures. A remarkable proportion of 73 per cent of the elder Tanzanians are

economically active, most of them are engaged in small-scale farming (HelpAge 2012). During my field trip, Paulo, one of the research participants, has pointed out that “to be dependent upon my children only, that is impossible to me!” (Research Journal: 7). Therefore, the following sup-chapters examine the individual practices that the elder people pursue in order to secure their lives with a focus on the ageing body and specific spatialities.

8.2.1 Old Age Security – Building Upon Many Different Pillars

Gabriel mentioned that it is important to start planning one's future life as an aged person early and that one needs to build this future 'upon several pillars (Gabriel: 18). His own life can be regarded as a good example for that: he bought a house in Sumbawanga in his 40s and built a new house a few years ago. He owns land which he does not cultivate himself but pays village people to do this for him. In addition, he receives a pension of 140.000 Tsh⁶ per month and has several part time jobs as he teaches language courses at different places. His wife Winfrida takes care of the household and the kitchen garden. Thus, Gabriel and Winfrida are able to secure their old age lives in many different ways and quite independently; only sometimes, they receive support from their children. Amongst all participants, Gabriel's way of securing his life is quite exceptional because most of the other participants possess less financial, social or cultural capital or are in a less good bodily condition. This again shows how the elderlies' lives and their experiences of this phase of life strongly intersect with the axes of social position and health. Even though in not such a differentiated way like Gabriel, they also pursue different activities for securing their lives.

8.2.2 Retiring – and Then? Pursuing a 'Retirement-Job'

In the interviews with those elderlies who gained a pension, they all stated that this amount of money is not sufficient to sustain their lives and the lives of other dependants.⁷ Amongst the elderly participants, the amount of the pension varies

⁶ Equals 53,63€. Exchange rate of 04.11.2018.

⁷ Of all participants who receive a pension, only one is a woman; thus, in the other cases, the dependants are mainly the elderly men's wives.

between 50.000 Tsh and 140.000 Tsh⁸ and accounts for 25% of their former salaries. For having a continuing source of income, the elderly men who were formerly employed and retired started a 'retirement job': in the way that Gabriel continued to teach, Peter, a retired teacher, started to tutor orphans after his retirement. Emeratus retired from his office job and got a part-time employment in another office; Kedrick worked for the army and after retiring, he worked for a security agency; Juma was employed in the technical department of the water works of Sumbawanga and started to measure the oil pressure of car engines as a pensioner. Thus, their retirement jobs are in similar domains to what they have done before.

What is striking is that these retirement jobs differ from their former jobs in certain aspects. Emeratus is working part-time in the Caritas office in Sumbawanga and he states that he is satisfied with having a part-time job because as he is "ageing more and more, he needs more time to rest" (Emeratus: 6). Kedrick worked in the army in different parts of Tanzania and when he moved back to Sumbawanga, he started to work for a security agency – not as a watchman but as their coordinator in the office: "For working in this domain, one has to be young and very strong, but I was already aged when I got employed" (Kedrick: 6). In these elderlies' lives, continuing to work is important for their livelihood security. Thus, when possible, they continue with a wage labour job that meets their needs as an ageing person: Emeratus reduced his number of working hours and Kedrick changed to an office job that requires less bodily strength. Above all, being able to continue to work is determined by the elderlies mental and physical conditions. In a similar context, Obrist investigated the interplays of ageing, agency and health in Tanzania (2016a; 2016b). She focussed on "old age frailty and disability" as a threat and investigated how elderlies built up social resilience to these threats. Her results showed that critical health moments like injury, chronic illness or increased frailty make older people "reorder the relations to their body and self but also to other people, places and events" (Obrist 2016b: 272). This takes place in the lives of the participating elderlies as well: Peter continued to work as a tutor for children until he was hit by Malaria and Typhus at the same time. Even though he recovered, he did lose some of his strength and explained that he is not able to teach at all. This changing

⁸ Equals from 19,16 € to 53,63€. Exchange rate of 04.11.2018.

situation induced that Peter and his wife are now more dependent upon their children who, amongst others, support them with money and groceries (Peter: 9).

Kedrick had to stop his office job after he had a car accident from which he never fully recovered. This accident – and the resulting decline of his bodily strength – caused a re-ordering of his family structures: as it was always him who was the families' 'breadwinner', he could not fulfil this role after the accident anymore. As a livelihood strategy, his wife moved to the countryside and started farming whereas he stayed in town. In this case, the so-called 'critical health moments' made Kedrick's family reorder their family structures which went along with changing of places.

However, in other cases, these re-ordering processes are not only induced by events with a sudden onset, but they can also be induced by continuing and disrupted processes that come along with ageing. The following chapter on Gabriel's working life shows in more detail, how the aspect of having strength is determining Gabriel's daily re-structuring's of teaching and moving from A to B.

8.2.3 Re-Structuring Practices According to the Daily Constitution of the Body

One afternoon, I was invited to Gabriel's home. As a part time job, Gabriel works as a language teacher at the University in Sumbawanga. As the Campus is close to my office, I walked over, and we went together to his home. In my research journal, I recorded the following memories:

"When I was on my way to Gabriel's working place, a heavy rain started so that I had to seek shelter at a duka (kiosk). Soon, Gabriel came over to the duka and we waited for 10 minutes until the rain stopped. The University Campus is located uphill, and we had to walk down to one of the bigger roads. On our way to this bigger road, we had to walk down a rough road. The road was quite bumpy (probably because of the rain season in which material is constantly washed out) and because of the rainfall, the road was slippery and cluttered with puddles of rainwater. I really had to concentrate on where to put my next step. Gabriel, who is generally a slower walker than me, seemed to be quite used to it. After we arrived at the bigger road after 15 minutes, we waited for a Bajaj to pass⁹. Luckily, we did not have to wait for a long time to be picked up. With this Bajaj, we went down to the bus station close to the market and had to take another connecting Bajaj to Chanji. The whole trip took us around 40 minutes. Even if Sumbawanga is a middle-sized town, its size is quite expanded. Gabriel explained that now, the whole distance is too long for walking but that

⁹ A Bajaj is a three-wheeled auto-rickshaw.

he was able to walk it five years ago. His strength is decreasing and as he has no car, he depends upon public transport. For one way, Gabriel has to pay 500 Tsh, so every day, for going and returning, he pays 1000 Tsh. He complained that in a month, he pays up to 30.000 Tsh for transport and this is nearly a quarter of what he earns with this job.” (Research Journal: 14)

In 2010, Gabriel was my *Kiswahili* teacher. I remembered that back then, he walked for more than an hour each way from his home to our place. I told him about my memories and he said that walking is his preferred mode of travelling, but that he is losing his strength. Therefore, he re-ordered his way to move and now manages some parts of the distance by public transport.

Gabriel said that when the weather is better for walking (no rain and no puddles of rainwater on the road) and he feels strong enough, he sometimes only uses one *Bajaj* instead of two and walks half of the distance. Thus, Gabriel adjusts his modes of mobility to his daily changing condition and the environment. Investigating this aspect deeper, it shows that bodily processes - being strong enough to walk a certain distance - change in complex, nonlinear and not necessarily predictable ways (Schwanen et al. 2012a: 1292). Thereby, the dominant narrative of a constant decline of strength and health of the ageing body turns more nuanced: Gabriel described that over that past years, in general, he has lost strength and notices a development that follows the narrative of the declining ageing body. Nevertheless, his bodily strength changes in a non-linear way: it changes daily, even changes several times a day; and it is upon these changes that he decides upon his mode of travel. Making a short excursion to perspectives of the *New Materialism* paradigm, the example of Gabriel shows that his decisions are not only taken depending upon the condition of his body in the respective moments but that they are also influenced by ‘non-human actants’ such as the weather and ‘materialities’ such as the constitution of the road.

What is more, Gabriel stressed that teaching pupils at a school with a fulltime position would be too exhausting for him. After his retirement, he turned towards adult education and says that these students are less demanding. Directly after his retirement, he was working a lot but in the last years he reduced the amount of lessons as he needed more time to relax. When he feels unable to teach one day, he can call his students and arrange the lesson for another day. Thus, his job is not only less exhausting but also more flexible in relation to his daily changing condition. On some days, he does not feel “strong enough” to move to his student’s places, on other days,

he feels dizzy and unable to teach whereas on most of the days, he feels strong enough to pursue this job (Gabriel: 15).

As Gabriel is conscious of the threatening impact of restricted mobility on his income practices, he organized a way in which he can teach his students from his home. When his new house was built some years ago, he saved one of the rooms as a classroom and furnished it with school benches and a board. In this way, he does not have to travel anywhere but it is his students have to travel to his house. By re-structuring his home and also his interactions with his students by shifting the lessons to his home, he found a way to stabilize his manner of generating income and thus to secure his livelihood.

The way that Gabriel arranges his days and his work shows that his life as an ageing man is in the first way not coined by a constant 'decline' – which counter the decline discourse that is overlooking experiences of increasingly healthy and engaged ageing people (Sandberg 2011: 13). On the contrary, his (work) life is much more coined by weekly, daily or even hourly changes of his bodily constitution. Even though this must have been the case in his younger years as well, these changes became more determining in his life as an ageing man.

8.2.4 Wage Labour – More than generating Income

The past chapters focussed on the importance of pursuing a job for the elderlies' livelihood securities and the ways in which these working practices are re-organised in the context of ageing. However, this chapter argues that being employed is not only a source of generating a stable income but for many elderlies, spending time at their workspaces also means being socially integrated.

During my research stay, I was able to use an office room which was located on the same corridor of Emeratus's office. Together with the other colleagues from the Caritas office, we often spent breakfast time together and in my research journal, I remembered those daily events:

“Even if Emeratus is a part-time employee, he never misses Chai ya Asubuhi (breakfast) with the other colleagues. Whenever there is someone missing, he passes by at the person's office and welcomes him/her to breakfast.

During breakfast, we talk about many current topics, e.g. about the problems that come across with the heavy rain season. Last week, many funerals took place and every colleague shared the information that she or he had on the

death and the date and venue of the funeral. As one of the sisters from the nearby motherhouse died, the whole office staff went there together, myself included.” (Emeratus: 15-16)

By working at the Caritas office, Emeratus experiences being part of the office community. Emeratus described that he continues to work not only because he is in need of the money but also because he thinks that working is much better than sitting at home: having a job helps him to stay active and to have a certain structure and routine within his day (Emeratus: 6).

For Paulo, the dimension of social participation through wage labour matters as well. He retired about 10 years ago from being the chairman of the Rukwa Regional Cooperative Union. Now, he has been working at the public water pump in Katandala for 8 years, unlocking it in the morning and locking it in the evening, collecting the people's money (Paulo: 4). The water pump is located directly behind the building in which I had my office. I passed by at the water pump many times and now and then, I spent some time with Paulo sitting at the water pump. During my stay in Sumbawanga, it was rainy season and in the rainy mornings, I did not see him working. He explained that the customers would not come when it's raining and there is no shed to take shelter, expect a big tree providing shade. But in busy times, especially in the mornings and in the late afternoons, many people, not only customers but also friends, stopped by:

“Whenever I pass by at the water pump, I see him sitting on his wooden stool, sometimes alone, but many times accompanied. Nearly every day, his old friend James pays him a visit. As the families of the neighbourhood Katandala regularly fetch water, he is in regular contact with his neighbours. Amongst them are Mama Seba (who fetches water every morning) and her husband Juma. They keep the tradition that the woman fetches the water, but nevertheless, also Juma likes to pass by at the water pump and they exchange the latest news. Paulo said that he likes his job because he can talk to people a lot, which is different from ‘kukaa nyumbani tu’, ‘only sitting at home’.” (Paulo: 5)

By working at the water pump, Paulo is not only provided with a regular income but also with contact to people and in the network of his neighbours, Paulo has a central function of passing on news and information.

In the context of social participation and integration, spatial aspects come into play: it is in their working places that Gabriel, Paulo and Emeratus fulfil their wish of belonging. By finding jobs that meet their needs, they gain access to places that underlie processes of institutionalised age-related segregation: places such as kindergartens, schools and working places show that the age-related stratification of the society takes place within and through space; that in- and exclusions are made in and through space (Enßle & Helbrecht 2018: 232). This aspect will be further developed in chapter 7.3 and related to elderlies free-time activities and their spatialities.



Figure 10: An elder man at his workplace, the water pump. Photo: M.Deter

8.2.5 Working Women: Turning the Homes into Trade Spaces

Paulo's wife is called Neema. When Paulo spends his working days at the water pump, Neema mostly stays at home. Paulo explained to me that Neema has a small business with buying and selling charcoal: She was born and grew up in Kasanga, a village located a one-hour-drive from Sumbawanga and buys charcoal from people in that village. Every month, Neema's sister sends a bag of charcoal to the bus station in Kasanga. At the bus station in Sumbawanga, Neema pays for the transport fees and picks up the bag of charcoal. In front of her house, she sells the charcoal in smaller quantities (Paulo: 10). Paulo explained that this business is doing well as there is a large range between the purchase price and the selling price. Like many other elderly women, Neema spends most of her time at home. By turning her front yard into a

business place, she can combine spending her time at her home as a housewife with pursuing another job.

In a similar way, Mama Seba sells *mandazi* in a *duka* close to her house. She is able to prepare the *mandazi* in her kitchen and only has to leave the house for delivering the *mandazi* to the *duka*, which is only a hundred meters away from her house. Sometimes, she also puts up a small stool with a box of *mandazi* in front of her house. When people want to buy some *mandazi*, they knock at her door and she comes out (Mama Seba: 15). Thus, Mama Seba does not have to stay in front of her house at the stand and spend her time waiting until a customer comes but this way, she can fulfil her other household duties in the meantime. Mama Seba started this business already many years ago and it is not a job she specifically turned to when she became a *mzee*. Nevertheless, Mama Seba claimed that she can continue with this job for many years as also in future, her home will stay the place where she spends most of the time as well as she rates her health and strength to stay quite high.

8.2.6 Renting out Rooms & Fields

As mentioned previously, the elderlies secure their livelihoods by building upon different sources of income. For some of the elderlies, renting out rooms is a feasible option: after all the children left the house, Mama Seba and Juma had some empty rooms on their compound. Their house is built in a traditional style: it is built on a compound which can be accessed through the gate to the yard. On the compound are three residential buildings, two of them are occupied by Mama Seba, Juma and their grandchildren whereas they rent out the other one to a younger woman.

Some years ago, Gabriel built a new house as he did not find his old one to be good enough. Renting out his old house is a source of income that he can rely upon even in cases of illness and weakness because it does not require any work from him – “the money just comes!” (Gabriel: 20). Thus, renting out places is regarded as a secure source of income in old age by many of the participants.

James's family lives in Dodoma and he stays alone in their spacious house. Behind their main house, there is a smaller building which was formerly used as a site of production for sunflower oil. Several years ago, the tenants moved out and since then, this building has been staying empty. James explained that he wishes to renovate the place and to rent it out to tenants, but he complained that he lacks the seed capital

(Research Journal: 19). In a similar way, Filicia thinks about renovating the back part of her house and to either rent it out to tenants or use it for livestock keeping. Like James, she does not have enough money to renovate it and states that it is impossible to get a loan from the bank (Filicia: 32). As renting out rooms seems to be a useful way of generating income in older age as it does not require a lot of additional work. However, being able to rent out these places requires to possess over this sort of physical capital and to be able to maintain it.

8.2.7 Cultivating in the Kitchen Garden & Keeping Livestock

Nearly all of the elderlies had a kitchen garden in which they cultivate mainly maize, beans and green vegetables. In contrast to the fields outside of town which are cultivated by their children in many cases, all of the elderlies with kitchen gardens claimed that they cultivate them without any help. When I visited the elderlies, it happened many times that I couldn't find them in their house but somewhere in their kitchen garden. Many of them liked to walk through the garden with me, presented their plants and talked about the specific difficulties of the current growing season. When I visited Elisa Zumba, I mainly found him sitting on a comfortable couch in his living room. But once, his wife sent me to look for him in the kitchen garden. Even though Peter is not able to kneel down or to dig, I found him investigating his plants and weeding. When I visited Mama Stella, we walked along her maize field and she even proudly told me that she cultivates this field mainly on her own and only receives a little help from her grandchildren now and then (Stella: 5).

In the elderlies' lives, the kitchen garden did not supply the elderlies with all the food they need; they mainly cultivated to have some additional food. Many of them focussed on planting nutritious food in their kitchen garden; Gabriel and his wife like to plant a lot of traditional green leafy vegetables as they consider them as very nutritious (Gabriel: 16)

8.2.8 Ageing and Living from Subsistence Farming

Apart from those elderlies only cultivating in a small kitchen garden, a larger part of the participating elderlies' lives from subsistence farming. They originally come from surrounding villages and are still working on their own fields outside town. They are

travelling there regularly, during harvest time they even stay in the villages for one or two weeks.

As described earlier, Theodor and Serena live in Sumbawanga town, but they make their living by cultivating fields outside of Sumbawanga town. When I visited them, they were just about to sort the beans they harvested in the afternoon:

“Theodor and Serena said that they are both cultivating but only have a small field of one acre. They used to have more land, but the other fields were bought by the government to build houses. Everything they cultivate, they consume themselves, there is nothing left for sale. Their field is about an hour and a half away from their home – walking distance.” (Theodor & Serena: 6).

Whenever work has to be done in the field, Theodor and Serena have to walk one and a half hours each way. When there is more work to do than they can complete within a day, they sometimes stay at a relative's place that is close to their field. They can also leave their tools at their relatives' place so that they do not have to carry them the whole way. However, Theodor explained that he is losing his strength to walk the long distance; he is still able to manage it but needs much more time and breaks to relax (Theodor & Serena: 8). This shows how ageing, expressed by losing strength and the ability to walk long distances, affects the everyday lives of Theodor and Serena. For them, being mobile is of primordial importance for continuing with their livelihood practices. At the same time, also cultivating itself is a practice that makes Theodor and Serena “more and more tired” and, with the continuing progress of ageing, they will have to stop it one day (Theodor & Serena: 9).

As subsistence farmers, Serena and Theodor do not sell any of their harvests but store them in their house. For them, it is hardly possible to make financial reserves or to fill food storages many years ahead. As Theodor explained, they do not plan their future lives much ahead but “we won't change anything, I will continue with my job until I do not have the strength anymore” (Theodor & Serena: 9). In many publications on the livelihoods of subsistence farmers in Tanzania, access to land is regarded as a central livelihood asset; stressing that land provides people with a multitude of goods and services necessary for their well-being (Smith et al. 2008). Even though Theodor and Serena do possess land, they will not be able to cultivate it in the same way for their whole lives. This hints at the rigid understanding of people's lives in livelihood and well-being approaches; I argue that they are not only ‘gender-blind’ but also ‘age- or body-blind’ as they are neglecting that the individual bodily procedure of cultivating the field

is a) of primordial importance when subsistence farmers secure their well-being and b) not a static 'asset' but underlies dynamic and often unpredictable processes. In Serena's and Theodor's life, this bodily ability to work as subsistence farmers was given in most parts of their life; but especially (but not only) within the elder stages of life, they have to adjust their way of working to their daily condition; showing that the bodily condition is not a static factor but dynamically changing, often in unforeseeable ways.

Coming back to the imagination of elderlies growing old in the midst of their families, also Serena's and Theodor's seven children moved out, one of them to Dar, one to Songea and the others to Laela, a small town. I asked if Theodor's and Serena's children might move back to Sumbawanga in case they need them, but Theodor replied that "his children cannot move to Sumbawanga to look after them when they are very old because they have already settled down in other places" (Theodor & Serena: 7). Sometimes, their children send money to support them, but this is not sufficient for Theodor and Serena. In comparison to those elderlies who pursued other jobs and built up their lives upon different pillars, the out-migration of the children has stronger effects on Serena's and Theodor's lives as subsistence farmers. Traditionally, the system of subsistence farming builds upon the generation contract; families live together on one compound and when the elderlies are too weak to cultivate, their children take over (Gabriel: 7). The out-migration of children impacts the lives of Theodor and Serena as subsistence farmers stronger than for example Gabriel and Winfrida or Theodor and Agnes. In their current situation of living from subsistence farming without having their children around, Theodor's and Serena's futures are uncertain to them as they cannot think about any alternatives of securing their lives.

8.3 Free-time Activities, Well-being and What Else Matters

When revisiting the reasons why some of the elderlies moved (back) to Sumbawanga, they did not only do so out of reasons of a more certain and secure future, but many of them moved to Sumbawanga because they wanted have friends and family around them, people and places that they know and where they are embedded into society. In the following sub-chapters, I highlight further everyday practices that are meaningful to the elderlies as well – less in terms of livelihood security but more for their individual well-being.

8.3.1 God Helps a Person to Live a Good Life: Religious Practices and Places

Most of the participating elderlies are of Christian faith and they regularly attend religious services. In one of the mornings, I went to a morning service together with Mama Seba and Juma at 6:00 am. As the service itself roughly took half an hour, we spent another 20 minutes in front of the church talking to other – mainly elderly – people. It was a few days before Easter and the parish had to organise the annual Easter donation campaign. Juma and Mama Seba are very active members of their parish and they played an important part in leading the discussions on how to best organise to collect and redistribute the donations. (Research Journal: 16). In some of the afternoons or evenings when I visited Mama Seba and Juma, other members of the parish came over to their house. Sitting in the living room, they continued to discuss their plans about the donations. This shows that they do not only spend some of their mornings in church but that they were actively participating in the parish's life; their recommendations for the donation were followed and it seemed that they are highly respected.

Peter is an active member of his parish as well and since he lives in Katandala, he has rarely been missing one of the morning masses in Katandala church. Within the last years, he experienced an increasing fragility of his body and thus, he mainly prays from home and visits the Sunday masses only on those days that he feels strong enough. This shows that due to the increasing fragility of his body, Peter's participation in society decreases. In Peter's case, his age-related complaints hinder his daily social, economic and cultural activities in a direct way as he can no longer carry out not only his religious obligations and had to stop his field and household work. As van Eeuwijk describes, the quality of life decreases increasingly and noticeably with these age-related complaints, which are simultaneously restricting the elderlies' mobility (2018: 16). These problems have various direct and indirect consequences: In Peter's case, it leads to the exclusion from church services and religious prayer groups and consequently to a certain social isolation - which means a loss of independence.

Like Mama Seba and Juma, also James spends a lot of his time in Katandala church or with praying at home. As he stays alone in his house, he says that he particularly enjoys being surrounded by other people of his parish. What is more, the Christian belief itself helps James to deal with the uncertainties and insecurities of old age life. When I asked some of the elderlies in the interviews about if and how they imagine

their future lives, they claimed that “only God knows – he has a plan for me”. Living according to his Christian faith helps James to live a healthy life:

“God helps you very much to live a good life. If you pray, when you control your faith, you will live a good life. I feel that if I live this way, I can go to ninety something. If you care for yourself, go and greet people, you live in good spirits, you don’t drink beer, keep your body fit, you will have a good life as a *mzee*.” (James: 16)



Figure 11: An elder religious man in front of his worship place. Photo: M.Deter

Aged Places: The Church Pub

Emeratus is a choirmaster and together with his choir, they practice two times a week and sing at the Sunday service in Sumbawanga’s Cathedral nearly every week. After practice, Emeratus and another aged friend sometimes drink a beer. Once, I have met them at a pub in Sumbawanga. What is special about the pub is that it is a church-owned pub and it differs from the “normal pubs” one can find in Sumbawanga: instead of *Bongoflava*, they play church songs in a much lower volume and it has an outdoor area which is surrounded by fences or walls (Emeratus: 19). Regarding this place and Emeratus’s practice to regularly visit it show that ageing and places stand in a co-constitutive-relation to each other, as Hopkins and Pain (2007: 288) pointed out that “people have different access to and experiences of places on the grounds of their age, and spaces associated with certain age groups influence who uses them and how.” When visiting the ‘normal’ pubs, Emeratus would be out of place as these bars

are mainly visited by younger men. When I met Emeratus at the pub, he entered with his friend from the choir but inside, he sat together with many other, elder (Christian) men. As the church pub appears cleaner, quieter and less 'sinful' than the normal pubs with their chairs on the pavement, it is also accessible to Emeratus as a religious man as well as to his friends.

8.3.2 Entering Public Spaces: A Man cannot sit at Home

In 2008, Juma retired from his job at the Ministry of water in Sumbawanga. After he retired, he started to work in a car repair shop because he only gets a little pension which is not enough to support his family (Juma: 5). In the beginning, the business went well but within the last years, the cars and streets in Sumbawanga improved and therefore, less drivers needed his help (Juma: 5). He stopped working daily and goes to the garage only two or three times a week. On the days he does not work, he leaves his house in the morning, every day at the same time, and meets his friends. Together, they read newspapers and talk and laugh a lot. Juma's and his male friends' meetings are assigned to a certain place: they meet in the public sphere, more precisely, they gather at some benches under a big tree close to the city centre. Juma says that "staying at home is not good for a man" (Juma: 6) because the house is the place of women (Juma: 6). By leaving the house every morning the same way he did when he was employed, Juma leaves this 'female' place and enters places that are assigned to (elderly) men.

Leaving his home and spending his time either at work or with his friends is not only important for Juma's male identity; more generally, it is important for his participation in society. For Juma, meeting friends during the day requires him to travel to meeting points in the public sphere. Being in the bodily condition to leave the house and to be mobile are important preconditions for reaching at these places. For being mobile, Juma uses his bicycle every day. He explained that he could also walk but experiences that walking is exhausting him more and more (Juma: 7). This mobility practice of riding a bike enables what Schwanen et al. call a 'well-being in later life': being independent in later life is presupposed by a minimum level of capacity to be/become mobile in older adults (2012: 1313). Not only in Juma's case, but in many elderlies' lives, mobility is important because it links together practices within the home and relevant sites elsewhere; being able to conduct them in these various places is

important to being satisfied with their later lives. As Milligan and Morbey (2013) have shown that spending time in gender-specific places can play an important role in the promotion of health and well-being among older men, this might also be applicable for Juma when he enters the space under the tree.

8.3.3 Kitchen Talks with Neighbour Women & the Everyday, Mundane Places

Whereas Juma leaves the house in the morning and comes back at the late afternoon or evening, Mama Seba spends her time close to her house. When meeting friends, she mostly invites them over to her house or pays them a visit at their place. With one of her closest friends, Mama Evas, she drinks a tea every morning in her kitchen. Even though the house is empty in the mornings and Mama Seba and Mama Evas could move to the living room for her tea, they got used to sitting on their stools in the kitchen. Mama Seba does rarely meet with her friends in public places, but she spends some good amount of time in it: every morning, she fetches fresh water at the water pump. There, she does not only talk to Paulo (who is working at the water pump) but also talks to other people. In one of the mornings, I accompanied Mama Seba for her daily shopping at the market:

“Later the morning, Mama Seba and I went to the market together. As she likes to walk and likes to have many people around her, we didn’t go to the closer market in Katandala but walked the whole way to the main market, where prices are cheaper. There, we bought vegetables and fruits at the stand that she always goes to. We chatted with the selling woman who comes from the same village as Mama Seba and they talked about a funeral of an elder man they both knew. Mama Seba needed some further groceries, like credit for her mobile phone and some soap. We bought them at a duka of one of her neighbouring friends. Even though this small shop only has a few square meters, Mama Seba’s neighbours managed to build some benches inside. Some people, a younger man and an elder woman were sitting there, chatting with the sales woman. Mama Seba explained that she likes to join them now and then, but today, she was a bit in a hurry.” (Research Journal: 13)

When analysing Mama Seba’s activities that bring her in contact with other people, it has shown that these activities are all everyday activities or everyday events. Following the perspective of the NRT, it is these everyday events that constitute her daily life and play an important part in living a good life. This perspective particularly renders attention to the rather mundane places – the water pump, the kitchen, the market and a small shop – which often remain not only outside the individuals’ full consciousness

(Andrews & Grenier 2018: 66) but also the researcher's attention. But in fact, they are places that Mama Seba visits every day and in which she interacts with friends and acquaintances. However mundane they appear on the first sight, being able to be in and to reach these places is of high importance for Mama Seba's wellbeing. Mama Seba's wellbeing.

PART III – CONCLUSIONS

In the following chapter (9), I summarize the key findings of the empirical results and reconnect them with the theoretical background. In chapter 9.1, I shortly discuss how the research results are impacted by methodological aspects and finally come to highlighting some interesting entry points for further research as well as I line out some considerations for practical action within the field of elder people in SSA (9.2).

9. Summary of the Main Findings

This thesis mapped out the lives of elderlies in Sumbawanga by investigating their own experiences of ageing and exploring what matters to them with regard to their personal wellbeing; with a focus on how they secure their lives, how their own mobility comes into play and how they are supported by and embedded in their (translocal) families.

During the field trip to Sumbawanga, I got into contact with elderlies in considerably different living situations. When exploring how the elderlies live; which doors are and were open to them; which paths their lives took and may take in future, I applied a relational perspective, encompassing their life-courses, inter-generational aspects as well as interconnections with other social markers, particularly class and gender.

By exploring the elderlies' life-courses, the findings showed what mattered to them and which aspects they considered as relevant for their wellbeing. These included being surrounded by their families, friends and neighbours; generating income and continuing to work; staying in a place that one is emotionally and culturally attached to; participating in society; being healthy and being provided with a good infrastructure. In their earlier stages of life, these aspects were coining their visions of how to age and where to age. As the results have shown, these visions were sometimes place-bound: Gabriel could not access a five acres field everywhere in Tanzania but only in Sumbawanga, he possesses the necessary network and Theodor and Serena's wish to be surrounded with his family and old friends can best be met in the neighbourhood that they decided to live in.

What is more, the results highlighted that the elderlies' life-courses were marked by disruptions and did not always follow their visions. For example, Mama Seba envisioned to stay in Dar but as her husband felt ill, they had to think of another plan; due to this changing context, they re-envisioned their future.

Furthermore, the elderlies' biographies show evidence that mobility is not something 'new' that only recently entered the lives of these Tanzanians but already from their childhood on, mobility was an integral part of the now aged participants' lives. Some of the elder people also have plans for their future in which migration is a central element. The case of Filicia, an elderly Tanzanian widow who is thinking about migrating to Dar es Salaam to start a retirement job exemplifies a counter-narration to

the stereotype of the immobile elderlies who are stuck in place and left behind by the out-migration of their children.

I further investigated how the elderlies are embedded in their families and how and if they are supported and cared for. The empirical results showed that the imagination of 'the elderlies growing old in the midst of their loving and caring family members' meets the real living situations of the participating elderlies from Sumbawanga only to a certain extent. Only few of the elderlies live together with their children in the same house or on the same compound. However, the results have shown that spatial/physical proximity does not automatically guarantee that family members who live in the same household as an elder person actually take care of them. At the same time, physical distance of family members does not automatically exclude them from supporting their elder members. When I applied a relational perspective on the care spatialities, it became visible that in Mama Seba's and Juma's family, a strong connection between them and their children living in distant places exists. This was hold up by e.g. daily phone calls, sending of pictures and money via the internet/mPesa; exemplifying how translocal care arrangements may look like.

The case of Stella showed that she receives support which goes beyond basic provisions of food and money: she lives alone, and her kinship supports her by inviting her over or paying regular visits at her place. This stresses that not only obvious basic needs have to be met when ageing but for Stella and many other elder people, emotional aspects such as being surrounded by friends or family instead of staying alone matter considerably. Coming back to translocal care arrangements, the results have shown that the elderlies might benefit from the children's better income by working in other places than Sumbawanga; but when considering the affective aspects of wellbeing, these distant care practices cannot replace physical closeness and face-to-face interactions, hinting at the flip side of such translocal care arrangements.

Generally, I discovered that the main care practices are conducted by closer female family members, but when zooming into some of the arrangements, I realised that they consist of many different, visible and less visible care practices and actors involved. However, the findings also showed that these care practices by non-kinship, mainly neighbours, only cover certain domains of care as they never implied personal and intense care or support with money. In those cases that elderlies needed intense and personal support or care, the emigration of the elder people's children, 'leaving them

behind', would fundamentally impact their lives. When in need of intense care, which in this case study was only provided by family members, these elderlies 'left behind' would indeed experience abandonment, helplessness, and absence if their children/other possible care providers migrated out.

The non-kinship care providers which were mainly neighbours and friends paid visits to the elderlies, talked to them, provided them with food or took over some of their everyday duties. As the empirical findings have shown, being in personal contact with other people is important to the elderlies, showing that these care practices by non-kinship are essential for the elderlies' wellbeing. What is more, the case of Peter further illustrated how dynamical these care arrangements are and how they intensity of care and the number of actors involved depended upon his need, which did not only change over longer periods of time but also on a weekly or even daily basis.

Furthermore, not only the family networks play an important role in the elderlies' lives; in some arrangements, the elderlies do not merely receive support by their kinship, but they play an active part in supporting their families as well, most of them by caring for their grandchildren. Whether these mutual support practices can take place strongly depends upon the elderlies' (but also the kinships') ability of conducting them: this ability is shaped by aspects such as bodily strength, health, gender, education and income.

When investigating the elderlies' individual practices to stay independent and to gain income, the empirical findings have shown that, above all, being able to conduct these practices is determined by the elderlies mental and physical bodily conditions. Depending upon the changes of these conditions, the elderlies had to reorder the relations to their body and self but also to other people and places. The example of Gabriel's working life – how he changed his modes of travel according to his daily constitution of the body, his feelings and the environment - showed in more detail how the ageing body is determining Gabriel's daily re-structuring's of working and moving from A to B. The way that Gabriel arranges his days and his work showed that his life as an ageing man is in the first way not coined by a constant 'decline' but his (work) life is much more coined by weekly, daily or even hourly changes of his bodily constitution.

What is more, the elderlies' ability to secure their lives was not solely determined by their bodily condition but in intersections with such social categories as gender,

educational background or class. Only those elderlies who were employed by the government received a pension to which most of the elderlies, working in informal sectors or as subsistence farmers, did not have access. This access is further co-determined by their educational background, showing that these inequalities in later life are also rooted within early stages of their life-courses. With this focus on intersectionality, it became evident that amongst the participating elderlies, widows are most vulnerable in old age. Here, intersectional and life-course aspects come together, as these women experienced gender-based disadvantages or discrimination, such as the denial of education, throughout their life-courses, leading to high dependency upon their husbands or, when they passed away, on others.

The empirical result further highlighted that being employed is not only a source of generating a stable income but for many elderlies, spending time at their workspaces also means being socially integrated. In the context of social participation and integration, spatial aspects were identified to be of particular relevance: it is in their working places that Gabriel, Paulo and Emeratus fulfil their striving for participation not only in work life but more generally in society. Furthermore, by visiting them such places on a regular basis, the elderlies resist and restructure particular age identities, e.g. of being unproductive.

Coming to further relevant spatialities and practices, the results have shown that further places of encounter are important to them and their well-being. They mentioned such mundane places as the water pump, the *duka* or the market stand that they pass by every day as well as their homes, their churches or particular meeting points in public space. Many of the elderlies experienced social participation, the feeling of belonging and the feeling of being active within their parish. At the same time, some elderlies, such as Peter, were not able to visit the church (or other relevant spaces of encounter) anymore, as they experience a loss of strength and frailty. Not only in his case, but for many elderlies, the empirical findings have shown that the quality of life decreases with these age-related discomforts, which are simultaneously restricting their mobility. As shown in the case of Peter, this restricted mobility can lead to the exclusion from such important places of encounter and consequently to a certain social isolation.

All in all, this thesis followed Aboderin's urge to confront the heterogeneity within Africa's older populations within research, which implies to calibrate the all-too-often

dominant narrative of Africa's older people as homogeneously disadvantaged (2017: 644). In order to do so, this thesis acknowledged the disparities in capacity, privilege, and power that exist within this population. It finally comes to the conclusion that the elderlies' agency and thus also their need of support by their families and other care providers differs considerably; it is shaped by their life-courses and in intersections with other social categories – how educated they are, which sources of earning income they possess, how fit their ageing body is, how and when illness hits them, if they are male or female.

9.1 Reflections on the Methodology

Methodologically, I combined a grounded theory approach with an ethnographic approach, which led me to conducting narrative interviews and participant observation. I experienced the grounded theory as a fruitful, but at times very challenging approach. As I stayed open to all data, I sometimes got lost in the wealth of information and had hard times to carve out the relevant aspects. Nevertheless, the grounded theory helped me to ground the findings in the real-life situations of the elderlies and to avoid over-generalizations but to highlight the diversity of their living arrangements.

For gaining deep and ethnographic insights into the participants lives, the relationship between the researcher and the participants is of primordial importance. Hence, the results of this thesis have to be regarded in the context of the research circumstances: The interviews and the observations were conducted by a white female foreigner, who stayed in Sumbawanga for five weeks, resulting in gaining only snapshots of the elderlies' lives. The research outcomes would have been different and probably even more grounded, if (elderly) Tanzanians had conducted the research themselves, as they have a much better understanding of the local settings and circumstances.

9.2 Further Research and Considerations

During the research for this thesis and as pointed out in chapter 3, I discovered that only a small body of research on ageing in SSA exists. The empirical results have not only underlined the need to further investigate elderlies' lives in SSA but also highlighted interesting entry points for further research. In order to understand the diversity of ageing experiences within and across countries in the region, particularly intersectional approaches appear to be fruitful: focussing on how ageing crosses with

the axes of gender, rural/urban residence and social position more deeply would provide a deeper understanding of inequalities in later life. This requires focussing on certain groups, such as elder women, elder subsistence farmers, or – as Aboderin suggests – on certain socio-spatial groups such as older slum inhabitants (Aboderin 2017: 644). In the context of care and family networks, further research taking a 'de-romanticised' perspective would help to discover the care arrangements in more nuanced ways, acknowledging that care does not take place in such a linear, guaranteed and uncontradicted way as older, mostly ethnological documents suggest (van Eeuwijk 2018: 17).

What is more, this thesis has more or less left out the role of the Tanzanian government within the elderlies' lives. This was the case as within the empirical data, the Tanzanian government was rarely mentioned and in fact played little to no role within the elderlies' lives. Against the backdrop of this lack of state support, a further field of research could be to investigate policy agendas and debates on ageing in SSA more nuanced and in-depth.

In future, large populations of older people will become a major issue for governments, non-governmental organisations and communities, but “older people still remain a neglected and invisible group” (HelpAge 1999: 5) and within development cooperation, Africa's elder populations have been little recognised so far. The 'Sustainable Development Goals' (SGDs), which have been in force since 2016, do not provide for a specific goal for old people and their fields of development (ibid.: 5). Given the challenges that elder people in SSA meet, this thesis strongly recommends to holistically integrate not only elder people as a target group but more generally, the process and category of ageing into development agendas and projects or humanitarian aid. The empirical results, having shown that the foundation for elder people's well-being is often laid in earlier stages of their life-courses, underline that incorporating life-course approaches into development agendas is an essential task to support people of all ages sustainably.

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