



Understanding The Turn to Farming by The Retired Elderly: A Case Study of Pensioners in Munyati Resettlement Area, Chivhu, Zimbabwe

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Disclaimer:

This document represents part of the author's study programme while at the International Institute of Social Studies. The views stated therein are those of the author and not necessarily those of the Institute.

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Contents

<i>List of Tables</i>	<i>v</i>
<i>List of Figures</i>	<i>v</i>
<i>List of Maps</i>	<i>v</i>
<i>List of Appendices</i>	<i>v</i>
<i>List of Acronyms</i>	<i>vi</i>
<i>Abstract</i>	<i>vii</i>
Dedication	ix
Acknowledgement	x
Chapter 1:0 Introduction	1
1.1 Anecdote	1
1.2 Introduction	1
1.3 Research Problem	2
1.4 Research Objective:	3
1.4.1 Research Questions	3
1. 5 Linking Ageing and Rural Change in the Zimbabwean context	4
1.5.1 Ageing: an overview	4
1.5.2 Ageing in Zimbabwe	5
1.5.3 Rural Change in Zimbabwe	6
1.6 Bringing Ageing and Rural Change Together	7
1.7 Structure of the paper	8
1.8 Conclusion	8
Chapter 2 Carrying out Social research during the Presidential elections of 2013 in Zimbabwe	9
2.0 Introduction	9
2.1 Background of Study Area	9
2.2 The political scene	10
2.2.1 Research design and Data collection	11
2.2.2. Life Histories	12
2.2.3. Semi-structured interviews	13
2.2 .4 Focus group discussions	13
2.2.5. Ethical considerations	14
2.2.6 My positionality as a researcher	14
2.2.7 Scope and Limitations of the study	15

2.3 Conclusion	16
Chapter 3: A Generation’s lens on land: Views and Analysis of Land, The Fast Track Land Reform Programme	17
3.0 Introduction	17
3.1 The elderly cohort within a generation	17
3.2 Understanding the process of land acquisition	20
3.3 Beneficiaries of the FTLRP	22
3.4 New land, “new farmers”	23
3.5 Drivers of mobile farming among the urban elderly new farmers	24
3.6 Conclusion	26
Chapter 4 The Practising of Smallholder Farming and challenges faced by the elderly farmers	28
4.0 Introduction	28
4.1 Smallholder farming as practised by the elderly in Munyati Resettlement Area	28
4.2 Problems faced by the elderly in Munyati Resettlement Scheme	30
4.3 Conclusion	32
Chapter 5 Meanings and Significance of land to the elderly in Munyati Resettlement Area	33
5.0 Introduction	33
5.1. “Doing Old Age” A turn to the land by retired the elderly	33
5.2 Meanings elderly in Munyati resettlement attach to land	35
5.3 Women’s voices on land	38
5.4 Conclusion	38
Chapter 6 Conclusion	40

List of Tables

Table 1 Methods used for data collection as well as the number, age and gender of respondents	12
Table 2 Presents respondents in the study stating their demographic characteristics, land holding and the channel through which they acquired their land	22

List of Figures

Figure 1 Women participants in the focus group discussion.....	13
Figure 2 Mud hut and grass thatched granary (structures found on the FTLRP farms)	26
Figure 3 Cattle owned by one of the farmers	29

List of Maps

Map 2.1 Zimbabwe map indicating study area	9
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List of Appendices

Appendix I Time line of events in the elderly's lives	48
Appendix II Interview Guides	49

List of Acronyms

FTLRP	Fast Track Land Reform Programme
GoZ	Government of Zimbabwe
GMB	Grain Marketing Board
SAP	Structural Adjustment Programmes
ISS	Institute of Social Studies
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
HAI	Help Age International
FGD	Focus Group Discussion

Abstract

In this thesis I intertwine ageing and rural change. These two concepts have surprisingly largely been developed in relative isolation from one another although in real life they tend to be very close to each other. To do this I focus on the phenomenon of elderly Zimbabweans who turn to the rural areas and pursue farm-based livelihoods, following retirement from careers in formal urban employment and residency in urban settings. I use the Fast Track Land Reform Programme (FTLRP) as a case study through which I investigate these retired elderly's participation in farming activities. To be able to analyse my case study I draw from some important concepts. Of particular interest to my analysis from the ageing literature such as the social construction of retirement and ageing. I also examine the issue of agency among the elderly. Examining if and how their decisions are influenced by culture and economic conditions. I thus use these concepts in my contribution towards the debates on rural change in Zimbabwe giving special attention to the dynamics brought about by the FTLRP. This I do using an elderly generation lens.

My argument is constructed as follows: There exists an existing pattern of the elderly's turn to the land following life within the urban sphere that dates back to colonial times. I argue that this phenomenon cannot be reduced to a mere continuation of socio-historical patterns. By juxtaposing the life course trajectory of the cohort of 'retired the elderly'/ 'new farmers' in this study with the political-economic developments in Zimbabwe I bring out how important points of convergence between these two rhythms of development. This cohort grew up in an era where land was unequally distributed. They then lived their adult lives under an economy that was doing relatively well with employment opportunities being available. As the Zimbabwean economy was exhibiting signs of collapse, their retirement was also in sight and an uncertain future for these soon to be retired the elderly was presented. It was at this juncture of the unknown that the Fast Track Land Reform Programme was implemented.

Having observed the important intersections of these two trajectories of both historical times in Zimbabwe and the elderly's lives, I noticed how studies on land reform in Zimbabwe have generally omitted 'age' as a variable. Furthermore, where age is included in the rural transformation debates it tends to be limited to how young people are leaving farming and rural areas. Very little is mentioned with regards to the elderly's staying, or even returning to the land. The participation of the elderly in the Fast Track Land Reform Programme is not elaborated on and therefore difficult to determine at least from the debates proffered on the issue.

I argue that the literature on rural change thus needs to incorporate work on ageing in order to fully comprehend the phenomenon of 'ageing new farmers'. Currently this body of work is largely concerned with processes of agrarian differentiation which are illuminated through a class-based analysis. Without dismissing the immense value of this work, I argue that it fails to take into cognisance this ostensibly insignificant phenomenon of 'ageing new farmers' as a socio-cultural process shaped by the elderly's efforts to become successful older persons in socio-cultural terms. I construct this argument by attending to the value of land in relation to the social construct of the elderly and how the

construction of ‘musha’ and farming signifies an important form of ‘labour’ among the elderly in Zimbabwe.

In conclusion, this thesis makes two key contributions. Firstly, it demonstrates the importance of adopting an interdisciplinary perspective that weaves together bodies of literature that are seldom put in conversation. Second, it calls for a deeper conceptualization of temporalities within development studies by seeking to integrate the temporal dynamics of individual life course trajectories with broader politico-economic trajectories of development.

Relevance to Development Studies

This study is relevant to Development Studies in that it brings together the seldom discussed issue of the elderly and the FTLRP in Zimbabwe. Issues of ageing and rural change in Zimbabwe have been discussed but not in the vein of land reform. This paper therefore contributes to developmental issues by offering this discussion, hoping to contribute to literature which highlights the experiences of the elderly in Zimbabwe with particular reference to the FTLRP.

Keywords

ageing, the elderly, rural change, retirement, land, musha, Zimbabwe

Dedication

I would like to thank God for His grace that has seen me through this journey. With Him all things are possible.

I dedicate this thesis to my son Munesuishe; this is my first greatest achievement as your mom. May my success challenge and inspire you in your own journey so that one day you achieve your own dreams. I pray that I will always be there to celebrate your success. I love you so very much and wish nothing but the best for you.

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Chapter 1:0 Introduction

“After 34 years of loyal service with the National Railways of Zimbabwe, Nkosana Moyo could be forgiven for wanting to kick back and enjoy his retirement with his family. Instead, thanks to an economic disaster that has engulfed his country for the past 10 years and wiped out people's pension contributions, the 61-year-old has been forced to lease his house in Bulawayo, move out to the countryside, and is planning to take up farming. "I thought after working for 34 years I would rest," he said. "There is nothing like that. I am starting a new life of hard work, like I never worked before”, (The Standard, 2009)¹

“Even when someone is working in London when they say they are going home they will be referring to their rural area. When you work in town or wherever you work it is only temporary that's why you see even when someone dies they go to be buried in their rural home” (72 year old's male Life Narrative, July 2013)

1.1 Anecdote

For older Zimbabweans in formal employment, reaching the formal retirement age (65 years) hardly constitutes a ‘rite of passage’. In fact, retirement is only potentially meaningful to 11% of the Zimbabwean population in formal employment, should they manage to reach the retirement age. However even for those few, the concept of retirement may well remain elusive. This first struck me while I was working in Human Resources. I remember hosting long service awards for men and women who had loyally served the organisation. As a gesture for sending them off they were given gifts that ranged from ploughs, wheelbarrows and anything representing rural life. I did not notice then that these retirees were being prepared for a new working life in the rural areas and not for retirement from productive labour. This triggered my interest into looking at issues of ageing, land and retirement.

1.2 Introduction

In this paper I investigate the phenomenon of retired elderly Zimbabweans’ turn to the land upon retirement from urban-based employment in the context of the Fast Track Land Reform Programme in Zimbabwe (FTLRP) and a declining economy. I tease out their inclusion in the FTLRP, and the generational dynamics underpinning their motivations behind this land acquisition. The FTLRP has received a substantial amount of attention from scholars. However very little of this attention has proffered evidence of the elderly’s participation and benefit in comparison to other groups in Zimbabwe.

¹<http://www.thenational.ae/news/world/africa/zimbabwe-finds-little-rest-in-retirement> accessed 12 October 2013

I adopt Mannheim's (1952) generation approach in locating this group of the elderly as a cohort that grew up within the colonial structures of Zimbabwe. Placing this group back in historical time allows me to look at their lives and understand how and why land becomes meaningful to them as they age. I also base this on their performance of cultural labour through the construction of *musha* and farming in the rural areas following their retirement. The Mannheimian approach enables me to unpack how the specific meanings the elderly attribute to land are a historical product. In addition, the generational analysis shows how the elderly as a cohort experienced a similar set of political-economic developments. Furthermore how this experience too has contributed to the group's construction of meanings of land in relation to their current life stage. Drawing on Mannheim, I thus go on to argue that this cohort may be considered a 'generation' based on their going through similar life experiences. I also look at their life stages and how the meanings they attribute to land are not only produced historically but also related to a dominant social construction of the elderly that places a high social value on the practice of 'kumusha', the establishment of a 'rural home' and farming. Acknowledging that I cannot represent all the elderly in Zimbabwe and their practises in this short paper. I specify that my study is confined to the elderly who fall within the below mentioned criteria:

- 1) Retired from formal urban employment
- 2) Acquired their land through the Fast Track Land Reform Programme
- 3) Born in the rural areas but spent their adult lives in an urban setting
- 4) Were aged 60 and above

My study is based on qualitative research, using a relatively small purposive sample as commonly done in qualitative research. In my discussion of ageing I focus on the micro aspects of ageing that is individual ageing. Messkoub (1999:219) describes it as being related to normal retirement age, unfolding how retirement as a concept is socially constructed. Individual ageing is thus different from population ageing which is the increase in the proportion of the elderly within the total population (*ibid*). Linking this to my paper my conceptualisation of the construction of *musha* and the integration of work on rural change and ageing, cannot be done at a demographic level. Consequentially, care should be taken with generalising from the findings presented in this thesis.

1.3 Research Problem

The development discourse has been dominant in detailing what developing countries are not and rather what they should be (Escobar 1992). Furthermore paradigms such as the modernisation theory offer us a prescriptive description of what development entails from a western point of view. Through the five stages of growth that supposedly lead to development (Rostow 1960). This hegemonic view suggests that developing countries are in need of development and can only achieve it by following the western path. This path is characterised by trends such as urbanisation and shifting from agriculture to a highly industrialised state (*ibid*). Developing countries can thus be said to have

urbanized especially in the 1960s to the 1980s (Fay and Opal 2000). This urbanisation resulted in rural to urban migration among young adults in search of employment. The same can also be said for this now elderly group that they did join in the rural out migration wagon in their youth leading them to careers in the urban areas. Conversely this development narrative for them breaks when they turn back to the rural areas following their retirement from urban formal employment. This phenomenon can thus be interpreted as development gone wrong, and indeed the economic conditions in contemporary Zimbabwe provide ample evidence to substantiate such a claim.

However does this really mean that development has gone wrong? Or is this too much of an economic-determinist view of development? That being said perhaps it is important not to view these so called developing countries as needing development. Instead we should examine their local histories and lived experiences of development (Escobar 1992). Consequently this might cause us to arrive at a more nuanced understanding of phenomenon such as the one detailed in this study. In this paper I thus contextualise the break in the narrative and examine the possible influential factors that drive these elderly out of what is a seemingly a comfortable life in the urban areas into a life of farming. I unravel how factors such as the declining economy alluded to above and the political economy of the Fast Track Land Reform Programme are important in shaping the choices made by the elderly. However attributing all this to the declining Zimbabwean economy and the FTLRP may be overstating the argument, because I also noted that the elderly took pride in their return to the land and starting an agrarian livelihood. This raised the need to also examine the cultural significance of this return

1.4 Research Objective:

To investigate how political, economic and socio-cultural factors influence the return to the land and participation of the retired elderly in smallholder farming.

The main question which this research attempted to answer was: How is the return to the land by retired people and their participation in smallholder farming in Zimbabwe an influence of the political economy as well as of social and cultural factors.

To help me answer the main question I asked the following sub questions

1.4.1 Research Questions

- 1) To what extent did the elderly benefit from the Fast Track Land Reform Programme in Zimbabwe?
- 2) What are the factors influencing the nature of smallholder farming practiced by the elderly in Munyati Resettlement Area?
- 3) How does smallholder farming contribute to the lives of the elderly?

- 4) What meanings do the elderly attach to land and smallholder farming?

1.5 Linking Ageing and Rural Change in the Zimbabwean context

It is difficult to delve into why the elderly described above turned to land without proper comprehension of the issues of ageing and rural change in Zimbabwe. This section thus bridges the gap in knowledge between these two discourses. Issues to do with ageing and rural change are rarely discussed in the same vein, these two bodies of literature focus on two different subjects and use diverging approaches. Literature on rural change tends to look more into issues to do with the political economy such as Bernstein (2010:22) Four keys questions of the political economy namely Who gets what?, Who owns what? Who does what? and What do they do with the surplus? On the other hand ageing touches on a myriad of issues concerning the elderly however this study focuses on the social constructions of ageing rather than being restricted to the biological component. In this section I therefore discuss these two bodies providing an overview of the issues that they mainly focus on in the Zimbabwean context. I then also look at how ageing as a social construct aids or impedes the participation of the elderly in the rural transformation in Zimbabwe. I also look at how the elderly themselves as social actors determine their livelihoods as well as living out their cultural aspirations.

1.5.1 Ageing: an overview

Defining ageing in the African context is ambiguous as many societies define it in accordance to the shifting of roles that comes with physical change (Heslop and Gorman 2002). Age thus becomes a salient feature in many societies as it is mostly used in the allocation of these roles among members of society, creating a correlation between roles and age (Oppong 2006). These roles and definitions given to the elderly differ from society to society for example they can be regarded as repositories of knowledge in one society while considered as feeble in another (*ibid*). The elderly in developing countries are thus defined in accordance with their ability or inability to contribute to society as opined by Tout (1989). These meanings attributed to age have mostly been socially manufactured and are not a direct product of age. Vincent (2004) argues that ageing is a biologically based distinction which history and culture have over emphasized into social roles that the elderly have to subscribe to. Messkoub (1999:231) suggests that ageing stems from socially, culturally and historically determined concepts such as retirement. Retirement has been defined as a given social construct that people have to cope with by coming up with appropriate action plans as they work towards it (Ekerdt et al, 2000:4). The term retirement is itself a western concept and in actual practice it is not widespread in developing countries. This is because most people in developing countries are engaged in the informal and agricultural sectors where retirement is uncommon. This social construction of individual ageing can also have both negative

and positive impacts on the elderly. For example where they are undervalued and described as being reliant on their family and society this can result in their positive attributes being overlooked.

1.5.2 Ageing in Zimbabwe

In Zimbabwe the elderly are those who are aged 60 and older (H.A.I. 2013). They constitute 7 percent of the total population in Zimbabwe and most of them live in the rural areas (Census, 2012). Contemporary literature on ageing in Zimbabwe has mainly focused on issues such as lack of social security, demographic aspect of ageing, the role that the elderly play in developmental issues and their role in an HIV/AIDS era (Hungwe 2010:332).

There are approximately 12 million orphans in sub-Saharan Africa as a result of the HIV&AIDS pandemic, which has led to a premature death of many adults. Subsequently, many elderly have had to take up the burden of raising grandchildren following the early death of their adult children (Kautz et al. 2010). The survey also revealed that in Sub-Saharan countries the number of the elderly who have no support from adult children or live only with children under 10 was quite high estimating the figures in Zimbabwe to be between 89 400 to 140 700 (*ibid*). A relationship was also established between AIDS mortality and the number of older persons who live by themselves.

In contrast to these bleak images of old aged presented in much of the contemporary literature on the elderly in Sub-Saharan Africa, the construct of the elderly in Africa and traditional Zimbabwe has centred on them being treated with high regard and receiving support from their extended family in their old age. The elderly held various important roles within their families and communities such as those of advisor and educators as they were responsible for teaching the young cultural values (Nhongo 2004). In his book *The African Poor Ilife* (1987) discusses the role of extended family towards the care of the elderly in Africa. He, however also pointed out that the extended family had begun to show signs of disintegration during that time (*ibid*). This has certainly been true in Zimbabwe where the extended family has malfunctioned. A result of the ripple effects caused by the economic downfall which has also resulted in the out migration of adult children and in turn the inability to care for kin.

On the other hand we should be mindful of representations of the past in which all was well and with the elderly having little to worry about. Indeed, there may well be a tendency to romanticise the past that is out of tune with the historical lived experiences of the elderly. Alerting us to the importance of distinguishing between social constructions and lived experiences. Whilst, it is no doubt true that there was (and still is) a strong normative framework that constructs old age as a time of reverence this does not mean that this resembles all the elderly's actual lives. It is further noteworthy that social constructions are often gendered. This is also true for Zimbabwe where, the dominant construct of elderly is a highly masculine one. With older men accorded respect and decision making roles within the family and positions of authority such as chieftaincy as compared to women in their old age.

The lived experiences by many elderly people in contemporary Zimbabwe have forced many of them to continue to work into their old age in order for them to sustain their livelihoods. These lived experiences of old age however co-exist with social constructions of 'old age' revolving around a retreat from productive activities. This perceived retreat from the productive realm can also be said to be a product of ageism stereotyping and marginalization of the elderly. Which treats them as a homogeneous group (W.H.O. 2013). This is done through structures such as retirement which has been discussed above which often carries the perception of the elderly as no longer productive and valuable to their employers (*ibid*). In contrast many the elderly in developing countries are found within the agricultural sector where they work until they are no longer able while only a few retire from formal employment. I could not establish how many elderly retire from formal employment each year as statistics were not available.

In Zimbabwe the retirement age is 65 years, however it does not necessarily follow that upon reaching this age one completely withdraws from working. The elderly who work within the formal sector continue to work beyond the so called retirement years due to the minimal pension benefits that are available in developing countries (Messkoub 1999, Lasslet 1996). Thus the elderly can be seen as social actors who upon retirement find diverse ways of sustaining their livelihoods when they leave formal employment. This includes the taking up activities such as smallholder farming a strategy I examine in this paper. To be able to understand how the elderly fare in smallholder farming and land issues there is need to understand rural change in Zimbabwe by looking at the major issues that scholars on this subject in Zimbabwe discuss.

1.5.3 Rural Change in Zimbabwe

The face of rural Zimbabwe was transformed significantly following the attainment of independence in 1980. This transformation was a result of the land redistribution which was initiated by the new government (Palmer 1990:165). This idea of a possible redistribution of land had been a source of huge support from the rural masses (*ibid*). Who had themselves been greatly affected by the land displacements in the country before independence. Land redistribution had also been popular since the revolution had been strong in the rural areas hence the idea of repossession of land was attractive to these supporters (*ibid*). Even President Robert Mugabe had attested to the distribution of land after independence. Saying that the land question is what was at the core of why the liberation struggle had been fought (Palmer 1990). Upon the attainment of independence the rural people thus pushed to have land redistributed. The government then put in place the Land Reform Resettlement Programmes (LRRP-1) through which it sought to resettle 162 000 families (Chiremba and Masters 2003). Rural people were among the beneficiaries of the first efforts of this early land reform programme. As the LRRP-1 marked the beginning of land redistribution in Zimbabwe through the resettling of 72 000 families in communal areas on 3.5 million hectares of land (*ibid*). Thus marking the beginning of the land redistribution programmes.

This first redistribution programme was to be followed by two other programmes the largest of which occurred in the year 2000. This Fast Track Land

Reform Programme sparked great interest among researchers as they analysed the political context that surrounded it (Cliffe et al. 2011). Other scholars examined the structural changes, economic implications as well as the social outcomes of the process (Moyo 2011:939). Although the elderly and rural residents seem to have been among the beneficiaries, there are no studies that have systematically analysed how the elderly fared in the programme. In fact, the elderly are often absent from studies on rural change. On occasions such studies do employ a generational lens, which is however typically limited to youth leaving the countryside. Citing the implications of such movements on the rural areas and the future of smallholder farming in Zimbabwe (Muwi 2012).

1.6 Bringing Ageing and Rural Change Together

In reviewing the dynamics of the land reform programme scholars such as those cited above make no mention of age. An indication of the missing discussion on ageing as far as rural change and the Fast Track Land Reform Programme (FTLRP) are concerned.

This paper therefore attempts to engage these two bodies of literature in examining how the political economy, economy and social-cultural factors contribute to the experiences of the elderly in as far as FTLRP is concerned. I look at the elderly as social actors who take part in the culturally significant act of going *kumusha* where they establish themselves through smallholder farming. This is in contrast to the socially constructed concept of retirement. Also in contrast to what is suggested by the disengagement theory that the elderly withdraw themselves from engaging with other actors in society (Cummings and Henry 1961).

However I also bring out that in exercising their agency they act in accordance to the culturally constructed notion of the elderly in Zimbabwe whose perceived ideal is living in the rural areas. In this paper I describe going “*kumusha*” as a form of cultural work done by the elderly in Zimbabwe as they transition into retirement. Hampson (1985:42) suggests that during the colonial era the black elderly were expected to find economic and social security in the reserves following their retirement. The white government described the years spent in town by these elderly as an interlude (*ibid*). Andersson (2002) discusses the rural-urban link by migrants workers, Ferguson (1999) discusses the return to the village by retired mine workers in Zambia.

While the colonial government in Zimbabwe may have romanticised the notion of reserves and used it to justify giving little pensions to the black workers. The trait of going “*kumusha*” is identifiable in all the three descriptions, yet as a practice it is shaped by and appropriated for by very different reasons. Though examined in different contexts this trait is still present in Zimbabwe. I pose questions such as why is this practise still existent? and why is it important particularly among the older Zimbabweans?

1.7 Structure of the paper

This paper comprises of six chapters, this being the first one in which I have introduced the subject matter highlighting the use of a generational approach in the examination of the phenomenon identified. In this chapter I have also reviewed what literature on ageing and rural transformation in Zimbabwe discusses. Chapter two outlines the methodology I applied in the case study. It also looks at the research context and offers some of my reflections in my position as a researcher. Chapter three places the group of elderly people studied in this paper in two groups, first as a cohort then within a broader generation. The chapter brings out this group's views on land as shaped by their belonging to the same cohort and also generation. A description of the acquisition of land through the FTLRP is also given. Chapter four details smallholder farming as practised by these elderly along with the challenges they face. In chapter five I describe the cultural labour of going kumusha as done by the elderly people and the meanings that they attach to it also paying attention to its gendered nature. I conclude the paper in chapter six by bringing together the discussions raised in each chapter to synthesize and bring out the overall argument that the paper raises.

1.8 Conclusion

In this chapter I introduced the elusive concept of retirement as understood within the Zimbabwean context. In addition I also bring out the development narrative for the elderly in this study identifying the break therein and the turn to land through the FTLRP. I adopt Mannheim's generation approach in my study of the elderly in order to analyse their participation in the FTLRP. To also understand the meanings land has to them from a historical perspective and how political and economic developments have also influenced their narrative. I also give an overview on the discussions on ageing and rural change in Zimbabwe, bringing out how ageing is missing in the rural transformation discourse.

Chapter 2 Carrying out Social research during the Presidential elections of 2013 in Zimbabwe

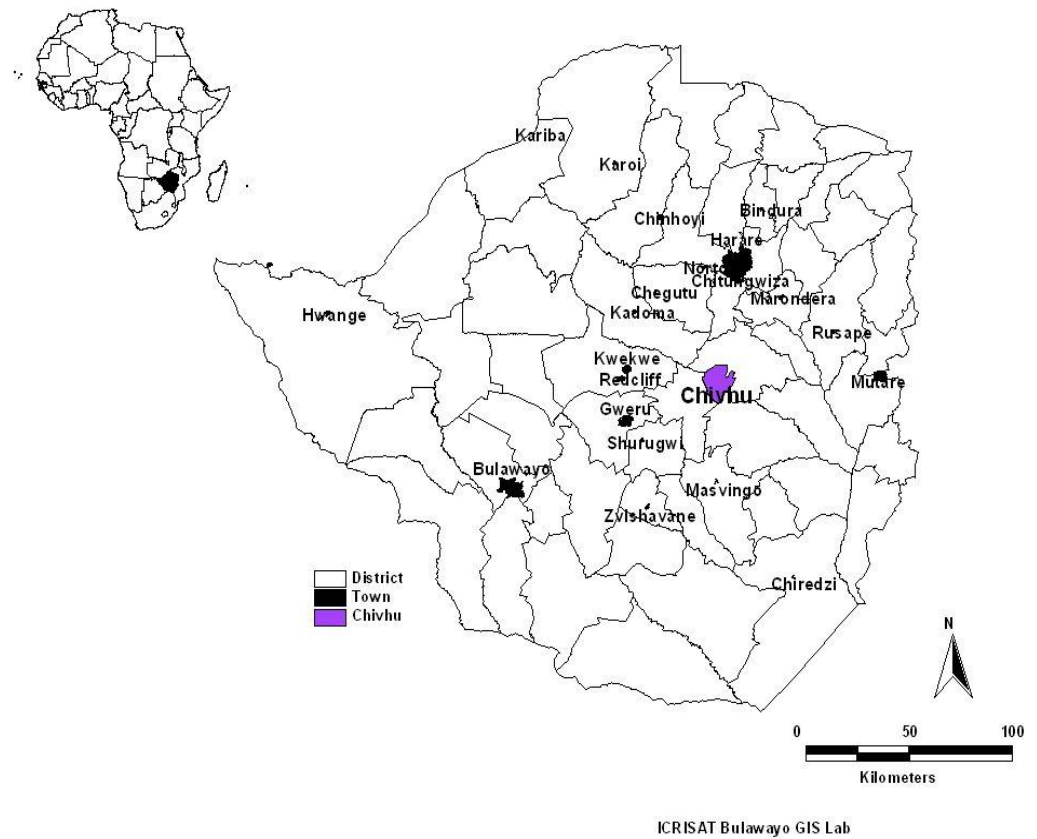
2.0 Introduction

In this chapter I outline the methodology I used in the study. I highlight that the research was a case study method which used qualitative tools namely: life narratives, focus group discussion and semi-structured interviews. I also explain why these methods were chosen. I also reflect on the research journey in an election context in Zimbabwe. I bring out my personal experience during the research process.

2.1 Background of Study Area

I conducted my study in Chivhu and Munyati Resettlement Area. A resettlement area is a place where people were relocated to following land redistribution. These two places are within Chikomba district, in Mashonaland East in Zimbabwe. Chivhu being 150km south of Harare the capital city of Zimbabwe. While Munyati Resettlement Area is 17km outside of Chivhu. The study area is located in Natural Region Three (iii which is an agro-ecological classification used in the country). Natural Region three is characterised by rainfall of between 500-700mm per annum, relatively high temperatures and also subject to seasonal drought (Mushunje 2005). This region is suitable for semi-intensive farming of livestock and crop production (Zinyama 1986:110).

Map 2.1 Zimbabwe map indicating study area



Source:(ICRISAT Bulawayo, 2013)

2.2 The political scene

Here I give a description of the political environment in which I conducted my field work and how this impacted on my work and influenced some of the decisions I made regarding my sample and data collection tools. Reflecting on this I realise how collection of data is difficult to separate from political realities see also (Abbott 2007:213).

For the past five years Zimbabwe has been under a Government of National Unity (GNU²). This was the first ever coalition between opposition parties in the country making the 2013 elections equally important. These elections were also to be the first ones following the 2008 elections that were marred by violence. The thought of conducting research in an election context brought some discomfort as recollection of the 2008 events came to mind. Also considering that issues to do with land are politically sensitive in Zimbabwe.

² GNU was comprised of the ZANU PF party and the MDC-T party following the 2008 elections

The 2013 harmonised Presidential and Parliamentary elections were set for the 31st of July 2013, as a result my data collection was thus to be done in the midst of political activities such as political campaigns. The atmosphere was calm, with everyone appearing to be about their day to day business. However, it was close to impossible to access any of my respondents. As many of the elderly were attending political campaigns, though these campaigns are attended by those who are willing there is an unwritten rule that most rural people attend. This is because major campaigning is done in the rural areas that are believed to be the strongholds for ZANU (PF). As a result the elderly tend to attend out of fear of being subjected to intimidation. This also made the elderly reluctant to discuss issues on land because of fear.

2.2.1 Research design and Data collection

My research was a case study approach of Munyati Resettlement Area. I chose a case study because it allows for a comprehensive description and analysis of a single situation or case (O'leary 2012:174). Since I was looking at a particular group a case study approach was suitable for me to be able to describe this group in detail. I used qualitative research methods in a triangulated way because use of several techniques allows for great description of the subject matter. I also used these qualitative methods because they are used in the studying of subjects on which very little information is known (Appleton 1995:993). Issues pertaining to pensioners in Zimbabwe are under researched more so the link between the FTLRP and the elderly is seldom examined. Hence my choice to use these methods which would enable me to get as much data as I could. The qualitative methods I used allowed for retrospection by the elderly as I needed to understand how past events were tied to the present.

Choosing my sample

The criteria for the type of sample led me to Munyati Resettlement Area. I used my father (70) as a key informant because he knew the area, and the elderly residing in the area better than I did. I used snowballing as a way of identifying my respondents. Snowballing sampling refers to a method of sampling that obtains its respondents through referrals (Biernacki and Waldorf, 1981:141). I chose snowballing because of the political environment I was researching in. Some of these the elderly had been subjected to harassment and beatings in the 2008 elections; making them reluctant to talk to people they did not know. Through snowballing I accessed elderly people who were willing to participate. I did realise that using snowballing had the downside of leading to a particular sample but my sample was already particular as outlined below:

- 1) Retired from formal urban employment
- 2) Acquired their land through the Fast Track Land Reform Programme
- 3) Spent their adult lives in an urban setting
- 4) Were aged 60 and above

Since I was not looking at all elderly people I needed to be referred to find those who fit in the above description. Due to the purposive approach to sampling the majority of the rural elderly were excluded from the research, as well as other elderly who would not fit the above criteria. Snowballing suited my research also because through referrals I was able to go to the elderly's farms or their urban homes depending on where they would be. However in

some cases I could not find them as they would have gone to attend political rallies. Through snowballing I identified twenty elderly people aged 60 and above.

Data collection

For my data collection I used life histories, semi-structured interviews and a focus group discussion. I conducted all of my interviews in Shona which is the main language spoken in the study area. I then transcribed these interviews and life histories into English to enable me to start my analysis. For the analysis of my raw data I borrowed the steps outlined by O'leary (2012:263) of organizing the data and then searching for meanings using a thematic analysis. Using these I would then look at the individual responses for data on these themes and would compile it accordingly. I used themes which were in line with my objectives; I also looked at particular words that were repeated during the interviews that were of cultural importance, words like *musha*. Words can be analysed through their being used over and over as this may show the importance of something from a cultural point of view (O'leary 2012). I used some Shona words and phrases in my write up without translating them for emphasis of the respondents' points and also to capture perceptions in the words of respondents. As I could not find English words that would bring their points in the same manner as the native language. In the table below I present the methods used.

Table 1 Methods used for data collection as well as the number, age and gender of respondents

Method	Number of participants	Age range	Gender composition
Life history	5	66-84	3 males;2 females;
Semi-structured interviews	15	60-75	12 males; 3 females
FGD	6	54- 75	6 females

Source: (Field notes, July 2013)

2.2.2. Life Histories

In chapter one I alluded to the use of Mannheim's concept of generation. By doing this I sought to obtain views and meanings of land this required the elderly to relive some of their experiences in colonial times and after. It also required understanding their life course. As such life histories were the appropriate tool as they allow for retrospection as well as looking at the present. Telling their life histories allowed me to understand how their views had been shaped by both the past and the present. Making this method a suitable data collection tool. Life Histories refer to a person's total experience as told by themselves and this can be oral and autobiographical narratives (Bertaux and Kohli 1984:217). For these elderly people their decisions to acquire land and to commute in order to engage in farming activities were based on past experiences during their life course that led them to value land.

2.2.3. Semi-structured interviews

I conducted semi-structured interviews with 15 of my respondents and one organisation official. I decided to use this type of interview method because it allowed me to probe and explore further into what the elderly said. Semi-structured interviews permitted exploration of the elderly's life course and their experiences. Interview guides for the semi-structured interviews allowed me to keep in check with what I wanted to ask without restricting me. The semi-structured interview is an interview which can begin with a set of questions as guidelines(O'leary 2012:195) .The researcher is able to deviate from the set of questions when using the semi- structured interview in order to follow the direction in which the interview is taking (*ibid*).

2.2 .4 Focus group discussions

I conducted one focus group discussion which comprised of 6 women. I chose to conduct a focus group with women only because as cited at the beginning of this chapter I was carrying out my research during an election period. Public gatherings during election periods are treated with suspicion as most activities that take place involving the public during this time are political and mostly include men. Conducting the FGD with women made it less sensitive not to say that women are not politically active. I conducted the discussion at a local church where most members were elderly. Through this group I then sought to find out women's views with respect to land, masha and farming. The elderly women in the group were between 54 and 75 years old. The group was mixed with one of the women being formally employed, while three were retired and two had never been formally employed. I used a focus group discussion because it allowed for an unrestricted discussion with the women. According to (O'leary 2012:196) focus groups enable detailed discussion. Having a women only group allowed for their independent views to be heard.

Figure 1 Women participants in the focus group discussion



Source: (Field work, July 2013)

In addition to the above described data collection tools I also used secondary methods. I did this by using:

- Journal Articles on gerontology, agrarian transformation, rural transformation, peasant studies among others
- Books
- Websites

2.2.5. Ethical considerations

I assigned pseudonyms to my respondents in order to protect their identities. Some of them would ask where I was taking the information they were giving me despite my having explained. I attributed the fear to the election campaigns that were taking place in the area causing some uneasiness among the respondents. I thus decided to hide their identities in order for them to feel secure. The respondents were chosen on their full consent, availability and willingness to participate. Consent was also sought from the local municipality to carry out the research within the area. Recording of interviews was only done for those who had given me their consent to record, others cited being uncomfortable being recorded. I thus respected their wishes as well.

2.2.6 My positionality as a researcher

Researching on an issue that involved the elderly in the African context as a young woman reminded me some of the values that hold us together. Respect was of utter most importance and this I had to apply in different ways such as having tea with plain white rice with one of the widows, in our tradition it can be viewed as disrespectful to turn down an elderly person's offer. Again my position restricted me from asking certain questions which would

have made me come across as disrespectful such as asking one elderly woman if she was divorced or never been married. There was a generational dimension between them and I which I was reminded of in some of their responses for example the quote below from the focus group discussions.

“Very few in your generation are interested in farming; you are only interested in your jobs and degrees”, (65 year old female, FGD, August 2013)

Also as a youth and a young woman I had to be careful on how my research would be interpreted by others around me. Youth are often used by political parties during election time. In some cases youth participate in the inciting of violence hence at a personal level I did not want my data collection to be perceived as such. With all this I conducted my research bearing in mind that the context of my research was not ‘normal’ and as such my decisions on how to collect data had to take this into cognisance.

2.2.7 Scope and Limitations of the study

Scope

The research offers insight into the lives of retired elderly who turn to farming, shedding light on the under researched lives of the elderly in Zimbabwe. Additionally it brings forth a discussion that has not been presented before on the elderly and the FTLRP in Zimbabwe. Through this study I intend to contribute to both the ageing and rural change scholarship in Zimbabwe. I wish to bring out that the elderly do positively and actively participate in the social and economic arenas despite not receiving much attention resulting in their being co-opted into the rural change literature.

Limitations

The study sought to identify respondents who were practising farming. This was done amidst the political context and the political campaigns which also sought the attention and presence of the elderly. This meant being unable to conduct interviews at appointed times and going back and forth between the farms in search of respondents. This was challenging also considering the limited time frame in which I had to carry out the data collection in. I thus had to be aware of where and when political campaigns would be taking place in the area so that I would be able to at least predict the chances finding respondents. This was not always possible and so at times I would not find the respondents. I had also intended to interview representatives from organisations that work with the elderly in the area, however during field work I discovered that in Chivhu only the Ministry of Social Welfare assisted them. Discovering that most Non-governmental organisations that worked in the area were mainly concerned with Orphans and Vulnerable Children was also something that I considered worthy of observation as it meant that the elderly’s needs were not being catered for. A lot of NGOs have put much of their focus on children marginalizing the elderly in the process. The limitation of not finding organisations that work with the elderly therefore turns into a possible issue for exploration to ascertain why the elderly have not been prioritised.

2.3 Conclusion

In this chapter I offered a background of the study area and discussed the research methods that were employed in this research. I went on to give reasons for the choice of data collection methods. I also gave insight into the political environment in which the study was conducted outlining how this affected the research.

Chapter 3: A Generation's lens on land: Views and Analysis of Land, The Fast Track Land Reform Programme

3.0 Introduction

Over the past decade Zimbabwe has gone through a major land reform programme that transformed the rural sphere. Within the same decade the country also experienced a grave economic decline. These events have impacted on the elderly's lives both in the negative and positive. This chapter thus offers a generational perspective on the interplay of the political economy, economic decline and ageing in Zimbabwe. To do this the chapter brings into discussion the views on land by the elderly, their participation and benefit from the programme. The chapter also engages current debates on land reform that discuss beneficiaries of the FTLRP elucidating on their inclination towards a class based approach analysis. Consequently marginalising the issue of age and by so doing failing to capture the elderly's participation or lack of it in the FTLRP. Lastly the chapter contextualises the type of farming practised by these older beneficiaries bringing out the different dynamics of the FTLRP.

3.1 The elderly cohort within a generation

Situating the elderly in Zimbabwe

For this paper I was unable to get statistics which clearly state how many the elderly lived in the rural and urban areas respectively. However as already mentioned in Chapter 1, the elderly in Zimbabwe constitute 7 % of the total population with many of them situated in the rural areas (Census, 2012). In Zimbabwe the elderly like their counterparts in other African countries have been regarded as susceptible to poverty due to their decreased capacity to generate income (Heslop and Gorman 2002). This vulnerability in Zimbabwe is worsened by a lack of adequate social protection programmes. That being said it is difficult to generalise the severity of poverty among the elderly in Zimbabwe as there is no adequate data that separates their poverty from that of other population groups (*ibid*).

The sample in my study exhibits unique characteristics that set them apart from other elderly in Zimbabwe. This is because these elderly acquired their land through the Fast Track Land Reform Programme just before and not long after they retired from formal employment. The FTLRP thus coincided with their retirement at the turn of the millennium when the Zimbabwean economy was declining and this retiring generation realised that their pensions and sav-

ings were lost. Land acquisition³ was therefore a way of cushioning themselves from this harsh economic reality. I offer two examples that illustrate the intersecting of personal events in the elderly's personal lives and some of the significant events that occurred in Zimbabwe. Gogo Shereni retired from her teaching job in 1999, she acquired her land in 2001, two years after her retirement. On the other hand Mr. Tauzeni retired from his job as a policeman in 2001, the year when the land reform programme started. He then acquired his land in 2003. These examples give us an insight into the events which occurred in the elderly's lives. Setting them apart from other the elderly whose lives are not significantly linked to the FTLRP (see also appendix I).

In addition to acquiring land around the same period these elderly also shared other characteristics such as having worked for the government. Sixteen of the respondents were former government employees in various ministries such as the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, Ministry of Land and Agriculture and Ministry of Health and Child Welfare. Three of the respondents had worked in the private sector (banking sector) while one in a parastatal. This skewed distribution of high government employment is elucidatory of the nature of the economy and the civil service sector during the time which this cohort entered the job market. Fallon and Lucas (1991) give us an idea of the economy during this time by saying that the Zimbabwean economy grew a little during the period 1979 to 1982 and employment expanded around 1984.

However Makina (2010) reminds us that this growth was perhaps short lived as by the late 1990s the economy was beginning to show signs of decline following the implementation of the Structural Adjustment programmes in 1991. This was also a time when this cohort was beginning to think about their retirement having enjoyed a stable economy and some job security through most of their adult years. Again this delineates them from other elderly in Zimbabwe who never left the rural scene thus never experiencing working in the urban areas. Mr. Savhieri one of the respondents cited that he retired in 1995 a time when the economy had not severely deteriorated. Having worked in the private sector he managed to buy his farm which also happens to be the largest in terms of hectorage among the respondents. By so doing Mr. Savhieri used income from his formal employment to prepare for old age in the rural areas. His purchase of land brings out how the elderly in the Shona culture value land perceiving it as a trustworthy investment less likely to fail than other projects or investments. The majority of the elderly retired around the period 1999 to 2007. Looking into the trends of economic decline in Zimbabwe this is also around the time when the economic crisis was worsening. Which resulted in these elderly not being able to invest in assets such as large farms like Mr. Savhieri's.

³ Acquisition of land in this paper refers to the allocation that was done during the FTLRP. There appears to be no evidence which suggests that the land obtained during this period was paid for hence acquisition here does not refer to monetary terms. Land which was obtained through monetary exchange shall be referred to as purchased land.

The above events situate the elderly in my study in certain contexts in which they experienced similar events. Such as being born during the colonial era and experiencing events such as the Second Chimurenga which occurred in 1965 (Palmer 1990). Furthermore they were likely to have been in their late teenage years during this war. Causing them to witness and experience the injustices that were suffered during that time. One major such injustice being the unequal distribution of land between black and white people. In view of this I use Mannheim's (1952) generation approach to place them within a cohort for having been born within the same period. I also go further to locate them in the same generational location because according to Mannheim...

A generation is composed of a cohort that resembles a certain type of identity and shares a social historical process... Members of a generation are "similarly located" first of all in so far as they are all exposed to the same phase of collective process... a similar location is created by being in a position to experience the same events (Mannheim 1952:170,176).

The generation in my study also lived under the legal frameworks that were introduced by white people such as the Land Apportionment Act of 1930⁴. An act that enforced segregation, separating areas where whites could own land from where blacks could live. As a result of this Act many black Zimbabweans were moved to Tribal Trust Lands⁵ where land was scarce and barely arable. While white farmers possessed 42 % of Zimbabwe's land (Palmer 1990). One of the respondents Mr Madamombe recalled how his parents owned very little land in the communal areas he said "*I think my parents had about 2 acres of land*", (67 year old male, semi-structured interview, July 2013). Another respondent Mr. Togarepi said that before his parents moved to Wiltshire farms after independence they lived in the communal areas of Chivi, where they had about 5 acres of land. Mr Togarepi added that the land did not produce much as it was "*rukangarabwe*" rocky soil.

I thus examine how belonging to a generation that experienced such inequalities as well as the struggle has shaped their views towards land. Their memories of the inequalities reveal how much land was and is still revered in Zimbabwe. More so by the elderly who lived through the injustices of colonialism. One of the respondents also describes how he had seen farmers prosper due to farming "*I worked with farmers and I saw how successful they were*", (72 year old male life narrative, July 2013), realising what could be achieved through land and aspired to also do the same. This also shows that land was associated with the accumulation of wealth.

⁴ The Land Apportionment Act of 1930 divided the country's land into three areas along tribes, zones where whites, Shona and Ndebele could own land. This Act resulted in some families being displaced from land that they had owned for generations.

⁵ Tribal Trust Lands came to be as a result of the Tribal Trust Land Act (TTLA) of 1967 which transferred authority over land allocation from District Commissioners to Traditional Leaders this was mainly done in order to avoid having to deal with the Africans' (black Zimbabweans were referred to as Africans) issues over land shortages but rather to have the traditional leaders deal with these issues.

Moore (1993) states that past occurrences with regards to the access of land and exclusion from resources shape the meanings as well as the cultural understanding of rights of property. Contextualising this thinking by Moore to these elderly in Munyati Resettlement helps in the understanding of how this cohort that I studied used their social memories to construct what they would have wanted to be the ideal in their past into their present. One of the respondents who had also been a war veteran highlighted how he had wanted to acquire land because he had fought for it. He brings out how exclusion from land and his participation in the war have shaped his understanding that the rightful owners of the land were the black people, he said

“Ini ndaida munda nekuti ndakaurwira, vachena vakanga vakati dzvanyirira minda yemadzitateguru edu saka isu taijanira kuzoimwana, ndosaka ndakada kumwana minda padzakange dzopihwa”(84 year old male, Life Narrative, July 2013). Translated he said I wanted land because I fought for it, we had been oppressed for a long time, our ancestors were deprived of this land thats why I wanted to get it.

The historical situation in Zimbabwe had an underlying effect in the land acquisition by the elderly as many of them gave narrations of growing up in the land deprived communal areas.

3.2 Understanding the process of land acquisition

Having understood this group of elderly as to how they as a cohort have experienced Zimbabwe prior to the Fast Track Land Reform Programme (FTLRP). It is also important to understand the FTLRP itself through the description that has been offered by scholars as well as how the elderly themselves describe how they acquired land. This contributes in comprehending how these urban elderly benefitted from the whole process and their experiences in this whole transformation as these have not been captured by researchers on agrarian transformation in Zimbabwe.

Zimbabwe has undergone three land reform programmes since 1984 as the Government of Zimbabwe (GoZ) strived to correct the unequal distribution of land. The first one being from the period of 1984 to 1990, the second from 1990 to 1999 and the third in 2000 (Sachikonye 2003:227). According to (Palmer 1990, Zibo 2012) 42 % of Zimbabwe’s land in 1984 was owned by white farmers. The Government of Zimbabwe (GoZ) decided to resettle 162 000 black families through the Land Reform Resettlement Programme phase 1 (LRRP-1) (Cliffe et al. 2011:911). However by 1989 less than half of the intended beneficiaries had been resettled. The government then put in place the Land Acquisition Act in the 1990s (*ibid*). As the process of redistribution of land was proving to be slow the GoZ decided to hold an International Donors Conference in June of 1998 (*ibid*). The members to the conference agreed to the programme of land redistribution with member countries such as the US, Sweden, Norway and The Netherlands promising to provide technical assistance. However the United Kingdom which was the major sponsor due to its colonial history with Zimbabwe did not follow through with the funding for

the programme. In the mean time war veterans were becoming restless due to the slow progress.

Upon realising that the UK was not forthcoming with funding for the programme the GoZ in 2000 crafted a new constitution to support land acquisition. The people of Zimbabwe declined the constitution but the GoZ went on to amend the Land Acquisition Act. The GoZ inserted a clause on acquiring land without compensation marking the birth of the third land reform programme (*ibid*). Implementation of the Land Reform Programme was characterised by invasions, chaos and violence that was spearheaded by war veterans, while in some parts of the country the process contained some administrative aspects (*ibid*). However different scholars have come up with different analysis pertaining to the beneficiaries of the programme. Researchers such as Moyo (2000) , Cousins (2006) among others argue that land was issued to the semi-proletariat while Marongwe (2011:1070) and Hammor and Raftopoulos (2003) argue that land was allocated according to which political party one supported with those who support the opposition being left out. Scoones et al (2013) argues that the “ordinary” Zimbabwean benefitted from the process. Moyo (2011) describes those beneficiaries of the land reform as being a wide range of blacks such as the non-landed poor, land-short farmers, landless agricultural workers, poor urban workers, unemployed middle class, entrepreneurs and political elites.

Many of these scholars present a class based analysis of the beneficiaries of land reform. While Deininger et al (2004) presents an age dimension citing that the criteria for qualifying to acquire land was that one had to be between the ages of 22-55. In addition one had to fit into the following criteria: they had to be refugees, displaced by war, urban refugees, former inhabitants of protected villages, landless or near landless and small scale farmers who did not have enough land to sustain themselves and the elites and ZANU PF supporters (*ibid*). He does not however proffer an explanation for the given age ranges though his argument suggests that those above 55 years were excluded. This exclusion of the elderly suggests the social construction of the elderly as being unproductive thus they were regarded as not being worthwhile beneficiaries of land. In contrast to Deininger et al (2004) other literature is silent on the issue of age. For example Marongwe (2011:1076) appears to be age blind in his analysis of who benefitted as he lists recipients who are above the age of 55 years. However he focuses more on categorising these beneficiaries according to occupation and political links than according to age (*ibid*).

An analysis of the discussion above reveals that the issue of age has not been given much attention. Instead scholars categorised the beneficiaries into classes for example elites, poor urban workers and the land less dwelling mostly on the class notion of beneficiaries and less on the age. There however seems to be some sort of consensus that the majority of beneficiaries were ‘ordinary’ Zimbabweans (Marongwe 2011) . Cliffe et al (2011) concludes by saying that different scholars classify the beneficiaries of land in so many different ways, making it hard to compare.

Having examined the distribution process from a scholarly point of view I also looked at the narration given by a key informant on the allocation of land

in Munyati Resettlement Area: He narrated how they had benefitted during the Jambanja⁶ period. Describing the land acquisition as follows:

“There were two major resettlement programmes in the Munyati area. The first one, started towards the end of the 1990s, it was more peaceful and orderly than the 'Jambanja' land reform programme which started in 2000. Under the first scheme all councilors within Chikomba District, in which the Munyati area falls, were asked to submit names of people who wanted to be allocated land. There was no criterion that was followed; anyone with an interest in the land could register with their local councilor. The names were then forwarded to a committee made up of most government departments, such as AGRITEX (Agriculture Research and Extension) Department of Youth, Sport and Culture, Natural Resources Board (now Environmental Management Agency) and other government departments. The government would then identify a farm on which the people who had applied for land could be resettled. Agritex would then peg the farm, subdividing it into plots. The names of those who would have applied for land would then be put into a hat and randomly picked and allocated to specific plots. (75 year old male, July 2013)

The two discussions offered above assist in comprehending the position of the elderly within the FTLRP. However it should be noted that this paper’s primary focus was not to establish the beneficiary status of all the elderly in Zimbabwe. Rather to position this particular case study of the elderly within the FTLRP.

3.3 Beneficiaries of the FTLRP

Table 2 Presents respondents in the study stating their demographic characteristics, land holding and the channel through which they acquired their land

Name	Age	Gender	Marital Status	Farm Size	Type of Acquisition
Mr. Togarepi	72	Male	Married	49 hectares	FTLRP
Mr. Makiwa	66	Male	Married	144 hectares	FTLRP
Mr. Madamombe	67	Male	Married	45 hectares	FTLRP
Mr. Zvaita	63	Male	Married	40 hectares	FTLRP
Mr. Savhieri	79	Male	Married	7.5 hectares and 1900 hectares ranch	Private purchase
Mr. Ncube	75	Male	Married	49 hectares	FTLRP

⁶ Jambanja is a Shona word that means violence/chaos which was used to refer to the chaos and violence which accompanied the early land occupation which occurred in 2000 when war veterans invaded white occupied farms. The farmers in this research however obtained their land through the formal land redistribution that occurred after the chaotic period of land invasion.

Mr. Mudimu	67	Male	Married	45 hectares	FTLRP
Mr. Gumbo	65	Male	Married	49 hectares	FTLRP
Mr. Tauzeni	70	Male	Married	46 hectares	FTLRP
Mr. Dzepasi	69	Male	Married	49 hectares	FTLRP
Mr. Farisai	66	Male	Married	45 hectares	FTLRP
Mr. Gaza	75	Male	Married	49 hectares	FTLRP
Mr. Matambo	73	Male	Married	46 hectares	FTLRP
Mr. Garisai	64	Male	Married	49 hectares	FTLRP
Mrs. Saru	60	Female	Widow	45 hectares	FTLRP
Gogo Sando	68	Female	Widow	40 hectares	FTLRP
Mrs. Mhizha	58	Female	Widow	1600 hectares	Private purchase
Gogo Shereni	71	Female	Widow	30 hectares	FTLRP
Mai Magumbo	68	Female	Widow	49 hectares	FTLRP
Mr. Moyo	84	Male	Widower	30 hectares	FTLRP

Source: (Field notes, July 2013)

As shown in Table 3.3 above the majority of land owners in my sample are men, (14 of them were married), while five were women who also happen to be widows and one widower. These respondents were also the heads of households.

3.4 New land, “new farmers”

Land redistribution in Zimbabwe gave birth to all sorts of “new farmers”, including these older farmers which I focus on, whose methods of managing land vary across Zimbabwe. Some of these ‘new farmers’ have been termed “remote control farmers”⁷ or “mobile farmers” (Scoones et al. 2011)⁸. The elderly in my study are also part of this new wave of farmers as 15 out of the 20 who participated in the study did not permanently live on their farms but commuted between their homes in Chivhu and their farms. However, I posit that it would be wrong to equate my sample of older ‘mobile farmers’ with the other mobile ‘new farmers’ generated by land reform programmes. Doing so would obfuscate the generational dynamics leading my sample of ‘new farmers’

⁷ Remote control farmers is a phrase that arose in Zimbabwe during the Fast Track Land Reform Programme to refer to those farmers who had benefitted land but were seldom on their newly acquired farms as they managed the farming activities from urban areas.

⁸ The term mobile farmers has also been used to describe farmers who manage the activities on their farms via cell phones.

to be mobile, which are distinct from those factors pushing the rest of the ‘new farmers’ into forms of mobile farming.

Chaumba et al (2003:593) identifies similar type of farmers in Chiredzi whom he terms “weekend farmers” however these are younger than the elderly in my sample. He describes how these salaried settlers visit their plots during the weekends and how their livestock is looked after by herd boys during the week (*ibid*). The difference with Chaumba et al’s study is that it identifies beneficiaries who are younger as compared to the older farmers in my study. These younger farmers are motivated by the potential that the acquisition of land has with regards to them having diverse livelihoods in addition to their full and part time jobs. Land for these young farmers is a way of increasing their income and establishing new markets for their wares (*ibid*). They are not concerned about the proximity of their newly acquired land with regards to their villages of origin which they do still refer to as home (kumusha).

In contrast, the elderly farmers in my research applied for land near their original home areas applying what Chaumba et al (2003) refers to as the restitution discourse whereby individuals return to land that has particular meaning to them. A look at the two different groups of farmers outlined above offers us different generational motivations for engaging in farming. The younger generation still seeks to increase their income hence their decisions are more economic driven than socio-culturally inclined. While for the elderly the Mannheim’s generation approach becomes ideal in describing them. As they are guided by the historical value of land as a result of the struggle they experienced in their youth.

This somewhat migratory type of farming being practised by these new farmers in Zimbabwe is however not peculiar to Zimbabwe only. It has also been identified as being practised in other African countries such as Ghana by cocoa farmers (Hill 1997:1). The cocoa farmers travel to and from their ancestral villages as they grow cocoa and use the income to build homes in their original villages (*ibid*). As they age and have acquired sizeable assets these ageing cocoa farmers return to their villages, this transition according to them is said to mark the beginning of “adulthood”. This is in the sense that they are given positions of authority within the clan because of the wealth they would have managed to accumulate during their years of growing cocoa (Stucki 1992:367) . Like the ageing cocoa farmers the older farmers in this research’s entry into commuter farming is also a transition as they enter into retirement and land acquisition enables them to sustain themselves during this new phase in their lives.

3.5 Drivers of mobile farming among the urban elderly new farmers

The practise of commuter farming in this study needs to be understood in its context, examining why it is practised. For the elderly in this research this decision has them linking the rural and the urban spheres. When the Zimbabwean economy declined it wiped out these elderly’s savings resulting in them having to find alternative means of earning an income and sustaining their livelihoods. The acquisition of land hence appeared to be a way of ensuring that their live-

lihoods were safe. As they were already living in town they chose to commute from their town homes to the farms hence commuter farming. However the macro- economic conditions in the country have prevented these farmers from putting in place any infrastructure on their farms.

Having been offered land which was former paddocks no infrastructure was in place on these new farms. These farmers therefore had to start from scratch providing infrastructure for their needs such as houses, sources of water, toilets, and kraals. These developments required a lot of capital which the farmers did not have. As opined by Scoones et al (2010), these new farmers started off from nothing, clearing the former grazing lands. However to circumvent the challenges the farmers in this research decided to engage in farming while still based in the urban areas. Seasonally migrating to their farms where they have in place temporary structures to shelter them. As one of the respondents said:

“I can’t say I migrated to the farm because there is only a pole and dagga⁹ house so I have nowhere to put my property” (72 year old male Life Narrative, July 2013).

While he says that he only has a pole and dagga house on his farm he still considered his farm a “musha”. A few of these farmers are developing their farms for example Mr. Madamombe who acquired his land in 2001 indicated that he was planning to have a borehole drilled this year estimating the costs of the borehole at US\$2600.

However for most of them there is a reluctance to put in place permanent infrastructure. This is brought about by their not having title deeds to the land, as they have usufructuary rights meaning that land cannot be inherited upon the death of the land holder (Goebel 1999:80). These usufructuary rights have thus been inhibitive to these farmers’ development prospects. These farmers fear the repossession of their land by the state as there have been some cases in the country where land has been reposessed from beneficiaries. For example the Nuanetsi Ranch case where beneficiaries of the FTLRP are being displaced to pave way for the Nuanetsi Ranch Bio-diesel project (Mujere and Dombo 2011:11). Such uncertainties have seen the farmers reluctant to leave the creature comfort of their urban homes but rather continue practising commuter farming. In contrast younger farmers are not deterred by the absence of title deeds as they look at the prospects of what they can get from developing their farms.

Usufructuary rights have not only been inhibitive to men but women as well as they disadvantaged them as far as issues of land ownership are concerned. This is a result of prohibitive laws such as The Communal Lands Act of 1982 and The Traditional Leaders Act of 2000. According to these laws the authority to allocate land is held by Rural District councils, however in actual practise it is the traditional leaders who continue to allocate land in communal areas

⁹ A pole and dagga house refers to huts built using mud and poles, these structures were found in rural areas and also emerged in the resettlement areas as new farmers put up temporary structures to shelter them during the rainy season when they will be on their farms.

(Byers et al. 2001). This arrangement disadvantages women because traditionally men are regarded as being heads of households and as such tend to be allocated land over women. This scenario was also true for the married women that I interviewed in my research as they indicated that land was registered in their husbands' names. However women are not a homogenous group hence the access to land for married women is different to that of women who are head of households (*ibid*). Only a fifth of women do have rights of ownership and access over land as a result of the FTLRP most of them being head of households (Mutopo 2011:1028). Women head of households in my research are among those women who are heads of households who benefitted from the programme.

Figure 2 Mud hut and grass thatched granary (structures found on the FTLRP farms)



Source: (Fieldwork, July 2013)

In the absence of title deeds that guarantee land ownership, a challenging economy and lack of infrastructure there is little incentive for these the elderly to completely cut the ties that bind the rural and urban spheres. As Manzo (2005:76) explains that many places play a role in the building of who one is. For these farmers town as a place itself contributes to who they are in a way that this “new farm” in the rural setup does not and vice versa.

3.6 Conclusion

The chapter described how views on land for this group have been shaped by their colonial experiences. The chapter also narrated the process of land acqui-

sition as well as contextualisation of the type of farming practised by these elderly farmers.

Chapter 4 The Practising of Smallholder Farming and challenges faced by the elderly farmers

4.0 Introduction

In this chapter I discuss smallholder farming as practised by the older farmers in Munyati Resettlement Area. Looking at the nature of the farming they practise and how they sustain it. Lastly I present the challenges they face as they practise their farming activities and in their daily lives.

4.1 Smallholder farming as practised by the elderly in Munyati Resettlement Area

Chambers and Conway (1992) define livelihoods as consisting of different facets namely: people, their capabilities and their means of living that is assets and income. The making of a livelihood is dependent on a variety of resources that are available to an individual such as land. Livelihoods can also transcend beyond boundaries for example rural and urban (Muruviwa 2011). However as stressed by Bebbington (1999:2023) it is on the access of these resources that the making of a livelihood hinges.

The elderly in this study practise smallholder farming as a livelihood strategy in an effort to supplement their pensions. Food and Agriculture Organisation refers to smallholder farming as being farmers that lack adequate resources (FAO, 2004). Smallholder farming varies from country to country as it is mostly determined by farmers' access to resources such as finance and markets among other factors (*ibid*).

The farmers in this study exude economic differences as their access to finances varies. In the previous chapter I discussed mobile farming as practised by these farmers showing how they constantly link the urban and rural areas. Linking these two spaces is not done at par with some of the farmers having their own means of transport which makes their farming efforts easier while others have to walk to their farms. Such scenarios are also telling signs about the access of other resources and nature of their smallholder farming.

The farmers in this study grow crops such as maize, beans, groundnuts and they also rear livestock. The crops that they grow offer them very little returns even after selling for example to the Grain Marketing Board (GMB) which buys the maize at US\$387.86 per tonne¹⁰. That being said small holder farming has proved to be a better livelihood option for them in comparison to the small pensions they receive that range between US\$60-US\$100 per month (NSSA¹¹, 2012). In order to sustain their farming activities they sell livestock,

¹⁰ <http://allafrica.com/stories/201308021156.html>

¹¹ In Zimbabwe the National Social Security Authority (NSSA), constituted and established in terms of the NSSA Act of 1989, Chapter 17: 04, is the statutory

which is one of the major ways that they use to keep their farming activities afloat. The cattle are sold for a market price of between US\$300 and US\$500 per herd.

In all these farming activities these elderly are assisted by both permanent and seasonal workers. Of the twenty respondents eight had at least two permanent workers who were not their relatives but lived on the farms. The rest of the respondents were mainly dependent on seasonal workers. These workers' duties involved looking after cattle in addition to other activities such as the planting and harvesting of crops. These workers are paid between US \$65.00 to US\$ 80.00 dollars a month. For these elderly having permanent workers is more expensive as compared to hiring seasonal labour for “maricho¹²”. Seasonal labourers are cheaper because they can be paid in kind using second hand clothes or food items. Additionally hiring seasonal labour means that these elderly are creating employment for young adults in the area and in turn contributing positively to the community.

Figure 3 Cattle owned by one of the farmers



Source: (Fieldwork, July 2013)

corporate body tasked by the Government to provide social security.
<http://www.nssa.org.zw/index.php/about-nssa/mission-values-mandate>

¹² Maricho is a shona term which refers to seasonal work on the farm which includes planting, cultivating and harvesting of crops depending on the season.

4.2 Problems faced by the elderly in Munyati Resettlement Scheme

In this section I outline the challenges faced by the older farmers in their farming activities. These challenges range from economic, social and psychological. One of the objectives of this study was to establish how the acquisition of land upon retirement has contributed to these elderly people's livelihoods. To fully comprehend this it is important to take into account the macro economic conditions in Zimbabwe. As these conditions influence the success or failure of these elderly farmers. Ultimately this has a bearing on their social, economic and psychological well being. As has been alluded to in this paper the economic situation in Zimbabwe has impacted negatively on the lives of elderly people. The economy has been characterised by high inflation, high unemployment and the adoption of a multicurrency system. Consequently the economic crisis resulted in the out migration of many of the elderly's children. All these events have taken a toll on their lives hindering their efforts to sustain their livelihoods.

The major economic challenge that these elderly face is that of lack of capital. They receive very little pensions as cited in section 4.1. This money is inadequate for them to invest into their farming activities. They also lack support from the government and financial institutions in the country. During the interviews they revealed that no support has been forthcoming to them over the past years. Researchers have suggested that the lack of smallholder support is a persistent problem (Havnevik et al. 2007:37). Suggesting that smallholder farmers in Africa have not received funding for their activities since Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAP). This lack of finances has resulted in them not being able to fully utilise their land. In spite of the fact that they own relatively large pieces of land almost 20 times more than what their parents owned during the colonial era (see also table 3.2).

In Zimbabwe commercial farmers have been the ones who received funding for their activities as they were considered to produce for export (Musuna and Muchapondwa 2008:5). During pre-independent Zimbabwe there were institutions such as the African Loan Development Company which was founded in 1961 and the Agriculture Finance Corporation in 1971. These institutions catered for white commercial farmers (*ibid*). It was only after independence that the government started extending credit facilities to smallholder farmers. Structures such as the Agricultural Sector Productivity Enhancement Facility were set up to provide working capital for small scale farmers (Maposa 2013). However such facilities did not adequately address the needs of these farmers. More over these initiatives were short lived due to the economic challenges faced in the country that saw these credit facilities withdrawn. The lack of adequate support to smallholder farmers has also been attributed to the unstable prices and incomes that are derived from agriculture as well as the long time frames between planting and harvesting (*ibid*). These conditions have thus made it almost impossible to give small scale farmers credit. As a result these farmers struggle to raise money to buy the inputs that they need making them grow more for own consumption rather than for selling. Below are some of the excerpts from the semi-structured interview responses that indicate that these farmers grow just enough for own consumption.

Respondent 2: *I grow maize, most of which is for my own consumption. I only sell about 1 tonne. The money I get I use to buy more inputs, (63 year old male, Semi-structured interview).*

Respondent 5: *I grow maize and also have livestock. The maize I grow is for stock feed, (79 year old male)*

Respondent 7: *I practice mixed farming, growing maize and peanuts. But because I have no money to buy inputs the maize I grow is only for consumption. I also have ten herds of cattle and twenty goats, (67 year old widow)*

Because GMB pays us late when we take our maize there, I end up selling to cash buyers who give me cash on the spot”,(65 year old male, July 2013).

The excerpts above show that these farmers are growing crops mainly for their own consumption. All of them have maize as their major crop highlighting their high dependency on this staple crop. Some of the respondents also aired their frustrations towards the GMB for not paying them on time forcing them to sell to private cash buyers. These elderly hoped that their financial plight could be eased if the government were to assist them with inputs. Mr. Makiwa said

“I wish the government could support us the same way that the white farmers were supported”, (66 year old male, life narrative, July, 2013).

Mr. Tauzeni acknowledged having received inputs from the government which they had since paid back but nothing has been coming forth. He said

“Yes we used to receive inputs like fertiliser and maize seed from GMB, then we would pay back from the money we got after selling our produce, but all that has stopped. If you go to GMB they will just tell you that the inputs are coming but nothing comes. I think it is because things are hard these days and the government is failing to get money to buy the inputs”, (70 year old male, semi-structured interview, July 2013)

Apart from lack of capital these elderly also have multiple social challenges such as the care giving of HIV/AIDS patients and orphans. I interviewed two elderly widows Gogo Sando and Mrs Saru who look after their orphaned grandchildren. These elderly widows like many other elderly women in Southern Africa carry the extra burden of looking after their orphaned grandchildren. It is mostly the elderly women in sub Saharan Africa who have been left with the task of caring for HIV/AIDS orphans. With over 40% of people living with HIV/ AIDS in Southern Africa being cared for by the elderly (Munthree and Maharaj 2010). The social challenges also in turn impact on these elderly's lives. For Gogo Sando the death of her son caused her to reduce the size of land that she utilizes. This was because her son had been the one who used to source inputs for her and also because her son used to help her with tilling the land, now she is forced to hire a tractor which is expensive. She now also finds it hard to fund for her inputs and at the same time pay school fees for her grandchildren.

Another problem these elderly face is that most of them have depleted social capital. Of the respondents eleven said that their children work far away

from home of these only three received remittances that they acknowledged as contributing towards their farming activities. The others though acknowledging that their children were working said that they cannot say the money they receive is sustaining them and also that most of the time the children remitted in kind for example by sending clothes. They attributed this to their children failing to meet their own needs and consequently the parents' needs. This situation leaves these elderly with no one to turn to a situation which is made worse by the absence of adequate social protection for the elderly in Zimbabwe. These elderly acknowledged that they are not getting any younger and that with time it will become difficult for them to work. Some of their worries were who will they pass on their work and farms to? They said many of today's children are only interested in formal jobs and getting university degrees. This worry by the elderly can also affect the psychological wellbeing.

4.3 Conclusion

The chapter discussed small holder farming as practised by the older farmers in Munyati Resettlement Area. In this chapter I brought out how smallholder farming is a livelihood strategy employed to supplement meagre pensions. The chapter also highlighted challenges faced by the farmers such as financial and social challenges which have contributed in inhibiting their full utilization of land. The chapter also brought out the lack of government assistance towards these smallholder farmers. Also a depleted social capital due to HIV/AIDS has also negatively impacted on their lives. This chapter has on a whole shown that these the elderly strive to sustain themselves but are to a greater extent hindered by different external factors.

Chapter 5 Meanings and Significance of land to the elderly in Munyati Resettlement Area

5.0 Introduction

In this chapter I discuss how the elderly “do their age” as they turn to farms for the construction of musha and farming. I go further to bring out other meanings derived from the farms apart from them simply being sources of livelihood. This rural home or musha which is built around on-farm activities carries more meaning as compared to the urban houses. This is despite the fact that most of the elderly in this study do not permanently live there. I therefore discuss the importance of this rural home to these elderly.

5.1. “Doing Old Age” A turn to the land by retired the elderly

Laz (1998) suggests that there exists an assumption that as individuals grow older they will perform roles expected of them in the manner laid out by society. In Zimbabwe this maybe likened to the socially constructed view of the elderly that reside kumusha practising farming following retirement. The elderly thus draw from these norms, rules and interactions with society in their attempt to live out these roles in the given sequence. These norms and rules therefore guide the elderly as they create their own identities and act in a way that corresponds with this identity (Laz 1998). Reinforcing the social construction of ageing in the process.

This same view of the elderly in the rural areas also has them looking after their grandchildren. While their adult children working in urban areas go “kumusha” to visit them time and again. These visits by their adult children in themselves represent the transmission and preservation of a culture. Doing so brings out an intergenerational dimension of ensuring culture continuity. The excerpt below brings out how for one of the respondents the rural home is the real home which idealises the above described view

“This house in town is not my home; my children who are married can’t come here to my town house and say they have come home. If they come to the farm then they are home because there I can slaughter a cow for them, what would I give them here in town there is nothing”, (72 year old male Life Narrative, July 2013

It then follows that as the elderly in formal employment in the urban areas move towards retirement they too draw from this cultural view. Thus making the decision to construct their own musha (Musha is a Shona word that refers to home or homestead, used with reference to rural homes). The elderly do this by turning to the rural areas where they join the rest of the elderly who have always been in the rural sphere practising farming. According to Geschiere and Gugler (1998:310) the rural areas are thought to give the urban people some form of security. Even when the entire family resides in the urban areas they return to the rural areas once they retire (*ibid*).

By deciding on where and how to live after retirement the elderly are exercising their agency but are also drawing on cultural scripts which seem to reserve the elderly's position within the rural areas. This normative construction of the elderly in the Zimbabwean context thus contributes to the performance of cultural labour by the elderly. This cultural labour also has them presumably "doing their age" (Utrata 2011).

However this cultural practise of turning to the land by the elderly has not been problematised within the rural change literature in Zimbabwe. This is because this literature has not incorporated the aspect of belonging when discussing the land reform programme. Hence there has been little recognition of the turn to the rural areas and construction of *musha* by the elderly. Instead much focus has been on the importance of livelihoods; however it is important to also engage other debates into the already existing debates on land in Zimbabwe. Mujere and Dombo (2011) argue that the land reform has created prospects for people to return to their ancestral lands.

Andersson (2002) in his thesis "Going places staying home" introduces us to this rural-urban link in which people return to the rural areas. Though he attributes the migratory practises by the "Buherans" in his study to the legal frameworks that existed in colonial Zimbabwe (*ibid*). Which are no longer relevant in present day Zimbabwe. He however identifies the economic insecurities of urban life as being the reason why these urban workers maintain links with their rural homes (*ibid*). Andersson does not delve deeper into the cultural meaning of this link with regards to the construction of a rural home.

For the elderly in this study the turn to land and construction of their own rural homes was facilitated by the FTLRP. Coincidence as it may have been that the opportunity to have a rural home came through the FTLRP. It is however no coincidence that this rural home is built around on-farm activities. In the Shona culture it is difficult to detach farming and rural homes. Farming means different things to different people, for some it represents an opportunity to create wealth. For others like the elderly in this paper it is a way of keeping and continuing tradition while sustaining a livelihood.

Owning land to this group means that they are able to belong within the rural areas and do their age. Working in the urban areas thus becomes part of this life course. As they "do their age" they have different meanings and interpretations of what they do. These meanings and interpretations of doing one's age are informed by these the elderly's experiences which are in themselves informed by different factors such as gender, class and culture (Laz 1998). As alluded to in chapter one culture has to some extent played a part in exaggerating social roles which the elderly are expected to conform to (Vincent 2004).

Understanding the piece by Andersson and examining the same trait of turning to the land by the elderly in this study contributes in our conceptualisation of *musha* as a place of permanence. Something that is sought by the elderly causing them to re-link with the rural areas as they perceive that this is where they belong. As highlighted by one of the respondents that even when people work far away from home they still do come back home even if it is to be buried there. *Musha* thus has a significance of permanence unlike any other

place these elderly have found themselves in. According to (Mujere and Dombo 2011:1125) belonging is a relational concept that encompasses attachment to a group or place. For these the elderly this attachment is with the rural areas. In Africa the sense of belonging has usually been centred on religion and the ownership of land (*ibid*).

The elderly in this study have constructed their homes on their farms and they display a deep attachment to their land. Through the interviews I established that the farms that these the elderly had were not only considered to be sources of livelihood but also of cultural value. They contribute in displaying the accomplishment of age by these elderly. One of my respondents Mr. Savhieri a 79 year old retired accountant who worked for a reputable mining organisation before his retirement. He narrated how when he was about to retire from his job, he started looking for a place where he would retire to. He said

“I wanted somewhere to retire to, a place to call home, somewhere better than the communal area where I grew up” (Semi-structured interview, July 2013).

The better referred to here by Mr. Savhieri was in terms of land size. Despite having worked in Harare for 45 years and owning a house there he sought a place to retire outside the city. Establishing a rural home for this respondent is informed by the normative construction of the elderly discussed above as well as that outlined in the retirement anecdote and their seeking of a permanent place. By moving from the urban to the rural sphere Mr. Savhieri acknowledged the temporality of urban life and conformed to the thinking of the rural being a secure place as suggested by (Mujere and Dombo 2011). One would expect that after such a long time in the urban area the need or desire to live in a rural setup would have faded but for him the link was never broken. Growing up in the communal areas shaped this elderly man’s experiences and as suggested by the life course perspective earlier life experiences of older adults are built around historical events as well as their respective cultural heritage, (Hareven 1994). In Mr. Savhieri’s case spending 45 years in an urban area would appear long enough to be a permanent situation however this move by Mr. Savhieri brings us to argue about what is permanent.

Another of the respondents Mr. Ncube also said that as he was preparing for retirement despite having a house in the urban areas he decided to build his homestead in the rural areas. Like other retired the elderly Mr. Ncube and Mr. Savhieri conformed to the normative that the elderly’s place is in the rural areas especially when they retire from urban formal employment.

5.2 Meanings elderly in Munyati resettlement attach to land

Smallholder farming is undeniably the major source of livelihood for these respondents as brought out in chapter 4. Respondents like Mr. Makiwa regard their farms as home because according to him *“the farm is the sole provider of all income”*, (Life narrative, July 2013). He acknowledges that his livelihood is derived from the farm. Gogo Shereni acknowledges the same saying that she is

sustained by her farm. Land is not only an asset through which they are earning a living but it also has a meaning in their lives. (Bebbington 1999:2022) in his capitals and capabilities approach suggests that:

“People’s assets are not only assets through which they make a living; they also give meaning to the person’s world”

It was evident that to them land ownership was more than just about smallholder farming. Land for these elderly encompassed a sense of ownership, freedom and belonging. This love for land was also born out of all of them being raised by peasant farmers in communal areas during the colonial era. Respondents such as Mr. Togarepi and Gogo Sando grew up in the Gutu communal areas where their parents had small pieces of land. As a result they valued having their own farms which were close to 20 times larger than what their parents had owned. Though they may not be farming and living on their farms the possession and ownership of land gives them a sense of belonging and ownership. Below are some of the remarks that were given by the respondents on the importance of land:

In the shona culture it is imperative for one to have their own “Musha”(home). Having land does not only mean that you are able to farm and have a sustainable livelihood. It also means that one has a ‘musha’ (72 year old male Life Narrative, July 2013).

Among the elderly owning land is very important, those who do not own any are despised this is because if one does not own immovable property like land they are considered to be poor no matter their income or education. For the elderly acquisition of land is also to a certain extent is a result of fear of society labelling them as unaccomplished when one does not own land and cattle. The ownership of land and subsequently musha by these elderly people means different things to them. Below are some of the excerpts that reveal what having land and musha on these farms means to them:

“Land is my life, I have to appreciate that without land I would be a pauper”. (66 years old male)

“I have freedom on my farm, I am able to do what I want when I want” (71 year old female, semi-structured interview, July 2013)

“Having land makes me happy because when I am there I am free” (60 year old female)

(Life Narratives, July 2013)

In the Shona culture for the elderly to have successful biographies they would have fulfilled the cultural aspect of owning a rural home along side with livestock and farming activities. This becomes a symbol of a well lived life as these the elderly will have something to show for their time in formal employment. Having their children and grandchildren visit becomes the romantic ideal of the elderly’s life within the rural areas.

The preference by these the elderly to own a home in the rural areas yet they also own urban houses and having worked in the urban areas for most of their lives leads one to question the temporality and permanence of urban and rural life. Revealing the meanings of (house) and musha (home). A house in the urban area in shona is called imba and whereas as explained earlier the rural

home is musha. The Oxford dictionary defines a house as being “a building for human habitation” and a home as “a place where one lives permanently or the district or country where one was born”. Though these terms are merely definitional terms in the English language in the Shona context the urban house is temporal while the rural home appears to be permanent. You seldom hear the urban house being referred to as “musha” but the rural home is commonly referred to as “musha” with people going “kumusha” as a way of maintaining the rural link. The land reform programme offered not only an opportunity for a livelihood but it was also a way through which they did what is expected of them by society.

According to these elderly they need a place to call home and as highlighted in the narratives above a town house cannot be equated to a rural home. Through their farming activities they have created meanings based on the cultural importance of land to them. Bebbington (1999) calls this cultural capital when land is acquired for the cultural benefits it offers in this case the ability for these elderly to have musha. One of the respondents an elderly man whose children work away from home with some working in South Africa said that:

“Even when someone is working in London when they say they are going home they will be referring to their rural area. When you work in town or wherever you work it is only temporary that’s why you see even when someone dies they go to be buried in their rural home” (72 year old male, Life Narrative, July 2013)

Land for these elderly means more than somewhere to grow crops, to stay but also a place for one to be buried in the event of death. Land has also allowed them to actively age in spite of having been regarded as too frail to continue to work in formal employment as defined by the chronological age of retirement. From the responses and narratives given by the elderly it is clear that for them land, farming and home (musha) are important. One would question whether the same interest held by the elderly towards land is shared by their children. The response to this by a significant number of the elderly was that “children of today” are not interested in farming. One of the female respondents said:

“Very few in your generation are interested in farming; you are only interested in your jobs and degrees”, (65 year old female, FGD, August 2013)

Muwi (2012) opines the same in her research where she also discovered that rural youth in Zimbabwe had very little interest in farming. This lack of interest many a times results in the youth moving away from home when they finish school to look for jobs elsewhere. As I conducted my interviews it was common to hear about their children who work in other countries such as South Africa and Canada. These children were currently not interested in rural homes but in the pursuance of urban life in and outside of Zimbabwe.

5.3 Women's voices on land

In the Shona culture has a proverb that says “*Musha Mukadz?*”. In English this proverb loosely translates to it is the woman that makes a home a home. However “musha” and land are always referred to using the man’s name. The roles given to men and women in the Shona culture are clearly defined with the men having more power within the households. Which tends to increase with age while for women it is not the same. While appreciating the importance of women within the home women have seldom been put at the forefront in decision making within the home. Elson (2012:65) points out that social reproduction is gendered in that women often own fewer assets than men (*ibid*).

Alongside owning fewer assets women are assigned care giving roles. As mentioned in section 5.1 the elderly are expected to care for their grandchildren. This care giving role in itself is gendered in that it is delegated to elderly women. Society views caring for grandchildren by women as a given that cannot be questioned. Elderly women are thus assigned this role following the death of their children.

Aligning this view of women with discussions from the focus group discussion shows that men do have the upper hand. On discussing the issue of land the women highlighted that despite the land being registered in the man’s name it was equally important to them. Land has given these women an opportunity to have a place where they could have their own assets. The women said they now owned, chickens and goats while the cattle belonged to men. One of the women said:

The woman is the one who thinks of what the children will eat and so when you have your own musha you are able to grow crops like groundnuts and you ensure that your children are fed (60 year old retired female, FGD, August 2013).

Another respondent also said: *Ivhu rine upfumi, kana mvura ikanaya kudya kunowanikwa. Muvhu muneuswa mombe dzikadya dzova bank*”, (65 year old retired female, FGD, August 2013).

Translated this means that the soil is rich and provides feeds for the cattle. In turn they fatten and they become the bank which you can use to send children to school. It is not surprising for women to talk about food in relation to land as they are regarded as homemakers. These women acknowledged that these rural homes have improved their lives when comparing them with the time before land acquisition and the time when the economy had begun to decline. For these women retired lives were much better. They now had time to do their own things at their own time unlike when they were in formal employment. From this discussion it is evident that women do not speak much on land itself but rather the homemaking opportunities it gives them cementing their already defined domestic roles. Shows that even in old age these roles are still visible.

5.4 Conclusion

In this chapter I discussed the social construction of ageing in Zimbabwe. Where the ideal way to retire and age includes turning to the rural areas, constructing a musha and farming. I discussed how the elderly themselves aspire to have their own misha and how these aspirations are also a result of this so-

cial construction. Society expects the elderly to turn to the rural areas as if to say their place in the urban space diminishes with age. However for the elderly owning musha and farming appears to be a sign of successful entry into old age.

Chapter 6 Conclusion

This chapter synthesizes the discussions that I have put across in this paper.

In this thesis I used the Fast Track Land Reform Programme in Zimbabwe as a case study to understand retired people's turn to land. Using a generational lens adopted from Mannheim's (1952) generation approach I examined the motivations behind this turn to land for this group in my study.

At the beginning of the paper I presented the paradox of retirement in the Zimbabwean context. Through the anecdote I brought out the societal construction of the concepts of retirement and ageing. As the elderly were regarded as too old to continue working within the formal sector but physically strong enough to labour in the rural areas. This reveals how social constructions play a role in influencing decisions made by the elderly. As society dictating how people should act on the premises of their chronological age. In addition this again showed how the elderly "do their age" drawing from experiences and interaction with society. The elderly in this study though appearing to exercise agency in turning back to the land were in actual fact doing this on the joists of societal definition of retirement

I found that the turn to land was made possible by the political economy through the Fast Track Land Reform Programme giving these elderly an opportunity to own land. Though the FTLRP itself has received tremendous coverage from scholars they have not discussed the elderly's participation in the programme. Age has not been considered as a variable for discussion, instead scholars have rather focused on a class based analysis of the FTLRP. This research thus offered an avenue through which the elderly's participation in the FTLRP or lack off could be explored. In the effort to elucidate on the participation by this group I looked at different influential factors that have led to the turn to land. In the process showing how cultural, political and economic factors all contribute in the decision making processes by the elderly. This study thus set to answer the following objectives:

1. To what extent did the elderly benefit from the Fast Track Land Reform Programme in Zimbabwe?
2. How does smallholder farming contribute to the lives of the elderly?
3. What are the factors influencing the nature of smallholder farming?
4. What meanings do the elderly attach to land?

Through Mannheim's generation approach I was able to show the trajectories of the elderly, in particular how and why they turned to smallholder farming upon retirement. The study also captured their views on land, especially with regards to culturally based factors. I was also able to understand how the elderly as a cohort/generation had acquired land and the meanings it carried for them. Using trajectories obtained through life histories and semi-

structured interviews I established that turning to smallholder farming had been necessitated by the economic conditions that prevailed in Zimbabwe during the same time that the elderly were retiring from formal employment. As evidenced by this introductory quote:

“...I thought after working for 34 years I would rest,” he said.. I am starting a new life of hard work, like I never worked before”, (The Zimbabwean,2009)

Land and the practising of smallholder farming have thus cushioned the elderly from harsh economic conditions. Smallholder farming was found to be a more sustainable livelihood strategy in comparison to the pensions that the elderly receive. The study also established that the elderly in their practise of smallholder farming have maintained their urban homes. A strategy stemming from the lack of adequate infrastructure on the resettlement farms. The insecure land tenure and usufructuary rights which characterises the land reform programme were found to be a contributing factor causing the elderly to be reluctant to make any long term investments. These fears are compounded by the fact that there have been cases in other parts of the country where beneficiaries of the FTLRP have had their land repossessed by the government and given to a few affluent business people who seem to have political support. The nature of their smallholder farming activities are also affected by the lack of institutional and governmental support in financing them resulting in their inability to produce beyond for their subsistence.

Acquisition of land by the elderly has however not been entirely for economic purposes. The generational views and meanings of land they offered brought out a socio- cultural socially dimension of them “doing their age” as per societal expectations. The elderly thus turn to land in a bid to establish retirement homes and conform to societal norms. These expectations by society are of an elderly people that live in the rural areas. This cohort is however content with owning land and re-establishing a link with the rural areas. To them no matter where they have worked and for how long turning back to the land and having masha remains the pinnacle of their lives as evidenced by this opening quote.

“Even when someone is working in London when they say they are going home they will be referring to their rural area.... (72 year old’s male Life Narrative, July 2013)

This strong feeling towards masha by these the elderly can also be attributed to their experiences during the colonial era when they as a cohort lived through the injustices of unequal land distribution.

The elderly in this study have constructed homes, practise smallholder farming but this retired life is not without challenges. For the elderly the Zimbabwean economy has not made their lives easy. The inception of the multicurrency system wiped out r pensions resulting in the elderly receiving barely enough to sustain themselves. HIV/AIDS has also brought upon the elderly

the burden of care giving especially for women bringing out the gendered experiences of ageing in the process.

To sum up this thesis I bring forward my argument that smallholder farming has sustained the lives of the elderly. I also argue that the elderly's life course been shaped by events that are a combination of the historical, cultural, economic and political factors and these have in turn influenced their turn to farming. I also argue that this study has shown that it is difficult to tease out one factor from the political, economic, cultural and social factors and pin point it as being the sole cause for the turn to land. These factors are all intrinsically tied in the shaping of the elderly's lives. Through this study I managed to show how the desire for land among the elderly has always been there inculcated into them by colonial experiences, it was the economic conditions in Zimbabwe that then led them to farming. An opportunity presented via the political economy. However pinning the elderly's decisions solely on economic conditions is an over statement of the economic argument, rather it is important to look at socio-cultural factors which saw the elderly constructing *misha*. Lastly this study posits that ageing is very much tied to the external environment; and as such is more of a social construct than it is a biologically inevitable part life.

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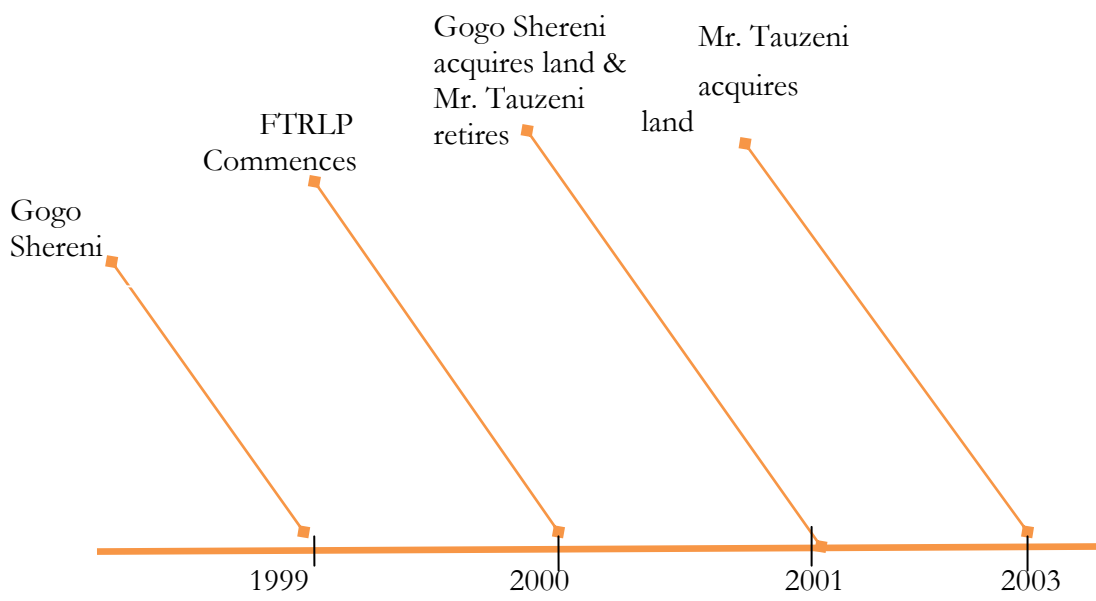
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Appendix I Time line of events in the elderly's lives



Appendix II Interview Guides

Name of Farming Area:		Farm size:	
Age of interviewee:	<input type="text"/>	Sex:	<input type="text"/>
Years in retirement:	<input type="text"/>	Length of stay on the farm:	<input type="text"/>
Number of children:	<input type="text"/>		

THEME 1: MOTIVATIONS BEHIND RETIRED PEOPLE'S CHOICE OF SMALLHOLDER FARMING AS A LIVELIHOOD. *(Under this theme I want to be able to answer the question "What factors do retired people consider in choosing livelihood strategies for post retirement)*

1. Where were you working before retiring?
2. Do you own any property in any urban area?
3. How did you acquire your land?
4. What were your reasons for acquiring this farm?

THEME 2: Resources Available to the retired people during the period before and after land acquisition *(Under this theme I want to address the questions How do retired people sustain their farming activities and how has the acquisition of land upon retirement contributed to their livelihoods).*

1. What resources are available to you and how do they contribute to your farming activities
2. Do you receive any other financial support apart from your pension? If yes please explain the source of the funds, e.g. remittances from your children
3. What crops do you grow, do you have any livestock?, how much of these crops do you sell and what are some of the uses to which you put your money?
4. How important is this land to you as an individual? (Do your children participate in your farming activities and what are their views on land?)
5. In what ways has the acquisition of land contributed to your life since your retirement?

THEME 3: RETIRED PEOPLE'S DESCRIPTIONS OF THEMSELVES AND THEIR SITUATION AS WELL AS THEIR EXPERIENCES *(I want to address the question what meanings do retired people as a generation place on land)*

1. What has been your experience of retirement? (Here the interviewee is expected to touch on how their life has changed as a result of retirement, and the challenges faced)

2. How did you plan for your retirement while you were still employed?
3. Did you plan that you would live in a rural area after employment or you were forced by circumstances?(The interviewee is expected to elaborate on what these circumstances were)
4. Do you think your own views towards land are different or similar to those held by your parents and grandparents and how has this view changed over the years?
5. What type of support would you want to receive towards your farming activities and from where do you want the support to come from

Life Histories Guide

Discuss with the interviewees their experiences of retirement, have them give a narrative of the process of retirement and the decision making process surrounding their turn to land.

Questions for office bearers working with the aged

Through these questions I want to see if they are aware of the situation of retired people in Zimbabwe and what initiatives are in place if any to help this group.

1. What in your view are the challenges that elderly people face in Zimbabwe?
2. What do you think can be done to address these challenges?
3. Is there anything that the government has done for elderly people in Zimbabwe in terms of policies and programmes? (Assuming that the response indicates that something has been done the follow up question would be) :Do you think these interventions have been helpful?