Veiled and Vocal:
Intergenerational Perspectives on Ageing amongst Muslim Women in South Africa

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DECLARATION

This thesis titled "*Veiled and Vocal: Intergenerational Perspectives on Ageing amongst Muslim Women in South Africa"* is a presentation of my own original research. Where the contributions of others are involved, every effort has been made to indicate this clearly, with due and complete reference to the literature. The thesis is being submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Sociology at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa. It has never before been submitted for any degree or examination at this or any other university or institution.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is based on a qualitative, exploratory study which sought to find out and analyse how South African Muslim mothers and daughters of Indian descent interpret and understand ageing. The thesis rests on a specially developed theoretical framework which applied the lifecourse perspective, symbolic interactionism and the writings of post-colonial feminism. A non-probability purposive sampling strategy was used. Data were collected using one-on-one semi-structured interviews with twelve biological mother-daughter pairs.

According to this study, ageing or growing older is more than just a linear process. By profiling Muslim women's expression of their individualised versions of ageing identity, this thesis provides unique insights. It offers exceptional scripts of women of different ages' articulation about themselves or what is told about them. The narratives shared in the study show the malleability of personal constructions of ageing, the meanings attached to events and the transitions that lead women to new and or (re)negotiated social identities in the context of ageing in the lifecourse.

The novel intergenerational perspective adopted is geared towards understanding the sociological process of ageing between two generations within the South African setting. The findings show that South African Muslim mothers' and daughters' constructed personal definitions of ageing were influenced by their individual life histories. Personal retrospect was shown to have facilitated how the ageing experience was perceived resulting in renewed ideas of the ageing experience.

Intergenerational perspectives on ageing emerged consistently throughout the thesis and thus provided evidence of pollination of views on ageing across generations. Findings showed the multidimensionality of ageing in the context of participants' experiences thus providing evidence for alternate imageries and individualised versions of ageing thereby making a novel contribution to bodies of knowledge focusing on progressive gerontological research.

The thesis concludes that the socio-cultural contexts of the two generations of Muslim women in the study was shown to have mutability and bearing on their interpretation of ageing and their ageing selves and therefore recommends future areas of ageing research in order to attain a more nuanced, alternate and socio-cultural perspectives of ageing in the South African context and especially amongst minority groups.

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INTRODUCTION

This thesis offers a distinctive sociological perspective on ageing within a minority group of women in South Africa. The research undertaken herein focuses on how two generations of South African Muslim women (mothers and daughters) of Indian descent interpret and understand ageing. The study examined the influence of acculturation, introspection and the meanings attached to life events, transitions and turning points of Muslim mothers and daughters in South Africa. Understanding these influences is posited to reflect how Muslim women in the study constructed their personal comprehension of ageing and its manifestations in their lived realities within their social context.

This introduction is intended to articulate the research topic and provide context to the study. The scope of the research undertaken is outlined by presenting a description of the research problem, the rationale and significance of the study as well as its research aim and objectives. The section concludes with a presentation of the organisation of the thesis.

Description of the Research Problem

Research on ageing has been approached by multiple perspectives across the natural and social sciences (Carnes, Nakasato and Olshanksy, 2005). Consequently, ageing is observed in diverse contexts yet its precise definition and measurement is contentious and not always possible (Carnes et al, 2005). Attempts to define the concept of ageing are very much related to the context of its use. The World Health Organization (2015) acknowledged that the use of chronological age to mark the threshold of old age often assumes equivalence with biological age. The thesis views this as only partially reflecting what constitutes ageing; therefore it is limited in its understanding and use. Firstly, it assumes that ageing is largely innate and only biologically driven. Such opinion fails to acknowledge the variability of socio-cultural bearing on an individual's construction of ageing. Secondly, its focus on health, loss and declining ability as opposed to acquired ability and gains associated with ageing remains one of the key contentions of this thesis.

The scope and interest in ageing has widened significantly over the decades. The explosion of literature on ageing has also in part been prompted by the demographic transition in developed countries (Gergen and Gergen, 2001). Despite this widened scope, exploration on ageing has usually been dominated by chronological age; often with largely unchanged concepts and measurements (Scherbov and Sanderson, 2016). Described as a "backward-looking" approach, Scherbov and Sanderson (2016:1160) claim that

whilst this traditional measure accounts for the numbers of years lived, it does not reflect the shifting characteristics of an individual or of a society for that matter. Alternatively, it remains an incomplete measure to what is one of the most vital pieces of information one can retrieve about a person (Settersten and Mayer, 1997). Chronological age is thus a singular and inert characteristic in a multidimensional process. In support; Martinez (2005:1) maintains that "the passing of time is necessary but not sufficient to account for the cognitive and biological changes that transpire in the ageing process".

This study illustrates that ageing or growing older is more than just a linear process. The thesis furnishes insight by profiling Muslim women's expression of their individualised versions of ageing identity. It offers unique scripts of women of different ages' articulation about themselves or what is told about them. The narratives shared in the study show the malleability of personal constructions of ageing, the meanings attached to events and the transitions that lead women to new and or (re)negotiated social identities in the context of ageing in the lifecourse. This is a clear conceptual departure from measurement or understanding of ageing based on a simply chronological account.

As alluded; in recent decades, studies on ageing increased due to demographic forces (namely declining fertility and mortality) leading to a rise in the elderly population particularly in developed countries. Scholarly work on this transition include Fuchs (1984); Martin and Kinsella (1994) and Cutler, Liebman, Shepard and Smyth (2005). Early interest was motivated by concerns of policy makers due to population projections indicative of increased life expectancy (Martin and Kinsella, 1994). Academic efforts were concentrated on the response to the socio-economic challenges of an increasing elderly population (Martin and Kinsella, 1994; Scherbov and Sanderson, 2016), the viability of public pensions (Sunley, 2000), healthcare, disability and morbidity (Liu, Manton and Liu, 1990; de Meijer, Koopmanschap, Koolman and van Doorslaer, 2009), labour force participation and retirement (Ellis and Odland, 2001) and so on.

Whilst anthropologists and sociologists were already examining the social and economic implications of ageing in developing countries, it was only around the 1980s that ageing in developing countries receive attention from other streams of the academic fraternity (Martin and Kinsella, 1994). Since then scholarship of ageing populations in developing nations has increased considerably. According to Shetty (2012), by 2050 approximately one in five people in developing nations will be over 60 years of age. This will be most prevalent in Asia and notably a projected tripling in numbers for individuals over

age of 60 in Sub-Saharan Africa. This no doubt creates an opportunity for further scholarly engagement with ageing and its intersection with other academic genres.

As with developed nations, the interest here too centred on social welfare (Rudra, 2007), changing family structures (Kreager, 2004); labour participation (Marshall, 1999); healthcare (Kuder and Roeder, 1995; Stadtländer, 2008) and planning and policy (Sagner, 2000). Similarly in South Africa - given its unique socio-economic and political landscape post-1994 - studies on ageing have focused largely on investigating the relationship between social differentials, health and ageing (Gilbert and Soskolne, 2003); ageing and social pensions (Lund, 1993; Ardington, n.d; Schatz, Madhavan, Collinson, Gómez-Olive and Ralston, 2015); care and support rendered by grandmothers in the context of HIV and AIDS in the family (Aliber, 2001; Ferreira, Keikelame and Mosaval, 2001; Ogunmefum, Gilbert and Schatz, 2011) and understanding socio-economic differentials of elder poverty and welfare status (Hunter and May, 2003).

Decidedly; demographical accounts on ageing created the impetus for other interests on ageing. Accordingly, enquiries have centred on the descriptions of ageing, the subjective experiences of one's own body and perceptions of ageing and the meanings attached to one's body by other people (Featherstone and Hepworth, 1991). That said; a significant proportion of this kind of gerontological scholarship is seated within the Western or European frame of reference. For example, studies are frequently based on samples from North America (Dillaway, 2005; Dumas, Laberge and Straka, 2005; Altschuler and Katz, 2010; Quéniart and Charpentier, 2012), the United Kingdom (Tunaley, Walsh and Nicolson, 1999; Mowl, Pain amd Talbot, 1999; Niland, 2004; Gimlin, 2007) and Nordic countries (Öberg and Tornstam, 1999; Rexbye and Povlsen, 2007; Christensen, Thinggaard, McGue, Rexbye, Hjelmborg, Aviv, Gunn, van der Ouderaa and Vaupel, 2009; Krekula, 2009). A nascent body of literature is also observed from Asiatic countries (Sankar, 1989; Traphagan, 2007; Sévigny, Chen and Chen, 2009) and Australasia (Wiles, Leibing, Guberman, Reeve and Allen, 2011; Khoo, 2012). A void that this study attempts to fill relates to its focus on the African and South African context.

For instance, many of the studies cited above and alike concentrated specifically on body image and awareness, visual signs of ageing, ageing in place, perceptive and subjective experiences of ageing, inclusive participation and so on. It appears that much of the literature captures the individual's experience of ageing as it manifests on the psychological, physiological, emotional and spiritual level. On the other hand, within certain cultures globally (for example Latin America, Asia and Africa) and certainly in South Africa gerontological studies commonly reflect the traditional culture of placing the

aged amongst the esteemed in society (Nyangweso, 1998; Ajala, 2006; Ajala and Olorunsiye, 2009). In other words, the experience of ageing is approached from a collective or communal standpoint with prominence on aspects such as their place in society, care and support, and living arrangements. Here, substantively less emphasis is placed on the individual experience and signs of ageing.

Typically, the literature paints the process of ageing as one characterised by "decline, degeneration and decrepitude" as opposed to "growth, generativity and development". Gergen and Gergen (2001) and Lupien and Wan (2012) assert that comparatively little attention has been paid towards generating positive images of ageing especially in the last decades of life. Furthermore efforts to explicate positive associations of ageing – emphasis on gains as opposed to losses - have been criticised for its lack of cultural sensitivity (Baltes and Carstensen, 1996; Torres and Hammarstrom, 2009).

Promisingly – and realising cultures are not static and homogenous - new works have begun to emerge and present an alternate image of ageing amongst different groups of people globally, regionally and locally (Ajala, 2006; Okiria, 2014). This thesis is a further example of such efforts. Given that the social construction of ageing is complex; the study intended to bridge the fractures (and in some ways challenge) between the Western or European focus (i.e. individualised) on ageing and emergent scholarly works from other regions globally (i.e. collective). This thesis intends to further contribute towards this gap in knowledge by illustrating how human and gendered dimensions of ageing amongst Muslim mothers and daughters are mediated by socio-cultural and temporal factors in South Africa. This includes producing positive images of ageing with progressive strides towards meaningful social engagement and well-being throughout the lifecourse challenges the "marginalised, weak and dependent" view of the aged and ageing (Gergen and Gergen, 2001:3). This research thus presents an understanding of existing, alternative and ethnic variations in the construction of the ageing experience, especially in the context of a previously unexplored target group of South African Muslim mothers and daughters.

The research undertaken also raises concern at 'who' forms the sample of investigations on ageing. Upon reviewing the literature, a stark contrast is evident on the target samples of ageing research. Older women appear to have received the greatest share attention of ageing research focusing on both the perceived positive (i.e. socially engaged, independent, inclusive, active etcetera) and negative (i.e. ill health, loss of attractiveness and beauty, impaired mobility etcetera) outlooks to ageing. Younger women on the other hand have been limited to certain foci of research where their age is of contextual relevance. These largely include matters of reproduction, fertility, sexual experience and marriage, self-

representation of age, ageism and ageing anxiety. Interestingly, studies amongst younger and older women show that views on negative stereotyping often mirror each other (Levy, 2003; Kite, Stockdale, Whitely and Johnson, 2005).

To understand how these mirrored sentiments are formed; another founding angle of the thesis was to include women of both generations in a single study to further interrogate how such opinions on ageing are moulded. The study therefore provides an intergenerational perspective by including mothers and daughters. Whilst previous endeavours reserved particular topics and questions for certain ages of women, the research herein is unique since it did not follow this approach. Instead a bevy of interrelated themes and guiding questions were posed to both groups, thereby eliciting telling narratives characterising intergenerational transmission of the experiences of ageing – thus making a distinctive contribution.

Rationale and Significance of the Study

Having acknowledged that the thesis holds ageing as more than chronology, influenced but not determined by population based accounts, viewed considerably more than decline, care, support and social order etcetera; with a clear emphasis on generating meaningful, socio-culturally variable, alternate and positive images of ageing amongst older and younger Muslim women in South Africa; the rationale and sociological significance for the study are multiple.

The research detailed in this thesis aimed at building on these current paradigms of ageing research whilst also seeking to provide insight on content that has not possibly been studied in substantial detail before (indeed in the South African context). Furthermore, the evolving relevance and expression of ageing in a time characterised by social forces attributed to the global 'cultural melting pot' has been documented in the literature (Naidu, 2009; Pakulski, 2016). The position of the thesis is thus vital in grasping the current discourse of ageing as well as contributing to this emergent body of work.

In addition, investigating ageing in relation to Muslim women is not an intuitive research choice for many nor does it feature amongst pressing social science enquiries. That said; the justification to embark on a study involving Muslim women is multifarious. Firstly, the thesis aimed to address the dearth in positive and ethnically variable imaging of Muslim women, especially in South Africa. The focus of investigations on Muslim women has centred largely within the human rights perspective (Edross, 1997;

Offenhauer, 2005; Sader, 2008; Murji, 2010). The 'voiceless, veiled, oppressed, waiting to be liberated' image of Muslim women is synonymous to what some believe is a representation of what it means to be a Muslim woman in a post 9/11 world (Sader, 2008). By implication this 'distorted' vision of passivity and oppression places Muslim women under a singular perceived narrative irrespective of their personal dynamics, cultural and social differences.

The global footprint of research on Muslim women is evident in the South African context as well. In other words it has been overshadowed by focusing on "specific samples of vulnerable Muslim women" (Shaikh, Hoel and Kagee, 2011:97). Whilst these 'hard issues' are important and should be profiled it does however create the impression that investigative foci on Muslim women are generally paired with serious social, religious, human rights and political matters. The interest in Muslim women should not be confined to these alone but rather opened up to other progressive and insightful spaces. Given the 'popularised' image of Muslim women globally and locally, the lack of substantive research on Muslim women especially in South Africa serves to perpetuate commonly held images as purported in society. Whilst not on a representative scale, the thesis in part aimed to address this knowledge void with the aspiration of highlighting vocalised notions of what it means to live and age as a South African Muslim woman.

Having noted that much of the research content is academically novel, the thesis builds on its originality by having used the approach of comparative intergenerational discourse between mothers and daughters to understand how Muslim women form a pragmatic understanding of ageing. Despite the strong relationship between generational perspectives on topics such as identity formulation, Murji (2010) writes that intergenerational studies to date usually account for the views of younger generations and hence fails to offer comparison to older generations. Comparative generational discourse by principle is poised to highlight the possible shift or recurrence in ideology over generations. Murji (2010) argues that social conditions change and no longer offer the illusion of stability and certainty that older generations will be more accustomed to. Hence delving into the past and current experiences of the older generation is extremely vital. If a shift in ideology is observed, the causes attributed to the shift are of significance. A weakness that this study helps to overcome is by considering the views of older Muslim women (i.e. mothers) and comparing these with younger Muslim women (i.e. daughters).Perhaps the greatest sociological significance of the thesis within the South African context lies in its exploration of the ageing discourse amongst two generations of South African Muslim women of different ages and backgrounds.

The cessation of Apartheid opened up social and technological spaces were Muslim women were able to travel, read widely and becomes increasingly connected to digital and virtual spaces through the advent of the Internet and mounting social media platforms. True to its 'Rainbow Nation' adage, South Africa has a unique mélange of people, cultures and contexts. South African Muslim women have been exposed to an array of ideologies, which at times may have conflicted with *Sharia* (Islamic law) and possibly challenged their Muslim identities. In the same breath the fall of Apartheid and the gradual assimilation into the widely accepted notion of the 'global village' may have in fact reinforced many of the localised notions and beliefs privy to traditional Islamic ideology (Sader, 2008). Hence the thesis documents how these experiences and events over the lifecourse carve individual perspectives around the concept of ageing.

Aim, Objectives and Research Questions of the Study

As mentioned, the thesis's primary aim was to explore and understand how South African Muslim mothers and daughters of Indian descent interpret and understand ageing. The study examined the influence of acculturation, introspection and the meanings attributed to life events, transitions and turning points. For these reasons, the thesis rests on a specially developed theoretical framework which applied the lifecourse perspective (Elder, 1999), symbolic interactionism (Mead, 1934; Blumer, 1969) and the writings of post-colonial feminism (for example, Mohanty, 1986; 2002; Van der Spuy and Clowes, 2007).

The specific objectives were to:

- Unpack how Muslim mothers and daughters choose to personally define ageing.
- Uncover how Muslim mothers and daughters interpret and feel about their experiences of ageing through the lifecourse.
- Understand the ways in which Muslim mothers and daughters perceptions of ageing are influenced or affected by various life events, transitions and turning points in the lifecourse.
- Uncover common and or dissimilar intergenerational perspectives on ageing amongst Muslim mothers and daughters by exploring the 'historical self' and understanding the role of temporality and context in shaping of such perspectives.
- Investigate the role of 'personal retrospect' in explaining the subjective and desired experiences of ageing.

Additionally the study also set out to:

- Reveal intergenerational anxiety expressed by Muslim mothers and daughters on growing older.
- Investigate the role of religious beliefs and practices in the construction of ageing amongst Muslim mothers and daughters
- Uncover how Muslim mothers and daughters define successful ageing and to what extent is this definition influenced by their lived realities

In-line with the objectives of the study, the main research questions were:

- How do Muslim mothers and daughters understand the concept of ageing?
- How do Muslim mothers and daughters internalise and feel about their experiences of ageing through the lifecourse?
- How are Muslim mothers and daughters perceptions of ageing influenced or affected by various life events, transitions and turning points in the lifecourse?
- What temporal, historical and contextual factors shape common and or dissimilar intergenerational perspectives on ageing amongst Muslim mothers and daughters?
- What is the role of 'personal retrospect' in explaining the subjective and desired experiences of ageing amongst Muslim mothers and daughters?

Subsidiary research questions were:

- How do Muslim mothers and daughters understand the concept of successful ageing?
- What shapes the anxiety of growing older for Muslim mothers and daughters?
- Do religious beliefs and practices play an influential role in Muslim mothers and daughters construction of ageing?

Organization of the Thesis

The thesis comprises of the following sections.

The *Literature Review* presents an overview of literature gathered from interdisciplinary fields such as psychology, gerontology, anthropology, medical sociology, cultural, media, gender Islamic and population studies. The purpose of the review is to provide context to the thesis thereby allowing for a

comparison of emergent themes and alternate voices. A synthesis of existing scholarly work regarding ageing and experiences of ageing is presented.

The *Theoretical Framework* discusses the construction of an innovative theoretical framework for the study. This pioneering study is one of many emergent attempts to use intergenerational perspectives to understand personal comprehensions of ageing in a non-Western context. Hence, the study applied the lifecourse perspective (Elder, 1999), theory of symbolic interactionism (Mead, 1934; Blumer, 1969) and the writings of post-colonial feminism (for example, Mohanty, 1986; 2002; Van der Spuy and Clowes, 2007) have been included to strengthen the case and focus on Muslim women in South Africa.

The chapter on *Methodology* engages in a detailed presentation of the research approach adopted for the study. Considerations made for the overall research design and qualitative approach are discussed. Processes related to sampling, the reflexive role of the researcher, research instruments data collection, analysis, reliability, validity and ethical considerations are explained in the chapter.

The *Analysis of Findings* provides a thorough and rich account of intergenerational perspectives on ageing from the qualitative data. Relevant excerpts from participant narratives are used and unpacked to provide substantive answers to questions posed by the thesis. Global and local literature explored for the study is cited to strengthen findings as well to provide a further comprehensive account of the ageing experience amongst mothers and daughters in the study.

In the concluding chapter, *Discussion, Conclusion and Recommendations**,*** summative comments are made to consolidate the lead findings emanating from the qualitative data; along with supporting proof from the literature. Finally, areas for future research in order to garner a nuanced perspective of ageing and its experiences in the South African context are suggested.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The thesis draws on multidisciplinary scholarly work. The purpose of the review is to provide a framing context to the thesis by exploring the breadth of the research topic. A synthesis of existing bodies of knowledge regarding the experiences of ageing by women and Muslim women in particular both globally and locally is presented. The review presents wider debates and highlights how the study contributes to or challenges some of the claims made. The review of literature further extends to identifying gaps in the literature relating to the entirety of the ageing experience in the global and South African context.

Conceptualising Ageing

There are a number of definitions on ageing as there are writers to define it. Attempts to define ageing is very much related to the context of its use. This thesis views ageing as a ubiquitous process and not an event (Strehler, 1962 cited in Tyagi, 1999). Yaylagul and Seedsman (2011:257) asserted that ageing is the "common denominator" across all societies and cultures, yet it remains a uniquely reflexive personal experience. De Beauvoir's (1977) claim of "die early or grow old: there is no alternative" has been greatly challenged in the decades since its publication (Vincent, 2006; Scherbov and Sanderson, 2016). Scholarly evidence gathered pointed out the 'alternative' and other positive pathways to ageing that bring out meaningful opportunities for continued engagement in life - best summed as "becoming, and belonging" (Renwick and Brown, 1996 cited in Dupuis and Alzheimer, 2008: 91). This thesis is one further example in the plethora of similar studies addressing the "deficit orientated" discourse of ageing (Yaylagul and Seedsman (2011: 259).

Yaylagul and Seedsman (2011) said that attempts to understand first-hand accounts of the ageing experience must take cognisance of the social setting inclusive of both context and consequences associated with political, economic, cultural and historical events. Equally, there are also calls to understand the "existential dimension" of the human experiences of ageing with the proviso that a balanced approach acknowledging the diversity of personal experiences associated with ageing are taken into account (Cohen, 2005; Yaylagul and Seedsman, 2011; Kahlin, Kjellberg, Nord and Hagberg, 2013)

The concept of ageing is thus reflective of these dimensions. For example, ageing is chronologically expressed as "how old are you?" Biologically viewed as "you look good for your age", subjective as

how old or young do you feel" and sociological as "you should not be doing that at your age" (Scott, 2018). Therefore, as an intricate and dynamic part of the life cycle, four lead dimensions of ageing are commonly identified in the literature (Kalinga and Kumar, n.d). Namely, chronological, biological psychological and social ageing (Glascock and Feinman, 1980; Kalinga and Kumar, n.d). In the context of the thesis, cultural ageing is also noted as a key component to the ageing experience in the life course. These dimensions are discussed hereon.

Chronological Ageing

Chronological age refers to the number of years since an individual was born. There is much consensus that the use of chronological age when investigating age through the lens of the life course is not the preferred ideal (Dannefer, 1987; Schroots and Birren, 1987). For instance, such definitions are inadequate as it focuses primarily on calendar time and is independent of psychological and socio-cultural factors (Rosenbloom, 2012). Additionally, chronological age is often used by researchers as a proxy for biological and psychological maturation as well as the manner in which integration into society through various life phases has occurred (Dannefer and Settersten, 2010; Settersten, 2017). It nevertheless does not explore the way in which experiences, roles and statuses of individuals are understood, perceived and linked to their age and more importantly the implicit connectedness that is shared between these aspects and the larger societal framework (Kertzer, 1989).

Chronological age places individuals at different strata within society and is used to determine social order and predictability (Birren and Cunningham, 1985; Settersten and Mayer, 1997). Yet such social order and predictability is not static but is context-driven, dynamic and layered. Martinez (2005:1) asserts that cultural milestones or what he refers to as "biocultural portals" such as status in the community, perceived wisdom and so on; define and trigger life transitions and influences how such transitions are assimilated. In other words, how a culture or society marks or regards such biocultural portals strongly influence the "cognitive and biological expectations for the second half of life" (Martinez, 2005:14). In so doing, it is the culture or society that interprets health and the quality of ageing (Gergen and Gergen, 2001). As individuals' thoughts and actions are socially and contextually shaped; individual as social actors in turn have the ability to change society. Hence collective transmission and meditation is expected (Billington, Hockey and Strawbridge, 1998). For some, ageing may be viewed as a natural progression, symbolising new experiences and is openly embraced. For others, ageing can be seen as the presence of impending affliction, onset of disease and the inevitable decline in the quality of life. Therefore, a chronological explanation inherently fails to unearth such collective and individual integrated notions of ageing.

As such writers such as Birren and Cunningham (1985) and Goecke and Kunze (2018) suggest that alternative and positive perspectives to the ageing phenomenon which are specific and sensitive to individual difference must be developed. In support, this thesis extends the development of such alternative and positive outlooks on ageing as found in studies by Vincent (2006) and Denmark and Zarbiv (2016).

Biological Ageing

Focused on events or senescent changes which progressively impair physiological processes, biological ageing places emphasis on how an individual is less able to withstand the effects of advancing age, disease and illness and overall physical degeneration (Kalinga and Kumar, n.d; Rosenbloom, 2012). Other studies show that conceptualisations of ageing, especially in later life has become decreasingly multifaceted and increasingly related to health status (Brubaker and Powers, 1976; Johnson, 1976; Freund and Smith, 1997). In support, pro-senescence scholar de Magalhães (2013:1) sees ageing as a "progressive deterioration of physiological function, an intrinsic age-related process of loss of viability and increase in vulnerability".

Jin (2010) asserts that multiple theories exist which aim to explain the process of ageing at a biological level; yet none provide a fully satisfactory consensus as to why individuals age the way they do. From Jin's (2010) perspective, ageing stems from physiological factors and is modified by environmental elements throughout the lifecourse (Kalinga and Kumar, n.d). However, Jin (2010) fails to consider that the pace and proportion at which decline occurs is not uniform. Additionally, such theories by design fail to acknowledge ageing and the sociological effect on an individual's physical and subsequent emotional state.

Supportive in some measure, Gorman (1999) states that the ageing process is a dynamic biological reality and beyond human control. In the same vein, Gorman (1999) also viewed ageing subjective to the social construction by each society, where biological ageing is not a precursor for the meanings associated with experiences of ageing. Rather socially constructed meanings of age are of more significance (Gormon, 1999). Acknowledging the influence of biology on the ageing process, the thesis is aligned to Gormon's (1999) socially constructed understanding of the ageing experience. As such, delving deeper into biological understandings of ageing as penned by Mackenzie (2012), Rattan (2013), Jin (2010) and Stauffer (2007) are beyond the scope of the study. However as an extension of the

discussion on biological ageing in the context of the research, the thesis presents literature on sociological constructions of ageing, pain and illness. These are discussed later in the chapter.

Psychological Ageing

Psychological ageing refers to changes that occur over the lifecourse which point to an individual's "personality, mental functioning and sensory and perceptual processes" (Kalinga and Kumar, n.d). According to Birren and Shroots (2000) and Jegede (2003) additional dimensions of cognitive functioning such as self-esteem and self-efficacy are also included as part of psychological ageing. Geropsychology or psychological care aimed at older adults facing mental health issues associated with ageing such as anxiety, depression and age-related illness has received increased attention in decades past – and with good reason (Birren and Shroots, 2000; Ranzjin, 2002). With each passing year "new material" is added to the individual lifecourse creating different pathways for interpretations and experiences (Birren and Cochran, 2001). This may include self-reflection and identity re-assessment which facilitates acceptance - or not - of life lived through "new understandings of his/her past and understandings that often lead to revisions in his/her anticipated future" (de St Aubin and Baer, 2003:331).

In his discussion of developments towards a positive psychology of ageing, Ranzjin (2002) claimed that strengths of older persons are closely related to their social and physical contexts where such strengths are often overlooked. For example, older persons have an increased ability to regulate emotions, leading to greater levels of contentment and acceptance of their lived realities (Strongman and Overton, 1999). Whilst lauded for the shift in focus, studies like Ranzjin and Grbich (2001) focus primarily on older persons. Pitting the gains of the older generation against the younger like appreciation and satisfaction of life, wisdom, contentment creates the impression that younger persons are incapable of developing and experiencing positive associations with psychological ageing at younger ages. Furthermore, despite the growing body of research on positive gains associated with ageing such as Dittman-Kohli (1990) and Strongman and Overton (1999); Uttal and Perlmutter (1989) point out the converse, where ageing in later years is marked by declining abilities and strategies to minimise further decline. As both arguments feature in discussions of quality of life as related to successful ageing; this thesis takes issue with the primary focus on older persons as well as the "losses" described as part of psychological ageing. Hence the thesis includes discussions on gains in all ages and offers a balanced approach in understandings of psychological ageing.

Socio-Cultural Ageing

Recognising that human development is predicated on interrelated life stages, Cutler (1992:5) said "people do not age in laboratories, they age in society". This assertion is supported by Billington et al (1998). The formation of the self as argued by Billington et al (1998) is a result of experience and interaction. In support, Schaefer (2014) added that age and quality of life is closely related to the environment. Therefore, merging these assertions is the perspective that ageing is a socio-cultural process which is based on the dynamic interaction between the self and environment.

Evidence of ageing as a socio-cultural phenomenon was examined by Scherger (2009). Using data from the "Taking Part" Survey of England, Scherger (2009) showed that participation in socio-cultural activities such as sport and recreation, playing a musical instrument or attending the cinema is influenced by age and the position in the lifecourse. For example, gender effects, occupational class, education and income, influenced the frequency (increased or decreased) of participation (Scherger, 2009). Socialisation and the different meanings attached to activities was cited as an explanatory factor for decreased participation in certain activities, particularly for older cohorts (Scherger, 2009). The paper concluded that generational differences in the frequency and interest in cultural participation is produced by socialisation in younger ages within cohorts; thus making it harder to influence at older ages. Therefore the most apt time to engage on the value of participation in socio-cultural activities would be in younger years as meanings attached to activities are being or yet to be formed (Scherger, 2009).

In his scholarly piece discussing ageing and longevity, Martinez (2005) criticized life sciences for failing to consider cultural dynamics in the process of growing older. He adds that "growing older is a dynamic cognitive, biological and cultural co-authoring of health rather than a hopeless unfolding of pathology" (Martinez, 2005: 14). This narrative is consistent with arguments presented by Gormon (2000) and Gergen and Gergen (2001). The thesis places great importance on socio-cultural ageing in its contribution to new understandings of ageing in the South African and non-Western setting. The review will discuss a number of studies which examined ageing from a socio-cultural perspective and its link to lifecourse. For now, from the brief appraisal of the conceptualisation of ageing; ageing can be viewed as existential, cognitive and behavioural outcomes derived from individual socio-cultural histories.

In acknowledging these conceptualisations of ageing, their differences and failure to factor integrated perspectives, a singular conceptualisation of ageing for the thesis is not adopted. As the study is by

design descriptive and exploratory, agreeing an existing definition of ageing at the outset nullifies the true purpose of the research. In understanding how ageing is understood and interpreted by two related generations of Muslim women in South Africa, the study has elicited its own unique conceptualisations of ageing through the perspective of the study participants. This is shared in the *Analysis of Findings*.

Scope of Ageing Research

As presented in the *Introduction*, research on ageing has largely been defined by both the natural and social sciences where the scope and variation on ageing studies has widened in recent years. This interest has been prompted in some measure by the demographic transition of some countries in the midst of a growing older population (Joubert and Bradshaw, 2006; Aboderin, 2003; Scherbov and Sanderson, 2016). Apart from demographic forces, the scope in ageing research has also been prompted by other factors which are of relevance to this study to which a sociological contribution is made.

Quèniart and Charpentier (2011) add that there have been several studies on older aged persons which focus on attitudes to the elderly, treatment, support and care, retirement and even death. Lalive d'Epinay (1995) write that old age has expanded in scope where there are many stages of old age thus stimulating research into understanding new forms of ageing as part of an ageing continuum. Consequently, older cohorts of women appear to have received the greatest attention of ageing research (Covan, 2005; Radtke, Young and van Mens-Verhulst, 2016). Writers such as Caradec (2001) and Quèniart and Charpentier (2011: 988) state that studies on older women should seek to avoid "the homogenization of the elderly…and the decontextualization of their experiences of ageing". In support, Charpentier and Billette (2010) conclude that older women have multiple experiences of ageing. Hence studies have also focused on personal constructions of age stereotypes, self-perception of ageing, social representation of old age, body image, size and satisfaction in later years, successful ageing and ageing in place to name a few (Öberg and Tornstam, 1999; Tunaley et al, 1999; Altschuler and Katz, 2010; Wiles et al, 2011).

A stark contrast is observed on the scope of ageing research amongst younger aged women. While research amongst younger aged women has also focused on self-representation of age, age stereotyping, and the perception and construction of age; some studies have been limited to certain foci of research where age is a precursor in the interest in younger aged women. Whilst insightful, these studies largely include matters of reproduction, fertility, sexual experience and the like (Obeisat, Gharaibeh, Oweis and Gharaibeh, 2012; Tahiri, Kalaja and Bimbashi, 2015). This however creates the fallacy that such

topics are not relevant to the ageing experiences of older aged women – which is not true as shown in studies by Siverskog (2015) and Miller (2018)

On the other hand, research which has differentiated the foci of older and younger women relates to the broad investigation of attitudes towards the elderly, ageism and ageing anxiety (Lasher and Faulkender, 1993; Koukouli, Pattakou-Parasyri, and Kalaitzaki, 2013). Research studies have also shown that the construction age and ageing amongst younger and older women often mirror each other especially with regard to negative stereotyping (Perrig-Chiello, 2001). This is relevant to the study as the views of both generations – positive or otherwise – are critical to the de-homogenized holistic construction of the ageing experience, particularly in the South African context.

As highlighted in the *Introduction*, global ageing research has originated from particular regions of the world. These include cross-sectional and large-scale panel surveys predominantly in Western settings (Scherger, 2009; Parsons, Gale, Kuh and Elliott, 2014). Refreshingly, cross-cultural ageing research in alternate settings, particularly from Asia and the Middle-East has also surfaced in recent times (Ahmed, 2005; Hsu, 2007; Bergman, Bodner and Cohen-Fridel, 2013; Tam, 2017; Jackson and Liu, 2017). These offer a more nuanced understanding of the ageing experience in unique settings amongst different aged samples. Furthermore, in acknowledgement of globalisation, migration and changing family structures, an increase in studies that examined intergenerational relationships and ageing has also emerged (Albert and Coimbra, 2017). Within this context, interest in the self, family and ageing has been reinforced and received increased attention (Andersen, Chen and Miranda, 2002; Herlofson and Hagestad, 2010).

The amplified focus on untapped regions and populations of study has also brought about new insightful areas of emphases in ageing research (Sherman, Harvey and Noxell, 2005; Litchenstein, 2012; McWilliams and Barrett, 2014). Termed as "new gerontology", studies have gradually concentrated on the improvement of life as part of the ageing process (Miller, 2018:2). The narrative of "loss, disease and disability" (Miller, 2018:3) has progressively been replaced by the "physically capable, deserving social support, and adapting if not transcending the ageing process" (Radtke et al, 2016:99).

Taking the conceptualisation and scope of ageing research into account; in accordance with the objectives and questions raised by the research, the review hereon discusses literature of relevance to the study. It pays particular attention to context, sample, general findings – reflective of the amalgam of dimensions associated with ageing – and gaps which are addressed by this thesis.

Scholarly Focus on Muslim Women

Long standing stereotypes of Muslim women have been present in the West thereby distorting the image of Muslim women. This point has also been made by writers such as Edross (1997), Sader (2008) and Murji (2010). Offenhauer (2005) asserts until the late twentieth century, reflections on Muslim women and their culture, roles and status were largely absent from the scholarly sphere. If mention was made in the literature (usually Western) it was done so in a fleeting manner riddled with sensational stereotypical views (Offenhauer, 2005). Interestingly, literature produced for Muslim women revolved around moral notions of living a pious life and by knowing your place in society (Offenhauer, 2005; Hussain, 2019). The turn in the tide was evident over the last two decades where there has been a significant increase in the volume of studies that have emerged on Muslim women which attempted to unpack the prevailing reductionist and stereotyped assumptions. According to Offenhauer (2005:5) "this paucity of rigorous research began to be remedied in the late 1970s, and by the early 1980s scholarship about women in Muslim societies had truly taken off. The 1990s saw an explosion of writing about women, which is on-going, as is the growth in the number of interested scholars who address issues of gender and Islam".

Given the tension that is present between the two camps of scholarly expression on Muslim women, some topics, regions and nations are more documented than others. The common thread that runs through these dimensions is the emphasis placed on female disadvantage that is assessed via the present gender gap in opportunities and access to or lack of resources (Offenhauer, 2005; Ryan, 2011; Hussain, 2019). As such interest in the lives of Muslim women has usually occurred within the dimensions of politics and conflict, demography, ideology, law, family and the economy.

Offenhauer (2005) notes that with the advent of global interest in the lives of women a significant amount of scholarly work has been generated on previously 'untouched' subjects relating to Muslim women. Studies of this nature rest on understanding how gender based inequalities disadvantage females in their physical and psychological well- being (Offenhauer, 2005; Hussain, 2019). Reflection on the study of such 'taboo' topics and Muslim women serves to highlight the somewhat neglect paid to Muslim women in 'normal, everyday, lived experiences' and the challenges and opportunities created from this (Ryan, 2011). Hence the thesis makes a considerable sociological contribution in this regard.

Scholarly Focus on Muslim Women in the South African Context

The focus of research on Muslim women globally is somewhat mirrored in the South African context. Shaikh, Hoel and Kagee (2011) write that few empirical studies have been conducted exclusively on South African Muslim women. Some of the researched areas include social and gendered identity construction in different contexts (Edross, 1995; Edross, 1997; Sader, 2008), culture and religion (Soares, 2008), marriage (Bangstad, 2004), divorce (Toefy, 2001; Tayob, 2003), sexuality (Hoel, 2010), sexual and reproductive health (Hoel, Shaikh and Kagee, 2011); HIV research (Ahmed, 1999; Ahmed, 2003), Muslim Personal Law and the Muslim Marriages Bill (Abdullah, 2013).

As pertinent as these topics of investigation are they do not always reflect issues that maybe applicable to collective South African Muslims. Shaikh et al (2011: 97) writes, "a common element that runs through all the aforementioned studies in South Africa is the focus on specific samples of vulnerable Muslim women". This thesis acknowledged this and thus at the outset selected respondents from different backgrounds and regions so as not to perpetuate the "vulnerable women" approach to research on Muslim women. Muslim women in the study are viewed as component and knowledgeable on their social lives where this knowledge ensures order and stability in their everyday interactions (Collodel, de Beer and Kotze, 2012).

Perhaps a refresher to the type of research conducted on Muslim women in South Africa in recent years come from studies like Sader (2008) and Shaikh et al (2011). Sader (2008) firstly investigated how married, educated and employed Muslim women constructed their identity and secondly how their husband's constructed their wife's identity (Sader, 2008). Sader's (2008) study elicited robust and positive responses from participants where Muslim women described themselves as independent and strong and rejected the stereotyped notions of Muslim women as oppressed at the hands of men (Sader, 2008). The women also did not view the *hijab* as restrictive visual marker of their oppression but instead one that commanded respect and propriety (Sader, 2008).

In a study that investigated perspectives and experiences of marriage, spousal relationships and sexual and reproductive health decision making, Shaikh et al (2011) found that Muslim women who participated in the study viewed marriage as an equal relationship where a significant portion of women in the study reported to have also made financial contributions to the household (Shaikh et al, 2011). Acknowledging the prevalent stereotype that Muslim women are oppressed and ruled by men; the study also found that the majority of Muslim women were not afraid of their husbands nor did they force or

compel them to do anything against their will (Shaikh et al, 2011). The women also expressed comfort and freedom in their sexual relationships with their husbands (Shaikh et al, 2011).

Viewing the evidence of the latter body of knowledge; it only serves to drive the point that more research is awaited on the general lived experiences of Muslim women in South Africa. Such research will be instrumental in 'shaking up preconceived mind-sets' on Muslim women. It is the researcher's conviction that investigating ageing amongst South African Muslim women through the lifecourse is but one step in this direction.

Ageing, Self and Society

The world viewed as something 'out there' does not lay in wait to be discovered. Instead reality is created by individuals "who act in and toward their world" (Conrad and Barker, 2010:71). Placing emphasis on the social, cultural and historical, social constructionism is viewed in the thesis as underscoring how meanings of phenomena – ageing in the case of this research – are developed through interaction in social contexts, thereby producing perceptions of individual realities (Blumer, 1969; Gecas, 1982). To this, Constable (1984:120) wrote that "persons 'make' roles within the limits of social understandings and agreements, not simply 'take' them". Individuals are thus not passive beings but are actively engaged in the construction of their lives. This section of the review uncovers the link between the self and society and its greater connectedness to the discourse of ageing.

Individuals as social agents or actors have the capacity to reflect resulting in two types of consciousness characterising daily interactions, namely practical and discursive consciousness (Billington et al, 1998). Giddens (1991; 2001) sees both types as critical to social life. Tacitly 'doing' or 'getting on' with social life marks practical consciousness. This produces structure and predictability to social interaction and life. Human action or agency changes or alters social life through continuous monitoring of the 'goings-on', thus resulting in reflexive action regarded as discursive consciousness (Giddens, 1991; 2001). Essential to human agency and reflexivity is to experience the world subjectively. Consequently, as much as society is experienced and meanings derived, it too is scrutinised creating potential for change (Billington et al, 1998). Referred to as the 'duality of structure', Giddens (1991; 2001) argues that society is not static or random but rather dynamic and continually changing.

Experiencing the world as subjective and reflexive in the context of ageing allows individuals to create and negotiate their personal ageing journeys in the lifecourse. Ageing identities are developed unique

to the individual on account of their discursive consciousness amidst flexible social contexts. Central to the 'duality of structure' is the inextricable link between the 'private' and 'public' realms of individual lives, especially in the formation of the ageing self. In the context of the study, the 'private' is represented by the family home with the presence of significant social actors. The 'public' sphere is represented by the socio-cultural and historical context within which the 'private' is situated. To understand the link between the two spheres and the implications for constructed meanings of ageing, Barley's (1989) analogy of the English and Indonesian connotations attributed to homes cited in Billington et al (1998) is reflected on.

For Barley (1989) cited in Billington et al (1998) the private home on some levels is symbolic to the private self: a "container with clear boundaries which shut out the public world" (Billington et al, 1998: 38). For the English, the purchase of a home represented belonging, identity and an overall sense of ownership. Within the home, a family formed by love and procreation added to the sense of each individual being appreciated and valued as a member of the family as opposed to any role or characteristics or as an isolated unit (Billington et al, 1998). In contrast, the visiting Indonesian tribes based their identities on their ancestral roots and their archaic homes rather than the modern homes they lived in (Billington et al, 1998). Their private context did not create or impose a boundary with the outside world as they chose to identify with ideals of ancestry; a construct which superseded physical structure or creation.

Billington et al (1998:38) summed Barley (1989) private-public separation as "natural, culturally and historically located". However, Barley (1989) cited in Billington et al (1998) and his experiential account of English private homes presents a conceptual inconsistency thereby illustrating just how public the private space is. For instance, both internally and externally English homes were regulated by structure, purpose and function. This observations thus point to the fallacy that whilst the 'private' exists and we pursue a life of difference and individuality; our private spaces remain "culturally and publically" regulated (Billington et al, 1998: 39).

Using Barley's (1989) paradoxical example of English homes; the study examined the decisive yet at times shifting boundaries between the 'private' and 'public' contexts of Muslim mothers and daughters as it related to the formation of the ageing self through personal narratives. As much as meanings of ageing and the ageing self has its beginnings in the 'private', the way in which it is 'acted out, toward the world' is in some measure regulated by immediate socio-cultural and historical contexts. The findings of the research point to this duality. However, to understand the relative importance of voices

within and external to the 'private', a discussion on the self, significant others and 'public' as represented by the community is warranted.

The Self and Significant Others

As alluded, within the 'private' space is the presence of significant others or prominent social actors which tacitly or even directly influence thought and action. This is defined as persons – which may include family – who are connected to the person through emotional investment at one point in time (Andersen, Chen and Miranda, 2002). Like Billington et al (1998), the thrust of Andersen and colleague's claim is that significant others are particularly influential in shaping "self-definition, self-regulatory process and personality as it is expressed in relation to others" (Andersen et al, 2002: 159). In support, Constable (1984) explained that individuals' self-consciousness, responsiveness, action and interaction emerge from self-evaluation of their surroundings as well as from significant others.

The interpersonal patterns or transference developed in relation to significant others include shared realities and relationships (Constable, 1984; Andersen et al, 2002). Transference may include positive or negative experiences thus presenting with implications for vulnerability or resilience across the lifecourse; especially with reference to adaptive behaviours and maintaining new and current roles and relationships. Similarly, just as social interaction facilitates roles and bonds, imbalance and incompatibility within this interaction may also produce interpersonal and societal conflict (Constable, 1984; Giddens, 2001; Bawin-Legros, 2002).

Put differently and providing a greater link to the self and society, Constable (1984:119) argued that "persons learn and become unique through their experiences of present and past relationships to other persons, to larger social units, and to instructional structures; through persons who are their significant other; and through the reflected expectations of societal contexts that have been thrust upon them and that they have chosen". Referred to as the "entangled" self, or the "self-with-significant-other", Andersen et al (2002) argued that the self or individual is relational to others, even when not physically present. In other words, in the absence of the significant other, the "entangled" self remains functional. The functional "entangled" self in the absence of significant others is particularly important in the setting of the study as the transmission of intergenerational views on ageing may continue to be shaped and lived out, even in the absence as described.

Constable (1984) also examined the self and family interaction as a foundation for experiencing the world. The family is the basic unit of society (Giddens, 2001; Schaefer, 2014). Constable (1984) added that "human social institutions such as the family are socially constructed, that is they are given form and pattern by the conceptions of their family members, and to a greater or lesser degree they reflect enduring realities of human nature". The family unit, either nuclear or extended is not independent, but is viewed as inadequate in the absence of ties to its communal context (Constable, 1984). Constable's (1984) assertion is supported by Billington et al (1998) in that whilst the family unit is 'private' it remains socially constructed and regulated by the 'public'.

Differences in the nuclear and extended family set-up yield multiple distinctions. Written from a Western perspective, Constable (1984) said that the nuclear family is hinged on individual autonomy and self-support. In contrast, the extended family offers a multiplicity of family roles and a different level of emotional investment. According to Constable (1984) this dissimilarity lends nuclear families to an increased vulnerability and susceptibility of breakdown due to the limited kinship and resources available. Conversely, despite its limited individualism, extended families offer a buffer to members through its "reservoir of available persons" (Constable, 1984: 121). A generalised account, Constable (1984) fails to consider that whilst some commonalities exist across settings, nuclear and extended family are not homogenous in its agreed structure which gives it purpose and function. Additionally, from a socio-cultural and historical context, especially factoring in temporality since its publication, family boundaries are now more fluid owing to greater global forces (Albert and Coimbra, 2017). The thesis acknowledges the merits of Constable (1984) however it seeks to position the discourse of ageing within family units (nuclear and extended) in the dynamic South African context; which may differ from the Western perspective of the family.

As stated, each family establishes its own meanings, conceptions and expectations of the world and each other. This is particularly evident in the interaction of generations within a family – be it the mother-daughter relationship or the grandmother-granddaughter relationship. The family, especially in this generational context is thus ground for developing roles, bonds, decision making as well as the reconciliation of differences (Giddens, 2001; Schaefer, 2014). Importantly, roles and relationships developed are bound by "ongoing relationships and memories of the parental generation from their own families of origin" (Constable, 1984: 122). Communication is central to the establishment of one-on-one and generational relationships within a family unit. Conflict or generational struggle may also ensue whens life stage or developmental needs necessitate a re-evaluation and re-negotiation of roles which challenge the 'structure as agreed' (Schaefer, 2014). The disjuncture between family structure and evolving identities and roles of the family is reflected in emergent power imbalances and conflict

especially “if there are forces outside the family supporting a different self-conception or if the structure demands the sacrifice of one member’s selfhood and communication with the outside world in the interests of family solidarity” (Constable, 1984: 126).

Resting on sociological understandings of ‘family practices’ by Morgan (1996; 2019); Finch’s (2007:66) work on ‘displaying families’ highlighted that families are defined more by “doing” than “being”. In other words, membership alone does not constitute belonging. Rather it is reciprocity and meanings of one’s actions that are understood by relevant others (Finch, 2007). Morgan (1996) cited in Finch (2007:66) viewed this shift in “family as a structure” to understanding families as “sets of activities which take on a particular meaning, associated with family”. On this, Morgan (1996) cited in Finch (2007:66) asserted that family is a “facet of social life” representing a “quality rather than a thing”. This reference to quality is made in terms of the character of relationships that make the family. Thus Finch (2007) adds that ‘doing family’ is sustained by ‘display’, that is the relationships. In support, Mancini and Blieszner (1989:279) state that “reciprocity in these relationships has come to be seen as important for understanding relationship quality”

Finch (2007) argued that social interaction and the meanings derived and understood by relevant others are a tool for ‘displaying families’. Hence ‘displaying families’ is based on the premise that the individual understanding of family is fluid and is seated in personal narratives. Here, social actors continually shape the social word of the family. The implications for ‘doing’ or ‘displaying families’ mean that relationships evolve, questioned and are redefined. Therefore, personal stories about family relationships are a window through which ‘family’ and its ‘character ‘can be viewed.

In the context of this study, the transference of perceptions of ageing is posited to occur within the home – the ‘private space’ – amongst significant others such as between mothers and daughters. Leaning on the arguments of Constable (1984), Morgan (1996) and Finch (2007) with respect to ‘doing family’, communication, fluidity of relationships, re-evaluation and re-negotiation, the ‘transmission’ of views – even conflicting ones – are established. Additionally, other social actors within the home – for example, grandparents – with an emotional investment as described by Andersen et al (2002) are also viewed as instrumental in shaping personal outlook which may have an implication on how ageing is internalised and lived out.

Sense of Community and Integration

Sense of community and community attachment features prominently in community psychology and urban sociology literature (Farahani, 2016). The focus on place-based communities, such as the context of the neighbourhood has been equally studied in psychology and geography (Farahani, 2016). The development of social ties and a community attributed to physical space is - as argued by Wellman and Leighton (1979) and Talen (2000) - overemphasized. The argument suggests that sense of community is independent of physical space. On the contrary, Farahani (2016) maintains that space (likened to spatial arrangements of neighbourhood and residential blocks) is an inseparable component in the formation of local communities. The merits of both arguments are extracted by the study whereby the study positions itself as acknowledging the community and or physical space is a contributor towards a sense of communal composition and character; but to an extent. Additionally, it considers the roles and statuses filtered into the 'private' context which ultimately relates to interactions within and outside the home are done at the agency of people in so far as what they deem acceptable and enforceable (Billington et al, 1998).

Classically, sociologists define the concept of community as having three elements, namely place (neighbourhood), interest (commonality) and identity (shared belief and practice) (Farahani, 2016). These elements may be additionally categorised to include other types of communities (Glynn, 1986). Delving into further notions of other types of communities is beyond the scope of this thesis. Instead, the thesis concentrates on the meanings attributed to community and attachment as an explanative factor in its role in developing the discourse of ageing amongst the study sample.

McMillan and Chavis (1986) argued that the sense of community comprises of four elements, namely, membership or the feeling of belonging or not belonging to a community; influence or being able to exert 'sway' to encourage group cohesion; integration and fulfilment of needs or members needs are satisfied or fulfilled and lastly shared emotional connections or commonality from a shared history which is inclusive of scope and quality of interaction between members. In agreement, Hummon (1992) extends the sense of community to include community sentiment expressed by community satisfaction, community attachment and identity and community life. Low and Altman (1992) cited in Farahani, 2016: 365) suggest that the sense of community and attachment is facilitated by the "positive emotional bond that develops between individuals and their neighbourhood". According to Riger and Lavrakas (1981) and Farahani (2016) strengthened neighbourhood attachment is derived from social bonds and established behaviours. This is characterised by people who know their community members and feel a part of their neighbourhoods. The greater the circle of known members, the higher the attachment to the community and stronger social bonds are experienced (Farahani, 2016).

Long and Perkins (2007) contend that 'place attachment' differs from a 'sense of community'; where the former is an emotional construct based on physical space and the latter is cognitively and socially constructed. Place attachment in a collective sense, emphasises the bond between residents and the community. Sense of community on the other hand underscores the 'feeling' of being a member of the community. Put differently, given that one is a prerequisite to the other; without feeling as a member of the community (sense of community), the bond between others in the community will not be experienced (place attachment) (Farahani, 2016).

Additionally, while neighbourhoods are built on communal bonds and social networks, collective expectations and rootedness has changed over the years. This attests to the social contexts, including communities adaptive and reflexive natures as argued for by Billington et al (1998) and Giddens (2001). Furthermore through discursive consciousness people re-evaluate their membership, influence, fulfilment and emotional connections as they transition through the lifecourse. This is particularly important in the setting of the study. As the study examines two generations of women who lived under vastly different socio-cultural, historical and political contexts; the sense of community through the establishment of social bonds – or not – and the individual as a 'historical self' becomes a crucial factor to consider in the intergenerational construction of ageing.

Socio-Cultural and Historical Contexts of South African Muslims

Following the discussion that illustrated the relational self to society, the family as an institution and the significance of the community, connections between communal experiences of Muslims in the South African context are made in the section to follow.

Whilst a minority religion, Islam has been on the increase in recent years (Vahed, 2007; Hassan, 2011). The growing number of Muslims in South Africa is indicative of scale, transition, identity formulation and meanings attributed to physical spaces and relationships across contexts. In other words, the rise of the Muslim population through the early years is thought to also have been a conglomerate call for solidified identity on a personal and collective level necessitating the desire for physical public and private spaces to express such identity (Hassan, 2011). That said, the Muslim population of South Africa and their resultant identities are not viewed as homogenous by the thesis. Rather, it acknowledges that the journey towards establishing identity and expression is traced back to different paths and experiences (Hassan, 2011).

Despite social and political challenges, much of the Muslim population thrived under Colonial and Apartheid rule (Mahida, 1993; Tayob, 1999). In other words, prosperity was experiences in terms of social and economic position but also in solidifying identity with reference to establishing centres of prayer and learning, communities albeit with some challenges for instance segregation and regulated movement in Apartheid.

Historical evidence for such obstacles is evident in the writing of Dangor (1997). Intertwined in the narratives of Mahida (1993), Dangor (1997) and Vahed (2007) is the clear socio-economic and religio-political struggles faced by Muslims over the decades. Hence mentioning such academic accounts is essential to the study as many of the participants draw their personal histories from these very movements, institutions and events of the past. The study thus acknowledges the historical significance of these events and makes specific reference to Apartheid and its effect on the social contexts of Muslim mothers and daughters.

The multiplicity of Islam in South Africa is evident in the writings of Vahed and Jeppie (2005). The authors elaborate on how post-Apartheid Muslim communities are organised, hierarchized and fractured along racial and class lines. This is deepened by the inequitable access to economic and social capital. The emergent images from Vahed (2000) and Khan (2009) illustrate the complexity of meanings of what it is be a Muslim in post-Apartheid South Africa – particularity referenced by race and class divides. On the other hand, Vally (2001) viewed being an Indian and Muslim in post-Apartheid South Africa as a shift from 'Indianness' to 'Muslimness'. Vally (2001) sees this as a re-orientation of identity and positioning one's self within an evolving culture not bound by geographical spaces. Characterised by what Vahed (2007) sees as "new manifestations of piety" or adherence to new and specific types of religious dressing and mannerisms, Valley's (2001) post-Apartheid linkage and being Muslim to the wider global context is evident.

Vahed (2007:119) notes "residential concentration in racially segregated urban areas meant that many Indian and Coloured Muslims lived in proximity to other Muslims, while the infrastructure necessary to practice Islam, such as mosques, madrasahs, cemeteries and butcheries have forged a strong sense of being Muslim". Whilst such living arrangements are still present in South Africa, the tide has evolved and continues to do so. Given that Muslims continue to be divided by race, doctrine, language, class and ethnicity, boundaries have blurred and continually shift.

Whilst Vahed (2007: 119) points out that Muslims are viewed by outsiders as a monolith, "an imagined coalescence of people across race, class and ethnicity, who are drawn together by religion"; post-Apartheid South Africa afforded the opportunity for movement to the previously restricted thereby allowing for cultural and religious permeation. This contextual factor is particularly significant in that the influence of acculturation into new spaces is essential to understanding how Muslim mothers and daughters (re)negotiate their ageing selves in transitory contexts as explored in this study.

Ageing and the Lifecourse

The lifecourse perspective is a less rigid construction of patterning of lives compared to the popularly used term lifecycle which emphasises life stages from birth to death (Billington et al, 1998). Abu Bakar and Abdullah (2008) add that the lifecourse perspective is closely intertwined between historical time and one's personal history; where the changing biographical history of the informants and social history shape and influence each other. The value in this relationship is best appreciated through what the element of time brings. Abu Bakar and Abdullah (2008:6) write that "we study people's life experience: turning points and daily rituals, relationship with other people, commonplace situations such as meals and household duties. By accumulating and organising these details, we arrive at the ideas of social structure and social change". To this, Breen (2009) writes the lifecourse approach recognises that the different parts of people's lives are interconnected. In support, Bird (n.d) notes that the life history approach allows for the exploration of complexity and inter-relationships between people and phenomena. Owing to its focus on the individual as connected to others, as part of collective history and with a personal history, such arguments solidify the study of ageing using the lifecourse approach.

Scholarly contributions by Meyer (1986), Elder (1996), Baltes, Lidenberger and Staudinger (1996) and Nowotny (1989) highlighted that ageing and its link to the lifecourse has been conducted within the context of three distinct and debatable areas. Firstly research has been conducted in a more generalized way of how the lives of people are intertwined to the ever developing and evolving social and historical collective (Mayer, 1986 and Elder, 1996). Secondly through individual development namely the biological, psychological and social (Baltes, Lindenberger and Staudinger, 1996). Lastly, ageing and the lifecourse has been investigated through the lens of the social construction of time (Nowotny, 1989). This study considers these distinct areas in the formation of intergenerational perspectives of ageing but chooses to reflect the findings as an amalgam as opposed to separate facets. This represents a holistic construction of ageing for the thesis.

Research on ageing has become more complex as the focus moves from merely images of ageing and theoretical categories to that of layered analyses and expositions (Settersten and Mayer, 1997). Consequently, Settersten and Mayer (1997) point out that the measurement of age and the lifecourse has become increasingly difficult; thus providing an impetus to constructing more innovative ways to explore and make sense of the links. That said, current and emergent works nevertheless highlight meanings of ageing through the lifecourse. In response to Settersten and Mayer (1997) the thesis is an attempt to innovatively uncover insightful associations with ageing in the lifecourse amongst an under-researched group in a non-Western setting.

Personal identity and the formation of the self is a result of experiences and interaction with family and community and wider social networks (Schaefer, 2014). This is a fluid process across the lifecourse influenced by a multiplicity of events and transitions. "The role of accounts, stories or scripts is important here, providing a way of linking these kinds of changes, whether they are accounts told in anticipation of change or in retrospect" (Billington et al, 1998: 58). In other words, how individuals recount their lived realities, the stories chosen to be revealed reflect impact changes in the lifecourse. Billington et al (1998) discusses this within the ambit of 'rites of passage' or how the body and social transition relate to each other. The 'stories' of the lifecourse told in anticipation or retrospect is suggested to reveal what the ageing experience means to the individual. This relates to the experience of bodily changes, acquirement or loss of abilities – mental and or physical – and shifting patterns in social relationships. This provides a window of opportunity to link these first-hand experiences to ageing over the lifecourse in the study.

'Rites of passage' is a concept used to denote rituals that "make and mark" individual and social changes (Billington et al, 1998: 66). This may include marriage, childbirth, death, bereavement and illness among others. Connections between the biological and social facets of rites of passage in the lifecourse are relational (Schaefer, 2014). That is, meanings and symbolism create connections between the individual and social. This life-long socialisation across the lifecourse is central to the construction of the ageing experience in the thesis. Consequently, events and transitions contributing to the ageing self produces new or re-negotiated identifies and belief systems.

At the outset, it was known that the types of rites of passage or life events and transitions as the research viewed it would be multiple. It was thus the researcher's responsibility to co-create the linkages with the participant and unearth its link to ageing. In recounting experiences over the lifecourse, disclosure and sensitivity is an additional dimension that was considered. The likelihood of disclosure is influenced

by multiple factors in a conversation setting (Okken, van Rompay and Pruyn, 2012). Disclosure is more likely to occur of the discloser's state of mind and demeanour is positive (Ignatius and Kokkonen, 2007), interviewer and interviewee characteristics such as gender, age and status are mirrored (Cappella, 1981; Collins and Miller, 1994) and the presence of general trust, likeability and familiarity (Collins and Miller, 1984). Within the context of the study, through the use of the lifecourse perspective, Angrosino (1989) showed that intimate discussion and disclosure is possible when the above factors are considered.

The intergenerational perspective adopted by this study is unique in design and is geared towards understanding the sociological process of ageing between two generations within the South African setting. Mothers and daughters selected for participation are not viewed by the study as simply sources of information but rather as insightful representations of what ageing means to Muslim women in South Africa. Support for the use of intergenerational perspectives in research are found in Hareven (1994), Kellerhals, Ferreira and Perrenoud (2002), Waldrop (2012) and Quéniart and Charpentier (2012). Such studies view intergenerational relationships as a "barometer for social change" (Jamieson, n.d: 1). The chain of relationships between parents and children are a strong source of information for social change as such information is formulated across generations (Jamieson, n.d; Bawin-Legros, 2002).

By agreement individual or linked life histories are viewed as ideal types of data to understanding intergenerational transmission and social change (Jamieson, n.d). Useful and widely applied; life histories are favoured to explaining the impact of historical and social changes on human behaviour (Hutchison, 2007). By being cognisant of change and diversity; the lifecourse perspective is sensitive to culture and its practices. The use of life histories in exploring the social dynamics of ageing and identity has been successfully demonstrated in Brannen (2006) and Kellerhals et al (2002). Of bearing to this study, life histories are particularly useful in tracking biological, psychological and social processes in the timing of lives associated with a rapidly changing and diverse society (Bawin-Legros, 2002; Hutchison, 2007). Having canvassed how previous academic works have approached the subject; central methodological stance and related considerations made for the study are discussed.

Constructed Meanings of Ageing

Research on ageing includes both qualitative (Garoo, 2000; Gulllette, 2004: Wangmo, 2010) and quantitative (Bajekal, Blane, Grewal and Nazroo, 2004; Cai, 2009; Cappeliez and O'Rourke, 2009)

paradigms. Central to the choice of method are objectives of the inquiry and whether or not it seeks to establish causality, significance and relationships between variables or exploring and understanding a particular phenomenon to ageing. From the researcher's reading, it appeared that inquiries on ageing are predominantly from a qualitative perspective. This could be attributed to the discovery of meaning, associations and interpretation which are well suited to the subjective qualitative context (Mouton and Marais, 1988: Colladel, de Beer and Kotzé, 2012).

Based on 329 in-depth interviews with women in their sixties, seventies, eighties and nineties, Covan (2005) uncovered the meaning of ageing in the lives of these women as explained by reminiscence (looking back) and preminiscence (looking ahead). Using the lifecourse perspective, Covan (2005) explored the meanings of ageing as it related to the body, family, home and faith. The study revealed that while reminiscence is useful in understanding how meaning is socially constructed by the different cohorts in the sample; preminiscence played an equally important role. Consequently, ageing was conceptualised different among the cohorts included in the study. Common to all cohorts was the interwoven importance on the family, home, faith and body image.

Research on older women has revealed two contrasting camps of thought on ageing. In essence these reflect the negative and positive stereotype of ageing. Quèniart and Charpentier (2011) mention that Western representations of old age are usually negative eliciting views such as impairment and dependency. According to Quèniart and Charpentier (2011: 986) "they refer to what Hummel (1998 cited in Quèniart and Charpentier, 2011) termed 'vieillese ingrate' (unpleasant old age), a perspective in which older adults are seen as isolated, suffering, diminishing autonomy, dependent, indeed in a state of physical or mental impairment or degeneration". Perrig-Chiello (2001) in particular concludes that such views are held by both the young and old.

Other studies that resonate with these views on old age include Featherstone, Hepworth and Scambler (1998); Perrig-Chiello (2001); Hurd (2000) and Hurd-Clarke (2001). Lalive d'Epinay (1995) found that from in-depth analysis of 130 autobiographical accounts by older men and women aged between 65 and 80; old age is viewed as predominantly negative due to its cumulative losses; be it health, social usefulness or the pleasures of life. Interestingly older women viewed the loss of beauty and attractiveness as a particular concern Lalive d'Epinay (1995). Lalive d'Epinay (1995) explained for women the desire to please is greater thus making the loss that much more apparent. Hurd-Clark, Griffin and Mahlia (2009: 710-711) write that "women face a double standard of ageing and gendered ageism,

as they are at once old and female". This is akin to what Perrig-Chiello (2001) and Twigg (2004) describe as the losses (youthfulness, vigour and attractiveness) experienced by ageing women is inextricably linked to their femininity and thus in its diminishing state renders them as socially invisible.

In contrast to the above, positive views of ageing are also evident in the literature. For example, studies by Hopflinger (1995); Caradec (2001) and Charpentier and Quèniart (2008) show positive opinions on ageing by older persons. Common to these studies and in stark contrast to Hummel's (1998) 'vieillese ingrate' (cited in Quèniart and Charpentier, 2011) is the description of ageing and old age as being active, independent and socially engaged with family and friends. Quèniart and Charpentier (2011), in their study of older women showed that participants valued their autonomy and stressed the importance of being socially active in order to "stay in the swing of things" Quèniart and Charpentier (2011:983). In addition, a study that focused on age stereotypes and self-perception in French and Moroccan populations by Macia, Lahmam, Baali, Boetsch and Chapuis-Lucciani (2009), illustrated that age stereotypes were perceived as more positive in older, urban Moroccan adults than their French counterparts. Hummel (1998 cited in Quèniart and Charpentier, 2011) states that these positive views on ageing represent an ideological position specific to young adults, who have and will adopt this stance as they actively age (Hummel, 1998 cited in Quèniart and Charpentier, 2011).

According to Quèniart and Charpentier (2011: 987) "the image of the active, fulfilled old age has not replaced the image of the unpleasant or impaired old age; the two images co-exist. We believe they both express, in their own way, in the first case, negatively and in the other, coincidently, the predominant values of our postmodern societies, with their cult of youth and beauty, autonomy, individual fulfilment and productivity performance as the measure of a successful life and old age". This sentiment is profound as it deepens the need to understand the process and perception of ageing (both positive and negative) as it evolves along the continuum.

Research has established that younger women are greatly concerned with the loss of youth and personal looks during the ageing process (McConatha, Schnell, Volkwein, Riley and Leach, 2003) hence experiencing greater levels of anxiety than their male counterparts (Abramson and Silverstein, 2006). In support of this finding, Koukouli et al (2013) through their study of self-reported ageing anxiety amongst Greek students found that young women reported the highest concerns about physical appearance compared with men thus exhibiting higher levels of anxiety about ageing.

Through the use of diaries, memoirs and letters, Stavenuiter (1995) examined the self-images of elder men and women in the Netherlands and how these self-images differed from their contemporaries in nineteenth century literature. Analysis of personal documents revealed converse to the literature; old age was not viewed as a blessed experience for many. Elderly men and women cited ageing as a generally difficult experience and defined largely in socio-economic terms. The use of personal literature revealed intimate thoughts and fears; all which detail how old age is experienced in different ways (Stavenuiter 1995). Quéniart and Charpentier (2012) analysed twenty-five in-depth interviews with women aged sixty and eighty-five and older. Women in the sample described their reluctance to identify as older or elderly women, thereby negating persistent stereotypes and images of old age to dependence and fragility. Their diverse revelatory accounts challenged prevailing social prejudice and preconceptions on old age.

Another qualitative appraisal by Hurd-Clarke and Korotchenko (2011) examined existing socio-cultural research and theory concerned with the ageing body. In consonance with other studies like Lewis and Cachelin (2001) and Winterrich (2007) Hurd-Clarke and Korotchenko (2011) acknowledged existing commentaries of ageing through a diseased and ailing body; but also pointed out areas which are ignored such as sexuality and embodiment experience of older persons.

Chow and Bai (2011) revealed that being lonely, having severe chronic illness were statistically significant in negative perceptions of ageing. Reflecting on how Polish women fifty and older age, Ostrowska (2010) used secondary data and relied on descriptive statistics with logistic regression to show that women's ageing is a biological, psychological and socio-cultural process. Themes examined quantitatively included menopause, sexuality, social activity and expectation.

Aimed at exploring the perceptions of ageing amongst women of older ages, Brenner's (2007) qualitative study offered uniquely personal accounts of ageing and growing older in the South African context. Comparatively a small study in relation to some of the scholarly work referred to in the thesis, Brenner (2007) provided rich descriptions towards new understandings of ageing in the context of participant experiences. Findings by Brenner (2007) marked a noticeable transition from the 'grand narratives 'or stereotypes commonly found in the literature and thus presents narrative accounts focused on more positive associations with the ageing experience. Three areas in particular are of relevance to the study.

As mentioned by Ballard, Elston, Gabe (2005), the public and private perception of ageing featured prominently in Brenner (2007). Women in the study highlighted the differences they felt between what is seen on the outside or 'public' and felt on the inside or 'private'. Termed as "look age" and "feel age" by Öberg (2003: 106), the study highlighted that whilst changes in their physical appearance were accepted – decline in physical function, weight gain etcetera – women still wished to look attractive irrespective of their age. Furthermore, their overall acceptance of ageing was linked to self-acceptance in the way life had unfolded, both good and bad. Embedded in acceptance was also forgiveness towards specific persons in their lives, namely mothers in particular (Brenner, 2007). Lastly, positive reflections on growing older revealed a "more balanced view on ageing" (Brenner, 2007:144). Despite being afraid of declining health and independence, feelings of happiness, satisfaction and increased freedom at older ages contributed to their positive outlook on growing older (Brenner, 2007).

Whilst Brenner (2007) is a South African study, references to the lifecourse perspective are made in tracing events that influenced the perceptions of ageing among study participants. However, the link between the self and greater South African society within which participants lived were not explicit. It therefore, does not take the 'historical self' as shaped by temporal socio-cultural forces as an explanatory factor in the perception of the ageing experience - perhaps beyond the scope of Brenner (2007). This research study bridges this knowledge gap by contextualising the self and society as a contributory factor towards the construction of intergenerational perspectives on ageing.

Ageing, Illness and Pain

As seen in studies like Covan (2005) and Parsons et al (2014), the meanings of ageing included reflections of illness and pain. Whilst this points to biological and physiological facets of ageing, it also draws attention to the social construction of illness and pain. The interest in the social construction of illness has thrived in the last few decades with scholars endeavouring to understand the social dimensions of illness (Gilbert, Selikow and Walker, 2010). In their scholarly quest, Conrad and Barker (2010:67) attempted to uncover the social construction of illness through "cultural meaning of illness and the illness experience as socially constructed". These thematic areas bear relevance to the thesis as embedded within it are connections to the ageing experience.

In outlining the foundation for the social construction of illness, Conrad and Barker (2010) offer a clear conceptual distinction between 'disease' and 'illness'. To them, disease is a "biological condition" whereas illness is the "social meaning of the condition" (Conrad and Barker, 2010:67). Criticisms of this line of thinking is found in Parsons (1951) and Timmermans and Haas (2008). For instance,

believing that "illness is a state of disturbance in the normal functioning of the total human individual" Parsons (1951) asserted that illness is part biological and part sociological. Timmermans and Haas (2008) further concluded that in an effort to understand the sociological perspective of health and illness, the biological dimensions of health care and disease have been neglected by proponents of social constructionism and thus does not constitute a holistic outlook as purported.

Conrad and Barker (2010) acknowledge the shortcomings of their approach yet maintain its relevance. Driving forth with their perspective, Conrad and Barker (2010) take issue with medical models which assumes that disease is universal and is independent of time and place. Whilst disease is biological, it is "socially negotiated" (Conrad and Barker, 2010: 68). They assert that illness on the other hand is rooted in cultural and social systems which facilitate the meaning and experience of illness. Like the reality of the world, illness does not exist 'out there in nature' but rather is made sense by individuals in their social interactions.

The study recognises the opinion expressed by Parsons (1951), Timmermans and Haas (2008) and Conrad and Barker (2010). Each in part have a bearing on the study. Firstly, the study embraces illness as part sociological through Conrad and Baker's (2010) core argument. Secondly, while the study advocates for social construction, it is cognisant of biological dimensions as described and thus factors it into its holistic construction of illness as part of the ageing experience and therefore rejects Timmermans and Haas (2008) regarding the negligence of biomedical consideration in the social construction of illness. The study's assertion is supported by Vincent (2006) who sees the ageing trajectory as social and biological. In the context of study participant experiences, the study's convictions in this regard will become clear in the presentation of findings.

Conrad and Barker (2010) discuss the impact of cultural meanings of illness, particularly illnesses that are stigmatised, those that are contested, considered as disabilities as well as the converse. Key to these compartmentalisations are the social meanings which precipitate their distinctions as opposed to their biomedical and experiential dimensions. For instance, in stigmatised illnesses such as epilepsy, individuals make sense of their illness and become aware of their physical and social restrictions. However Conrad (1987) cited in Conrad and Barker (2010: 69) asserts that these physical and social restrictions and accompanying stigma is not inherent to the illness rather it is the "social response to the condition and some of its manifestation or the type of individual who suffer from it that make a condition stigmatised". In other words, the 'how' and 'who' of the 'tainted' influences the cultural

meanings or social response that may afflict the affected with a heightened sense of burden and negativity (Blaxter, 2004).

On an individual level, "people enact their illness and endow it with meaning" (Conrad and Barker, 2010: 71). Thus the individual experience of illness is unique and personal in the way in which it is lived out. Thus, this 'insider's perspective allows for a personal construction in terms of how illness and its consequences are managed. Examples of the 'insider' approach to illness include Charmaz (1991) and Klitzman and Beyer (2003). Studies like this illustrate the changes experiences in day-to-day living in the context of managing chronic illness, for example getting treatment or choosing to reveal or conceal their illness – especially the degree at which information is shared and to whom. In doing so, a personal evaluation of one's life prior to the onset of illness is common. Termed as a "new identity illness" the management of the illness oscillates between "agency and resistance" and is thus lived out as a result of a re-negotiated identity (Conrad and Barker, 2010: 72).

While the importance placed on cultural meanings is appreciated by the thesis, its main contestation with Conrad and Barker (2010) is the reference to culture as if it is a homogenised, commonly understood concept amongst readers. For example, whose 'culture' is being referred to? Studies like Schneider and Conrad (1983), Peyrot, McMurry and Hedges (1987) and Weitz (1990) are cited in constructing their argument on the cultural meanings attached to illnesses such as epilepsy, diabetes and HIV and AIDS. These are however centrally from a Western setting. Conrad and Barker (2010) do not include cultural perspectives from other settings, thus creating a blind spot to the cultural and social construction of illness and disease. In realisation of this void, studies by Schatz and Gilbert (2012) and Cooper and Gilbert (2017) highlight the socio-cultural meanings attached to illness in the South African context. The study thus acknowledges the shortcoming of Conrad and Barker (2010). By bringing alternate meanings of ageing and illness from a minority group of women in a non-Western setting to the fore, contributions to progressive efforts by Schatz and Gilbert (2012) and Cooper and Gilbert (2017) are made in the thesis.

Like illness, pain too has a socially constructed dimension. Kugelmann (2003) explained that pain is a bearer of meanings and offers insight into a person's circumstances. Medically speaking, pain is a symptom, however pain also belongs to "interpretative schemas" where the construction of pain has gained traction as a subject of interest in health research (Kugelmann, 2003:32). Similar to arguments presented on illness, the biological versus social debate is present here too. For example, Sullivan, Thorn, Haythornthwaite, Keefe, Martin, Bradley, Lefebvre (2001) noted that pain is seated in biological

and social systems where it is not entirely a 'private 'experience. Put another way, pain can be defined in terms of its connection to the social world more than its intrinsic qualities.

Coined as the "sociality of pain" studies by Kotarba (1983) and Palmer, Walsh, Bendall, Cooper and Coggon (2000) revealed how some people become "pain-afflicted persons". Both studies showed that cultural changes led to greater awareness and acceptance of pain and an increased willingness in acknowledgement of it in in public domains. For instance, in the case of Palmer et al (2000) back pain was viewed as a valid reason for absence from work. Scholarly work that have contributed to the socio-cultural understanding and acceptance of pain are multiple (Lupton, 1994, Kugelmann, 1997; Mitzner, McBride, Barg-Walkow and Rogers, 2013). Common amongst such studies is the interpretative aspect of pain in terms of roles and management of pain as a person and society. As an "interpretant" Kugelmann (2003) explains pain as something that is felt rather than the condition that a person is found in. Embedded here is the construction of pain relative to the individual. As such pain as 'felt' has the capacity to "re-organise our lived space and time, our relations with others and with ourselves (Bendelow and Williams, 1995: 148).

The parallels between illness and pain in the context of ageing is evident (Schatz and Gilbert, 2014) Arguments presented show that illness and pain are related to the ageing experience, however not in a uniform manner but rather individually constructed and given meaning, including social meaning as it relates to people and the world. Re-negotiation of identity, exercising agency, management and resistance to change as well as the socio-cultural response colour the unique illness and pain experience. By examining the meanings of ageing, the study uncovered such connections amongst both generations of Muslim women. These are shared in the *Analysis of Findings.*

Conrad and Barker (2010) and Kugelmann (2003) conclusions further highlight the academic divide between the biomedical and sociological realms in thinking about the body, ageing, illness and pain. This is most applicable to any rounded discussion on ageing and therefore necessitates an examination of the medicalization of ageing.

Medicalization of Ageing

Medicalization refers to the process whereby human conditions are defined in medical terms thus requiring medical intervention and therapy. As argued by senescence scholars, ageing primarily occurs at the biological level through visual markers of ageing, the onset of pathological disease and sickness

at certain ages (McHugh and Gil, 2017). Pro-medicalization of ageing literature has burgeoned in the last few decades where authors such as Ebrahim (2002) believe that the medicalization of ageing should not be renounced but rather encouraged. Likewise de Grey, Ames, Andersen, Bartke, Campisi, Heward, Mccarter and Stock (2002) believe that ageing is largely a three stage biological process comprising of metabolism, damage and degeneration. Consequently, the 'damage' that occurs is irreversible thus rendering ageing a condition marked by degeneration (de Grey et al, 2002). This view is supported by McHugh and Gil (2017) who argue that ageing is marked by gradual functional (mental and physical) decline especially in later years.

An online discussion in 2004 between scholars Harry Moody and Arthur Caplan revealed two sides to the "is ageing a disease?' debate. Caplan argued that if ageing is a disease, then it is possible for it to be cured and is thus a condition from which people can be liberated from (Caplan, 2004). Following this perspective, Caplan (2005) demonstrated through his work that ageing is a disease where it is argued that "processes denoted by the term 'ageing' do not fit the standard concept of disease that operates in clinical medicine. However, in medical dictionaries, disease is almost always defined as any pathological change in the body. Pathological change is inevitably defined as constituting any morbid process in the body. And morbid processes are usually defined in terms of disease states of the body. Regardless of the circulatory of this concept, ageing would therefore seem to have a *prima facie* claim to be counted as a disease" (Caplan, 2005:73). In the debate, Moody counter argued Caplan's views by stating that ageing is natural and disease is socially constructed which can be redefined (Caplan, 2004). Thus echoing sentiments of renegotiation of illness in lived experiences as expressed by Conrad and Barker (2010) as well as by Cooper and Gilbert (2017).

Vincent (2009) links his views on the medicalization of old age to commercialism and anti-ageing technologies. According to Vincent (2009) if ageing is viewed as a disease, it requires anti-ageing interventions (for example, skin products, aesthetic treatments etc.) in order to avoid the illness of old age and to restore youthful vigour and health. Phillipson (1998), Lupton (1994) and Dumas and Turner (2007) believe such interventions within the anti-ageing movement will in fact create a new dimension to the medicalization of old age where ageing or old age will need to be 'treated'. As Vincent (2009:202) pens "these endeavours identify old age as a biological problem waiting for a scientific solution and postpone action on current problems of old age". Related to these accounts, Ebrahim (2002:324) reflects on the limits of medical technologies in combatting the "social scourge of old age". Given the desired image of keeping young and beautiful old people – certainly amongst the affluent – are likely to demand cures of old age related to wrinkles, baldness and so on. Whilst medical fixes exist to combat these cosmetic concerns of old age, with the demand projected to increase, the

likelihood that such treatments would garner funding and interest as a medical issue is not probable (Ebrahim, 2002).

In the context of the medicalization of illness, Conrad and Barker (2010) debate that instead of attempting to understand the underlying causes of clinical issues such as obesity and substance abuse etcetera, there is a tendency to negate the influence of social and cultural contexts as explanatory and causal factors in such instances. This rationale too can be applied to that of ageing. Medicalization of ageing downplays the socio-cultural context of ageing due to its focus on medical solutions. Conrad and Barker (2010) further raise the question on what are the limits of medicalization; for what is essentially according to them is seated in multifaceted socio-cultural systems.

Like Moody, while Ebrahim (2002) too believes that ageing is a natural phenomenon, he also views it would be incorrect to conclude that diseases accompanying ageing should be excluded from medical attention. Framing his argument within the ambit of old age, reduced health costs associated with chronic illness, Ebrahim (2002) concluded that the benefits of treating medical ailments of the elderly significantly outweigh ignoring them. As such greater access to medical care for the elderly will increase life expectancy and reduce disability (Ebrahim, 2002). Schramme (2013) picks up on the argument of reduced financial costs and stresses that the 'ageing as disease' debate is too heavily reliant on this angle. Instead of seeing ageing as a disease that could result in a "potentially bottomless draining of resources", Schramme (2013:175) advocates for using theory to defend his notion that ageing is not a disease, thereby dismissing grounds of medicalization.

The divide in the literature on whether ageing should be medicalized is clear. Schramme (2013) alludes by stating there is no general consensus on whether ageing is disease necessitating medical intervention. Contrary to Ebrahim (2002) and Caplan (2005), Schramme (2013) defends his view by arguing at length that biological ageing or senescence denies that ageing is a disease, thus rejecting claims for its medicalization. Schramme (2013) bases his argument on the theory of Christopher Boorse's theory of disease developed in the 1970s. According to Boorse's theory, ageing is not a disease requiring medicalization as ageing that brings about the decline in certain abilities biologically is normal (Schramme, 2013). That said, Schramme (2013) does however concede that medical treatment of ailments of old age may be done on a normative basis.

Schramme (2013:180) points out that whilst some scholars may view ageing is not a disease based on the account of it being a natural process, he regards this as "notoriously ambiguous". He expands by stating that whether an event, like disease is natural or unnatural is not an indication of potential pathology, instead the argument needs to be based on a more solid foundation. Caplan (2005) however agrees with the 'ageing as natural' argument which again, Schramme (2013) takes exception with. While he 'charitably' agrees with Caplan (2005) on ageing sharing some features of disease like mental and physical decline, ageing cannot be regarded as a dysfunction, which to Schramme (2013) believes is the mark of disease. Therefore, ageing as disease is not characterised by its naturalness but rather by whether or not it is characterised by impairment or disruption in normal activities. Partial support for this argument is found in the writing of Glannon (2002). Glannon (2002:345) writes that "ageing itself is not a disease. But the diseases resulting from the gradual deterioration of the growth and repair mechanisms of cells are part of an age related process". Implicit to Glannon (2002) is that if age-related processes are considered as disease, then the argument of whether ageing itself can be viewed as a disease falls away.

Schramme (2013) claims that there are multiple benefits to ageing, hence questioning the need to seek a 'cure' or label it as an ailing condition. For instance, whilst declining abilities my result in limitations of self-care, being dependent on family or caregivers can be an opportunity to deepen social relations. Additionally, old age brings different abilities in the wake of changing mental and physiological changes. Studies like Ranzjin (2002) have shown that older persons perform certain tasks with greater efficiency than their younger counterparts. Thus, Schramme (2013) concluded that a 'cure' for ageing or senescence is unfounded as it may erase many of the adaptive mechanisms and strengthened social relations and is thus not in the best interest of a person to 'get rid' of ageing.

Granted that the medicalization of ageing is a contested debate, the study sought to understand how participants view ageing in the context of medicalization. Do they believe ageing is or is not a disease or illness which requires medical treatment? What are these views based on? These are shared in the *Analysis of Findings* chapter.

Ageing and Body Image

Studies by Kleinspehn-Ammerlahn, et al (2008) and Kim and Moen (2002) agree that older women are more likely to display pessimistic notions of ageing and old age, especially towards the loss of youth and the presence of visual markers of ageing. Such findings have created the space for further

interrogation into these negative views. Stemming from these findings, previous studies concentrated mainly on young to middle aged women however the literature now shows a nascent corpus of work linking the body (image, size and satisfaction) and ageing amongst older women.

Studies on body image and ageing amongst older women have found that like with general views on ageing, there is a divided opinion on body image amongst older women (Van Bauwel, 2018). In their study undertaken amongst 2002 Swedes (both men and women) Öberg and Tornstam (1999) discovered that women were more concerned with bodily appearance where this concern does not disappear with age. Furthermore, the study found that there was no decline in the satisfaction with the body by age; hence women had a positive body image along the ageing continuum (Öberg and Tornstam, 1999). Tunaley et al (1999) in contrast to other studies discovered positive discourses on the construction of body image. Older women noted that having previously being preoccupied with the ideal weight and body size being in their youth, they now prefer to adopt a 'laissez faire' attitude to weight control and diet (Tunaley et al, 1999). These views stem from their acknowledgement of their life stage and the freedom from anxiety and responsibility that comes with growing older (Tunaley et al, 1999).

On the other hand, Hurd-Clarke and Korotchenko (2011) and Bedford and Johnson (2005) comment that older women are more dissatisfied with their body image where this discontent is on par with younger and middle-aged women. Interestingly, higher levels of dissatisfaction with bodily appearance were found among women who belonged to a higher social class background (Dumas, Laberge and Straka, 2005). Whilst weight has been identified as a key indicator of bodily dissatisfaction amongst older women, they were less likely to actively engage in behaviours aimed at reducing their weight (Lewis and Cachelin, 2001). According to research by Hurd-Clarke (2002), older women also resisted the 'thin, ideal body image' as propagated by popular and consumer culture and expressed preference for more voluptuous bodies as desired by society during their era of youth. Hurd (2000) notes that with the onset of collective health issues and the gradual decline in functional autonomy, older women re-evaluated their concern with bodily appearance where now the emphasis of personal looks were no longer a matter of grave concern. Such findings such as links to social backgrounds, reference to youth as well as the evolving ageing process in older women points to the importance of considering the lifecourse when understanding how images of the ageing body are perceived.

In addition, scholars argue that a lifecourse perspective must be adopted to understand how the body image develops over the lifecourse and how this image is placed within the individual life path (Clarke and Griffin, 2007). According to Liechty and Yarnal (2010:1197) the lifecourse model provides "a

useful theoretical orientation for framing body-image research among older women and highlights the influence of personal life events, historical changes and the individual's perceptions of and responses to such experiences". With the literature presented and given that ageing manifests in the body physically, mentally and emotionally, understanding the impact of the bodily experiences of ageing is critical to the study.

Ageing and Dress

Clothing lays at the interface between the self and society and are thus central to how individuals present their bodies to the world (Twigg, 2010). Dress and accompaniments (for example, handbags, shoes and so on) are loaded with personal and social meaning and are "about much more than the practicalities of life" (Buse and Twigg, 2014:14). Twigg (2007:285) suggested that "clothes are central to the ways older bodies are experienced, presented and understood within culture, so that dress forms a significant, though neglected element in the constitution and experience of old age". Built on the premise that the body is central to the ageing experience, Twigg (2007) claims that clothing and dress play an important role in the cultural constructions of ageing.

Believed to be academically neglected, the focus on age and dress has been limited to high-end, youthful fashion as opposed to the everyday clothing choices of older people, especially women (Breward, 1998; Twigg, 2007). Clothing choices reflect age-ordering and cultural expectations directed at the body. Such gleanings have attracted considerable debate where 'cultural prescripts' to choice of clothing and dress has been critiqued. Likened to 'disciplining the body', the rigidity accompanied by pre-fixed notions of culture and dress has been resisted by some women, where agency and individual expression regardless of age is favoured. Counter-arguments such as the "mutton dressed as lamb" metaphor suggest that such choices are based on age denial (Hurd-Clarke, Griffin and Maliha, 2009). Given the multiple debates, Twigg (2007:302) concluded that instead of inclusivity, older women are subject to "subtle forms of age-grading". On a positive note, recent work on fashion choices and its consideration of contemporary gerontological debates have highlighted the changing constitution of ageing (Twigg, 2008).

Dunkel, Davidson and Qurashi (2010) acknowledges the paucity of research on Muslim women with respect to body image satisfaction or whether traditional dressing influences women's perception of bodily image. In a sample of 201 women comprised of 95 Muslim women and 106 non-Muslim women in the United States, Dunkel et al, (2010) attempted to investigate body satisfaction and pressure in younger and older Muslim and non-Muslim women. The study found that younger Muslim women who

donned the 'hijab' (head veil) and adopted a non-Western dress sense were less likely to experience pressure to strive towards society's thin and ideal body image compared to those who wore Western dress or non-Western dress without the *hijab (*Dunkel et al, 2010). Older Muslim women when compared to younger Muslim women noted an even less likelihood to express drive for thinness and compliance with the ideal body size. Dunkel et al (2010) cited age and religion as particular protective factors in against the unhealthy desire to conform to society's valorized thin-deal standard of beauty.

Ageing and Religious Beliefs and Practices

The consideration of religious beliefs and practices and is impact on the way a person ages has gained significant momentum in social gerontology (Thomas, 1997). For example, in a multi-cohort study, Covan (2005) presented the importance of spirituality and religion amongst older women. Having established that preminiscence was a key factor in the generation of meanings of ageing over the lifecourse, preminiscence also featured the context of religion. Older women in the study described their anticipation at being united with God as well as family and friends who have passed. Having described no fear of death – especially those who were significantly older and were dying – the presence of religion and spirituality in their lives kept their optimism and satisfaction with life alive.

In a cross-cultural study, Mehta (1997) explored the impact of religious beliefs and practices on ageing amongst elderly men and women aged between 70 and 85 in Singapore. The Muslim sample comprised of members from the Malay community. The study aimed to highlight the specific ways in which particular religious beliefs impacted on the perception of ageing, the variations in ageing and the arrangement of social worlds (Mehta, 1997). Unfortunately, the study did not disaggregate the findings by sex; nevertheless the findings are still relevant as they in some way reflect the views of Muslim women. The study found that Muslim Malay's believed that their ageing process as the Will of God (Allah). The concept of fate or 'Taqdeer' was cited as a key factor in elderly Muslim Malay's accepting their ageing (Mehta, 1997). Following this, Muslim Malay's adopted an attitude of subservience and acceptance, especially when they encountered difficult situations (Mehta, 1997).

These findings thus deepen the need for studying the ageing process through the lifecourse and giving credence to individual life histories. Furthermore, the study attempts to understand how Muslim mothers and daughters potentially rationalize their individual ageing through their religious beliefs and practices.

Ageing and Sexuality

There is a nascent body of literature on the topic of ageing and sexuality. For example, in his paper González (2007) writes on how age shapes sexuality. González (2007) discusses the symbolization of the body by age differences and its link to social issues and sexuality. González (2007) latches onto the concept of age-grading to demonstrate his point of view. He writes that "age-grading allows us to consider how the meanings of age influence people's expectations, roles and forms of understanding status; this has implications on the management of their social time and, as part of that, their sexuality" (González, 2007:34). González (2007) remarks that there are conflicting interfaces between our own ageing bodily boundaries and sexual expression. For González (2007) age-graded sexualities are not just about sex, but rather about the diverse meanings, which constantly evolve through time. He argues that sexuality is beyond that of perceptions of "sexual competence, body image or sexual interest". According to González (2007:31) "the central idea is that the constructions of age involve different notions of status related to the ageing body that are problematic in our sexuality because they form complex power relationships, creating boundaries, segmenting expressions and committing individuals to spaces, identities and lifestyles". As such, he concludes that age grading is critical to understanding how sexuality is linked to bodies, morals and meanings.

Marshall (2012) explores sexual functionality and reconstructed sexual lifecourses through sexual and anti-ageing medicine. In her paper, Marshall (2012) writes on the burgeoning interest of reversing long-held stereotypes of asexual seniors to the notion of "sexy-seniors". Adopting a cautionary approach, Marshall (2012) notes that whilst positive images of the elderly and sex are welcomed, there are risks to meeting these expectations. Marshall (2012:341) considers that "new cultural representations of ageing and sexuality accompanying the expanding medical and therapeutic industry measure successful aging by individual accomplishments in maintaining youthful standards of sexual function and attractiveness". Marshall (2012) concluded by noting that there is an urgent need for further research that recognizes diversity in late-life sexualities as opposed to generic biomedical model.

Whilst thought provoking the study does not overtly seek to investigate the relationship between ageing and sexuality. In other words, respondents will not be directly questioned on how their constructs of ageing are linked to their sexuality and vice versa. The topic of sexuality is highly personal and sensitive in many contexts. This is very much applicable in this study as well. Sensitive information like one's sexuality amongst the Muslim community is not openly disclosed and discussed. This has been documented by studies by Sader (2008) and Shaikh et al (2011). Posing direct questions to respondents on sexuality could be perceived as an invasion of privacy thus resulting in a loss of rapport and trust with the respondents. That said, whilst there were no questions on age and sexuality, some findings

emerged in the study. This no doubt brings a new dimension to the body of knowledge on Muslim women in South Africa.

Ageing Anxiety

Commonly understood as the prejudicial attitudes and discriminatory practices toward older adults (Butler, 1980), research into ageing anxiety amongst young adults and especially women has given gerontologists a wider perspective of how ageing is understood by all individuals. Ageing anxiety has been defined as the concern and anticipation of physical, mental and personal losses consequent of the ageing process (Lasher and Faulkender, 1993). Ageing anxiety is further posited to "mediate the association between attitudes and behaviours toward elders and adaptation to one's own ageing process" (Koukouli et al, 2013:1).

Ageism and ageing anxiety has been linked with cultural influence (Koukouli et al, 2013). Boggatz and Dassen (2005) argue that ageism is more characteristic to modern, individualistic societies as opposed to traditional collectivistic ones. Barak, Mathur, Lee and Zhang (2001) found that younger women from more modern and youth orientated societies tend to retain negative beliefs about the ageing process and the elderly. Research shows that collectivistic societies rank the interdependence of the immediate and extended family as important with emphasis on caring for the elderly (Koukouli et al, 2013). By implication these societies should exhibit lower levels of ageism and anxiety of ageing based on their social norms. However, research by Yun and Lachman (2006) shows that even in traditionalist societies with rapid development such as that of South Korea, residents demonstrate higher levels of ageing anxiety and ageism than their American counterparts.

Past studies have concluded that although younger women may display with higher levels of ageing anxiety, the same does not apply to ageist attitudes among younger women. Research has shown that young women do not have strong, overt ageist tendencies (Bodner and Lazar, 2008). Support for these findings also comes from Bodner and Lazar (2008) who in their investigation on ageism amongst Israeli students (54.6% of the sample was female) concluded that young women held positive views on the elderly and thus did not ascribe to the negative stereotype of ageism. Some argue that this could be linked to the way in which young women have been socialized into a caregiving role in the family with an increased sense of responsibility and care (Neal et al, 1997). To add, Stuart-Hamilton and Mahoney (2003) found that individuals with a better understanding of the ageing process possibly hold less discriminatory attitudes towards ageing.

Bergman, Bodner and Cohen-Fridel (2013) build on previous research (Koukouli et al, 2013) that traditional societies are generally more favourable in attitude and behaviour toward their elders. Through the cross-cultural study of 68 Arab Muslims and 86 Jews in Israel, Bergman et al (2013) found that Arab Muslims observed their culture as tolerant and appreciative of the elderly's contribution to society. Arab Muslims (men and women) were also less likely to display avoidance behaviour towards the elderly. Evidence of this was found in their own positive views of ageing and concerns of physical appearance Bergman et al (2013). When disaggregated by sex young Arab females reported higher levels of ageing anxieties and ageist attitudes compared to their male counterparts Bergman et al (2013). This thus emphasizes the notion that Muslim women too have similar fears and anxieties like the general population. Evidently more research is needs to elicit other such opinions that may be useful in dispelling damaging stereotypes.

Successful Ageing

As some have described, Rowe and Kahn's (1987) definition of successful ageing might have stemmed from a pathological sense but nevertheless produced a positive effect on the scope of study of ageing and old age. For example, studies by Baltes and Baltes (1990) inquired into how successful ageing is attained by concentrating on the strategies people utilize to age well throughout the lifecourse. Other similar studies include those by Torres (2001, 2009) and Fisher (1995).

Moen, Dempster-McClain and Williams (1992) investigated successful ageing by attempting to understand the links between social integration and women's health and how this link contributes to successful ageing in later years. Based on panel data with a sample of 313, women who were wives and mothers in 1956 were located and re-interviewed thirty years later in 1986. The study found that of the women who occupied multiple roles in 1956 through to early and middle adulthood (i.e. employment, volunteer work or membership to a club etcetera.) presented with better outcomes of health and social integration thus leading to more successful pathways of ageing (Moen et al, 1992). The study showed that successful ageing "can be depicted as living both healthy and active. Both social integration and health in later years my reflect choices and experiences throughout adulthood" (Moen et al, 1992:1633). Furthermore research has shown that higher socio-economic defined by either education, profession or education has been associated with ageing well possibly due to such statuses offering individuals the resources to counter the challenges of the ageing process (Abramson and Silverstein, 2006).

In addition Project A.G.E, initiated by anthropologists Fry and Keith, engaged in a cross-cultural research project that looked into the meaning of age and ageing throughout the lifecourse. A variety of cultures and seven communities across four continents constituted this mammoth cross-cultural project. These included Hong Kong, Ireland and South Africa. The study found that chronological age was emphasized the greatest in modern and industrialized societies. In sharp contrast, age and ageing in rural Clifden in Ireland and the !Kung Bushmen of South Africa was of little to no relevance (Keith, Fry, Glascock, Ikels and Dickerson-Putman, 1994). These findings as reflected by Settersten and Mayer (1997: 237) point to the fact that "researchers must be sensitive to the cross-cultural differences in how the lifecourse is conceptualized, the assumptions they make about (or even impose upon) a given culture, and in turn, the ways in which age and aspects of the lifecourse are measured".

Questioning what successful ageing is and who should define it, Bowling and Dieppe (2005) conclude that the concept should be defined as a multidimensional one. That is inclusive of biomedical models which emphasize the absence of disease, good physical and mental function (Bowling and Dieppe, 2005). Additionally, psycho--social models will include life satisfaction, social functioning and participation must also be reflected in its definition. Apart from academic constructs of successful ageing, lay perceptions which include spiritualty, a sense of purpose, financial security and accomplishment and so on should also be considered (Bowling and Dieppe, 2005).

In summary, a synthesis of existing scholarly work regarding ageing and experiences of ageing was presented. The review reveals the South African discourse on ageing and related concepts thereby uncovering its distinctive meanings and manifestations. Key arguments, themes and concepts discussed are taken further in the discussion towards the development of a theoretical framework for the thesis.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The development of the unique theoretical framework for the study is discussed in this chapter. The study joins emerging scholarly works to use intergenerational perspectives – between mothers and daughters – to understand personal comprehensions of ageing in a non-Western context. Hence, multiple theoretical orientations which are aptly suited to explain the phenomenon of ageing were considered. The selection of theoretical models had to acknowledge the significance of the personal lifecourse, on-going changes in society, the impact that context has on an individual's thought and action and lastly presenting alternate imageries of Muslim women in a non-Western background such as South Africa. Hence, the following theoretical positions were adopted for the study.

The Lifecourse Perspective

Literature on the lifecourse perspective has emerged since the 1960s when attempts were made to understand the impact of social and historical forces on the individual and family. Theoretical expression and language development on the lifecourse perspective was developed largely by the pioneering work of Glen Elder Jr. during the 1960s. Elder's work titled 'Children of the Great Depression' centred on three longitudinal studies of children where he was astounded by the effect of the Great Depression during 1930s on individual lives and family pathways (Hutchison, 2007). His findings provided impetus for theory and research that examined the influence that social and cultural conditions have on an individual.

Application of Elder's lifecourse model forged a conceptual link between "ageing processes, the social trajectories of the lifecourse, the ongoing changes in society, one based on the premise that age places people in the social structure and in particular birth cohorts" (Elder, 1999: 6). To expound; this can be understood as the relationship between time and human behaviour; where chronological age, relationships, common life transitions and social change impact and shape the lives of individuals from birth to death. (Hutchison, 2007). In addition to the relationship between time, behaviour and its impact through different periods of life; the environment plays an equally important role in how lives are shaped (Hutchison, 2007).

According to Elder (1994), there are a number of key themes applied to understanding lives according to the lifecourse model. These themes and their accompanying concepts are instrumental in providing detailed understandings on why and how choices are made and their resulting consequences. Locating

the perspectives on ageing within these themes as well as positioning further theoretical considerations located outside the model of the lifecourse will assist in formulating a framework on how participants in the study perceive their ageing in the context of their lived realities. Elder (1999) and Hutchison (2007) outline the basic concepts and central themes for the lifecourse perspective as. These are explained as:

Basic concepts of the lifecourse model are: (Hutchison, 2007; Elder, 1999)

- *Cohort:* A group of individuals who were born at the same historical period and who experience similar social changes in a given culture in the same sequence and at the same age.
- *Transition:* A change in role(s) and status(s) that symbolizes a definitive secession from a previously held role(s) and status(s)
- *Trajectory:* Long-term pattern of usually multiple transitions indicative of stability and change
- *Life event:* Significant episodes involving relatively abrupt changes (either positive or negative) that possibly have long lasting serious effect on the individual lifecourse
- *Turning point:* Life occurrence that creates an enduring effect in the individual lifecourse.

Central themes of the lifecourse model are: (Hutchison, 2007; Elder, 1999)

- *Interplay of human lives and historical time:* The lifecourse perspective acknowledges that human behaviour is influenced by historical time;
- *Timing of lives:* The model places importance on the timing of lives whereby roles and behaviours are connected with certain ages and or life stages;
- *Linked or interdependent lives:* The model stresses the interdependency of lives; where the family is viewed as the central nodal point for experiencing and interpreting phenomena in the historical, cultural and social world;
- *Human agency in making choices:* Whilst environments present with both opportunities and constraints, lifecourse theory favours human agency as important for the construction of life pathways amidst opportunities and challenges;
- *Diversity in lifecourse trajectories:* Lifecourse theory expresses an acknowledgment and appreciation of diversity of life straits as well as the sources of such diversity and;
- *Developmental risk and protection:* The lifecourse perspective recognizes and understands the linkages between significant life stages of an individual (e.g. linkages and impact from and between childhood, adolescence and later adulthood). Experiences of one life transition will have an impact on later transitions or events such that it may either protect the lifecourse trajectory or endanger it.

Whilst the above points provide the foundation upon which the study rests on; the usefulness and limitations of the model must be acknowledged. Whilst the lifecourse perspective draws tenets from developmental psychology it distinguishes itself by acknowledging that historical time, social and cultural influence affect individual experiences in unique ways as one navigates through various life stages as opposed to universal predictable pathways and events which occur in individuals life in key different stages as postulated by classic developmental psychology theory (Hutchison, 2007). Distinct from earlier developmental theories, the lifecourse perspective is not deterministic in nature, but rather acknowledges human agency and capacity for change in an evolutionary society (Hutchison, 2007). Useful and widely applied; the lifecourse perspective is favoured to explaining the impact of historical and social changes on human behaviour (Hutchison, 2007). Hence, the model is particularly useful in tracking biological, psychological and social processes in the timing of lives associated with a rapidly changing and diverse society (Hutchison, 2007). By being cognizant of change and diversity; the lifecourse perspective is an appropriate framework that is sensitive to culture and its practices.

One of the model's foremost advantages is the acknowledgement of diversity and heterogeneity yet this also poses as a great challenge in understanding human behaviour (Hutchison, 2007). It is argued that in outlining patterns of human behaviour in relation to historical and social changes; differing levels of heterogeneity within contexts may impede on determining perceptive patterns of thought and behaviour. In response to this, Hutchison (2007) suggests that a shift from patterns to processes and mechanisms is needed.

Additionally, the lifecourse perspective places strong emphasis on holism (Adriansen, 2012). According to Adriansen (2012:43) "lives are seen as whole, the public and private cannot be separated, and lives are contextual and should be studied and understood this way. This view is also supported by Goodson and Sikes (2001) and Callewaert (2007).

Despite the academic relevance to a topic such as ageing; the lifecourse perspective has been subjected to its share of criticism. For example, the model has been criticized for its inability to consider diversity of experiences on a global level (Hutchison, 2007). Consequently some scholars have relegated the model's application to affluent and late industrial societies. Hutchison (2007) disagrees and notes that there is nothing inherent to the lifecourse perspective that prohibits the model from understanding and explaining human behaviour at the global level and certainly in a setting like South Africa.

Dannefer (2003) points out that the lifecourse models fails at linking the micro world of the individual and family to the macro world of social institutions, processes and formal organizations. Historically these worlds have been studied apart as there was no firm theoretical link to both the macro and micro world that sufficiently explained phenomena Hutchison (2007). This however should not be deterrent for its use. In the words of Samuel (2009:5), "to research is to look again with new eyes" and the life history approach (flaws and all) certainly affords one that.

Whilst the lifecourse model was created to potentially connect these worlds; its success at forging this link is questioned (Hutchison, 2007). Taking the above into account, given the lens of the lifecourse, we need to acknowledge that time and events in the lifecourse is merely one aspect which offers plausible explanations of human behaviour and thought. Hence to understand how one's life has been shaped; the significance attributed to these events; the development of personal characteristics, behaviour and thought, environment and relationships (Hutchison, 2007). It is this very point that leads onto the second theoretical model considered for the study: symbolic interactionism theory.

Symbolic Interactionism Theory

Symbolic interactionism is a theory used to explain and describe the manner in which individuals interpret and give meaning to the world through interactions with others. Conceptualized by Mead in the early nineteen thirties and later developed by Blumer in the late sixties, symbolic interactionism theory postulates that people interact through symbols in the world.

The theoretical model is based on three basic premises. Firstly, the way individuals think and behave is based on their interpretation and level of significance attributed to symbols in their lives (Schaefer, 2014; Carter and Fuller, 2015) Secondly, the significance of these symbols is derived from complex social interaction with other individuals thus having profound influence on the self (Giddens, 2001; Smith and Bugni, 2006). Thirdly, through a continuous interactive process between the self and society the meanings attached to these symbols are modified according to the context or situation the individual is faced with (Carter and Fuller, 2015).

The premises of symbolic interactionism are closely aligned to that of social interaction theory. These relate firstly to *meaning*; where meaning of symbols or objects is not inherent but derived and modified through interaction (through relationships, family, community and environment) and as such behaviour

towards those symbols are closely tied to the significance attributed to those symbols (Billington et al, 1998). Secondly *language*; where meanings of symbols and social meanings are communicated through a shared language (Billington et al, 1998). Lastly, *thought or minding*; where individuals are able to introspect and reflect and modify the meanings of symbols (Billington et al, 1998)

According to Blumer (1969) symbolic interaction recognizes that people have the ability to use, interpret and attach meanings to symbols. Individuals are distinctive due to their interaction with others (Blumer, 1969). Individuals are also considered to be conscious and introspective who actively shape their behaviour. Furthermore, people act, respond in and towards situations. Thus society is characteristic of individuals engaging in symbolic interaction (Blumer, 1969).

According to Blumer (1969), meanings are social products attached to symbols or objects are a result of social interaction between people. The meaning is derived according to how action towards the symbol is played out. Distinct from other social interaction theories, symbolic interaction does not view objects as having intrinsic meaning nor does the psychological make-up of the person constructing meaning towards that object have meaning Blumer (1969). Rather, it is the social interaction between people that creates this meaning thus distinguishing symbolic interactionism from other social interaction theories Blumer (1969). Importantly, social interaction actively forms human behaviour and thought as opposed passively creating ways in which human behaviour and thought is directed. Billington et al (1998) argue that individuals oscillate from the 'lone' individual' to the 'social individual' as a consequence of social interaction. As such, one can distinguish between our individual and social self. This differentiation enables us to adapt and channel our actions and thoughts according to the context. Blumer (1969) notes that during social interaction individuals, observe, anticipate and respond to the actions of others, which in turn influence, their own response. This could include a modification or replacement of the intended response. This back-and-forth interaction between individuals and the meanings attached to it lays at the heart of symbolic interaction.

According to LaRossa and Reitzes (1993), symbolic interaction is based on how individuals develop a complex set of symbols and through this gives meaning to their world. Symbols can be classed from the tangible such as a wedding ring or a vase to the abstract such as values, words, gestures, rules and roles (LaRossa and Reitzes, 1993). When individuals interact with others and their environment; meanings for symbols are formed through shared and altered understandings. Meanings of new and existing symbols are based on subjectivity hence characterizing the process as a highly personal one (LaRossa and Reitzes, 1993). By implication, the same symbol is interpreted and responded to

differently or even similarly based on how the viewer gives meaning or importance to the symbol. Bi-directional interaction between the self and society helps develop and modify concepts associated with larger social structures, processes, constraints, norms and values (LaRossa and Reitzes, 1993). Through common language between these processes, conceptual links provide insight into understanding cognitive function and human behaviour (LaRossa and Reitzes, 1993).

The theoretical models thus far have been useful in explaining the how social interaction gives meaning to lives and events through the expression of behaviour and thought for the individual life path. However this 'individual' that is constantly mentioned is not a faceless, generic being but one with a sense of identity and belonging. Hence with this consideration, the section to follows presents views on post-colonial feminism.

The Post-Colonial Feminist Narrative

Feminism remains a Western construct where attempts at bridging a relationship between the Western and non-Western contexts has been an intellectual and philosophical challenge (Zairi, 2003; Hamid, 2006). Mohanty's (1986) definitive essay 'Under Western Eyes' casted much needed attention to the unchartered domain of the non-Western feminist narrative at the time. Since its first publication over thirty years ago; Mohanty's writing is still considered as a key referent within feminist deliberations. Perhaps the true value amidst the convoluted language of the paper is that her writing gives the 'invisible an existence'; 'the unimportant, appreciation' and the 'faceless an identity'. The thesis does not ground itself in a particular feminist orientation but rather hinges on key arguments presented by Mohanty and others to aid in the presentation of Muslim women in the study relating to alternative imageries, acknowledgement of agency and distinct social and historical selves and identity.

To understand the conflict with the 'image' of non-Western women, it is important to grasp what this image is and how it is formed. Central to 'Under Western Eyes' is the contestation of pre-existing notions of the 'Third World Woman'. Mohanty (1986) tackles the image of the 'Third World Woman' head on by arguing against its "singular monolith" ideology (Mohanty, 1986: 333). Rather than deconstructing the social, historical and economic conditions that perhaps place certain groupings at a disadvantage, Mohanty (1986) and Zairi (2003) highlights that feminist writings illustrate non-Western women as an ahistorical, powerless, victimized, uneducated, tradition-bound collective. This view is supported by Zairi (2003) and Hamid (2006:78) who also affirm that Western feminists viewed non-Western women from a position of dominance, power and superiority. As such, little effort was

exercised in attempting to understand what they viewed as "outdated ideas of tradition, religion and backward cultures"

Mohanty (1986) and Hamid (2006) argue against the oversimplification of complexities of non-Western women relating to culture, gender to a reductive binary vision. To further drive her point Mohanty (1986) links the argument of the supposedly indivisible, homogenous notion of patriarchy to that of the non-Western women who have appeared to have suffered the same fate. In what she terms as the 'Third World Difference' Mohanty (1986) posits that colonial discourse has misrepresented and denied the heterogeneity of non-Western women. Non-western women have thus become the subjects of interpretation and subjectivity as opposed to objective inquisition. Specifically on Muslim women, Hamid (2006:79) expands the argument to note that Muslim women were seen as "passive, sexless beings, covered up in masses of cloth, a sharp contrast to the self- assured 'sexually liberated' women of the advanced West". In her work on the education of Muslim girls in India, Hussain (2019) expresses her frustration at "dislodging this discursive troupe". Hussain (2019) alongside Skeggs (2004:194) calls for reflexivity of the "un-thought" or re-thinking pre-understandings to consider diverse ways Muslim women can negotiate the structure forces present in their lives.

Mohanty (1986) and Hamid (2006) add that the construction of the collective image of non-Western women is an attempt by some Western feminists to affirm their own liberated identities. By portraying non-Western women as a homogenous group of oppressed women serves to only strengthen their case of personal agency, freedom and choice. Mohanty (1986) coins this as the 're-presentation vs. self-presentation' debate. In addition Mohanty (1986) notes that Western feminism's views on oppression and how non-Western women enter into social relations is hinged on the belief that men and women are pre-constituted beings where non-Western women are ahistorical, asocial and powerless. By implication, this ill defines non-Western women by their lack of agency and their minuscule capacity to develop such social and historical agency.

This in some quarters, has proved only too true for Muslim women. The 'voiceless, veiled, oppressed, victimized, waiting to be liberated' image of Muslim women is synonymous to what some believe is a representation of what it means to be a Muslim woman in a post 9/11 world. By implication this distorted and dominant vision of passivity and oppression places all Muslim women under one blanket where their experiences are bound to merely to religion; irrespective of their personal dynamics, cultural and social differences (Zairi, 2003; Sader, 2008).

Hamid (2006) claims that whilst the images purported by Western feminism are reductionist and inappropriately constructed this however is not done with malicious intent. Hamid (2006) believes that even when intentions are good, it is their limited knowledge of the Muslim world that drives their overgeneralised and stereotypical constructions. In support, Ahmed (1989) highlights the historical legacy of colonial powers which have influenced how Muslim women are viewed. Ahmed (1989:144) said "the colonial powers and their agents, and in particular the missionaries through the schools they founded did indeed explicitly set out to undermine Islam through the training and remoulding of women". Thus, being a part of the system, Ahmed (1989) and Hamid (2006) agree that this placed Western feminists at a disadvantage right at the beginning.

Captivating as these arguments maybe, they are not without limitations. Critique of Mohanty have included views by Ghias (2009) who writes that whilst Mohanty (1986) argues against the universalization of theories on non-Western women without considering their context and experience; Mohanty (1986) inadvertently proposes that the identity of women resulting from personal experience is universal. This in itself is contentious as a woman is comprised of her collective identity based on her roles and status at different periods of time. This is fluid and transforms over time influenced by social, cultural, political and religious forces. Cognisant of this critique, in an attempt to produce alternate and positive images of South African Muslim women, the thesis does not intend to create a different kind of 'monolith' by creating unwarranted distinctness that may create the same divisions that post-colonial feminism sought to rebuke. In other words, purpose is show the relatedness of Muslim women to their social contexts and groups and not to produce isolated images.

Theoretical Framework for the Study

The study used intergenerational research herein represented by the biological mother-daughter relationship. Intergenerational studies have adopted either the qualitative (Waldrop, 2012), quantitative (Moen et al, 1992) or mixed method approach (Aziz and Yusooff, 2012). Again choices of these studies are linked to the broader research aims under investigation. Ward (2008: 9) argues that "intergenerational researchers have tended to use quantitative research methods more frequently than qualitative methods. It would appear that qualitative methods have gained only limited acceptance over the last decade".

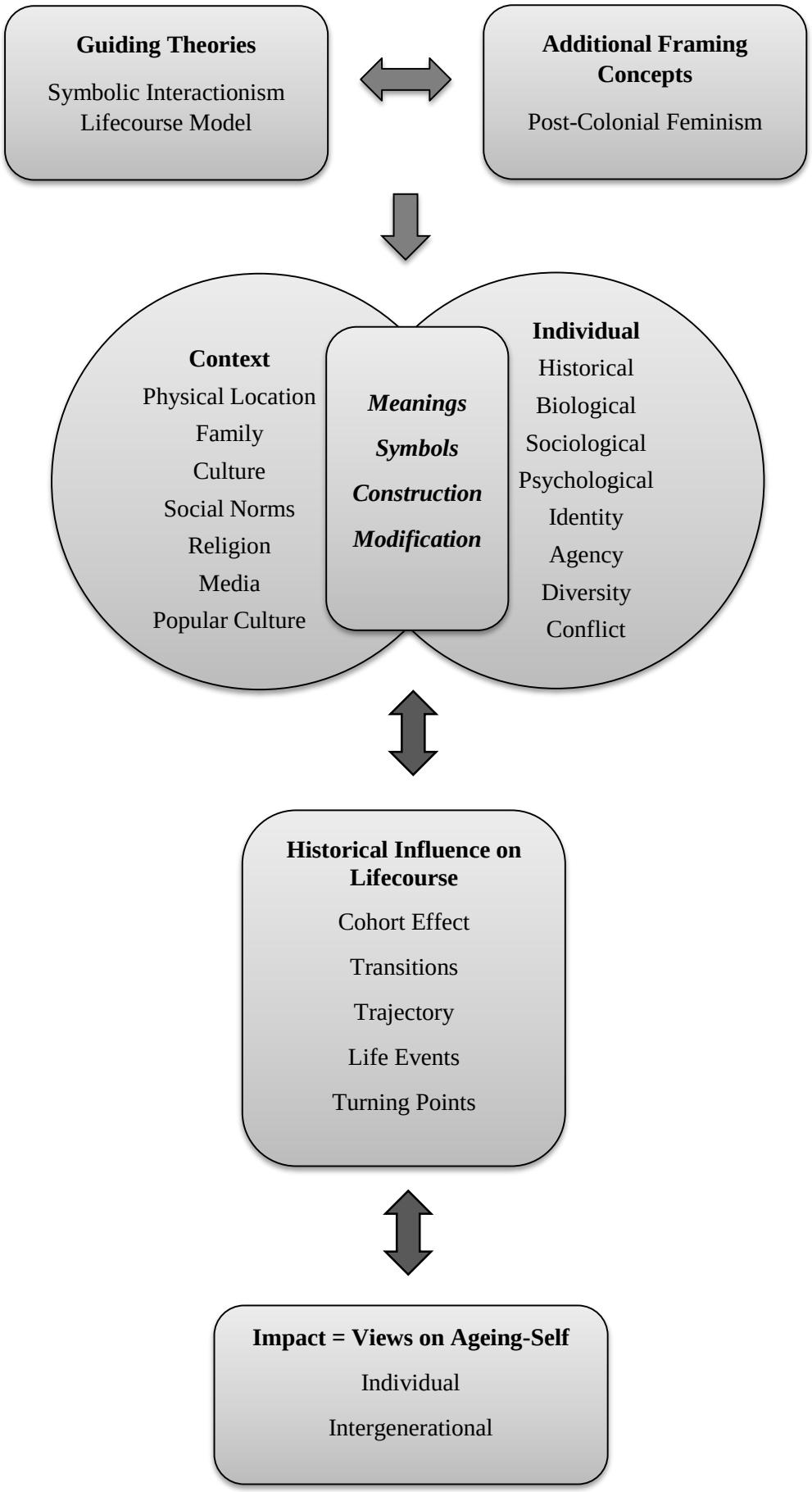
From a theoretical perspective, intergenerational research brings forth the importance and meaning of culture and context (Ward, 2008). Secondly, the ebb and flow of generational views surface through

intergenerational research (Mancini and Blieszner, 1989). Therefore, intergenerational research is poised to generate cumulative knowledge across the lifecourse. In the context of the study, this relates to the transmission of views on ageing. In other words, what has changed and what has not.

Whilst the use of intergenerational perspectives by the study is important and is a frame of reference, it is the personal, social and cultural context that drives the interpretation of the ageing experience and not generation alone (Grenier, 2007). Theoretically, the blend between the lifecourse perspective and intergenerational research, brings out the influence of the developmental and the historical. It thus provides ways of understanding life experiences as shaped by historical events – for instance Apartheid in this study.

Figure 1 shows the connections between the lifecourse and symbolic interactionist models and thus proposes a framework as to understand and explain how Muslim women in the study conceptualise their ageing experiences. The model places an individual within their life path. The individual is recognized as having a historical self, with agency – capacity of individuals to act independently and to make their own free choices – and diversity as argued for by Mohanty (1986; 2002), Ahmed (1989) and Hamid (2006). The model is also informed by an understanding that states that psychological and social theory affirms that one's identity is fluid and is greatly influenced by the immediate and broader context. In the individual life path there are certain life events, and turning points that occur that have a life-long or periodic impact on the individual as put forth by Elder (1999). The model posits that time related events lay the foundation for current and later views and behaviour on and towards ageing. These events have meanings attached to them which are explained through how the person views the event through their context for example socially and culturally. Theoretically, this is done via symbolic interaction. This back and forth interaction allows for interpretation and modification of the experience and behaviour hence contributing to evolving views on ageing. Understanding the cognitive process is crucial to gaining insight as to how a person sees their ageing selves in light of how these events have contributed to their ageing. Of interest is the emergent difference or similarities in intergenerational perspectives on ageing amongst Muslim women.

Figure 1: Theoretical Framework for the Study



METHODOLOGY

In presenting how two generations of South African Muslim women of Indian descent interpret and understand ageing from their lived experiences, the study adopted primary in-depth interviews as its main research method. The aim was to produce 'rich' findings that will broaden current understandings on ageing and bring insightful new pathways for the study of ageing in South Africa. Details regarding the methodological approach to the study, sampling, research and data analysis methods are discussed in the chapter. Ethical considerations and limitations of the study are also presented.

Description of the Historical and Social Dynamics of the Research Context

Mahida (1993) chronicles the arrival of the first Muslims to South Africa in 1652 at the Cape of Good Hope. Mahida (1993) provides a poignant account of how movements, institutions, personalities and events in religion, education (primary, secondary and tertiary), health, social relief and cohesion, media and publication etcetera shaped the foundation of Muslims and Islam in South Africa.

Vahed (2007) affirms that Islam is a minority religion in South Africa. The Muslim community comprises of various ethnic groups, namely, Indian, Malay and African Muslims (Hassan, 2011). In Census 2001, Muslims numbered 654 064 or 1.48% of South Africa's population. By population group, the majority of Muslims were Coloured (296 023) followed by Indian (274 931), African (74 701) and White (8 409) (Vahed, 2007). Most recently, the 2016 Community Survey recorded a total number of 892 685 or 1.62% of Muslims in South Africa (Statistics South Africa, 2017). By geographical location, South African Indian Muslims (originated mainly from India) predominantly reside in KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng (Hassan, 2011). South African Malay Muslims are ground mainly in the Western Cape whose roots can be traced to South-East Asia and North Africa (Hassan, 2011).

Mothers and daughters in the study experienced living under Apartheid to varying degrees, thus locating them in their personal contexts of 'then and now' is an avenue to understand and unravel the 'historical self'. This consideration is made to firstly draw on the events of the past in shaping the context of the participant, thereby allowing them to attach meanings to such influences and secondly to solicit how such meanings have influenced them as a person in retrospect. Thus being cognisant of the historical forces in shaping Muslim spaces, identity and expression was an important factor considered in the context of the thesis. Islamic beliefs and practices was not viewed as static and

homogenously applied by the thesis. Instead, this was left to participants to define in the context of the ageing experience.

As mentioned in the *Introduction*, research on ageing in the South African context has been dominated by demographic analysis and projections. Distinctly lacking in these accounts are the individual narratives that characterise the ageing experience for respondents. By failing to recognise the role of the respondent as a well-informed, interpreter of the data as it unfolded, these studies do not account for the 'mechanisms' people use to "make sense of their world, manage and sustain a sense of order in their lives and interactions with others" (Collodel et al, 2012: 40-41).

Attempting to understand the social construction of ageing, the role played by existing and alternative images of ageing and interpersonal social and cultural relations through which ageing manifests at the level of the individual and society is a colossal but necessary undertaking. As mentioned in the *Literature Review*, qualitative investigations cognisant of alternative images and ethnic variation of what ageing means to Africans is somewhat lacking, especially in the South African context.

Whilst the thesis does not include Muslim mothers and daughters from all parts of the country, it is important to locate the study within the historical and research setting described. The study's aim was not to offer generalised accounts of the lived experiences of Muslim women with respect to ageing. Rather it aimed to uncover and further interrogate nuanced understandings of what ageing means to a select but diverse group of Muslim mothers and daughters. The convergence of intergenerational research on ageing amongst Muslim women in South Africa in this thesis is novel and goes further than many other studies who have researched each of these aspects singularly in the South African and global context, For this reason, it sets a new precedence for sociological interest in Muslim women in South Africa and globally. It further makes a noteworthy contribution on broadening the scope for alternative narratives and research on ageing. Given the richness and depth of the data collected, there are opportunities to further investigate many of the emergent findings from the study.

Research Design

Mouton and Marais (1988) explain that a research design aims to bring congruence between the achievement of the research goal and the considerations and limitations of the research project. Implicitly expressed is the idea that a research design involves pre-planned rational decision-making

thereby reducing or eliminating factors such as errors and inaccuracies, which could comprise the quality of the study (Mouton and Marais, 1988; Punch 2006). To this, Mouton and Marais (1988: 33) point out that "the aim of the research design is to plan and structure a given research project in such a manner that the eventual validity of the research findings is maximized". Similarly, Greenstein, Roberts and Sitas (2003:14) maintain that a research design is "a plan that outlines the elements of the research and how they are related to each other". This study has aligned itself with the above definitions thereby ensuring planned methodological decisions taken were in coherence with the overall research aim of the study.

Research Paradigm

To recap; the study aimed to explore how two related generations of South African Muslim women interpret and attach meaning to the concept of ageing and how these meanings manifest in their lived experiences. Hence an exploratory, qualitative approach was deemed the most appropriate choice.

According to Filstead (1970: 6) cited in Chadwick, Bahr and Albrecht (1984: 206) "qualitative methodology refers to those research strategies… which allow the researcher to obtain first-hand knowledge about the empirical social world in question. Qualitative methodology allows the researcher to "get close to the data" thereby developing the analytical, conceptual and categorical components of explanation from the data itself…" Borg and Gall (1989) outline that in qualitative research the researcher attempts to study all the elements in order to attain a deeper understanding of the social phenomena within its social, cultural and historical context. Borg and Gall (1989) also state that in qualitative research the object of the research is the respondent itself where emphasis is placed on intuition-based knowledge or the knowledge based on the subject's experience of the situation.

Furthermore, qualitative research focuses on social processes and the meanings attached to social situations and phenomena by participants (Borg and Gall, 1989). It also offers the possibility of developing new conceptual ideas that will aid the researcher to understand the phenomena under investigation. By placing participants' perspectives, experiences and meanings of ageing at the cornerstone of the inquiry allows the researcher to describe the area of interest as expressed by the participant themselves thus offering greater insight into how participants create and experience their own realities and perspectives on ageing from their natural social settings (Borg and Gall, 1989; Babbie and Mouton, 2001).

The "getting close to the data" axiom as well as the allowance to understand social processes from the perspective of the "actors in a situation" (Lester, 1999:1) is the foremost reason for choosing a qualitative paradigm for the study. In addition, a qualitative approach is also suited to the distinctive theoretical framework adopted by the study (*See Figure 1).*

Narrative Framework of Inquiry

Even though the study adopted an exploratory qualitative lens, the manner in which qualitative information was retrieved from participants, required additional direction. Hence, narrative inquiry was selected as the guiding framework to gathering qualitative information during data collection (Sandelowski, 1991).

According to Connelly and Clandinin (1990), narrative inquiry encompasses personal and human perspectives over time and is thus mindful of the relationship between individual experience and socio-cultural context. Nettleton et al (2004:49) notes that "when a person's account is understood in its socio-biographical context…we can begin to gain insight into the socially embedded, and possibly embodied nature of people's experiences…the story reveals as much about the culturally available discourses as it does about the minutiae of the teller's life". Etherington (2007) further claims that narrative inquiry offers a way to systematically gather, analyse information and re-tell people's stories as revealed. Hence by accepting these narratives as a product of individual construction and socio-cultural embodiment, narrative inquiry allows the "unofficial, marginal places where alternative stories emerge" to surface (Sools, 2013:94).

Additional gains from using narrative inquiry relate to the multiple layers that are uncovered in understanding the individuals, their culture and how they have dealt with changes both personally and contextually. Through the retelling of personal narratives, individuals attempt to make sense of past events and create meanings as they relate what has taken place. According to Etherington (n.d: 6) the "shape of a story helps organize information about how people have interpreted events; the values; beliefs and experiences that guide those interpretations; and their hopes, intentions and plans for the future". Relevant to the context of the study, narrative inquiry allows the understanding of complex and multiple patterns associated with ageing and how ageing-self is formed in the milieu of social discourse. Collectively, these allow for further understanding of how individual knowledge and experience is created from cultural reference points (Etherington, n.d).

Of further relevance to the thesis, is the linkage of narrative inquiry and the lifecourse model. Understanding how Muslim women relay their 'stories' of ageing over the lifecourse and principally the meanings they attach to these 'stories' is the nexus between narrative inquiry and the lifecourse model.

Other connections between narrative inquiry and the lifecourse model lie in the manner in which such experiences are remembered and told at that specific juncture in a person's life or for a particular reason, audience or purpose (Etherington, 2007). According to Etherington (2007) such factors influence the choice of stories, how they are told, presented and interpreted. Perhaps the foremost connection between narrative inquiry and the lifecourse model are the subjective meanings, which allow for fluid negotiation of identity and the sense of self. This became evident as research participants were relating specific events over their individual lifecourse where they may or may not considered the influence of such events on their identity and their ageing self.

Narrative inquiry "provides a methodology, a set of broad procedural ideas and concepts, rather than a pre-set method or specified technique and it encourages responsiveness of the research context" (Stanley 2008:436). Furthermore, following the position of Gehart et al (2007), identifying meanings attached to narrative experiences was a continual process during data collection as opposed to being a separate activity after data collection. As stories were re-told by participants, 'meaning' attached to events as they unfolded over the lifecourse and how these related to their perception of ageing were continually discovered and co-constructed between the researcher and the participant. Here the researcher's role was restricted to inquiring how the pieces of the larger stories make sense as a whole as opposed to filling gaps with personal understanding.

Following this approach proved beneficial in seeking 'in the moment' clarification from participants thereby allowing the researcher to make links to other smaller narratives thereby viewing the personal narrative in its entirety. Secondly, discovering the meanings jointly allowed the participant to make connections and realize the impact of particular events not previously thought of. The researcher ensured that a sense of order emanated from conversations with participants (Marshall, 1998). The 'talk' between researcher and participant described and created 'order' through conversation (Marshall, 1998). This deeper level of introspection allowed for richer retelling of experiences resulting in 'weighty' data.

Thus, amidst a qualitative research design, the study has found narrative inquiry as a means to discover and unfold the layered meanings of ageing through the use of the lifecourse model as an apt methodological approach. Narrative inquiry allowed data gathering in the study to evolve organically and harmoniously thereby producing insightful narratives as told by Muslim mothers and daughters. For example, one daughter shared her battle with infertility over the last ten years. Her narrative pieced together the 'little stories' over the years relating to her infertility and its effect on her being, close relationships and connection with God. For her, infertility was the context within which she principally viewed her ageing self. More examples are shared in detail in the *Analysis of Findings.*

Sampling Strategy

A non-probability or non-random sampling strategy was used. In order to sample Muslim mothers and daughters, the researcher used a purposive sampling approach. In purposive sampling "the researcher uses his or her expertise to select subjects who represent the population being studied… [a]nd chooses on the basis of experience or other criteria" (Chadwick et al, 1984:65). Support for using purposive sampling is also found in Silverman (2005) who writes that purposive sampling allows the researcher to choose particular cases as it illustrates a feature or process of interest. Importantly, Swartz, de La Rey, Duncan and Townsend (2011) suggest that purposive sampling is based on the characteristics of inclusion to the research questions.

Whilst Chadwick et al (1984) agrees that purposive sampling allows a researcher to select a sample which they believe to be representative of the population being studied; they argue that there is no manner to determine the authenticity or representivity of the sample. The only way this may be determined is if a representative sample is selected and findings between the two samples are compared (Chadwick et al (1984). Despite this limitation, purposive sampling has been extensively used in qualitative research (Ryan, 2011; Obeisat, Gharaibeh, Oweis, Gharaibeh, 2012). Therefore, given its acceptability, the research aims and questions of the study, non-random purposive sampling was a suitable choice.

Initial participants for the pilot and data collection were drawn into the study using purposive sampling. The researcher identified mother and daughter pairs from personal networks. As fieldwork progressed, participants were also requested to share details of other mothers and daughters from their own personal networks who would be interested in participating. Hence the study also used snowball sampling alongside purposive sampling as a further strategy to build on the sample size. Following the

advice given by Chadwick et al, 1984:66), "snowball sampling identifies a few research subjects who have characteristics relevant to the study and in the process of data collection asks them to name others they know who are like them in the relevant characteristics". As with purposive sampling, the researcher here too is unaware of the exact representivity of the sample to the larger population being studied (Chadwick et al, 1984). Nevertheless, snowball sampling remains a popular sampling strategy in qualitative research (Mouton and Marais, 1988, Silverman, 2005)

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

This thesis adopted a layered inclusion and exclusion criteria with the aim of soliciting rich data from select but varied group of Muslim women.

As the research investigated perceptions of ageing between two related generations of Muslim women of Indian descent, this "relation" was derived through family genealogy. The White Paper on Families describes a family as "a societal group that is related by blood (kinship), adoption, foster care or the ties of marriage (civil, customary or religious), civil union or cohabitation, and go beyond a particular physical residence" (Department of Social Development, 2012: 3). Conceptually, the definition of a family is broad, but is accordingly reflective of South Africa's socio-cultural, economic and political history and current context. It was thus imperative to delineate parameters for Muslim women considered for the study.

The study chose to define the intergenerational relation as the biological mother-daughter relationship. Preference for the biological relationship over an adoptive relationship is purely from a participant identification and selection point of view. The researcher anticipated it would be easier to apply the inclusion and exclusion criteria based on biological lines. Including adoptive relationships was believed to complicate the selection of participants especially in cases where either participant did not live together under the same roof during childhood and did not experience the same or similar events in one household. Hence mothers and daughters had to be biologically related and had to have lived together for at least the period(s) covering the daughter's childhood, adolescence and transition into adulthood. Hence, living arrangements and daily interaction were seen to be vital to "intergenerational transmission" with respect to the ageing experience (Jamieson, n.d:1). Daughters who moved away due to tertiary studies, employment or marriage were still included in the study as they fulfilled the criteria of having lived with their mothers during their formative years (i.e. childhood and adolescence and early adulthood).

Muslim women of Indian descent were chosen for the study. This choice was made to simplify the inclusion criteria and therefore used Apartheid population group classifications due to their social legacy. Additionally, being 'Indian' in the study represented a social construct to understanding the formation of the ageing-self and identity in relation to and as a product of the social-cultural context developed in part by Apartheid. Secondly as the researcher is a Muslim woman of Indian descent; from a methodological and data collection having a similar background to participants was believed to encourage trust and rapport from initial contact and during interviews. Further justification for including Indian, Muslim women into the study can be found in the works of Ahmed and Carrim (2016) and Pillay, Buitendach and Kanengoni (2014). Whilst different in subject matter, both studies comment on the under-representivity of Indians in social science research in South Africa. Hence this study aimed to fill this knowledge gap by including Indian women.

According to the theoretical framework adopted for the study, mothers and daughters included for the study are firstly theorised to have experienced some level of transition, life event(s) or turning points (s) in their lives with some impact to formulate the foundation for their views on ageing. Secondly, mothers and daughters are juxtaposed within the individual and societal context, which fuels the interpretation and modification between the interactions of the self and society. This together with the impact of historical time elicits intergenerational perceptions of ageing among mothers and daughters.

Whilst it was unknown at the onset what transitions, life events at what ages for example would be realized, the study hinged on the understanding that transitions are unique to the individual; where societal and cultural norms are in shift where lines are continually erased, blurred and new lines are created. Within this context each mother and daughter would have experienced some event(s) during their life that impacted on their perception of their ageing selves. Hence the meaning of an event, turning point and transition was reflexive in the field and was at the liberty of the participant to define and recount.

Therefore, selecting the appropriate age for mothers and daughters was essential to the success of the study. Of the two, the age of the daughter was most significant and was seen as a precursor to the selection of the mother. Only daughters over the age of 18 were selected for the study for the following reasons.

Selecting daughters less than 18 years of age presented additional ethical concerns to the study. Whilst none of the questions infringed on the rights and privacy of any participant and without any pre-existing notions of what may impact the individual; the study did anticipate personal information possibly relating to sensitive content such as trauma, assault, death, grief etcetera to surface during interviews. Given the strict ethical protocol around the protection of rights and privacy of minors as well as the additional researcher responsibility in reporting cases of abuse, involuntary consent to sexual activity and providing access to psychological counselling and therapy for such instances, the study purposefully chose to select daughters aged 18 and over. The researcher viewed this as an opportunity to freely explore emotive content without the additional ethical 'red tape'. That being said all ethical considerations were upheld regardless of the age of the participant.

This purposeful selection does not negate the experiences of those younger than 18. However from a generalised Muslim socio-cultural perspective (that is where movements of children and adolescents are often restricted, sheltered and chaperoned, especially for young girls as suggested by Offenhauer (2005) selection over the 18 year threshold allowed for deeper conversation due to potential physical interaction and assimilation to groups and cultures not probably present in the lives of under 18 year olds, especially for females. Whilst these choices are based on a possibly over-generalised scenario, the researcher's close affiliation to the Muslim community was additional justification for this criterion.

The inclusion criterion for mothers was more fluid in design. No age limit was placed on the age of mothers selected for the study. It can be argued that choosing an age-band for mothers would have been in garnering diversity in terms of the background of mothers and life experiences. Transition through the lifecourse for mothers is in theory more 'dense' than their daughters for multiple reasons.

Particular to mothers is that they would have lived a greater part of their life under the Apartheid regime. This is significant, as firstly the design of Apartheid would have perchance left some impact on their social and cultural norms, which in turn impacted on their personal histories. Mothers in the sample have the benefit of retrospectively reflecting on their preceding live event(s) in this context and how it has shaped their current life events and views on ageing. Secondly, the contextual history of society and culture too would have transitioned post-Apartheid and affected how mothers interpret the world and themselves in a changing era. This too would be applicable for daughters of older ages as well.

If one participant, mother or daughter chose not to be a part of the study, their choice was respected. The willing participant understood their inclusion was based on mutual agreement by both mother and daughter. Either the willing participant persuaded the other to be included or withdrew their participation. This occurred in three instances during the recruitment phase. In the end, the willing participant (co-incidentally all were mothers) withdrew their participation.

Selection of Sample and Sample Size

Identifying eligible Muslim daughters was vital to ensuring a good sample and verdant information. As the sampling strategy was purposive alongside snowball sampling (to a lesser degree and only during the pilot and fieldwork); using existing networks and gatekeepers was essential.

Initially, the study sought to sample 15 pairs of mother-daughter couples in the predominantly Indian community of Laudium, Southwest of Pretoria, Gauteng. The researcher's identification with the target group and familiarity with the demographics of Laudium was hoped to aid in recruiting participants who will voluntarily take part in the research. Possible avenues of recruiting participants included family and business networks, friends and colleagues, social clubs and religious institutions to name a few. Support for a sampling rationale such as this comes from Waldrop (2012: 601) who states that "by taking the methodological view that individuals born approximately at the same time, within the same class segment, and in the same cultural place will be shaped by the same historical structures so that their lives to some extent are synchronized into gendered, generational experience…".

The study was positively received by personal networks and gatekeepers in Laudium. The researcher made contact with several persons within the Laudium community who would be able to refer mother-daughter couples who suited the profile. Potential participants were contacted telephonically approximately two weeks to a month before the suggested fieldwork date. The gist of the study and importantly participant involvement and what was required was openly described. The aim was to make participants fully aware of the study especially with regard to obtaining consent for participation and audio recording during interviews (*See Appendix 1, 2 and 3*)

Admittedly, whilst the topic of ageing did not particularly enthuse potential participants, being involved in a research process that involved showcasing Muslim women in a different light attracted interest. It was however clear that the idea of the interviews being audio recorded was a concern for

some. Whilst they were content to disclose personal and relevant information, their concerns related to being identified in their community. Their fears were laid to rest when the use of pseudonyms during the reporting process was discussed.

Recruitment of participants in Laudium did not materialise in the early stages. Reasons for the decline included busy work and personal schedules, lack of interest, lengthy interview duration and living distance from their daughters or mothers. Despite having personal networks, the researcher encountered difficulties in finding participants in Laudium. The only participant mother-daughter couple who was eager to be included in the research was reserved for the first pilot interview.

Following the developments in Laudium, attempts were also made to include Muslim mothers and daughters from Lenasia. A predominantly Indian community on the South of Johannesburg; Lenasia is socio-culturally and economically parallel to that of Laudium thereby affording a notable opportunity to research Muslim mothers and daughters. Through the researcher's personal network potential participants were referred. This yielded a positive outcome where a fieldwork appointment for a later date was secured. One mother-daughter couple expressed interest in participating was reserved for the second pilot interview.

Intriguingly, the subject matter garnered interest and keenness to participate from other places in the country. This was due to the researcher's friends and family in other areas being aware of the study through casual conversation. Whilst in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal, the researcher mentioned the research to acquaintances that showed interest in the subject. In view of the lack of interest in the initial study area and the keenness expressed by others; the researcher therefore decided to include areas outside Gauteng which were feasible for the researcher to travel to. Areas surrounding Durban, KwaZulu-Natal were chosen as alternative research sites. As such, a third pilot interview was secured and conducted.

Given the interest and positive reception outside Gauteng, the researcher renewed attempts in recruiting participants in Laudium and Lenasia once again. The researcher was successful and was able to secure more fieldwork appointments. It is the opinion of the researcher that having already conducted the pilot and some interviews in Durban may have possibly influenced Muslim women in Laudium and Lenasia to agree to be interviewed.

In summary, of the 20 mother-daughter couples contacted to be involved in the research in Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal, 15 couples were interviewed of which 3 couples were interviewed for the pilot and 12 couples were interviewed for the main data collection. See *Appendix 5* for a summary of participant demographics. The sample size was capped due to the level of saturation and repetition reached during interviews. The researcher believed that the sheer quantity of data that emerged during the research process would be sufficient to offer a meaningful analysis and presentation of the ageing experience for women in the sample.

Research Method

The research applied an exploratory qualitative approach with narrative inquiry as a guiding framework for gathering data. With this methodological background, the next consideration made related to how the information was retrieved from participants. The purpose of the enquiry was to yield astute and plentiful information through a meaningful and interactive process between researcher and participant. It was imperative that the chosen method allowed the researcher to subtly direct conversation with opportunities to transition between passive receiver of information and active co-constructor of the personal narrative (Babbie, 2011). The qualitative method had to also allow the researcher to steer the conversation with varying levels of interrogation at critical points of the discussion so as to uncover layers of meaning and association. (Collodel, et al, 2012). For these reasons, interviews were chosen as a suitable research method.

Cannell and Kahn (1968:527-528) cited in Chadwick et al (1984:103) define the research interview as "a two-person conversation, initiated by the interviewer for the specific purpose of obtaining research-relevant information, and focused by him [or her] on content specified research objectives of systematic description, prediction or explanation". Interviews are regarded as one of the most basic forms of data collection and as such have featured in studies relating to consumer behaviour, fertility and mental health etcetera (Chadwick et al, 1984; Babbie, 2011; Schaefer, 2014). Within the context of using interviews in ageing research, work by Quéniart and Charpentier (2012); Westerhof, Bennet and Stevenick (2003) is acknowledged

The amount of 'structure' apportioned to an interview is varied. Interviews may range from highly structured characterised by no variance usually with predetermined response categories to undirected, exploratory, unstructured interviews with no specific or standard questions, format or sequence

(Chadwick et al, 1984). The literature describes these types of interviews as "two extremes" and "being on opposite ends of the continuum" (Chadwick et al, 1984:104; Kielmann, Catalado and Seeley, 2012).

The unstructured format is typically suited for exploratory studies and cases where complex and detailed information is retrieved (Chadwick et al, 1984; Babbie, 2011; Kielmann et al, 2012). Possibly the foremost advantage of using a less structured approach would be adapting to the situation thereby yielding rich, explanatory and multi-dimensional responses (Mouton and Marais, 1988). In contrast, the structured format "assumes that the researcher has rather extensive information already available about that subject and about the respondents to be interviewed…" (Chadwick et al, 1984:105).

Whilst acknowledging the merits and demerits associated with both types of interviews, the direction and guidance of structured interviews was favoured. However this style was not adopted entirely; as strict, pre-structured questions and categories may restrict participant expression and responses. On the other hand, the unstructured approach as penned by Becker and Geer (1957:28) cited in Chadwick et al (1984:104) was also appreciated where "the interviewer explores many facets of his interviewees concerns, treating subjects as they come up in conversation, pursuing leads, allowing his [or her] imagination and ingenuity full rein as he [or she] tries to develop new hypotheses and test them in the course of the interview". The key consideration made with respect to integrating narrative inquiry into the interview process was to place the participant at the centre of co-construction and interpretation. Through intervention when necessary; allowing the experiences of the participant to take centre stage reinforced their role as being knowledgeable about their realities, social environments and lives (Collodel et al, 2012).

Therefore, a semi-structured or 'middle-ground' approach which in design allowed for some level of structure was adopted in this study. Such open-ended questions guided the conversation but still offered flexibility to the engagement. Labow (1972) cited in Sandelowski (1991:162) viewed the unfolding of the narrative as follows: "[f]irstly composed of an abstract, or what the story is about; an orientation, or the who, when, where and what of the story; some complicating action, or the then-what happened?; an evaluation, or the so-what?; a resolution, or the what-finally happened?; and a code, or a signal that the story is over and a return to the present". Suggestions by Labow (1972) Sandelowski (1991) is resonated in the 'middle ground 'approach as it is precisely the freedom of conversation with well-timed interjections of probes that allowed the temporality of the narrative to surface.

Research Instrument: Interview Guide

An interview guide was used to ensure all topics were covered during the interview; although the 'two-person conversation' remained unstructured. The open-endedness of the questions allowed the conversation to unfold as determined by the participant; who was given freedom to answer in a manner they were most comfortable with. Given the importance to extract rich and layered life histories, it was critical to ensure that the interview guide was non-threatening and non-judgemental (Chadwick et al, 1984, Wiess, 1995; Mouton and Marias, 1988).The design of the interview guide and themes considered are discussed hereon.

The interview guide (*See Appendix 4*) was formulated shortly after a significant portion of the literature review was drafted. Contents of the interview guide were directed by themes and gaps from the literature review, research problem, objective and key research questions. The interview guide flowed with logical order and permitted the interview to comfortably build from one topic to the next. The degree of semi-structured-ness envisioned was ever present; therefore the guide included themes with minimal guiding questions and probes for further information. The language used in the guide was meant to be easily understood in the context of an interview and devoid of any technical terms which participants may not be aware off.

The interview guide comprised of the following themes: (1) family and social context; (2) concept of ageing; (3) exploring life transitions and the ageing self; (4) notions of ageing well and (5) aesthetics personal grooming and lifestyle choices. In keeping with the semi-structure interview style, within each of these themes was sub-thematic probing questions which was poised to take the conversation to a cavernous level and extract narratives of significance and relevance to the study (Chadwick et al, 1984; Mouton and Marais, 1988).

The interview guide began with structured questions such as current age and date and place of birth. The interview then proceeded to discuss personal circumstances, occupation, education and family background. This was intentional and helped participants speak on familiar topics to ease their nervousness and relax within the first few minutes of the interview. Support for this interviewing strategy is suggested by Holliday (2002) and Kielmann et al (2012).

As the interview was semi-structured, the researcher was fully prepared to change the order of the interview themes when participants responded earlier or pre-empted another section of the interview.

This occurred fairly often during most interviews. Although when these interviews were reflected on during analysis, such shifting contributed immensely to the depth of the conversation. Such instances point to the highly reflexive nature of the instrument and the research process (Silverman 2005).

The interview guide ensured the conversation evolved 'organically'. For example tracing participants childhood experiences into adulthood in a natural order and at an eased pace. The timing and mix of general to specific and more complex questions was carefully constructed. An abstract question was usually preceded by a direct question which subtly signalled a change in focus and mentally prepared the respondent to direct their thoughts on the theme. Thereafter the abstract question allowed participants to pause and reflect before providing their opinion.

Whilst ageing may not be viewed as an intrinsically sensitive subject, getting participants to shed light on aspects of their life which shaped their ageing selves were potentially sensitive. Questions on influential life experiences with major impact were reserved for the mid-point of the interview. By then, a significant level of rapport was built between the researcher and participant (including contact during recruitment) which ultimately created an open and trusting relationship setting for sharing delicate and impassioned content. This proved to be a good strategy as there were several instances where extremely personal and in some cases previously undisclosed matters to others were discussed.

Piloting of the Research Instrument

The interview guide was first pre-tested with three mother-daughter couples (not part of the main study sample) from three different areas namely Lenasia, Laudium and Durban. The pre-test or pilot involves testing the research instrument and other procedures to be used in data collection on a smaller scale and thereafter reviewing the instruments to correct for errors or problems that surface (Chadwick et al, 1984). Whilst a pilot study does not guarantee success in the main study, a pilot does increase the likelihood of success and is an important element to a good research design (van Teijlingen and Hundley, 2001).

The purpose of the pilot was multiple. The pilot was conducted to test the adequacy and reliability of the research instrument. Reliability can be thought of as the degree of internal consistency when data is collected by different observers or by the same observer at different times (Babbie, 2011; Silverman, 2005). The pilot also assessed internal validity of the interview guide. In other words, was there

coherence in the findings of the pilot and did they truly represented the phenomenon investigated (Mouton and Marais, 1988; Holliday, 2002; Silverman, 2005). Ensuring internal and external validity is fundamental for reaching reliable conclusions from research findings (Greenstein et al, 2003). Additionally the pilot also sought to get feedback from participants on ambiguities, assess if questions provided an adequate range of responses and establish if responses reflect the intention behind the questions posed to participants (Peat, Mellis, Williams and Xuan, 2003).

The pilot was useful in highlighting participants understanding of the subject and questions. Overall, pilot participants understood all questions with minimal clarification required. Participants did not view any questions as ambiguous or challenging to comprehend and answer. Encouragingly, pilot participants did not decline to answer any questions, in particular sensitive probing about emotional events in their lives, for example, death of a close family member.

After the pilot, some changes were made to the interview guide. Firstly the flow of the interview with respect to organisation of themes was revised. Results from the pilot revealed that it was recommended to end the interview with a 'lighter' subject of discussion, for example, lifestyle and grooming as opposed to reserving a key section like successful ageing for the end of the interview. The researcher concluded that waning respondent concentration and possible fatigue affected the quality of responses. Secondly, 'lengthy' questions were unpacked and reformulated as separate questions or shortened for better understanding. Thirdly the length of the interview, approximately 1.5 hours on average per participant was flagged as a potential factor to consider in the field. The researcher devised a contingency plan of requesting a follow-up interview should the need arise.

The researcher was confident that the interview guide was reliable and garnered internal validity during the pilot phase. By this, the information collected through the interview guide yielded consistent findings in other settings (that is in all three study areas) and the information gathered truly represented the topic investigated. A discussion on the overall reliability and validity of the study appears later in the chapter.

Data Collection

The pilot was conducted between September and October 2014. Main data collection took place during the latter of 2014 and late-2015. Data was collected through the use of semi-structured interviews

directed by an interview guide. This approach created synergy with the overall narrative inquiry model as a subtly directed conversation captured multiple insights offered by detailed and layered retelling of stories over the lifecourse.

Mothers and daughters were contacted telephonically approximately two weeks to a month before a suggested fieldwork date. Once their participation was confirmed, a suitable date and time for the interview was scheduled. Interviews for both mother and daughter were conducted on the same day either at the residence of the mother or daughter. Interviews were held separately with mothers and daughters so as to encourage openness, comfort as well as to eliminate any biases or reluctance to disclose information (particularly sensitive information) which could have occurred if each was aware of the other's responses.

There was no pre-requisite on who was interviewed first. Often the first person to be interviewed was based on who was willing to be interviewed or who was available at the time the researcher arrived to conduct the interview. Therefore, the interview procedure was flexible to accommodate for either mother or daughter to be interviewed first.

Each interview was between an hour and two and half hours in duration. Interviews adopted an informal conversational tone so as encourage comfort and sharing of information as naturally as possible. As most participants felt they shared as much information as they could during the interview and the researcher believed the most salient points were discussed to saturation; the need for any follow-up interviews did not arise.

The researcher was also mindful of mental fatigue on her part which could have affected the quality of the second interview. Hence after the conclusion of the first interview, the researcher opted for a short breather so as to gather thoughts and reenergise ahead of the next interview. During the break, the researcher also engaged in casual conversation with participants which further strengthened the rapport between the researcher and participant. It also provided an opportunity to observe participants in their natural setting so that inference on their thoughts and actions relayed in the interview could be made from their immediate social context (Chadwick et al, 1984; Silverman, 2005; Babbie, 2011).

Although difficulties were experienced in identifying and recruiting participants in the initial phases, difficulties encountered during data collection were minimal. As signposted in the outcome pilot study, the length of the interview was a concern for some. Even though this was clearly outlined during the recruitment phase where confirmation to participate was also based on the interview length. During the interview some participants queried how many more questions are remaining. The researcher ensured that interviews appointments were based on availability for at least two hours per participant and did not coincide with any errands or prayer times. Admittedly such questions disrupted the flow of the conversation at times especially if the narrative was approaching an issue of deepness. The break in flow had to be countered through imperceptible intervention to re-direct the conversation whilst in the same vein not being perceived as flippant about the participants concern over time. Of the 24 interviews in the main data collection phase, such cases were only encountered four times; once with a mother and three with daughters.

Another difficulty worth noting related to the conflicted role and ethical dilemma faced by the researcher when a participant had an emotional breakdown when recounting particularly traumatic events. The first instance occurred very early in the research process. The participant (a mother) became tearful and emotional when speaking about the death of her mother in the first ten minutes of the interview. In the interest of safeguarding the emotions of the participant and not exposing them to further vulnerability, the interview was stopped and the participant was allowed as much time as needed to regain her composure. The researcher comforted her and became emotionally involved as the participant calmed down. By doing so, the researcher was acutely aware that she may have crossed the boundary of the researcher-participant relationship and reducing the "social distance" (Walent, 2008). The researcher was conflicted with her identity as a researcher but also her values as an individual and a Muslim woman who shared a similar background with participants. Whilst it was important for the interview to resume (if still desired by the participant) the researcher did not want to be viewed as unsympathetic and continue without validating her feelings. As Wassenaar (2006) points out, the welfare of the participant outweighs the interest of the research. Hence it was decided that the interview would only continue with the consent of the participant and if the researcher was certain that the participant was indeed ready to proceed and no further distress or harm would be experienced. Once the interview resumed and the topic revisited, the participant answered in more emotionally controlled manner. This instance deepened the trust and comfort experienced for the remainder of the interview yielding a rich personal narrative. Action taken by the researcher in this case is supported by Orb, Eisenhauer and Wynaden (2001) who comment that researchers should expect diverse outcomes of an interview, be it beneficence or potential harm.

Accordingly, several lessons were learnt from this episode. Firstly, it surfaced that certain topics within the interview guide had the potential to invoke intense emotional reaction from participants. The foremost benefit from this experience was the researcher's ability to widen and improve her interviewing skills so as to be more conscious of the effect of the interview process on participants and how to respond appropriately. Out of twenty four interviews from twelve mother-daughter couples there were seven instances where interviews were temporarily stopped due to an emotional breakdown. Interestingly, this occurred only amongst mothers who described with feelings of longing and loss with death, widowhood and divorce as the emotional root cause.

Secondly, being willing to stop the interview is demonstration of the researcher's awareness of rights and vulnerability (Orb et al, 2001). It also further showed that the researcher valued and protected the dignity and welfare of the participant over data obtained from distressing experiences (Orb et al, 2001; Wassenaar, 2006). In all cases, participants chose to continue with the interview once they were ready. It is uncertain why some chose to react in this manner and why this reaction was felt particularly by mothers. It was clear however that many participants unexpectedly viewed the entire interview as a healing and cathartic experience. Such a finding points to the appreciative level of rapport and trust established and the sensitive manner in which the interview was conducted (Mouton and Marais, 1988; Greenstein et al, 2003; Babbie, 2011). It is the researcher's belief that had she not been from the Muslim community or as an 'insider', perhaps responses would have been more guarded thereby affecting the kind of data obtained

Ethical Considerations

The ethics code for the study encompassed respect for the participant, their informed consent, voluntary participation, privacy, confidentiality and anonymity as well as academic integrity and honesty on the part of the researcher (Orb et al, 2001; Punch, 2006; Silverman, 2005; Babbie, 2011). Ethical clearance for this study was granted by the University of the Witwatersrand, Human Research Ethics Committee (Non-Medical) in late 2013 (ethics protocol number H13/11/10).

During the recruitment and sampling phase, respondents were informed of the aim of the research and their role as potential participants in an honest and transparent manner. Once willingness to participate was expressed, a detailed information sheet and consent forms for voluntary inclusion, audio recording and transcribing was emailed for their reading prior to their commitment to being interviewed. Usually either the mother or daughter was contacted and offered to show the documents to the other. All

documents captured the details of the research, why they were chosen and reaffirmed the roles of the researcher and participant (Punch, 2006; Babbie and Mouton, 2011). Importantly, the information sheet noted that participants' rights will be safeguarded respected and upheld; where none of these rights will be encroached or violated during the interview process.

The researcher was principally conscious of potential emotive questions of the interview guide and effect of the type of information revealed in the interview. Such information could be embarrassing for participants to share and self-perceive negatively through mentioning deviant or questionable behaviour, personal attitudes and prejudices (Babbie, 2011). In addition, as the study adopted a narrative inquiry approach; in recounting personal life histories participants may be faced with subjects they prefer to avoid. Resultantly the "recurrence of old wounds" and "sharing of secrets" "opens new risks" to the researcher and participant (Orb et al, 2001:94). Given the concern of such cases and the personal agony they can cause to participants long after the interview has been concluded, the researcher opted to refer cases of a serious nature with the permission of the participant to local counsellors who were better qualified to help participants work through their emotions. By the conclusion of all data collection, even though there were several instances of emotional breakdowns, the researcher was able to intervene appropriately and the need for this contingency did not arise.

Committed to honour the overall dignity and welfare of participants was exercised at all phases of the study (Weiss, 1995 cited in Chadwick 1984, ; Punch, 2006). Hence by giving their informed consent, participants based their voluntary participation on full comprehension of all the risks involved in the research (Punch, 2006; Babbie, 2011; Colladel et al, 2012). Participants were informed of their freedom to withdraw from the study at any time. They were allowed to disagree with the researcher and had the right not to answer any questions posed them at any point in the study without fear of discrimination and prejudice. If they chose to withdraw from the study, they were free to do so at any time without any explanation. Their withdrawal involved no penalty or loss at any time. Also explained was their right to request that information they have supplied up to that point in the study be withdrawn and or destroyed. Participants were assured that the researcher will respectfully abide by their request(s). During data collection, there were no cases of refusal to answer specific questions or voluntary withdrawal from the study.

The researcher undertook to ensure confidentiality and anonymity during and after the interviews. Babbie (2011) highlights that being anonymous is not tantamount to being confidential. Using the conceptual guidelines of Babbie (2011) and Orb et al (2001), this was duly explained to participants.

In terms of ensuring confidentiality of the interview, the researcher revealed that whilst their responses can be identified (for example engagement and discussion between supervisor and researcher solely for academic purposes) such information will not be publicly disclosed. For anonymity, participants were assured their identities will be protected. Any reference to respondents during the analysis and reporting of findings will be done through the use of a pseudonym. All names reflected in this thesis are not the true names of participants but rather 'false names' used to protect their identities. These pseudonyms were assigned by the researcher and was not disclosed prior to the writing of the research.

Of course, if a participant (mother, daughter or both) were to read the thesis, they would be able to pick out their own narratives shared. Hence, during interviews, mothers and daughters willingly shared information that was known to each other – but not limited to this only. The researcher found that it was not an issue for participants of both generations and matched pairs in particular to be aware of what they spoke about during interviews. On shared knowledge of an event, they would often say, *"my mother will tell you"* or *"my daughter will say"*. The research thus aimed at piecing information between pairs. In so doing, if the researcher wished to link one generation's response to the other, permission was sought, where in most cases it was given. In some instances one generation (mainly younger daughters) did not want their mother to know something they raised – for example, how they met their boyfriends etc. This was not disclosed.

Participants' exact geographical location was not disclosed, but rather a general indication is made, for example, Durban, KwaZulu-Natal. In the interest of further protecting identities, specific material were excluded from some quotes (specific storylines that linked to other family members). Only material that had a bearing on the study scope were included. At the end of the completion of the thesis, participants were guaranteed audiences who read the thesis will not be able to identify and link any response(s) to a given participant (Orb et al, 2001; Babbie, 2011; Colladel et al, 2012).

Anonymity and confidentiality also extended to audio recording, transcription and storage of data. Granted, participants expressed concern over being identified in audio recordings. They were assured that no identifying markers such as names and locations will be mentioned during the interview and transcribing. Participants were also informed that all audio recordings will be stored on a password protected computer accessed only by the researcher. All mass storage devices with back-ups of the audio recordings will be stored in a locked cabinet at a location known only to the researcher. All audio recordings and transcripts will be kept for a period of ten years after the completion of the thesis and will thereafter be destroyed by the researcher.

As Babbie (2011:487) mentions "researchers can best serve their peers…by telling the truth about all the pitfalls and problems they've experienced in a particular line of enquiry". As such the researcher has strived to compile this thesis in a transparent, culturally and gender sensitive, non-discriminatory and bias-free manner (Punch, 2006). The researcher was also committed to honour academic honesty and integrity by duly referencing and acknowledging the work of scholars and other sources of material.

Reflexive Considerations

This section discusses some of the reflexive considerations made during the study. Such reflection is necessitated by an understanding that a researcher who is continually reflective with participants is cognisant of how pre-understandings may influence the outcome of the study (Walent, 2008). Reflexivity is viewed as "the process of a continual internal dialogue and critical self-evaluation of [the] researcher's positionality as well as active acknowledgement and explicit recognition that this position may affect the research process and outcome" (Berger, 2015:220). Furthermore, reflexivity is also thought of as a measure of quality control; where it becomes vital to understand how the course and conclusion of the research are impacted by the characteristics and experiences of the researcher (Berger, 2015).

In this inquiry which sought to explore how meanings are attributed to the ageing experiences from personal and socio-cultural contexts; a number of reflexive actions were inherent to the research. Being reflexive allowed opportunities to "monitor the tension" (Berger, 2015: 221) between the involvement of the researcher as a co-constructor of the narrative with participants and detachment or 'social distance' intended to enhance the credibility of the findings (Cutcliffe, 2003; Bradbury-Jones, 2007). The study used semi-structured interviews as its primary source of data. Given the reliance on this method and in the interest of ensuring rigour, a high degree of reflexivity in terms of the researcher' self-reflection of bias and preconceptions was present at all stages of the research process (Walent, 2008).

At the outset, the researcher was perceptive to possible bias relating to her pre-understandings which may hinder the appreciation of tradition, religion and worldview expressed by participants. Pre-understandings based on already acquired knowledge are unconsciously drawn into situations of expected new understandings (Walent, 2008). As such pre-understandings profoundly shape what we seek to understand and continually remould pre-understandings for all involved (Walent, 2008).

Notwithstanding, by the end of the research encounter, both the researcher and participant were inevitably affected by repositioning of their pre-understandings.

The researcher was deliberately conscious on a number of issues relating to her "positionality" during the investigation (Berger, 2015:220). Thus the researcher was attentive to her communicative and non-verbal reactions when engaging with participants and was further aware that she is part of the world being studied (Mason, 1996; Porter, 1993). Positioning identified by the researcher included her age, marital status, educational background, Islamic jurisprudence and ideology, family lineage and caste, Muslim identity personified through appearance and dress, place of residence and accent. Although vast, these reflexive positions are not unique to the study and have been reported in academic accounts by Bradbury-Jones (2007); Hamzeh and Oliver (2010); Walent (2008) and Finlay (2000).

In view of the sample being largely unknown or no prior familiarity to the researcher, this positioning became more apparent and was entwined as interviews progressed. Consequently, the researcher factored issues of Muslim identity, expression, background and lineage into the reflexive stance throughout the interview and reporting process. A few examples are shared below to illustrate the effects of the researcher's diverse positions in relation to the world and the women studied.

Given that the researcher identifies as Muslim, this created a scenario of simultaneously being an "onlooker" and a "member of the group studied" (Berger, 2015). This 'insider' role granted advantage during data collection and analysis. Firstly, this allowed the researcher to gain access to the group studied, who were receptive and cooperative in being involved in research on South African Muslim women. Participants expressed confidence in the researcher's capability as a female, Muslim scholar to *"show the world who we* [Muslim women] *really are"*. In spite of being a 'stranger' to the sample, this confidence allowed increased rapport, comfort and trust between the researcher and participants. However, the researcher was mindful of the effects of "diminished distance" between the researcher-participant relationship may bring (Berger, 2015: 223). This consideration is explained later in this section.

Secondly, by sharing a common religious belief with participants, the researcher was privy to grasp the socio-cultural and religious connotations to responses which may not be understood by an outsider (Richie, 1995). This "cultural intuition and insight" (Berger, 2015:223) allowed the researcher to approach the study with knowledge and a heightened level of awareness of how to broach sensitive

topics and how to respectfully address and probe further. For example, sexuality is a deeply personal topic amongst Muslim women and is not usually open for discussion. The study did not explicitly aim to touch on this subject due to this understanding, however should the opportunity arise the researcher was willing to address it. There was only one instance where this arose in the study. This 'shared understanding' of the sensitivity of the information, yet comfort in sharing it with the researcher enriched the research experience.

A further benefit of drawing on 'shared understanding' related to implied content and use of common linguistic expression akin to Islam and Muslim identity. Grondin (2002: 42) refers to this as "understanding as agreement". This agreement in understanding aided the depth of data collected as the researcher was able to extract a nuanced comprehension and probe more efficiently. This could have been easily excluded or dismissed by others not regarded as an 'insider' (Walent, 2008). Such content included words such as *"salaah"* (Arabic word for Muslim prayer) or *"namaaz"* (Urdu word for Muslim prayer), *"shukr"* (Arabic word meaning gratitude and thankfulness) and *"taqdeer"* (Urdu word meaning fate). Often these words from either the Urdu or Arabic language intertwined with English where it was assumed that the researcher understood knew what was meant by these words. Being conversant in both languages, the researcher did not request for clarification for any of the Arabic and or Urdu words used in interviews. Seeking clarification (apart from no need arising for it) may have unsettled the flow of the interview and importantly produce further effects such as unconscious participant critique of the researcher as a Muslim and avoidance in future use thereby impacting the overall quality of responses. In fact, the mutual understanding of such words and expressions re-enforced rapport and relatedness between the researcher and participant. This 'shared understanding' also related to South African specific words and expressions (for example, *"slap chips"* – An Afrikaans expression describing limp, soft, fat French fries) denoting their socio-cultural experiences. This is reflected in greater detail in the *Analysis of Findings* chapter.

Whilst "understanding as agreement" (Grondin, 2002: 42) contributed to presenting interesting imageries of ageing, the "diminished distance" (Berger, 2015:223) affected how participants rounded off their answers to questions. Sentences were often left unfinished or ended off with *"you* [researcher] *know how it* [perception, conditions] *is for us* [Muslim women]" or *"we* [Muslim women] *all know what some people* [general public, non-Muslims, Westerners] *think of us* [Muslim women]". The researcher was well aware of what inferences were being made in relation to what and whom. Due to the 'insider' position, the researcher was continually reflective of how her presence and co-construction of the conversation was affecting the research process. Participants were asked to explain and clarify their positions so that the researcher guarded against assumptions and secondly any

assumptions that were made did not compromise the true meaning and intention of what was really being conveyed. Conscious and deliberate efforts were made to remind participants that the aim of the investigation was to learn from them and articulate their experiences.

Despite the value that accompanies being regarded as an 'insider' to the research process, Drake (2010) cited in Berger (2015:224) cautions that the researcher's position and familiarity carries the risk of "blurring boundaries, imposing own values, beliefs, and perceptions by a researcher and projection of biases". This is particular observed in cases (like this study) of "dual identity" in the context of studying minority groups (Drake, 2010 cited in Berger, 2015: 224). The researcher was mindful that in studying a minority group like South African Indian Muslim women of which she too is a part of, the researcher inadvertently shaped the research process as well. The risk here is that certain aspects may be assumed (like with words from other languages or common experiences like marriage and perception of Muslim women mentioned earlier), overlooked or taken for granted by the researcher (Daly, 1992). The participant too may withhold information thinking it obvious or already familiar (Daly, 1992). Additionally, involving the researcher and the researched may jeopardises the level of self-involvement where some stories and experiences are not given prominence (Cloke, Cooke, Cursons, Milbourne and Widdowfield, 2000). The researcher was highly reflective on this matter and viewed all little stories (even if they were familiar or similar to her own, they remained unique to the individual in the manner in which it unfolded in the lifecourse) as significant parts to the bigger narrative and always probed for further information.

During data collection, the temptation to build meaningful conversation by adding personal experiences of the researcher was ubiquitous. For example, sharing personal information requested by participants at the beginning of almost every interview. Participants were especially interested in the family roots and lineage of the researcher. This was observed to be particularly significant for mothers in the study as is possibly attributed to their lived-realities under Apartheid. The researcher was mindful that she was not from the research study areas; hence this could potentially jeopardise her position as an 'insider' in some respects. This was evidenced by her distinct accent where this was singled out by several participants. The researcher felt conflicted as to how much information should be disclosed, when, how and to whom (Berger, 2015). The dissonance experienced related to maintaining 'social distance' from the participant in the interest of retrieving non-biased data; and ideally where the interview is a platform largely for the participant to speak and not the converse. Although uncomfortable early in the research phase and in full anticipation of the researcher-participant effect; the researcher gradually acquiesced to answering some personal questions, whilst being careful not to allow such information to influence the researcher-participant dynamic too greatly.

The researcher strived to continually separate her experiences from the participant. To aid the process, as the narrative unfolded, the researcher listened attentively and delicately directed conversation, so that emphasis is placed on what is being said, rather than the researcher imposing her experiences on the stories of participants (Pillow, 2003). In the end, despite the preference to abide by a 'professional stance' in keeping with 'social distance' the narrowed gap between the 'insider' and the 'subject' resulted in the disclosure of profoundly personal experiences (Berger, 2015). That said the relationship between the researcher and participant still upheld professional decorum and the results were not influenced by the negotiated closing in of research space between both parties.

The "dual identity" (Drake, 2010 cited in Berger, 2015: 224) of the researcher presented a further reflective and reflexive challenge. Being Muslim the researcher chiefly expresses this through her physical representation. Firstly, the researcher dons the *hijab*, commonly understood as the veil or scarf covering the head and chest, which is traditionally worn by Muslim women in the presence of adult males not part of their immediate family (Khan, 2001). As a *hijabi* or a woman who wears the *hijab* and who is modestly dressed, the researcher believed that her appearance may have affected how respondents self-reported on questions relating to religious beliefs and practices. These questions were asked as a way to draw on alternate dimensions of the ageing experience. However, these questions may have created critical internal-dialogue and 'polished' answers among mothers and daughters who did not wear the *hijab*, perceive their dressing as 'modest' or did not practice Islam as they should. Remarks by some daughters such as *"we do not dress as modestly as you"* or *"I might not wear the hijab like you but I try to be religious as I can"*, pointed to an unexpected power relationship between the researcher and participant. This was particularly characteristic in interviews with younger aged daughters. Despite having a 'shared experience' and Muslim identity, feelings of comparison surfaced (Berger, 2015). To counter such effects, the researcher re-emphasised that the aim of the investigation was to reflect on their realities in a non-judgemental manner.

Inherent to this power dynamic is the desire to express oneself in a positive light by emphasis of good behaviour and underreporting of unpleasant behaviours (Kaminska and Foulsham, 2013). Termed as 'social desirability' (Tourangeau and Yan, 2007; Kaminska and Foulsham, 2013) or 'impression management' the underlying cause to portray a positive self-image is driven by participants lack of comfort to reveal one's true attitudes (Holgraves, 2004; Tourangeau et al, 2007). As religion encompasses obligation and is value laden, it is understandable as to why some participants chose to self-represent in this manner. To counter the bias associated with social desirability, the researcher requested honest responses without the fear of judgement where none of the responses will be identifiable during reporting.

Another example of the unforeseen power-relationship related to the manner in which some respondents expressed themselves. In revealing the study is for a doctoral thesis, some participants initially crafted their responses in a manner which they felt were linguistically appealing to the researcher. Even though the researcher spoke plainly, some participants attempted to speak in a more deliberate and formal manner. The unnaturalness of responses (characterised by long pauses, and hesitation) was detected by the researcher who encouraged participants to speak freely and in a way they felt most comfortable to express themselves. This reflexive strategy proved well as participants thereafter relaxed and spoke naturally. They confirmed their concerns by remarking that *"we don't know high, high English… I hope you know what I am trying to say"*.

These remarks by some participants also provided evidence of a perceived divide between participants and the researcher. Some participants' preoccupation with their interpretation of social class manifestations of the researcher (that is, language, education, dress, lineage and caste) were shown to influence how responses were crafted; certainly in the use of language on the part of participants. The researcher was aware that such perceptions of social class in the interview setting had the potential to negatively impact responses. Being keenly aware of this, the researcher used relatable language and probed for clarification and understanding.

The last consideration made by the research related to power dynamics related to the age of the researcher; especially as it linked to interviewing older Muslim women. Grenier (2007) claimed that academics who plan for ageing societies are often younger than the study sample. It has been suggested by some that older academics should conduct research with older persons so as to avoid a power imbalance and potential conflict, especially in intergenerational research (Grenier, 2007). As with dynamics related to language and dress, the researcher was mindful of engagements with older women in the study. This included re-enforcing the participant as the focus of the interview and using comfortable language. Consequently, the age-divide was managed and the researcher-participant relation produced a positive connection as described by Grenier (2007).

Generalizability, Validity and Reliability

Generalizability is regarded as to whether the findings and conclusions reached in the study can be extrapolated to a larger population and setting outside the sample (Holliday, 2002; Punch, 2006, Chesebro and Borisoff, 2007). The sample in this study is clearly not representative of Muslim women in South Africa and hence the findings cannot be applied externally. Whilst the study examines how

Muslim mothers and daughters of Indian descent interpret and understand ageing from their lived experiences; their narratives do not represent or provide insight into the ageing experiences of South African Muslim women in general. In addition, the results emanating from the three study areas of Laudium, Lenasia and Durban cannot be applied to the population of Muslim women in those areas. The experiences shared by Muslim women in the study are unique and characterise the ageing experience at the level. Even with such disclaimers, this study did not intend for its findings to be generalisable and rather placed emphasis on collecting data which is astute, perceptive and rich in description (Holliday, 2002; Greenstein et al, 2003; Babbie, 2011).

Linked to the issue of generalizability is the assessment of reliability and validity of the study. The conceptual importance of both validity and reliability in the study was highlighted earlier in the chapter. During the pre-test it was concluded that the interview guide was reliable and garnered internal validity hence the progression to the main data collection phase. Given the outcome of the pre-test and experiences of data collection shared earlier, specific comments on the reliability and validity of the study can be conclusively drawn.

As the research findings cannot be applied or viewed as relevant to any population or setting outside the sample, the study has low external validity. Regardless, there are other aspects of the research which are commendable. The use of narrative inquiry – with considerable reflexive overtures during researcher-participant engagement – proved well and thus yielded rich and percipient understandings of ageing through the lifecourse. As such, these findings can be useful to scholars, contemporary writers, socio-cultural commentators, consumerist and media analysts to amongst others who are interested in understanding and presenting an unorthodox, non-conforming worldview on ageing and indeed Muslim women.

Therefore, as the research instrument achieved what it was designed to do and produced consistent findings in different settings which were coherence with the intention of the inquiry (Salkind, 2009) and further buttressed with supplementary sources such as scholarly and contemporary material; it can be said that the study displayed high internal validity with an appreciative level of reliability (Brink, 1993; Mouton and Marais, 1988: Chesebro and Borisoff, 2007).

Data Analysis and Reporting

As mentioned, narrative inquiry was an instrumental tool during data collection as it encouraged a natural and responsive research context where exchanges between the researcher and participant unfolded in an organic way (Sandelowski, 1991; Stanley, 2008). As such, early beginnings of informal but preliminary analysis were present as the conversation was being co-constructed and delicately focused (Holliday, 2002; Silverman, 2005). The researcher was attentive to aspects in the interview that were interesting and probed further. As data collection progressed, this provided a general sense of emergent themes of significance as well as anomalous experiences of ageing. Hence by the end of data collection the researcher had a wide-ranging perspective of categories, themes, patterns and associations to aid in developing a sense of argument (Holliday, 2002; Creswell, 2003).

Once all interviews were conducted, audio recordings were transcribed by an independent transcriber who worked closely with the researcher to ensure that all information was corrected captured. Transcripts were useful in understanding how participants "organised their talk" (Silverman, 2005:11). Two large bodies of data emerged, that is one for mothers and another for daughters. The first step of preliminary data processing was to manually reduce the volume of the analysis as suggested by van Zyl (2012).

To manage the "transition from raw data to text" (Holliday, 2002: 103), as well as to become more familiar with the data, interviews for mothers and daughters were examined by way of "vertical" analysis (reducing volume by summarising or paraphrasing interview by interview) and "horizontal" analysis (comparison of significant material from summaries of vertical analysis to assess how they related to each other) using the vertical analysis (van Zyl, 2012:1-2). This stage also involved reading and re-reading transcripts and listening to audio recordings to single out tonality and emotive expression.

After this 'getting to know the data' process, QSR NVivo for Mac was used to verify the material drawn from the manual process as well as to elicit further convergence in the data. The study applied thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within the data at different levels (Attride-Stirling, 2001; Creswell, 2003; Braun and Clarke, 2006; 2013). In other words, thematic analysis was done to organise the main topics or ideas that the interviews were about. This method is suited to the study as it firstly emphasises interpretation and the discovery of meaning attributed to the intergenerational ageing experience. Secondly, it unearths prominent themes on the ageing specific to participants' personal and socio-cultural contexts and

thirdly it well-aligned to triangulation and is useful in analysing different sources of secondary sources such as literature and other contemporary sources (Silverman, 2005; Braun and Clarke, 2006; 2013).

The recursive phases to thematic analysis advised by Braun and Clarke (2013:122) and van Zyl (2013) was adopted. Firstly, QSR NVivo for Mac was used to code the data. Coding identified important conceptual and semantic features of the data in relation to the broad research questions raised by the study (Creswell, 2003; Braun and Clarke, 2013). Thereafter all codes and relevant excerpts from the data was actively searched for coherent and meaningful patterns in the data. Recurrent themes were identified and all corresponding codes and extracts were assigned to the relevant theme (Braun and Clarke, 2013). Constructed themes were reviewed and assessed in terms of how assigned codes and interview excerpts related to all themes, their interconnectedness, divergence, representivity of the data collected and overall coherence with research objectives (Holliday, 2002: Silverman, 2005). Consequently, like with data collection, data analysis was also reflexive. The researcher was mindful of her 'lens' characterised by self-reflection of bias, worldview and preconceptions through which information was filtered (Creswell, 2003; Walent, 2008; Berger, 2015). Data analysis developed irrespective of the researcher's positioning and "dual identity" (Drake, 2010 cited in Berger, 2015: 224).

In the *Analysis of Findings*, findings are presented and are supported by wider body of literature to explain the relevance and significance of the data. The chapter is organised by broad themes and sub-themes. Each theme and sub-theme is reflective of the research questions posed by the study and pieces the main arguments for the thesis as a whole.

Limitations of the Study

The type of information yielded during qualitative data collection is indeed rich and descriptive and particularly useful understanding how South African Muslim women construct meaning to their individual ageing experience through introspection and interaction. However, given the earlier discussion of low external validity, the conclusions of the study cannot be extrapolated outside the sample population (Mouton and Marias, 1988; Greenstein et al, 2003).

The study is also cognisant of possible limitation through the use of a single primary research instrument. Whilst semi-structured interviews were the primary source of information, support from

scholarly literature and contemporary material were supplementary sources that added texture and depth to the findings of the study.

ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

Through themes and interrelated sub-themes, evidence gathered in the research process is unpacked with the aim of understanding the ageing experience for South African Muslim mothers and daughters. The analysis offers an in-depth understanding of the intergenerational transmission of ageing taking cognisance of the constraints of qualitative research explained in the *Methodology* chapter. The analysis is presented by intergenerational and intra-generational comparison. In other words, the 'parent generation' or Muslim mothers were collectively analysed for similar and dissimilar responses. This approach was also applied to the 'offspring' generation or Muslim daughters. Thereafter, an intergenerational analysis was conducted between the 'parent' and 'offspring' generation.

Organisation of the Findings

Whilst many of the themes are distinct they are not mutually exclusive; thereby highlighting the holistic approach of the thesis in explaining the phenomenon of ageing. The chapter begins with a *Descriptive Analysis of the Sample*. Here, relevant participant demographics and other socio-economic factors are presented. This is followed by *Contextualising the Self and Society*. This theme located the participant within their social-cultural and religious-political context. The central argument of the thesis begins to emerge with the next two themes, namely the *Personal Meanings of Ageing* and *Influences on the Personal Construction of Ageing.* This theme attempted to link the theoretical underpinnings of symbolic interactionism by exploring the voices of the 'private' and 'public' context in shaping how Muslim women in the study viewed ageing.

Myriad life events, transitions and turning points participants chose to share with the researcher are presented in the next theme: *Ageing and the Lifecourse*. This forms the most personal and intimate segment of the research. It is these very experiences that impact on how a person perceives the ageing experience and themselves as ageing individuals. In the penultimate section of the chapter, *Constructions of the Ageing Self,* responses from previous themes are drawn into the analysis thereby presenting a holistic account of how the construction and experience of ageing is conceptualised and lived out. Lastly, findings related to *Coping Strategies and Expectations of Ageing* are presented in the concluding section of the chapter.

The categorisation, sequence of themes and intergenerational comparison of views are done with intent. Themes are layered and built on each other to reveal alternative dimensions of ageing across the lifecourse for both generations. Comparative views in the context of the study helps to bring to the fore

that which maybe otherwise indiscernible. Comparing intergenerational views on ageing helps to create an ordered argument and perception of the ageing experience amongst Muslim mothers and daughters in the study. The influence of personal and social contexts of each individual and generation on the ageing experience is illustrated through this intergenerational comparison. Thus the multiplicity of personal and social worlds as it connects to the ageing self are uncovered.

Descriptive Analysis of the Sample

A total of twenty-four semi-structured interviews were conducted with twelve pairs of Muslim mothers and daughters. Interviews were conducted in Johannesburg, Lenasia, Laudium and Durban. See *Appendix 5* for participant demographics.

The sample consisted of mothers between the ages of 40-65 with most aged in their forties and fifties. The age range for daughters was 19-39 with most aged in their twenties and thirties. For mothers, the majority were married (eight), followed by divorced (two) and widowed (two). For daughters, six were married and six were single (currently not in a relationship, never married or engaged to be married). The varied statuses of the women in the sample were viewed to be significant in the way they perceived their ageing selves as well as their future outlook.

Muslim women in the sample were distinctly middle-upper class, generally educated with a mix of professionals and home executives. Of the twelve mothers interviewed; six mothers had a tertiary qualification mainly in the education sector. All except four mothers were either employed or self-employed. Only three daughters did not have any tertiary qualification. The remainder were either students in pursuit of a tertiary qualification, or possessed qualifications mainly in social and environmental sciences, education and administration, or employed in these fields.

Observations of the sample are suggestive of some upward social mobility in terms of educational attainment from one generation to the next, as evidenced by occupational achievement. Social and economic mobility in the sample could be explained by many factors such as financial opportunities, positive changes in life circumstances, motivation and achievement through family support etcetera. That said, the study does not singularly purport educational or occupational achievement as an explanatory factor in the perception and understanding of ageing between mothers and daughters. Rather it rather holds the socialised experiences, meaning and symbolism encapsulating such achievements and mobility as contributory factors to the holistic and personal constructions of ageing.

Theme One: Contextualising the Self and Society

With reference to the theoretical framework and its basis on the seminal writings of Mead (1934), Blumer (1969) and Elder (1974; 1999); it is essential to begin the analysis with locating Muslim mothers and daughters in their 'public' and 'private' contexts (Billington et al, 1998). Again, this is useful on multiple levels. Firstly, this is done with the purpose of laying an explanatory foundation for understanding how, what and who influenced the expression of thought and action for the women in the study. Secondly, it unravels the intersectionality of the self and society thereby affirming who we are is deeply influenced by society and culture (Billington et al, 1998).

The thesis viewed the 'public' and 'private' as not mutually exclusive but rather intertwined and equally influential. Hence a deeper understanding is required at the onset of the analysis; especially as this backdrop assists in unfolding personal histories for the women in the study. Inspiration for this initial exploratory technique in 'getting to know the sample' is taken from Barley (1989) cited in Billington, et al, (1998).

From an interactionist stance likened to Schaefer (2014) as well as a focus on relationships within families (Morgan, 1996; Finch, 2007), mothers and daughters were asked to describe the communities they grew up in. In other words, where and with whom they lived, who they interacted with and the kinds of activities which they were involved with during childhood and into adulthood is critical to understanding how socialised experiences are internalised and form the basis for interpreting multiple life events and transitions and in turn, their perspectives on ageing.

Social Interaction and the Sense of Community

When asked to describe the communities they were raised in, both mothers and daughters instantaneously placed emphasis on the racial composition of their communities. Their communities were described as predominantly Indian which included Muslims and Indians from other religions. Raised in vastly different areas to their current place of residence, some comments were:

> *"We had a whole lot of mixed people it was just not Muslim but my neighbours around me were all Muslim"* (Maarya, 48)

> *"It* [community/area she was raised in] *was a very Indian or Muslim environment. Everything you did was with Indians…you lived with Indians, you conversed with*

them" (Rukaya, 43)

The qualitative evidence also suggests that for mothers placing individuals within a social structure was important. Common in these passages was the clear emphasis on their communities being largely Indian but also accommodative towards other population groups. This 'accommodation' related to daily activities such as occupation and social activities. People from other races (for example Black/African and Coloured) were also a part of their communities however their position was that of paid help (for example, domestic workers, gardeners or employees in a business) as opposed to occupying a neighbourly place and being thought of a social equal. This racial compartmentalising can be explained in the context of segregation under Apartheid (certainly for mothers) and the acute awareness of one's skin colour in relation to social position and opportunity in society (Vahed, 2007; Dangor, 1997). Vahed and Jeppie (2005) highlighted that Muslim communities were indeed divided across race lines, although social contexts remain in transition since 1994. Comments thus made by mothers in this context offer support to these scholarly assertions.

Daughters on the other hand described the communities they were raised in terms of communal bonds like friendship and perceived norms of their communities. Whilst 'who' in terms of racial and religious composition was noted; prominence was placed on how the 'who' in the community contributed towards a sense of communal character, networking and mind-set. A noteworthy distinction compared to their mothers who presented 'parts of the (newly) constructed whole' yet it was daughters who further expanded into how these 'parts of the whole integrated – or not - and shaped its own character'. For example, Naeema shared her reflection on communal bonds as:

> *"Actonville was very awesome it was the kind of community where you could walk to school and back. Walk to madrassa and back, you could walk home with friends after school you could either go to their house for like a little a snack or they would come to your house but absolutely close. There is real concern for people"* (Naeema, 43)

Daughters' positive sentiments of their communities, like Naeema's reflect McMillan and Chavis (1986) elements of a sense of community in some measure. Discernable from their views was a sense of cohesion or influence and integration and fulfilment of needs by members of the community. Despite the general positively described, mothers on the other hand were more reflective of 'place as attachment' (Long and Perkins, 2007). This is particularly important for mothers and older daughters who lived under Apartheid as the 'sense of community' through bonds that had to be fostered (Long and Perkins, 2007).

Interestingly, mothers and daughters raised in the same community had parallel views despite the generational time-gap of their childhoods. One such issue related to conservative communities. The expression of conservatism took on individual meaning for only mother-daughter couple. Raised in the 1960s and 1970s, for Khanum (45), conservatism related to limited cultural and racial mixing. Her daughter, Muhsina (24), raised in the 1990s in the same community also touched on limited intermingling both with races as well as with boys and girls. The latter was linked to her 'living up' to the family name as a respected family given their Islamic lineage and education. Their views were:

> *"It was a very close-knit family… most of the neighbours were related to you everyone was very conservative. Because it was still at the time of Apartheid there was not a lot of mixing of culture… at school it was fine we had intermingled with others religions but just Indians"* (Khanum, 45)

> *"I grew up in Tongaat and so it was a very conservative community… in my atmosphere of growing up was very Islamic everything uh… because my father was a Moulana and I was always surrounded by people of high Islamic knowledge"* (Muhsina, 24)

Parallelism of communal experiences despite the generational gap can be explained by the rootedness of communal identity fostered in times of segregation. (Billington et al, 1998). Conservatism as it related to limited mixing was perhaps viewed as a 'functional' part of segregated communities, possibly creating an environment of joint understanding between members hence its transference over the generations (McMillan and Chavis, 1986; Vahed, 2007).

For university-educated daughter Aadila (25), living in the predominantly Indian area of Lenasia presented her with personal and social challenges. Whilst a sense of 'Indian-ness' and the closeness it brought was appreciated by most of her generation, Aadila in particular voiced her disdain during childhood which proliferated into adulthood. She expressed this with respect to her not belonging or fitting in as well as the closed mind-set in her community. Her views were:

> *I've not really felt like I fit in much with Lens* [Lenasia] *community. For me they very conservative and narrow minded in many ways. They not very open things outside of their community. There is no openness to accepting other cultures or other ways of thinking, it's very closed…so it's very much the Indian mind-set of this is how we do things and that's it"*

Aadila's reflection points to self-imposed boundaries and closing-off to other cultural experiences. The absence of belonging represented an absence of 'feeling' or sense of community (Farahani, 2016). Her views highlighted an attitudinal undercurrent where matters that question and re-negotiate social norms are best left unchallenged. Aadila's comments are further supported by mother Rukaya (43) who reflected on the shift in community living for Muslims post-Apartheid. She said:

> *"Since the advent of anyone being able to live anywhere and all of those things no restrictions…what has happened is segregation in the Indian community. Muslims are living and interacting with Muslims only and other people by themselves, meaning Hindu's and Tamils. Whereas where I grew up everyone was together"*

Elsewhere in her narrative, Aadila (25) mentioned that whilst she has come to appreciate her culture, she also believes that after Apartheid, the boundaries she referred to have become more reinforced as opposed to more permeable given the plurality of the social and cultural spaces privy to South Africans in general. This intergenerational view shared by Rukaya and Aadila regarding some Muslims choosing to remain in their social and cultural spaces and interact with only Muslims reinforces some of the societal divides that Vahed and Jeppe (2005) and Khan (2013) mention. Like with the example of conservatism, it highlights that not all communities are homogenous and the values and identity of communities are influenced by members thus the ensuing bond and group cohesion (Hummon, 1992; Farahani, 2016). The application, as evidenced in the quotes by Aadila and Rukaya still hold true even if communal bonds have undertones of social division.

Additionally, Aadila and Rukaya's accounts clearly demonstrate their discursive consciousness in being reflective of their communities (Gidden, 2001). Rukaya's views complement Gidden's (2001) 'duality of structure'. Her retrospective account captures the change in communal preference by its members; that is, limited intermingling among people, even of the same race.

Further analysis of narratives by daughters highlighted another compelling perspective – noticeably absent from the personal narratives of their mothers – of the communities they lived and were raised. This related to class, status and the consequences felt from being a part of this perceived context. This appeared to most prevalent amongst daughters in their early twenties compared to other age bands in the offspring generation. This is a noticeable divergence from the parent generation who commented on the social and economic relatedness of their communities. Supportive of Waldrop (2012), mother Khanum (45) said "*People didn't complain most of them were not so affluent…most people were like that".*

On class perception, daughter Naseema (21) said:

> *"I think it is more like economic status because generally and even if it is not true but there is a conception that Indian people are richer people…I think like Muslim people put themselves in a higher status for some reason and like I did it myself personally when I was there* [predominantly Indian school]*"*

From the perspective of trying to measure and 'keep up' socially and economically with her peers, Naadirah (21) added:

> *"So friends and things obviously people of wealthy backgrounds, trying to keep up with that when I was smaller wanting to be like them wanting to have what they had. It was very challenging, difficult for me especially. I felt like I needed to keep up with those girls like I wanted what they had.*

Daughters Naseema and Naadirah's views reflect the multiplicity of social contexts within which Muslims find themselves in a post-1994 era (Vahed and Jeppie, 2005). Again reflective of reinforced hierarchy, it also highlights unequal access to economic and social capital for some (Khan, 2009). Naadirah certainly experienced this social fracturing between herself and her peers – this in a time post-liberation. These findings thus support Vahed (2007) where experiences are still marked by class divides.

Building on Farahani's (2016) sense of community experienced by some mothers and daughters, emphasis was also placed on difference in religion and practices. Albeit not with divisive intent but rather to illustrate that there was a sense of togetherness despite diversity. This unity was expressed as friendship and partaking in mutual religious festivities symbolic of communal spirit. Some of the mothers' views were:

> *"Amongst us we celebrated Diwali* [Festival of Light in Hinduism] *with them did the candle lighting and did the fireworks… so yes maybe just the Hindu community that we were used to. Mum and Dad had friends that were Hindu as well. So on Diwali we used to go and celebrate with them and on Eid they used to come* [home]" (Zeenat, 40)

Similar to the above, the offspring generation also echoed sentiments of having mixed religions in their community. Daughters recalled being a part of this diversity.

> *"Our neighbours we are basically all religions…uh…ja we get along very well actually across us are Hindu neighbours and they are very, very friendly very humble whenever it's special occasions they always come over we go over ja they pretty cool"* (Muneeerah, 20)

For daughters who expressed relative ease with racial mixing, their opinions related to not filtering experiences and interaction by race. This was motivated by their assertion of not living through Apartheid as they were far too young to remember or was born after 1994; hence they have no or limited notions of how race was used to build and reinforce boundaries between people. In theory, daughters of this age would have grown up in a South Africa which for the most part encouraged breaking of social boundaries previously delineated by race. For many, the physical location of the residential home was typified by Apartheid settlement patterns (i.e. primarily Indian areas) yet the educational environment brought a more permeable socio-cultural experience (Vahed, 2007; Bangstad, 2011). Perhaps the only exception to this would be older daughters in their mid-30s and early 40s who are perhaps old enough to recall any experiences under the Apartheid and socialisation in segregated communities. Providing narrative evidence, Naseema (21) said:

> *"I actually, I hated it* [attending a multi-racial school] *at first* [laughter] *and I was like no, I want to go back* [referring to old, predominantly Indian, Muslim school]. *I think that is how everybody is with change initially, but after a while like I wouldn't have changed it, I really liked it there… I could mix with like other races and other religions where there you like exposed to only Muslim people, it becomes very hard to speak to anybody else or to relate to anybody else"* (Naseema, 21)

As much as daughters' narratives capture interactive encounters with different races; other daughters of the same generation did not hold the same opinion. Feelings of ambivalence marked their social encounters with other races. As posited earlier, where we live and who we interact with, contribute to our socialised experiences and our subsequent internalisation (Billington et al, 1998). The converse is also applicable; where these interrelations produce an entirely different result. In this instance; unease and uncertainty on mixing with people of different races and religions. The views demonstrated that such experiences was facilitated and influenced by wider contextual factors (i.e. extended family and institutions) within which daughters were part of (Andersen et al, 2002). For instance, Muhsina (24) mentioned the following:

> *"I think cos when we were younger the whole democracy thing was still new…so intermingling like playing around with black children and everything you know you regarded as naughty…"* (Muhsina, 24)

For Muhsina, whilst there is evidence of an attitudinal shift in recent years, her childhood socialisation was also extended to non-Muslims. As explained below, she believed this 'othering' stemmed from her orthodox grandmother. Her remarks are characterised by remaining within your own religious grouping for fear of contamination (morally and physically) According to her grandmother's worldview, which Muhsina adopted to an extent in her early years, transgressing such boundaries – albeit with friends – was forbidden.

> "*You know you must stick to your own kind like um…my grandparents were like why you playing with this non-Muslim children don't you know they don't wash their hands…. And no don't eat food, don't take anything, don't take biscuits or cakes from your non-Muslim friends because you don't know if they praying on it or what like…"*

Again, this is evidence pertaining to what we say about each other and how it influences our interaction. Her account is supportive of Constable (1984) and Andersen et al (2003) and their assertions of the self as relational to others, in this case Muhsina's grandmother. At this point, it is essential to highlight the mindfulness of social construction within the home, its re-negotiation and re-presentation to the individual as played out Muhsina's retelling.

The Family Home: Setting, Relationships and Norms

Having positioned mothers and daughters in their local and communal contexts; findings in the home and family setting and importantly its assimilation into socio-cultural, religious and political living are presented. This forms the conceptual crux of the thesis; as it is through this mutability that understandings of the ageing self are formed. That is to say, the thesis argues that voices and characters of the home are the beginnings of how meanings and interpretation form the basis for understanding socio-cultural, religious and political institutions (Billington et al, 1998). Similarly, through this interaction, foundations for the construction of ageing are established.

Mothers and daughters were asked to share information about their family and home atmosphere. The intention was to understand the concept of family and norms negotiated and established within the home which were internalised and manifested in everyday living.

From personal narratives, the home and family setting varied amongst study participants. Generational differences between mothers and daughters were evident. About half of sampled mothers were raised in extended family homes counter to the majority of daughters who were raised in nuclear homes. As expected, the lived experiences among these dissimilar living arrangements were wide-ranging and were coloured by both positive and painful recollections. As it will be shown later in this chapter, for some women these very experiences influenced how women in the study constructed their ideas of ageing and their ageing selves.

For mothers who recounted their experiences of living in extended family homes; the presence of grandparents, specifically grandmothers was a shared experience of joy in extended homes. This finding supports Constable (1984), as from his perspective the extended home and the presence of significant others relay a plethora of resources which are beneficial to residents. In this instance, a positive emotional investment manifested as happiness and joy.

> *"Pleasant memories are my Granny, she is the only one and that gives me pleasant memories"* (Maarya, 48)

> *"My family, which was my parents, my three sisters and I lived with my grandparents, my father's parents. It was a full house, much of fun and togetherness"* (Rukhsana, 57)

Similarly, daughters Mehreen (19) and Ameerah (22) also related similar experiences of living with grandparents. Incidentally, their mothers Maymunah and Maarya were also raised in extended homes albeit having had distinctly different experiences. Mehreen (19) touched on feelings of safety and support in her reflection of living with grandparents. After having lost her grandfather a few years before, Mehreen explains that having many family members in the home aided as a coping mechanism when dealing with grief. Mehreen's account is reflective of the multiplicity of roles present in an extended family home; thereby offering confirmation to Constable's (1984) Western notion of an extended family.

For Ameerah (22) being an only child living in an extended home raised mixed feelings for her. Whilst she enjoyed being pampered as the only child, she often felt lonely as she was surrounded by adults and did not have siblings to talk to when she was confronted with an issue that required input from a younger aged person. That said; the experience of living in an extended home was largely positive. Ameerah (21) voiced her experience as:

> *"I grew up with my grandparents, we all lived together, so there's like there was 5 of us in the household all the time. I'm very close with my grandparents uh…if also at times I felt like I couldn't go to my mother or my father for something or to talk to them I used to go to my grandparents. But sometimes, I felt lonely, like I wanted someone my age to talk to"*

Ameerah's experience does offer confirmation to Constable (1984) however it does disagree with the "reservoir of available persons" assertion. For Ameerah, despite being surrounded by four adults, feelings of loneliness ensued. Hence the 'buffer' afforded by extended homes is challenged in the context of Ameerah experiences.

All daughters in the sample had positive recollections of their family homes, be it a nuclear or extended setting. Their affirmative feelings on the family home were largely based on the relationships with their parents and siblings. Most recounted fond memories as a testament to these positive memories. Interestingly, even daughters whose parents were divorced, faced the loss of a parent or were raised amidst challenging circumstances remained positive in their reflection. This marks a clear distinction between the way mothers and daughters viewed their upbringing. Mothers were far more critical of their family homes compared to their daughters. Mothers voiced their unhappiness openly whereas daughters did not voice any. The difference in opinion between both generations can be explained by a disruption in the 'structure as agreed', resulting in conflict within the home (Schaefer, 2014). Additionally reflexive considerations of identity, roles and needs could have contributed to some mothers being more critical of their family homes (Giddens, 2001; Schaefer, 2014).

Muhsina (24) on the other hand shared the exceptional circumstances she was raised in. Apart from the transition from an extended home to a nuclear one in her later years, Muhsina discussed her experience of growing up with a special needs younger sibling and later facing the loss of her father in her final year of secondary school. This aspect of Muhsina's life in more detail later on *Ageing and the Lifecourse*. Of relevance here is that whilst Muhsina viewed her childhood and adolescence as positive, she was open about the challenges experienced. Muhsina shared the following:

> *"It was a lot of responsibility but I think my parents balanced it quite well because although my mother had to give her attention to my sister I was never neglected in a way…Ja the only time it got a bit complicated was when my father passed away. And you know that responsibility is not shared anymore it becomes greater on me cos I need to see to her more than I used to before because my mother had to go to work"*

Constable (1984) asserted that nuclear homes were less resilient and susceptible to 'breakdown'. Muhsina's account challenges this notion whereby functioning in the home after the death of her father was strengthened due to re-negotiated roles and a revised 'structure as agreed'. Whilst the self-support aspect of the nuclear home is demonstrated through Muhsina's account, it also borrows the multiplicity of roles from extended homes thus affording new insight into adaptations in a nuclear home.

Similarly, daughters like Faatima (19), Sabah (39), Naadirah (21), Kareema (29), Aadila (25) and Nour (34) recalled similar family dynamics in their nuclear homes. Again emphasis was placed on relationships with parents, siblings and activities done together as a family. Below are some extracts shared by some of the daughters and their memories of their family home.

> *"Oh wonderful life, wonderful. Full of fun full of life and got parents that are very understanding, allowed us to think for ourselves, make choices for ourselves. Well they used to interfere if the choices were not right but they gave us an opportunity to think for ourselves. That which my father said later life- later on in life we will be able to understand why he lets us think for ourselves. So we can go as individuals* (Sabah, 41)

> *"I'm the oldest of 3 kids, we're 2 sisters and 1 brother with my parents. We very um…open with each other and things…and…we're a close knit family …my dad works a lot so…um…my mom's like my best friend"* (Faatima, 19)

However, positive recollections of having lived in extended and nuclear homes were not present in all women's narratives. As mentioned, this was more prevalent amongst narratives from mothers as opposed to daughters.

For example, Rubeena (63) and Amarah (48) shared their experiences of living in – as described by them - *"an unusual family set-up"* characterised by the dual occupation of their mothers and their

father's other wives in the same family home. Both women commented on the positive and negative aspects of such living arrangements.

In Rubeena's case, after the "shock" of discovering her father married another woman, the arrangement of having two wives in one home was based on financial circumstances. According to her father all family members including the wives and children were required to make the arrangement work. When probed on how she as a child perceived the situation as well as her mother's reaction to the circumstances, Rubeena said:

> *"In the beginning she* [referring to her mother] *was very disappointed because she was pregnant when my Dad married again. She must have been maybe in her 20's or something* [referring to when her father took a second wife] *because when she got married to my Dad she was very young. She must have been also about 15/16 when she got married to my Dad. So she was young and she had nobody in South Africa and I always used to tell her Ma you know what why don't you take us to our Naani* [maternal grandmother] *in India. Maybe you know they are poor but we'll be happy and she always used to tell me Rubeena my mother hasn't really got for herself* [referring to finances and other resources]. *Because she accepted it I suppose this is why we* [referring to herself and siblings at the time] *could also accept it"*

For Amarah (48) the presence of more than one wife in the family home presented with rivalry and jealousy despite an accord to live together. Even though her father divorced the first wife, the two remaining wives (of which her mother was the second wife) lived in the same family home. Both Amarah and Rubeena considered other wife(ves) as their mother as well. During both their interviews, they referred to the other wives as "*our other mother"* or collectively as *"our mothers"*. In Rubeena's case, her father explicitly stated not to refer to the second wife and siblings as 'step' *"because we are one father's children".* As Rubeena shared:

> *"Respect was always there and like even if maybe my second mum maybe scold at us or anything. We never had the habit to tell her who are you to tell us? Or you know why did you break my Mom's home or something"*

Whilst their acceptance was gradual over time, spurred by explicit instruction and understanding as the years progressed; their eventual acceptance was characterised by the support provided to their own mother as well as them as children growing up. Findings from both Amarah and Rubeena confirm

Constable (1984), Andersen et al (2002) and Schaefer (2014) in so far as each family establishing its own meanings, conceptions and expectations. Uncharacteristic of the majority of extended homes, the findings does reveal alternate types of extended homes in a non-Western setting, and importantly how roles are re-negotiated to generate a functional "reservoir of available persons" in order to meet the needs of residents thus avoiding potential conflict (Constable, 1984).

In a different context, Rafeedah (43) expressed frustration of living in an extended home. Being the youngest of seven siblings, she was constantly 'babied' and was expected to obey her elder siblings (especially in the case of taking their advice and helping out with caring for with her nieces and nephews). Consequently, Rafeedah cited the large age gap as having contributed to challenges in communication with her siblings.

> *"It* [living in an extended home] *very hard, very difficult. I won't lie to you there was lots of challenges. I'm the youngest of the 7 um…ja the eldest is 67 years old and I'm 43 so you can see the major age gap difference…so the sister before me we have 8 years gap…so communication all of those things is a problem"*

In her interview, Rafeedah also shared intimate details of how these issues persisted in her life even after marriage. At the time of the interview Rafeedah shared that she was in the midst of a family feud with her siblings. At the core of her childhood struggles and her current family matter was - by her own admission- her personal struggle to assert herself and be recognised as an individual capable of making a competent decision.

At this juncture, it is interesting to note that many of the mothers who lived in extended homes were subject to following the voice or voices of dominant individuals; be it a parent or overpowering siblings. The effect of such power relations in their early years can firstly be seen in how their responses were framed; cautious and respectful despite the underlying tension it created and secondly how these power relations manifested in their lives then and now – largely unchallenged. And when challenges surface in later years (such as in the case of Rafeedah) conflict ensues creating a protracted inter and intra conflict.

Similarly, in the case of daughter Mehreen (19), she offered an account of her career choice and how this was determined. Whilst her grandmother advocated for her to study abroad, it was ultimately her father's choice for her to enter the teaching profession. The conversation was captured as:

Mehreen: *"... I mean when you are restricted you cannot do anything because that is your Dad and you know you cannot go against him. But when it came to my Dad like saying you know what teaching would be better"*

NK: *How do you feel about your dad making such life choices on your behalf? Are you honestly okay with it?*

Mehreen: *"I am happy he does that. I am happy that he brought us up this way because he is trying to bring us up the right way and mould us to what- to be you know high and respected. I would say you know what it is fine I am happy because it is who I am today. You know by him doing that it made me feel whatever he is doing is just for the sake of going on the right path, being a good person you know and how to react to people and all of that"*

The conversation was marked by an underlying current of ambivalence and deliberate rationalisation of her father's choices. For example, Mehreen would state her issue but then immediately refer to her father's thinking as what she regarded as being raised the *"the right way"*. To be regarded as *"high"* and *"respected"* appeared to be priority for their father. A direct manifestation of this would be a career choice – such as being an educator, something suitable and respectful for women given the duties of motherhood. Incidentally, Mehreen's mother, Maymunah (41) is an educator and whilst it was not shared; one wonders whether similar reasoning's were put forward to her when she considered a career choice after her children were born. The above passage uncovers yet again the dominant voice(s) within the home and its influence over the lifecourse. As will be shared later in this chapter, for Mehreen and her construction of ageing, this overhanging state of mind certainly precipitated her conceptualisation of her emergent role of a soon-to-be wife and the choices she intends to make for her future.

Another case of being raised in challenging circumstances in an extended home was shared by Maarya (48). Maarya's narrative presented a harrowing case of herself as a child, who transitioned into adolescence and adulthood bearing the emotional scars of her early years. Maarya provided a considerably 'darker' account compared to her peers. The significance of capturing her narrative is important; particularly in the way she views herself as an ageing individual through her retrospective reflection of her childhood and adolescence.

At the outset of the interview, Maarya was extremely frank in her disclosure of her painful experiences. Whilst the researcher was fully aware that personal narratives could reveal any number of intimate events; the candidness of Maarya's account was unexpected but welcomed. The researcher viewed this forthrightness as an indication of trust and rapport. She explained that part of her viewed the interview an *"opportunity to let it all out".* This cathartic experience was made possible as she admitted to feeling *"safe*" with the researcher.

Many of the issues shared were so deeply personal which are commonly suppressed and not shared for fear of being stigmatised and judged. Suppression of painful events are found in all contexts and amongst all individuals however this is particularly significant in the context of Muslim women. Muslim women are cautioned or reminded not to share intimate personal details in public for fear of consequences to the individual and the family (Khan, 2001; Sader, 2008). Whilst the interview setting can hardly be considered a public platform, it does however widen the personal boundary of sharing intimate details albeit it just with one, often unfamiliar individual.

Importantly, Maarya's narrative was the only account amongst all Muslim women interviewed, which touched on taboo subjects not intended or encouraged to be shared openly. Largely a result from her lived experiences, these included illegitimacy of birth, molestation, rape and sexuality in marriage. Other women in the sample shared personal encounters yet they did not choose to delve into the depths that Maarya willingly did. It will never be known if they too faced such instances or perhaps others. However, Maarya's disarming frankness provided rich material into how social interaction within the home and community in arduous circumstances can leave a marked impression on one's life journey. In the context of ageing and the study's interest in how it manifests at the intrapersonal level; this link provided an overarching personal framework to refer to, especially in the case of Maarya.

When asked to describe her family and the home she was raised in, Maarya shared the following:

> *"Okay actually I am the only child; my Mum was never married to my Dad so I was born illegitimate. I have other sisters and brothers. I have four sisters and one brother but they are all from another father".*

For Maarya, the theme of illegitimacy and 'not belonging' was recurrent through to early adulthood and marriage where only then was she able to later in life develop an identity, which she could be proud of. Further narrative evidence of her 'not belonging' are presented below:

"My Granny was Malay [referring to Cape Malay. Ethnic group predominantly from the Cape originally from Maritime Southeast Asia] *so they never really liked our part of the family, like you said as a Muslim woman you had to dress in a certain manner where ijaar* [Urdu word for long pants worn underneath a long dress] *and dress and scarf and things and we never did that. We were more on the Malay side of it. So we were like basically outcast and they* [referring to other Muslims] *were always to themselves"*

Feelings of being ostracised and not having an identity and belonging appeared to have originated in the family home and transcended into Maarya's social spaces. Maarya provided the following emotional and uncensored view of her relationship with her mother and growing up in an extended home:

Maarya: *"I never had a relationship with my Mum. My Mum and I never – because my Mum basically left me when I was three days old by my Granny and she never turned back to look for me. She never came back to see me, she never came back for me. So I never had a Mother, my Granny was my Mother and with my Grandfather being in the picture, when he used to come home my Granny and them used to hide me at another house because he never knew I was born. The day that he found out he did not want me there. So I resented my Mother for it because my Mum basically just through me away and never wanted me around so I had to be shunned from place to place whenever my Grandfather comes home"*

NK: *What happened when your grandfather found out about you? Where did you live?*

Maarya: *My mother's younger brother adopted me as his daughter legally just to give me a name. I hated my Mother for it I won't lie. I used to enter her house and next minute I would be out of her house again because I couldn't see her– look at her basically because she hurt me so much she hurt me a hell of a lot.*

NK: *What was it like living with your uncle? Was this a separate house or still with your granny?*

Maarya: *Still with my granny. Growing up with my Granny was not easy; you know the uncle that adopted me t used to drink, he was an alcoholic. So he used to come home drunk and he used to hit me. So I used to get hiding a lot and abused and one day when I went home and told them I was molested by somebody they it was like regarded as ah you just talk nonsense basically. So you were like an outcast because your Mother did wrong, your Mother made a mistake* [referring to bearing her out of wedlock] *so you were regarded as that.*

Clearly evident in the above extract are the multiple strained and toxic relationships present in Maarya's life from an early stage. Her use of strong words and expressions – aimed at her mother primarily- such as *"hate", "hurt me hell of a lot"* and repetitive text "*she never turned back to look for me. She never came back to see me, she never came back for me"* as well as the high emotive tone during this segment of the interview is testament to the strong feelings she has towards this stage of her life. Firstly the absence of any relationship with her mother scarred her deeply where resentment set in towards her mother and other siblings. Also in her narrative, Maarya mentioned feeling robbed off having two parents at no fault of her own. Secondly, the destructive relationship with her uncle who subjected her to physical and emotional abuse exacerbated the situation. Perhaps the most severe of it all was when she reported being molested, hoping to receive family support and justice. In the end it was not taken seriously and was explained away as her being an illegitimate child, being a mistake and the event being viewed as as her speaking *"nonsense".*

When viewing the above passages in context, the recurrent theme of 'not belonging' in the home and community for Maarya is clearly evident. Instead of receiving love, care and support from those closest to her, Maarya was severely rebuked. The effect of this will be later explained in Maarya's outlook on her ageing self, marriage and relationship with her own daughter. For now, these findings emphasise the vital link between our socialised experiences in the home, community and the impact felt on a personal level (Billington et al, 2002; Schaefer, 2014)

Integration of the Family into the Community

Narrative evidence from mothers observed that the family home embodied communal character. In other words, intimate family occasions like birthdays and day outings appeared to blend into communal living and were participated as a collective. In other words, participation was as a group with shared ideals and mutual understanding of the event. This also related to the commemoration of festivities such as New Year's Eve as well as marking key religious periods like Ramadaan and Eid and other holidays. This 'blurring' between the home and community was most commonly observed in extended family homes. Findings in this regard facilitated an emotional connection and cohesion within the community as argued by Farahani (2016). As recounted by Khanum (45):

> *"We always did things together so I mean in the community that I grew up in as I said everyone was also related. Every festival that was either somebody's birthday or you know something so it was always like everyone getting together and planning trips…"* (Khanum, 45)

Daughters Sabah (39), Aadila (25) and Naeema (43) also shared similar sentiments; touching on social capital, religious tolerance and fostering communal spirit through local events. Sabah mentioned:

> *"Everything used to be so nice. I think the most exciting thing used to be Diwali time you know? Because we used to all buy crackers and burn it in the centre of the yard and then mothers used to get together and clean it up.* (Sabah, 39)

The narratives suggest that integration into the community was in part due to the receptiveness and ease of transition between the private and public context. Celebration of different religious holidays appeared to be a unifying communal factor between mothers and daughters of different generations – again confirmation of the emotional bond between residents confirming the sense of community experienced by daughters in the study (McMillan and Chavis, 1986; Farahani, 2016)

Furthermore, the transference of family values such as philanthropy was integral to reinforcing communal bonds (McMillan and Chavis, 1986). Whilst these values were extended to all; keeping one's religious identity intact and separate was reinforced - although this did not influence their interaction with others. As expressed by Khanum (45):

> *"…my grandfather sponsored many of them* [young students]*…you know their education like doctors, lawyers and all that although they were not Muslim. So although we, we kept to our religion but we did not you know we always we were brought up in that way we didn't look indifferently to the others"*

The preservation of an Islamic identity featured earlier in Khanum's daughter, Muhsina's personal narrative. She reflected on how the separation of Islamic identity and lifestyle featured in her childhood. This distinction was shown to have influenced her early socialised experiences. Whilst not attainted directly from her mother, the influence of living in an extended home with her grandparents was linked to her earlier attitudes on race and religious mixing. This replication of outlook – albeit not directly between the sampled mother and daughter – is another example of intergenerational pollination of views. This instance does however provide support to the transmission of perception and understanding across generations. Therefore, it is plausible that this mechanism of transference between generations may also be extended to perceptions and understandings of ageing. The findings for Khanum and Muhsina in this context also support the notion of the "entangled self" (Andersen et al, 2002). Each of their views were in relation to a significant other in the home.

Mothers also described their homes as being open and receptive to fellow residents. From these informal meetings, goings-on in the community were shared. This is one of the avenues of how women (particularly mothers) in the study became aware of their local context as shared by those who visited their homes. Topics that filtered into the home included upcoming local events such as prayer meetings, living expenses, the changing social context in view of the anti-Apartheid movement (especially for mothers) and local gossip. Conversing and sharing opinions which were commonly held added to the sense of community. This finding also provides evidence to the three elements of a community presented earlier; that is place, interest and identity (Farahani, 2016).

With the exception of a few, most daughters shared similar feelings on the integration of their private spaces into the public. These experiences centred on activities that were done as a group or community as a whole. For example, family and religious celebrations (not necessarily Islamic only). This offers confirmation to Dangor (1997) and Vahed (2007) where they argue that a sense of Muslim identity is forged by communal activity. Whilst integration did occur, the extent to which the private and the public permeated into each other was to a lesser extent for daughters compared to their mothers.

Contrary to mothers, some daughters also expressed not feeling a part of their communities. Part of this related to daughters being more critical in their reflection of their community and public spaces. This was noticeably absent from personal narratives of mothers who spoke more positively about their communities. The critique offered by some daughters could in part explain the lesser degree of intermingling of their private and public spaces. For instance, on her transition from an extended home to a nuclear one in a different area, Muhsina (24) concentrated her response on her initial unfamiliarity of people and how different they were from her previous area of residence. Prior to moving, she acknowledged she had the social capital to navigate her way, however the relocation made her realise that she no longer possesses that level of social capital and therefore struggled. Her choice of words like *"strange"*, *"unfamiliar"*, *"different"* and *"no special treatment"* illustrated her initial discomfort.

Having acquainted with the sample, the analysis proceeds to build the core themes around the ageing experience as constructed by the parent and offspring generation.

Theme Two: Personal Meanings of Ageing

In the *Literature Review*, a number of conceptualisations relating to ageing were offered as background to the study. A singular definition was not adopted in the study. Instead participants were encouraged

to generate their own unique understandings of ageing. Under this theme, mothers and daughters were asked to share how they chose to define ageing and the meanings they attach to it.

Responses were varied and marked by similarities and differences. Common to both mothers and daughters was the multi-dimensional significance and meaning attached to ageing. This resulted in a number of sub-themes, which captured their personal comprehension of ageing. There was also an intergenerational replication of views between certain pairs of mothers and daughters. Some themes were more prevalent for mothers than daughters and vice-versa. The signs of ageing were embedded in participant constructions of ageing. This too was multi-faceted and reflected in some measure ageist attitudes held by women in the study.

Ageing as a Transformative Experience

The most common meaning for mothers and daughters was the perspective that ageing is a transformative experience that embodied certainty, self-confidence and wisdom. Seven pairs of mothers and daughters shared the same view; that is, ageing is a journey of personal evolution and character building with reference to maturity. Qualitative text such as *"experiencing life"*, *"perspective on things change"* and *"getting wiser with age"* were commonly cited to express ageing as a process of change – positive change in this instance (Ranzjin and Grbich, 2001). This representation was evident across different age groups and amongst those with more 'coloured' life experiences as well as those who have yet to experience life on that level as indicated in some of the narratives shared:

> *"I would term it more as experience, more as learning experiences, wisdom, moving forth…"* (Rukaya, 43)

> *"There's certain things that you take into consideration your…your pace, moods uh…changes your viewpoints changes um…so your maturity level everything changes over time the way you look at life changes"* (Zeenat, 40)

> *"Firstly for me it's a change…it's a transition…"* (Rasheeda, 52)

Their daughters had similar notions of ageing although expressed differently to their mothers.

> *"I think it means something different-obviously it means getting older but it's something different to everybody else because some people's context of getting older is getting like you can still young at heart and be older"* (Naseema, 21)

> *"Growing old…and becoming more mature um…experiencing more of life"* (Faatima, 19)

> *"Growing older is becoming obviously older like physically old with regard to appearance and stuff like that but also emotionally grow older and uh…you become more mature more responsible"* (Muneerah, 20)

Taking the concept of personal evolution further, daughters, Ameerah, Aadila and Nour make deeper connections to the self and ageing through their narratives:

> *"Ageing is like knowledge… as I'm getting older I'm becoming wiser more knowledgeable on how the world should be, how things should be, what you should…as a Muslim person what you should be doing"* (Ameerah, 22)

> *"For me I think it's growing within yourself…um…I wouldn't think of it as getting older. I think learning more about yourself and being more comfortable with yourself and being wiser. For me, it's more on a mental level than on a physical level"* (Aadila, 25)

> *"Ageing for me represents of the physical, emotional, mental, religious, and spiritual and so on. For me it means a changing state, an evolution of who I am as a person. It means maturity, but also gaining perspective, with age you realize what and who matters. With age you learn where to channel your energies and where not"* (Nour, 34)

Each of the above passages reiterates the personal meaning of ageing for each of the daughters (Billington et al, 2002). As will be seen later in the chapter, these specific constructions are a consequence of events in their lifecourse. Each daughter speaks about personal growth but in different contexts. This could be a realisation of knowledge and practices linked to a Muslim identity in the case of Ameerah, being comfortable with yourself for Aadila or simply learning on what matters and where

and what to concentrate your focus on as in the case with Nour.

Additionally viewed as part of the transformative experience, a positive outlook on ageing emerged with respect to the acquired maturity and life experience that ageing brings. This was jointly reflected by mothers and daughters who appreciated their own journey to maturity and life experience as they age, as well as having benefited from the experiences of others (Andersen et al, 2002). This was a welcomed finding given some of the negative connotations associated with ageing (Ebrahim, 2002). Mother Rukaya (43) interestingly, makes a connection to the *"Creator"* and the concept of predestination as an explanation of what you experience and the gains from those experiences as you age (Mehta, 1997). This is the first case with reference to religion in the context of ageing.

> *"It is all of what the Creator puts on you. Your curve balls and such but you're learning experiences comes through age because you tend to react to situations differently in a sense where when you are younger you are very reactive. You base your decisions on emotions and when you are older you base your decision on rational"* (Rukaya, 41).

Ageing and Physical Appearance

The second most common construction of ageing related to changes in one's physical appearance. Whilst this connection to ageing featured with mothers, it was however to a lesser extent when compared to daughters. When daughters were asked to define their personal ideas on ageing, their immediate responses were about physical appearance. Their specific concerns related to wrinkles, grey hair and body changes. Some of their views were:

> *"…and cellulite but it's kind of it is inevitable and you have to find ways of like dealing or accepting it or working round it"* (Aadila, 25)

> *"Ageing means going downhill physically you know. Like wrinkles, crows feet, grey hair, your body doesn't look youthful, parts of you start to sag and lose its tone. It's so much harder to maintain looking good hey".* (Safiyya, 35)

A striking observation from narratives of daughters throughout the entire research process was their preoccupation with youthfulness and maintaining their youth as they age (McConatha, Schnell, Volkwein, Riley and Leach, 2003). Granted mothers also voiced their concerns around physical

changes as illustrated below; however their comments were 'softer' and more 'accepting' than daughters in general. This could be explained by events spanned over their lifecourse such as experiences of pregnancy, childbirth and illness which tested their bodily boundaries, which could have contributed to their mind-set of acceptance (Billington et al, 1998).

> *"People look at ageing as in your age, your beauty, what your skin becomes like, what your body becomes like. I am not afraid to age because at the end of the day we have to get old and I don't believe its an issue for me honestly speaking"* (Maarya, 48)

> *"White hair [Laughter] wrinkles, fat…um…no well I suppose it's an individual thing, its going to happen eventually" (*Zeenat, 40)

Furthermore, cosmetic and physical signs of ageing were spoken at length by mothers and daughters; although more so by daughters for reasons already stated. Common facial features which were highlighted as markers of ageing, included the eyes, hands, hair and lips. Apart from some of the gradual physical changes over time, mothers also appeared to view physical signs as it related to mobility and gait. Some of their viewpoints were:

> *"Well the only area that you cannot really mask is eyes. You cannot mask your eyes, in the sense that you can mask every other area and your hands. Eyes and hands are a giveaway of age"* (Rukaya, 43)

> *"Well appearance of your grey hair you know and things like that, your wrinkles"* (Maymunah, 41).

> *"Um…the way they walk their uh…stature or their standing…ja. I can see even their uh…ja the way they will carry themselves out"* (Khanum, 45)

Among daughters, apart from pointing out the markers of ageing, conversations centred on lack and loss. For instance, the lack of youthfulness, suppleness, energy, vitality and vigour (Koukouli et al, 2013). Evidenced by their choice of words that signify loss and decline, daughters aired their view in a more forthright and detailed manner. Often in putting their point across, daughters made comparisons between an older person and a younger person (Barak et al, 2001). This was notably observed amongst younger aged daughters in the study. This was different from the way mothers explained their

understanding of the physical signs of ageing; mothers made no comparisons. Some of the daughter's perspectives were:

> *"Their face like their either wrinkles or you –I think you can see like young skin old skin like that kind of a thing. Also, I don't know I feel like their structure also-not as in like fat or thin but you can just see a more- a younger person by the way they carry themselves than an older person"* (Naseema, 21)

> *"You see their hair changing colour you know, you just like it takes every step. They become more slow…* [Laughter]. *Even your skin becomes really pale but it just like you can see your skin… sags… starts to lose its youthfulness"* (Mehreen, 19)

> *"Uh…visually I probably look for maybe wrinkles, wrinkles on a person's face or the texture of their skin not…ja the texture of their skin like older person would be a little bit more shrivelled than a younger person, you would see it depends on how a person takes care of themselves also um…"* (Aadila, 25)

Aadila (25) however provided a poignant reminder that as much as there are visual and physical signs of ageing, these can be altered (Vincent, 2006; 2009).

> *"Well there are always the visual signs but the visual signs can always be altered…so even though grey hairs been trending lately the moment you change your hair colour from like grey to like black immediately make you look younger and I noticed this with someone who is 52 and she used to have short grey hair and she's died it to black and I was like wow you look like 10 years younger now. So I mean like…the physical aspect can always be altered and then things like Botox and those things that help you look younger"* (Aadila, 25).

Dressing as an Indication of Age

Several instances where dressing style and choice were referred to as a sign of ageing were observed in the data. These included opinions by daughters, Naseema (21), Muhsina (24) and mothers Zeenat (40), Rukaya (43), Raeesa (57) and Rukhsana (57). Muhsina in particular spoke of dressing and age frequently in her narrative. One of her earliest quotes below can be described as a seemingly dismissive towards the choices of older women. She said:

> *"Um…the way I think the way your dress is…older people older uh…are more like they don't keep up with like what's the latest trends. Also try not defy your age. Firstly you should dress according to your size. If you are not so skinny, if you have all these rolls hanging and you big busted you shouldn't wear something that shows a lot of body you should try and conceal it"*

Muhsina's quote is reflective of age appropriateness associated with dressing. Apart from wishing older women not defying their age through dress, her opinion also included dressing for body type. It is unclear as to why Muhsina felt so strongly about this subject especially towards older women. Other segments of her narrative did not reveal any ageist attitudes towards older persons, in fact the converse was found (Koukouli et al, 2013). Taking into account her background, that is being the daughter of a respected Islamic figure in the community and having being raised in an extended home with conservative grandparents; it is plausible that her perspectives may have been shaped by these factors (Constable, 1984; Andersen et al, 2002). Additionally, through her social interaction outside the home she may have witnessed such dressing which she viewed as distasteful for older persons (Billington et al, 1998).

Upon further analysis, her views also imbue a tone of modesty through her words *"you shouldn't wear something that shows a lot of body, you should try and conceal it"*. Muhsina's reflection opened the conversation around dressing at certain ages amongst mothers and daughters. Salient findings relating to dress and ageing were extracted for discussion. Embedded within these responses were undertones of modesty and appropriateness at different ages especially amongst mothers. Mothers Rukaya (41), Maymunah (41), Khanum (45) and Rafeedah (43) weighed in on the subject. Elements that linked age and dressing included choice, maintaining youthfulness, appropriateness and modesty. Some of the opinions were:

> *"Who says that a forty year old cannot wear a skinny jeans? I do. So I would say wear what suits you and if you feel you look good in it then go for it. Within the confines of Islam obviously. Also bearing in mind that a forty year old is not going to wear a little short skirt even if you looks good in it. It is going to portray you in a light where you look silly. You are trying too hard, you are trying to be twenty when you are not".* (Rukaya, 41)

Rukaya vehemently expressed her views on the choice of dressing for one's age; thus offering support to Twigg (2007) on the resistance to age-graded dressing. She added that despite the choice it must be done within the bounds of what is acceptable in Islam. Like Muhsina (24) earlier, Rukaya too touched on defying one's age through dress. She saw it as *"trying too hard".*

Also agreeing with personal choice in one's dressing, Maymunah (41) said:

> *"I mean we as woman won't want to move away from youth. Society is for younger people. Everyone wants to look good even I am forty something and I want to look good. So it's best that you dress for your age group. But your tops must be longer than your bum and your scarf must always be on your head and things like that"*

She reiterated her earlier views on looking good in a society that is youth centred where women are reluctance to move away from it. Maymunah also expanded on what modest dress was for her – specifically longer tops (inclusive of shirts and tunics). This also featured in accounts by Rasheeda (52), Khanum (45), Saabirah (57) and Rubeena (63). These mothers believed such dressing was appropriate for older women; thus reflective in part of cultural prescripts reserved for age appropriate dressing (Twigg, 2007). Interestingly, the *hijab* was not a pre-requisite in modest dress, instead specific parts of the body should be covered in lose fitting clothes.

Mother Zeenat (40) made the first reference to the identifiable outer garment of the *hijab* in her explanation of dressing and ageing. Zeenat chose to refer to the *hijab* as a *"scarf"*. Apart from expressing her sentiments on ageing, she indirectly shares her meanings attached to the *hijab* – then and now. Zeenat's account was:

> *"I think the way she looks her dress maybe modestly dressed or…um…but not now a few years ago if you see a lady with a scarf you think she's old. Not now because nowadays like every person wears it, and if you don't wear a scarf you feel odd. That's how it's becoming in the community. But before if you like see a lady with a scarf you'd day God she's gone old she's like wearing a scarf….you know"*

Conversations around the *hijab* and modest dressing were telling in how the *hijab* and modesty are perceived by mothers and daughters in the sample. At the outset, meanings attached to the *hijab* were not pre-defined but rather the research intended to extract such findings from participants themselves. Whilst outside the scope of the thesis, participants were free in their opinion on the hijab. They regarded the hijab as being a personal statement of choice, an outer manifestation of their inner commitment and connection to their religion which they view as a form of protection and respect (Hamid, 2006). Within the context of the study, the link between modest dress, the *hijab* and ageing was unexpected. It is thus indicative of the deeper meanings and symbolism created through *hijab* and modest dress in the setting

of the ageing experience for study participants (Hamid, 2006; Sader, 2008)

Similar to Zeenat's views, Naseema (21) commented on the *hijab*, specifically the fabric, colour and styling of the *hijab* as an indicator of age. Naseema said:

> *"You know like our grannies they wear that hat* [fabric cap worn under the *hijab* to keep hair tucked in], *now we would never ever walk around with a hat on our head and stuff. For like young girls, it is like more for the turban style and you will find like all those brand name scarfs. There is so many different hijab colours and everything matches and stuff. The colours you wear, type of hijab, how you wrap it, I think shows your age"*

On hijab style, age and the influence of social media, Naadirah (21) noted:

> *"I think now like what I see on Instagram, YouTube and things is that there are hijab pages where there's young girls that are dressed modesty but stylish and inspiring other girls who dress stylish and modestly as well, so it's not only negative there's also positive as well where there are girls that are dressing decently but are still stylish in full hijab. Social media is making it desirable for the girls because if they see that it looks nice then they want to wear that more"*

Naseema and Naadirah's positive association with hijab and dress is evident. In outlining how *hijab* can reveal your age, Naseema compares the preferences between older and younger Muslim women citing specific styles for the two groups. For her, branded scarves, colour and styling are indicators of one's age. Naadirah on the other hand equated modesty associated with the hijab as *"inspiring"* and *"stylish"*. She believed that through influencers on social media, dressing modestly in *"full hijab"* as she puts it is desirable. Clearly her perspective is reserved for the younger generation. By comparison, mothers in the sample also reflected on modest dressing, yet their 'inspiration' to dress modestly did not stem from social media or any other similar platform. Instead their choices were informed by a gradual progression of 'fashion sense' as they aged and modelled on how their similar aged peers dressed (Twigg, 2007).

Ageing, Pain, Illness and Degeneration

Pain was also associated with constructions of ageing (Parsons et al, 2014). Whilst this was not a widespread notion amongst mothers and daughters it does remain an important finding to reflect on. Associations of pain and ageing surfaced not entirely because of direct experience of but also as a result

of seeing a close family member, for example a grandmother or mother experiencing a past or current illness with pain being a consequence (Andersen et al, 2002). The degree of association was stronger with mothers than daughters, possibly explained by their current state and experience of having witnessed pain through ageing of a significant other (Andersen et al, 2002; Covan, 2005)

One of the strongest opinions was offered by Sajeedah (65) who described ageing as a breaking down of the body accompanied by limited mobility and constant illness:

> *"The aging for me is like uh…when your body uh…breaks down when you can't really take life on, you can't really walk properly you are sick all the time"*

Maymunah (41), at least twenty years Sajeedah's junior also voiced considerable disdain on getting older:

> *"Yes I think we are getting older more aches and pains. Like I don't know maybe because we can't do much as what we should be doing you know there when you are young you can do certain things but when you get older it's like so difficult you can do it but it's so difficult and it takes a lot of energy and you just cant do because you are getting older, your body is getting older, you getting older; your mind is getting older. I guess it's also very scary I mean getting old is scary ja I'm quite scared about being old and you don't know what the future holds for you as an old person. You know what I mean?"*

Embedded in Maymunah's account of diminished energy, mental and physical limitation is the fear of getting old and the uncertainty it brings with it. She openly admits to her fear here and in other parts of her narrative thereby illustrating that for her, pain, ageing and fear is a real and intertwined experience. Maymunah's sentiments resonate with Lasher and Faulkender (1993) who emphasize the fear and concern with mental and physical loss associated with ageing. As much as the study is suited to contribute to new ideas in gerontology as advocated for by Miller (2018); findings such as this reinforce traditional ideas of ageing found in works by Caplan (2005) and de Magalhães (2013).

For daughters, ageing and pain was evident in three cases Kareema (29), Muhsina (24) and Naeema (43). Muhsina believed that *"most of us associate pain with ageing"* (Lasher and Faulkender, 1993). In the case of Naeema, her explanation took on a retrospective angle where she compared what is she able

to accomplish as someone her early-forties as opposed to a few years ago. Whilst the sub-theme of pain featured in her account, text such as "*your body is not the same"* and *"strain"* conveyed this notion.

> *"Physically as well you can see that your body is not the same because what you could do ten years ago you cannot do it now. For example like before how can I say, you would work an eight to five job you would go out with your friends in the evening, and you would still be able to get up at six in the morning and be ready for work by eight but now if you try and do that you cannot. You probably could but with a lot of strain"*

Naeema's account emphasizes the importance of reminiscence in the way 'stories' about ourselves are told, particularly in the context of ageing (Covan, 2005). Like with other findings on ageing and pain, hers also reinforces long standing views on ageing associated with loss and degeneration across the lifecourse (Gormon, 1999; Ebrahim, 2002; Caplan, 2005).

The narratives at this stage revealed some insight on what participants thought of ageing on a physical level with references to pain, illness, uncertainty and fear already having surfaced. The researcher viewed this juncture as an opportune moment to also probe participants for their thoughts on the medicalization of ageing.

In the *Literature Review,* arguments for and against the medicalization of ageing were presented (Ebrahim, 2002; Caplan; Schramme, 2013). The researcher asked participants their opinion on the question: *"some individuals view ageing as an illness or disease which needs medical attention, can you tell me how you feel about that idea?"*

Mothers and daughters unanimously disagreed with this notion. In other words women in the study did not see ageing as a disease; even mothers such as Sajeedah (65) and Maymunah (41) who were fairly vocal about their own experiences of pain, illness and ageing (Schramme, 2013). Again here this distinction is interesting. There is no denial that findings thus far indicate that the ageing process is associated with illness, pain and discomfort but the view that ageing may be thought of as a disease treatable by medical intervention was seen as *"wrong", "a generalization", "stereotypical"* and *"harsh"* (Schramme, 2013). Perceptions of inevitability and acceptance in this context featured prominently in the accounts of mothers and daughters. Mothers and daughters equally thought that the experience is shaped by what you perceive it to be, thereby alluding to the element of choice in mind-set. Some of their views were:

"I don't think it's a sickness I uh…it is part of life and it's a …it's a cycle that has to be completed… I wouldn't think that medicine could bring you back your age [Laughter] *so no…"* (Khanum, 45).

"Yes, ageing it is a natural thing, not a disease… to age it is a natural thing" (Rukhsana, 57)

"I think you allow it what you want it to be so if you are going to make it a disease or whatever. I think it is a negative way of thinking you should actually look at it positively because it makes you wiser, you look at the world differently" (Naeema, 43)

"No, I don't see it like that. Ageing is part of life. To see it as a disease means that its negative, it must be treated and fixed so you can be whole again, back to being somewhat yourself." (Nour, 34)

"No I don't think it's a disease I think it's something that's part of life it has to happen it happens to everybody and you either age gracefully and accept the process" (Naadirah, 21)

Views by mothers and daughters echo sentiments of Caplan (2005) in so far as ageing being natural, however the findings contradict Shramme's (2013) take on ageing as natural. As he viewed this opinion as "notoriously ambiguous", there appears to be no ambiguity in the minds of women in the study. They unanimously agreed that it is part of life and an inevitable process.

Whilst similar in thought to the above passages, Rasheeda's view (shared below) was the only one that embraced a religious connotation by viewing ageing as a blessing in this instance. This is the second indication in the research that ageing for some embodied a religious tone as well. Rasheeda's sentiments are supported by Schramme (2013) who agrees on the benefits of ageing, in her case a blessing from God.

Um…to them they feel there's something wrong with that I feel, to me it's a n'imat [Arabic word for blessing] *from Allah, so it's a blessing so…as much as…we feel uh…depressed about it sometimes we have to absolve it and accept it Insha'Allah* [Arabic expression for "If Allah wills"] (Rasheeda, 51).

Both mothers and daughters commented on the physical decline observed with ageing, with only mothers commenting on mental degeneration (Ranzjin, 2002). It was clear that mental deterioration was more of an issue for mothers than it was for daughters. Some mothers said:

> *"It* [thinking] *does slow down a little bit, your movements and whatever you are not so hyperactive like the way you were when you were younger. When you are younger you know you much hip. You are brighter in thinking you more energetic* (Rukhsana, 57)

> *"Physical breakdown… that's the biggest sign I can think of ageing. Even their posture. Even their walk the way they walk is no more like when you were young, you know you make out the difference"* (Sajeedah, 65)

> *Giving up and giving up and ja and the aches come in and you know sometimes your body aches and you can take pain killers or what but the pain is still there, you know you cannot get rid of it it's surprising. Not to mention the forgetfulness. Its like your mind is not quick enough anymore and you can't remember things so well* (Maymunah, 41)

Ageing and Social Position

Specifically mentioned by just one mother, Amarah (48); the social and familial position ageing brings was not a perception reflected on by any daughter in the study – despite some daughters being mothers themselves which in itself can be considered as an elevated position, provided such meaning is firstly attached to motherhood and becoming a mother. For Amarah, being a mother-in-law and a grandmother was a respectful, upward movement in social and family circles; one that she is very proud of (Denmark, 1999). Whilst she acknowledged getting older is true, there are other positive spin-offs to it – as discussed through the experiences of other mothers in the sample under *Ageing and the Lifecourse and Constructions of the Ageing Self.* For Amarah this social position was described as:

> *"Getting old is having your grandchildren and son-in-laws… I feel very proud that I can say this. People see you in a different league now, like you moving up in life, like family life. It brings more happiness and respect"*

Ageing as an Exclusionary Experience

Only one mother in the sample viewed ageing as a excluding experience, especially from a social perspective. Khanum (45) spoke about ageing and loneliness. Whilst she only in her mid-forties, she

feels that there some things that could be done before which is not possible now. She expressed that this cannot be done freely now. When probed as to what *"things"* she feels excluded from, Khanum said this meant socialising and going out.

Khanum's sentiments can be partially explained by her early widowhood at the age of forty and the responsibilities she had assumed following the untimely death of her husband (Covan, 2005). As will become evident in the discussion of life events, transitions and turning points in the lifecourse, Khanum's views here are influenced by this specific event and the image she feels she must uphold as a widow – a widow of a respected, religious and communal figure.

> *"Um…aging brings in some cases it also brings a bit of loneliness because you – some people can't do the things that they used to do you know at a younger age and they can't join in you know so freely"*

Theme Three: Influences on the Personal Constructions of Ageing

Thus far the thesis has presented images and experiences of Muslim women in their home and community contexts. The thesis also presented the bi-directional influence of these two entities by assessing how integration between the two was viewed by participants. Under this theme, constructions of ageing are linked to the influences women believe impacted on the meanings they attached to the ageing experience. In other words, the voices of the 'private' and 'public' context are re-examined to understand how they shape Muslim women's views on ageing.

Participants were asked to share where they believe their views on ageing originate from. As with previous themes, responses were varied and multi-faceted. Daughters however had more wide-ranging responses than mothers. Their responses broadly related to the self, home and society. Mothers' responses on the other hand were limited to the self and the home. This in itself provides some evidence to the thesis's postulation in the *Introduction*; where it was stated that owing to shifting boundaries and open social and technological spaces, Muslim women have gradually assimilated into living as part of the 'global village'. This certainly evident in the range of responses offered by daughters.

Family Members

Mothers and daughters also cited members of their family as an influential factor which shaped their views on ageing (Andersen et al, 2002; Schaefer, 2014). This provided support to the "entangled self"

as related by Andersen et al (2002). Family members included grandparents and parents. The influence of family members was more prevalent in the narratives of daughters, particularly younger daughters compared to mothers. This could be explained by their younger ages; where they have yet to encounter life events and transitions which may leave an impression on an individual level. Hence for now their views are shaped primarily on how they internalise the words and actions of family members in the context of ageing.

For example, daughters Muneerah (20) and Faatima (19) cited their grandparents as influences on where they get their ideas on ageing. Having spent much time in the company of their grandparents, their responses related to their physical ability despite their age and the wisdom offered by their grandparents. Of interest, Muneerah and Faatima belonged to different family constitutions, that is extended and nuclear homes respectively. Despite this difference, their grandparents remained a key factor in their early and current understandings of ageing. This shows, especially in the case of Faatima that physical presence of 'social actors' like grandparents was not a prerequisite for the transmission of views, but rather it is what we choose to internalise from the interaction however so often or not they may occur. This is supported by assertions of the functional "entangled self" in the absence of significant others (Andersen et al, 2002).

Conversely, daughter Muhsina (24) who grew up in an extended home with her grandparents prior to secondary school, did not cite her grandparents as a factor to her understandings of ageing. This could be understood as her not regarding them a key influence in how she understood ageing where perhaps their influence was greater in other parts of her life, as discussed earlier with reference to her recounts of racial and religious mixing. Perhaps as Constable (1984) suggested, forces outside the home supported a worldview on ageing Muhsina resonated with, thus the lessened influence of significant others like her grandparents. Again, the influence of views of ageing as shown in the context of family members are determined by what is chosen to be internalised and regarded as having an impact on a personal level – not necessarily only physical presence (Giddens, 2001; Andersen et al, 2002).

Older mothers Sajeedah (65) and Saabirah (57) viewed their mother and grandmother respectively as an influence on how they conceptualised ageing over the lifecourse. Their responses related to mind-set and physical ability. For Sajeedah (65) despite not having lived with her mother due to her parents' divorce, she nevertheless still viewed her mother and specifically her mother's mind-set as a key factor in how she approached ageing in her own life. During school holidays, Saabirah witnessed her grandmother carry out daily domestic duties. This to Saabirah, signalled physical health and wellness of

her grandmother despite her advancing age. For Saabirah, she viewed this as a stellar example of the importance and benefits of keeping occupied, especially on a physical level as one ages. These childhood experiences filtered into Saabirah's own views on coping mechanisms on age and successful ageing discussed later in the chapter.

> *"I lived with my granny…and…she's from India she was…okay she at that stage she was young…not that young but uh…she still managed to uh…to put up the routine and all that…and uh…my mother was fortunate in that sense that she stood in the shop and my granny did this…so I think I learnt about ageing from seeing my granny…"*

Saabirah's views in part support Shramme (2013) who believed dysfunction or the disruption in normal activities characterises ageing as a disease or not. As seen , Saabirah's observation of her grandmother at her advancing age did not hamper her ability to function, hence in her case, ageing is not a disease and renders further support to hers and other mothers and daughters rejection of the medicalization of ageing.

Daughters also cited their parents as an important influence on how they viewed ageing (Billington et al, 1998; Andersen et al 2002). For Naseema (21) and Aadila (25) seeing their parents approach to life and physical upkeep were determinants in how they viewed ageing. Muhsina (24) on the other hand presented a unique account of how she came about understanding ageing. Prior to the death of her father, Muhsina's father penned his thoughts on ageing in a poem which she later discovered after he passed on. This is explained in the passage below.

> **Muhsina:** *Um…my father once wrote a poem about uh… ageing… about a woman aging and somehow I felt that he wrote it for my mother… Its in Urdu. In his poem he explains the ageing process of more internal apart from external…Like the ageing process in his poem it makes the physical appearance of a female deteriorates but the personality or the intellect or the heart and the mind of a person ageing is more beautiful.*
>
> **NK:** *Okay, any reason why your father would have chosen that concept, do you know the background to that poem?*
>
> **Muhsina:** *I have a feeling he chose it for my mother because I always have this feeling – I don't tell her because I know she feel bad but uh…I always have this thing*

> *at the back of my head I always have this thought that mother aged too quickly because of all the stuff she had to do, being married young and look after my ill grandparents, then my sister who went into a coma and all that…He felt that set back her back and he saw the things that she had to do and he thought about you know what she had to do when he wasn't around, I think that um…impacted him to write that poem for her*

Muhsina's perceptive recollection of the poem and how she related it to her father's view of her mother, Khanum's hardship and dutifulness as a wife and mother, illustrates a deep understanding of intertwined life histories from the point of view of an observant daughter. Striking in the personal narratives of Muhsina and Khanum was the undisputed bond shared by the two through their reflection of specific life events and transitions which merged into their own life histories. Both spoke from an empathetic and protective standpoint in considering how these life events affected each other. For example, Muhsina engaged in such 'talk' in the above passage, where she chose not to reveal her true feelings around the poem to her mother so as to spare her mother any sadness. Whilst Muhsina's views on ageing may have surfaced from the sentiments expressed in the poem, her mother remained her living example of how ageing is manifested.

Islamic Discourse

Whilst only one unrelated mother-daughter pair reflected on the significance of Islamic learnings in shaping their views on ageing, it nevertheless is an important sub-theme to reflect on so as to understand the sociological link between religion and ageing. As seen thus far, religion and Islamic discourse has featured frequently in the reflections of daughters and mothers in particular.

Linked to her Islamic self-realisation journey, Rafeedah (43) said that her reading Islamic literature by prominent scholars and speakers as well as attending lectures more regularly than before, is a key factor for her in how she thinks about ageing and approaches it in her daily life.

> *"Islamic stuff… I do listen to a lot of talks and lectures I started doing that a lot more in the past seven years than I have before. And then obviously experiences with people interacting with other people as well. Um…and then looking at who the Muslim woman really is I think a major discovery and a turning point for me was realising uh…the power of…being a woman and it's not restricted to Muslim woman but the power that Allah (Subhanahu Wa Ta'ala*) [Arabic for 'May He (God) be glorified and exalted'], *has given us as Muslim woman that for me is was a major realisation"*

Roshaaan's reflection captures the essence of her self-discovery journey which to her is intrinsic to her being. She uses words like *"turning point"* and *"realisation"* to demarcate her personal transition into self-discovery. She further touches on the innate power of womanhood provided - as she views it - by God's divinity. Undoubtedly, Rafeedah's contemplation is philosophical and deeply personal. In the context of the study, efforts to understand Rafeedah's rumination as it links to her ageing self in the lifecourse are done. This is featured in the discussion on life transitions and turning points.

As the only daughter in the sample to link religion as an influential factor in her approach and understanding to ageing; Ameerah (22) retrospectively talked about her life when she was younger and prior to her illness. Her awareness of her ageing, with responsibilities that must be carried out and where death is eventual; this gave her a profound realisation that she will be accountable for her actions.

> *"It comes from my religion Islam… I mean being a Muslim when…how I looked at things when I was younger okay I was naïve to Islam and things like that. That was also because of I was sick but now that I'm getting older I'm realising that one day we're gonna die, one day we gonna be placed in front of Allah and this is…now as I'm getting older this is what I need to do and this is who I need to become in order to get that place where I want in Jannah* [Arabic for heaven] *so, …it comes from Islam and the way things…were and…that ja"*

Previously, findings linking religion and ageing, specifically pre-destination were presented. Here a further dimension relating to responsibility and accountability over the lifecourse has emerged (Mehta, 1997). Ameerah is acutely aware that she is getting older and she *"needs"* perform her Islamic duty. Therefore she viewed her ageing as an opportunity to carry out such duties with the reward of Heaven.

Media and Popular Culture

Mothers and daughters were particularly vocal on acknowledging the media and popular culture as influences on how they have come to understand ageing and how they relate to the ageing discourse they are a part of. Here, media represented digital and social platforms as well as print media. Opinions were mixed where some viewed the media and popular culture as either having a positive or negative influence.

Daughters –especially younger daughters- were far more critical than mothers on the media's influence. As Kareema (29) said, *"ageing is becoming very commercialised".* Other accounts were:

> *"It* [media] *kind of tells you to use cosmetics and that also it just tries to tell you that you have to be young all the time. You have to look young, you have to act young, you have to dress young"* (Naseema, 21)

> *"That you need to be fair your skin needs to be pretty the skin needs to be tight and you need to be I wouldn't say skinny but you need to have a well-shaped body…and then you need make-up. I think the companies that sell the products and the way that they put it forward that you actually really…you are dependent on their products"* (Aadila, 25)

Common amongst their responses was the 'need' or 'pressure' to conform to the preservation of youthfulness and beauty. Emergent passive-persuasive talk such as *"have to"* and *"need to"* feature strongly in all of the above accounts. The conservation of youth and beauty related largely to external presentation. Earlier findings presented showed that daughters, particularly younger daughters, held significant views around the physical signs of ageing; where most of their discussion focused on the loss or decline of youth. Here, their opinions appear to offer criticism on what is expected as per the influences of media and popular culture. This inconsistency of opinion is one of the first which has surfaced in the study relating to interface between the personal meanings attached to ageing and exposure to social and consumerist discourse. Whilst the intention of the study was not to uncover contradictions, this is a significant finding as it points to conflict between what we internalise and form opinions and what we choose to do nevertheless all within the rationale we construct to manage any conflict (Giddens, 2001).

Returning to the influence of the media and popular culture, the following are direct and cynical accounts of what two mothers believe are negative outcomes of such exposure:

> *"The media will give you an idea that even if you are older you need to look very young in order to have self-validation, self-worth. I mean the beauty industry is a multibillion dollar industry. The figures are just endless because they are appealing to your sense of wanting to look good"* (Rukaya, 43)

Rukaya's opinions are thought-provoking and contradictory at the same time. Earlier, it was revealed that whilst she viewed ageing as a transforming experience stemming largely from her personal experience and the acknowledgment of emotional growth and milestones; she was equally if not more

vocal on the physical aspect of ageing. Her immediate response to the signs of ageing was on a physical level where she referred to the "*eyes and hands are a giveaway of age"* where it cannot be masked and *"if you want to look good, invest in a good eye cream and a hand cream"*. She also mentioned elsewhere in her narrative that her intentions are to start her twenty-one year old daughter on an eye cream regime where she stated *"your face is going to thank you ten years later".*

Rukaya's sentiments are confirmed through her daughter Naseema's earlier account of her mother "*always"* saying *"…this cream makes you look younger*". Whilst her importance given to looking good can be appreciated; her contradiction of opinion is evident. In exposing the beauty industry intentions of "*appealing to your sense of wanting to look good"* her responses when viewed in totality reveal that Rukaya too has 'bought in' into the idea of youth preservation as propagated by the very industry she criticised. Such views have filtered to her daughter, Naseema who was equally vocal on her preoccupation with physical changes associated with ageing. This comparison between views thus presents a direct example of intergenerational transmission of attitudes on ageing in the study (Jamieson, n.d).

To further investigate if other mother-daughter couples shared the same opinion as above, participants were asked about their attitude towards the use of anti-ageing treatments and aesthetics. Responses in both generations were either for or against the use of anti-ageing treatments and aesthetics. Mothers and daughters who used anti-ageing treatments as part of their lifestyle cited the preservation of youth and self-care as the primary reasons for its use. Like with Rukaya (41) and Naseema (21), interestingly, one generation was shown to influence the other in initiating the use of such products (Jamieson, n.d). For instance, Maarya (48) said it was her daughter who introduced her to the use of certain creams and age blurring make-up. Similarly, mother-daughter couple Raeesa (57) and Nour (34) shared the same experience that is her use of such products was influenced by her daughter Nour. Raeesa recounted:

> *"I was not into these fancy creams and all that, even in my younger years. It was only when Nour started university and started threading her face and used some creams recommended her beauty therapist that I started to be intrigued and started looked into using it. As I approached my late forties I started using them"* (Raeesa, 57)

Mother-daughter couples who shared a different opinion said anti-ageing products are *a "waste of money"*. For instance, Khanum (45) said although modernity for Muslim women is allowed, it must be within the confines of Islam. She believed invasive procedures like Botox and cosmetic fillers amounted

to "*interfering with oneself"*. Her view was shared by daughters Naadirah (21), Aadila (25) and Muhsina (24) who said that such *"extreme beauty"* was *"unnatural"* and *"makes you look worse"* respectively. Other daughters like Sabah (39) and Muneerah (20) viewed anti-ageing products as commercialised and false advertising. Naeema (43) added that whilst women are vain and want to look like Kim Kardashian, the media adds to the pressure by *"making you believe you can look like celebrities if you use certain brands of skincare and treatments"*. In general, daughters were more critical than mothers on the influence of media, popular culture and the anti-ageing industry. This is notable as it was daughters who have been primary occupied with the loss of youth and ageing on a cosmetic and physical level.

Having discussed what is known about how women in the study think and are influenced on ageing; findings related to significant life events, transitions and turning points are presented in the next theme.

Theme Four: Ageing and the Lifecourse

The findings presented under this theme relate to the historical influence over the lifecourse. Using key concepts from the lifecourse model and its incorporation into the theoretical framework developed for the study; transitions, events and turning points shared by Muslim women are examined in terms of central tenets of the lifecourse model such as the cohort effect, interlinked lives, human agency, diversity, developmental risk and protection and so on.

Thus far trust and rapport had been established and thereby created a conducive environment to share as desired in this profoundly personal segment of the interview. The unfolding of personal narratives resulted in emotive content being shared by the women, mostly on the part of mothers. This uninhibited need to share by mothers can be explained by scholars like Birren and Svensson (2013) who write that reminiscing about one's life and recalling how past troubles were overcome may improve the confidence of older adults where they able to confront and adapt to new challenges as they age. The thesis provides significant evidence in this regard.

Mothers and daughters were asked to share their past or current defining life events, transitions and turning points. Interestingly, most women understood this as having a negative connotation. In other words, life events, transitions and turning points were interpreted to be disparaging or challenging in nature. In the interest of not creating bias in the data, the researcher did not prescribe how these events, transitions and turning points should be understood. Instead the researcher urged women to share events that have left or are in the process of leaving a felt impact on an individual level – positive or otherwise.

Experiences over the lifecourse shared by the parent and offspring generation were marked by similarities and differences. The level of disclosure was determined by personal preference in defining the scope and depth of the experiences shared with the researcher. Whilst many were shared, only those life events, transitions and turning points which were shown to be linked to the ageing experience as associated by participants are reflected in the thesis. These and other findings are presented hereon.

Death of a Significant Other

Discussing the death of a significant other (parent, spouse or close family member) was for most women a highly emotive and sensitive topic. Death was jointly viewed as a life event and turning point for those who experienced it. As an event, the impact of death left an everlasting mark on their being. As a turning point, death signified a distinctive change in the individual's outlook and approach to life. This was most commonly observed amongst mothers as opposed to daughters. The extent to which the impact was felt depended on the relationship shared with the deceased. Common to mothers and daughters was the affectionate manner the relationship was described as a precursor to the described impact of their passing.

For mothers in the sample, the loss of a parent was particularly hard even though the loss occurred at different ages for the women. In three instances, the researcher had to stop the interview to allow participants to regain their composure. The researcher's conflict in these cases were presented earlier in the researcher's account on reflexive considerations for the study. Mothers Raeesa (57) and Saabirah (57) capture the loss of their parents as *"life never being the same again"* and *"very, very tough"* respectively. Mother Rasheeda (52) for instance broke down in her interview and convey an emotional retelling of the loss of her mother. Her account was: Detailed accounts on the loss of a parent by other mothers are shared below.

> *"I couldn't um handle normal situations you know it was like every time just cried. I'm like lost I was like just slept because um…mummy and I had a very close relationship because we were like friends we could talk we could talk about anything you know. And I was very lost and…I'm very empty and I …although my aunts and uncles were there I felt very like there's no…there's no hope like you know I can't do anything but eventually Allah gave me the strength and everything started falling into place I started concentrating and focusing and then I started getting more involved in you know the work that I do…so I started getting involved there more projects that I did and then I came okay… ja because that emptiness made me feel terrible you know so it's trying to fill all the gaps positive energy"* (Rasheeda, 52)

Rasheeda's impassioned account revealed how the passing of her mother affected her ability to function in normal situations. She caringly referred to her mother as *"mummy"* in her narrative thereby alluding to the close mother-child relationship they shared. Rasheeda described the loss as having as no hope left despite having family support. Her account made known that she "*slept"* to handle the situation. This is also indicative of her inability to come to terms with the loss, hence 'sleeping it off' offered an opportunity to block out feelings related to the loss. In time, as a coping mechanism, Rasheeda once again referred to her reliance on her religion which she credits as having given her the strength to manage her loss. This significant life event symbolised for Rasheeda a transition from the known and comforting to that of emptiness. The turning point for her was filling the *"gaps"* with positivity – for example community upliftment projects through her occupation as an educator- which she continues to embrace to present day.

For Maymunah (41), losing her father at 15 years old symbolised the loss of direction in life, as if her father was her compass offering direction when she needed it. After the loss, she expressed not caring about life with having to come back to senses in order to lead an independent life after his passing. This sense of independence for Maymunah at an early age represented a turning point and changed the way she approached life going forward.

Their reflections capture how their deaths were processed as well as the impact felt post the event to present day. Common in the excerpts was the role occupied by the parent in their lives. The impact was most felt in the absence of this role post their death. In all three accounts, the death of a parent was experienced at different ages (adolescence, early adulthood and middle-aged). Despite these differences feelings of shock, emptiness, being lost and alone were prevalent in all accounts.

Daughters too experienced the loss of a parent, their father. For example, Sabah (39) reflected on the loss of her father. Sabah recounted the loss of her father through her short retelling and the use of stirring words and expressions. The role of her father was that of an *"anchor"* and her *"strength"*. His sudden passing which she referred to as *"just taken away"* left her feeling *"cheated".* Sabah admitted to not dealing with his death, instead her then fiancé and now husband, was her emotional support during that time. Perhaps an indication of her mental state; when the loss occurred, had it not been for her partner she would have "*probably given up a little bit on life".*

Sabah's sentiments mirrored that of her mother Sajeedah (65) at the loss of her husband. This is the first of two cases - second case being that of Khanum (45) and Muhsina (24) - where the death of a parent and husband was mentioned by mother-daughter couple thus highlighting how lives are linked and interdependent over the lifecourse.

Sajeedah (65) said the following on the emotional and physical strain associated with the passing of her husband.

> *"Emotionally the most uh…uh…terrifying experience was losing my husband because I didn't expect him to die, he just died you know it was just a terrible experience, but growing up growing my children and all I had something to do it wasn't idle…everyday has a new meaning for you. That* [death of husband] *affected my really very badly it really did. His death …I think it did it took half my life away. It drains you* [physically] *cos* [because] *it's a long journey your strength goes away"*

Like her daughter, Sajeedah too described the loss as sudden. Much of her account concentrated on time. This related to the years he has passed on, the time it has taken for her to deal with his death which she views as a *"long journey"* as well as the loss and the effect of his passing on her 'personal time' in the sense that his death as she puts it *"took half my life away".* Like her mother, Sabah too reflected on time; in the sense she felt *"cheated"* by his passing as there was yet so much of life to share with her father.

Sajeedah's retelling also presented the physical effects of her loss. She captured this as physically draining where *"your strength goes away".* Earlier in the chapter, Sajeedah viewed ageing as largely a physical phenomenon involving significant physical degeneration and illness. Her previous statements when viewed in the context of her loss of her husband are not unexpected. Whilst she disclosed having a pre-existing condition related to her legs which easily swell causing difficulty to walk, it can be deduced that the passing of her husband may in part explain her views on ageing on a physical level. In some ways, his passing according to her may have accelerated her physical degeneration.

Similar to mothers Maymunah (41) and Rasheeda (52) who sought new beginnings after the death, Sajeedah found a reason to move on; her children. Thus far, the narratives presented point to this important aspect in the bereavement process. That is, moral support and coping mechanisms to help the individual move on – even though this realisation and enlightenment comes after a period of emotional

struggle (Billington et al, 1998).

Daughter Muhsina (24) related her experience of losing of her father. Unlike the recounts of Sabah and Sajeedah, Muhsina shared intimate details of how she observed her mother, Khanum (45) processing the loss of her husband. This account offered a unique perspective of a teenager in mourning but also a teenager who had to offer emotional support and resume considerable responsibility in the home. Earlier findings on the poem on ageing which Muhsina attributed as her influence on views on ageing and which she believed her father penned in honour of her mother, touched on feelings of loss and sadness associated with his passing. In the same vein, Muhsina first shared her observations in relation to her mother's untimely widowhood. This mother-daughter couple intertwined narratives are presented below.

> ***Khanum:*** *Uh…I didn't see it coming it was major that really changed my life from being a housewife and tending to the needs of my family and Saira as a challenged child and Muhsina in Matric and still in school and all that. I had to now go and work with no experience, no qualification…so that like really it really took a lot from me.*
>
> ***NK:*** *Can you describe the impact of your husband's passing?*
>
> ***Khanum:*** *Well you know um…I having said that you know that the age changes you but at that age I had to go and study I had to do something because I was teaching in Madressah, how I can't make ends meet with that…my family they help me but I want to be independent I want to be able to take care of my own children, so this is where I decided that I need to do uh…something another reason why I thought of doing pre-school. I was depressed before that because of these kids I had to wake up in the morning they were waiting for me and I had to get ready and you know be there. Before that I was…there was a time where I didn't feel like doing anything It gave me a sense of purpose and you know I just thank Allah.*
>
> ***NK:*** *Apart from you having to become more independent to support your home, in what way did his passing affect you as a person?*
>
> ***Khanum:*** *It uh…I um…ja it has I have changed when it comes to…um…I feel I'm not that same uh…um…you know I'm not I don't laugh so often I don't um…like I wouldn't I wouldn't want to go out you know …for me like if Moulana*

> [referring to husband by his title] *was around I would have went…but and when it comes to things like that I pull away…I mean like I have no desire to experience these things, you know being out with the young ones when they go out. Also, going and doing things we did when he was alive is just too painful sometimes. So uh I think it's easier just not go.*
>
> ***NK:** Okay, anything else you would like to share?*
>
> ***Khanum:** Yes, there's a major loss of companionship there…and I think that has changed that part of me because we shared almost everything and right now you feel like although you have family support and you have the kids and they great and all of that…but the things that you share with your husband you can't share with them.*

Khanum's excerpt draws attention to the multiple layers of emotions and personal triumph amidst the premature loss of her husband at forty years of age. She acknowledged her young widowhood which for her was a significant life event, a time of transition and a turning point of note. Her passage clearly describes how she processed – and the initial lack thereof – her husband's death, followed by a period of depression characterised a loss of will where she "*didn't feel like doing anything"* and preferred *being in my* [her] *pyjamas the whole day".* Encouragingly, Khanum had the support of family yet she vehemently pursued a sense of independence for herself and her daughters. Her turning point is represented by her decision to pursue studies in early childhood development. This she credits with having given her a *"sense of purpose"* and *"joy"*.

Similar to other mothers like Rasheeda (52) and Sajeedah (65), Khanum's strength was sourced from her belief in her faith as well as being in the service of people be it family or the community. This act of service, in her case with children, provided her with the will to go on and lead an independent and productive life. For these mothers, their choices are in favour of the lifecourse model which advocates human agency as important for the construction of life pathways amidst opportunities and challenges. Their personal triumphs are evidence of alternative and positive conduits created as a result of a potentially emotionally scarring life events. In addition, the lifecourse model states that the experiences of one life transition may have an impact on later transitions or events where it may either protect the lifecourse trajectory or endanger it (Elder, 1999). In the cases of these three mothers, their lifecourse was protected through their agency and choice to work through the loss of their significant other by engaging in fulfilling activities hence giving them a sense of purpose and accomplishment (Hutchison, 2007).

On a more personal level, Khanum shared how the loss of her husband affected her character. She stated that she is no longer the same person she was. In this context, the impact is felt on her character. In other places of her narrative, this change manifests in her approach to life, namely her choice of clothing. Here and elsewhere in her narrative she spoke of the close bond she shared with her husband where this included new experiences and doing regular activities like shopping or day outings as a couple and a family. She described how she chooses not to be a part of social gatherings where she prefers to *"pull away".* The deeper reason as she stated lies in reliving memories with her husband which she now finds to be painful. Khanum further links this impact to a loss of companionship. For her, despite having family and daughters, being no longer able to share intimate details of her life as she would have done with her husband signals her feelings of loss of companionship. Findings presented earlier revealed that Khanum viewed ageing as an isolating, lonely experience. Given her loss, her passage provides further evidence as to why she holds this view.

Her daughter Muhsina (24) provided significant detail below on how she experienced the loss of her father, but more importantly how she witnessed her mother grieving. As mentioned, this was the only mother-daughter couple who reflected on the loss as it appeared to affect each other. Muhsina said:

> ***Muhsina****: It was very, very stressful at first…and…you they because you not used to it you don't know what to do, you don't know what's the next step from here now. Uh…It's like um…building something without an instruction manual…*
>
> ***NK:*** *Okay, apart from caring for your sister, anything else you want to share?*
>
> ***Muhsina****: Um… my mother was a bit weak because of her depression after my father passed away and everything, she didn't know what was cutting. Well seeing my mother go through what she went through was very hard also. I mean she was so young. I didn't fully understand at the time, but as I am growing and maturing I just don't know how she did it you know. I didn't know how to really comfort her. I would hug her and try to cheer her up but I know she needed more than that. I just didn't know what to do you know.*

Muhsina was young at just eighteen years old and in Grade 12 when her father passed on. Like her mother, Muhsina chose to adopt a new way of living – part choice and part obligation – following the death of her father. Whilst she acknowledged the period to be *"stressful"* she embraced it with positivity. Her reliance on her faith and prayer (similar to her mother) as well as the support from family helped her cope. Again, the Islamic discourse as seen thus far has surfaced as a way or guide to living in multiple

contexts, bereavement in this instance). For mothers and daughters who mentioned the importance of their religion, it offered hope, reassurance and guidance. This combined with her choice to live positively ensured that Muhsina protected her lifecourse trajectory, given that this event and transition could have endangered her subsequent life stages given the sensitive time (with reference to her age and final year of school) her father passed away (Elder, 1999; Hutchison, 2007).

Similar to mothers Maymunah (41) and Rafeedah (43) and daughter Sabah (39), Muhsina too felt directionless. As the oldest child, Muhsina assumed new responsibilities in the home given her mother's mental state at the time and subsequent pursuit of studies and formal work. She likened the experience to *"building something without an instruction manual"*. Her statements were made specifically at caring for her special needs younger sister. Whilst she eventually coped, it was undoubtedly an overwhelming experience.

Muhsina reflected on her mother's depression, stating it was hard to witness as a child. Despite her best efforts at consoling her mother, Muhsina knew it was not enough. Her display of empathy at a young age towards her mother is testament to their close bond but also revealing of understanding mutual grief and sadness.

The remainder of Muhsina's account concentrated on how the event affected both mother and daughter. Specifically, how the impact of the passing created perceptions of Muhsina to which her mother found a new sense of being vocal and protective. Muhsina explained that following the passing of her father, people commented that she was a *"burden"* to her mother and marriage would be a solution. In addition, by her marrying the home would gain a *"man in the house"* thereby offering protection to the three women as well as alleviating any financial strife. This clearly worried Muhsina as she wished her mother would *"wake up and let herself be heard"*. It was through the persistent interference of people that Muhsina noted her mother's new found assertiveness.

Analysis of both accounts provides substantial evidence of lifecourse model concepts such as the timing of lives and linked or interdependent lives. Consequently, both Muhsina and Khanum's new and re-negotiated roles are connected to this life event and turning point (Elder, 1999). The manner in which the death was experienced was through the family as a central nodal point (here the mother-daughter relationship) resulting in an interdependency of lives.

Marriage

Marriage for both mothers and daughters signalled a significant life event and a transition or departure from previously held roles and status in the lifecourse. The experience of marriage was interpreted differently. Negative or mixed feelings regarding marriage appeared only with mothers, whereas daughters viewed their experiences of marriage as largely positive even though they acknowledged its realities. This difference in sentiment was also communicated non-verbally during interviews. This overt level of non-verbal communication did not occur with any other theme. The researcher noted that positive feelings towards marriage were accompanied by smiles, laughter and general positive body language such as maintained eye contact and affirmative movements. Mixed or negative feelings were expressed with noticeable frowning and crossed arms or closed fists.

For mothers who shared positive experiences on marriage, their reflections were expressed as follows:

> *"Ja when I got married, I worshiped my husband and he really made me a person. He and I had a nice life my husband was a wonderful person, I didn't have children for 8 years he was patient with me. He loved me very much he did the best he could for us plus when I had my children he was there for me all the time. We lived a happy life right through till he died"* (Sajeedah, 65)

> *"My husband really made me feel special then and even now. This year we celebrated our 35th wedding anniversary. Can you believe it? We've achieved so much over the years, our lovely children, going in holidays and all that. Now we are both looking forward to having more grandchildren and enjoying our golden years* [laughter] (Raeesa, 57).

Common in both passages is the evident adoration directed towards their husbands and overall bond of marriage. Sajeedah encases her love as appreciation of his husbandly duties and support rendered for many years until his death. She touches on her difficult childhood that was discussed earlier; which she is appreciative of him taking her out of that environment. She sums it as him shaping her as a person. Sajeedah also introduced another life event in her passage; that is her struggle with infertility for eight years. Having had a significant impact on her life, her infertility experience – the only one amongst mothers – is discussed later. For now, her love and positive association with marriage is strongly tied with her husband's support with respect to her personal struggles as well as making the best provisions possible as a husband and father. She iterates his love for her and touches on several character traits which she unmistakably admired and fondly recalled after his passing.

Raeesa's association with marriage in her narrative gives insight on love and marriage in a bygone era. That is, her reference to pen pals and a romanticised notion on their love as *"pure and untainted*". Her excerpt illustrates the bond of marriage through her consistent use of *"we"* and "*our"* thereby signifying togetherness and unity. Apart from positive reminiscences of the past, Raeesa's reflection also captures hope and excitement towards the future as she terms *"enjoying our golden years"*.

The next account by Maarya (48) is unique in many ways. As one of the most candid participants in the study, while she provided an open account of her positive experience of marriage, this was closely connected and viewed as liberation from her tumultuous childhood. Maarya said:

> ***Maarya:*** *When I met Ismail and it was the happiest time of my life. But I met Ismail and in two weeks' time Ismail wanted to leave me, because I was so arrogant and I was so – I used to get angry for stupid things.*
>
> ***NK:*** *Do you perhaps know why you were upset and angry at the time when you met him? To me it seems like pent up frustration? Would you agree with that?*
>
> ***Maarya:*** *Oh yes. All my life I was treated like trash, especially by men in my home. And then here comes this man who is treating me like a queen. It was too good to be true. What do you really want that you being so nice? It was like, let me hurt you before you hurt me. Lucky I came to my senses and said no, I can't let him go. He is a good man and is very good to me.*
>
> ***NK:*** *How did you move past your anger and build your relationship and eventual marriage?*
>
> ***Maarya:*** *He became more accommodating to me because before my Granny died she called him and told him everything about my life and how I lived and she asked him to look after me and not to hurt me because of everything. So he became more accommodating even though I would rant and rave. .*
>
> ***NK:*** *Okay, and your marriage? Would you like to share more on that?*
>
> ***Maarya:*** *I like being married to Ismail. I found it like I had a name to my name. I could walk with him in town and feel proud that this is my husband. I love the attention I get, it's fantastic.*

***NK**: Okay, how did marriage impact in you as a person?*

***Maarya:** I think Ismail was the person that actually made me the person that I am today, because he gave me a life, he gave me a family.*

Maarya's excerpt captures her interweaved emotions of her childhood into later life stages. There are initial indications that her life trajectory was in jeopardy. Namely, the experiences of her childhood and adolescence may have had an impact on later transitions or events – for instance her relationship with Ismail – such that it may have endangered her lifecourse. Her built up frustration which she vented on occasion in the early stages of her relationship was evidence of this endangerment, nearly costing her the entire relationship. Her acknowledgement of being *"treated like trash"* and her ill-perceived but self-protecting view of "*let me hurt you before you hurt me"* are clear manifestations of someone who has suffered emotional, physical and sexual abuse (Okken et al, 2012) Her initial inability to distinguish being treated well because she deserved it as opposed to malicious intent is another indication of her mistrust in people which she spoke of when reflecting on her early life experiences. Through the intercession of her grandmother – whom she earlier described as the only happy memory of her childhood – her relationship was able to transition to marriage.

Her reflection on her marriage is very affirmative. It marks a clear departure from her past albeit some remnants remained. The distinction now was that she had unwavering support from her husband who helped her work through her periods of *"rant and rave"*. Apart from describing her marriage as being wonderful and something she was proud of, her true sentiments are expressed in her words "*I found it like I had a name to my name"*. This signalled a sense of belonging and identity; something which Maarya did not have in her early years as presented earlier in the chapter. More importantly, it removed the stain of illegitimacy that plagued her for most of her life until that point. As a married woman, she had new found respect and happiness. Like Sajeedah, Maarya credited her husband for having given her a family and moulding who she is today.

Her passage also highlighted the attention received by her husband, which she regarded as *"fantastic"*. Having extracted deeply private matters with Maarya, the researcher seized an opportunity to further explore the *"attention"* she referred to. The researcher had no notion of what this 'attention' could mean and left it to the participant to share as she saw fit. The opening paid off where Maarya was the only participant to willingly share her experience of sexuality within her marriage. Whilst similar probes were attempted (not designed to uncover issues of only sexuality) in other interviews with mothers and daughters they did not yield information such as with Maarya.

Maarya shared the following intimate details of her marriage and sexuality:

> *"In the beginning I was stupid, did not know much. But as the time went I had become more experienced and I know for a fact that I satisfy my husband and I know that he will never go look for it somewhere else. It is not like we feel that we are so old that we have to have it once a week or whatever the case no that is not it. You know it is like spontaneous. You know what they say that if you can satisfy your husband which is the most important thing in your marriage. Why not? I mean really like they say you have to be a whore in the bedroom because of your husband. It is not something to be ashamed of, it is reality"*

Strikingly, whilst Maarya was open to share, she did not use the word 'sex' but referred to the act as *"it"*. (González, 2007). Her reflection provided an account of her naivety which transitioned into experience and certainty of satisfaction for her husband as the years went by. She also made connections to age and sexuality where she dispelled myths around older ages and sex. Maarya's frankness does go 'against the grain' in terms of what information is regarded as permissible to share with others in the Islamic context (Khan, 2001). This can be firstly be interpreted as her having trust in the researcher not to disclose the information. And secondly, her level of personal comfort in disclosure is influenced by the meanings she attaches to sexuality in a marriage – evidenced by her words *"it is not something to be ashamed of, it is reality".*

The next three accounts by mothers Rukaya (43), Rafeedah (43) and Amarah (48) captured ambivalent and to an extent negative feelings towards marriage. For Rukaya marriage represented a loss of identity and individuality. Her narrative detailed how this 'loss' occurs. Rukaya explained the transition to marriage is one where a person *"gives yourself over"*. In her view, marriage is an unreciprocated relationship with the woman giving more than what is being received. Rukaya does not make the connection to herself but chooses to speak from a distance. Her reticent manner to speak more personally was surprising given her forthcoming assertions on marriage. Interestingly, her comments provide insight on her current state. She adds that she and her partner have chosen to remain friends. This signalled separation and divorce, yet she did not say this plainly. It is unclear why she chose not to speak openly on the fact that she is divorced. The literature highlights that disclosure could be influenced by a number of factors (Okken et al, 2012). Perhaps her reasoning is aligned to one of these.

The following accounts capture some similarities although the trajectories are quite different.

> *"I remember having one Eid for example the cultural differences where I was brought up in and where I'm married in is completely different. Oh it was hard I won't lie my mother in-law is from India, so it was extremely hard., but at the same time I only knew my husband 3 weeks and he proposed and I accepted because you know everybody was struggling and striving you know that type of thing. As a young girl when you looking at these kinds of things … somebody that he's matured that's got a stable job that knew exactly what they wanted, that for me was appealing…"* (Rafeedah, 43)

> *"I had problems in Johannesburg my mother and my father used to fight too much and for that I just want to get married I just want to get away. Never even look* [look at photograph] *I just got married. Hey marriage it was hard. It was hard…okay I don't speak Urdu and they speak Urdu and all that. What's hard my in-laws was quite different and they were not friendly…"* (Amarah, 49)

Common to Rafeedah and Amarah's excerpts are the interpersonal conflict experienced with cultural differences. Both faced considerable hardship and where their 'differentness' was singled out thus making the transition into the family difficult. Rafeedah cites the dichotomous situation she was in with respect to her in-laws. Amarah too touches on a similar situation where language was used as a tool of power, dominance and isolation.

Prominent in both cases are the reasons for marriage. Perhaps herein lies the source for their ambivalence. In Rafeedah's case, her acceptance of the speedy marriage proposal was based on maturity and economic stability she observed with her husband. She positioned her thinking in the context of her community where such traits were appreciated and desired above falling in love. Clearly in her husband, she saw a better life for herself, one that she perceived as unattainable had she remained there.

For Amarah, marriage meant escape from domestic troubles between her parents – as she puts it "*I just want to get married I just want to get away"*. Without having glanced at (referring to a photograph) who she would be marrying, she unknowingly entered a world she tried to escape from. Her retelling captures her early difficulties, being ill-treated by her in-laws and even contemplation of divorce. Encouragingly for Amarah, she attained some stability when she took up employment at a retail chain store. This provided her with a sense of independence and personal achievement.

Both women viewed marriage as an exit to their current situation at the time. Perhaps one that was hoped to provide a life different to what they had come to know. In Rafeedah's case, this proved true to an extent. However, her reflections elsewhere in her narratives point to a 'loss of self' over the years. In a way, her view of marriage is similar to Rukaya which necessitated her re-discovery of herself through her re-connection with God and religion. This is discussed as a further life event for Rafeedah later in the chapter.

Amarah on the other hand, admitted to the folly of how she decided to get married. Her treatment at the hands of her in-laws and husband was unfortunate, yet she endured with eventual personal victory. Such findings point to a cohort effect given the ages of Rukaya (43), Rafeedah (43) and Amarah (48). For example, they were born in the same historical period and from the accounts encountered similar experiences such as the loss of individuality, inter-personal conflict, and cultural differences and eventual emancipation – although it took different forms. The experience of marriage in this context were later shown to have impacted how they viewed themselves as ageing women This is presented later in the chapter.

Moving onto daughters, their reflection on marriage as a life event as significant was evident, yet the depth they provided was not as telling as mothers. Despite the age difference, Kareema and Naeema's narratives captured their exuberance when they got married. Their accounts also point to the realities of marriage which concerned *"ups and downs".* Noticeably absent in their renditions is any reference to the relationship shared with their husbands. Earlier positive accounts by mothers like Raeesa (57), Sajeedah (65) and Maarya (48) placed emphasis on the bond with their husbands. Daughters who viewed marriage as a noteworthy life event surprisingly did not provide much detail on this. Despite further probes by the researcher, the material appeared apathetic. One of the youngest married daughters, Naadirah (21), offered the only detailed account of her marriage. Naadirah said:

> *"First it was like hell no I don't wanna* [want to] *get married but I was getting proposals in between and my mom used to like ja you have to start considering this you have to start thinking about getting married and you can't just say no. So this here with this it was completely arranged I said okay you can come home I'll give him a chance okay and we spoke and um… we spoke and then two months after that we got married. I was 18 at the time"*

Naadirah's excerpt points out marriage at an early age – an arranged marriage. Her comfort with speaking on her early marriage was evident in the interview. Despite the marriage being arranged, it was

done with her consent. Naadirah also related how her early marriage was perceived by others as well. It appeared that it was met with dissatisfaction based on her age. This was countered by other opinions which stated that "*rather get married young it's really nice you'll enjoy it"* or *going to get married now you have fun with your husband".* Naadirah did not delve into what *"fun"* fully represented but commented later in her narrative that it meant *"doing things together"*. Again, vagueness was encountered when attempts were made to garner further details within a marriage setting – even with younger aged daughters.

Motherhood

Following marriage, motherhood was cited as another life event and transition in the lives of mothers and daughters. For mothers, the experience of motherhood was generally positive. The parent generation generally married earlier and became mothers earlier than the offspring generation. Most commented that this was the 'norm' back then although in retrospect, they regarded it as young by present day society. On the whole, motherhood was a layered experience for mothers. For mothers like Maymunah (41) and Zeenat (40) the event and transition to motherhood was captured as follows:

> *"I was twenty one when I had my first child. I felt like okay at that time you don't know what is really happening your mind is not really clued up on what is happening but after that you realize no this is your life now and you have to live it now, and you have to be responsible because you have got a child and you got to worry about you know your mind-set changes. I was still trying to change you know like getting used to being married and I think I was still trying to get into being a mother"* (Maymunah, 41)

> *"Ja, I became a wife at 19 and becoming a mother shortly after that. I feel nowadays, now when I look at things it was a bit too young. But you know I was coping with this responsibilities at such a young age basically that turned my whole life around…overnight change you know from a young girl…to a woman with responsibilities"* (Zeenat, 40)

Common to Maymunah and Zeenat's account was the element of responsibility and uncertainty with becoming young, first time mothers. Both were adapting to their early marriages when they entered into motherhood. Whilst the experience was welcomed, Maymunah spoke of the mind-set change required when meeting your responsibilities and caring for a child. Having had her children at different ages, Maymunah had the benefit of hindsight when comparing her personal experiences of being a mother. For her, her last born at age 30 represented the best age to have child due to acquired maturity and

overall readiness to have a child. Similarly, Zeenat also discussed the responsibilities of motherhood, yet she was confident in her ability to parent at a young age. She regarded this as an "*overnight change you know from a young girl…to a woman with responsibilities".* Both accounts point to a cohort effect in the way in which motherhood was experienced initially and the gradual acceptance of roles and responsibilities.

Older mothers Amarah (48) and Rubeena (63) alluded to the joyful aspect of motherhood. In spite of having becoming mothers at young ages, the excitement of having children is observable in the above passages. Amarah offered the only account in the study pertaining to labour, birth and coping post-partum. As she pointed out, at age 19, Amarah was able to cope on her own throughout labour and birth. She regarded herself as brave having gone through an un-medicated, vaginal birth referred to as a *"normal birth".* By her own admission, despite being brave, it was the pain of labour that deterred her from having more children. Post-partum, Amarah did not have the support of her mother in the days following the birth of her first child, hence she had to *"do everything"*.

Reflections by Maarya (48) and Rafeedah (43) made direct linkages to certain aspects of their childhood and adolescence. Theirs form a complex web of emotion which originated in previous life stages which had implications for their transition to and experience of motherhood. This was unique to just these two mothers in the study. Such findings are further evidence of how early life experiences may pose an endangerment to the life trajectory should agency, diversity and the creation of alternative, positive pathways not be done in order to protect lifecourse.

Rafeedah spoke about her purposeful choice of not spacing her children. Her choices are clearly influenced by her anxiety and anticipation of motherhood stemming from her own experiences. She linked her experience of being the youngest and being dominated and involved in constant power struggles with her siblings – to present day. Her agency in determining the close age gaps amongst her children ensured a diverse and hopeful lifecourse for herself and her children (Elder, 1999). This is evidenced in her encouraging comments about her children as a source of admiration. Rafeedah once again reprises her deep connection with God by stating that her children were given to her as an example for which she takes great comfort in.

Having already had one daughter, Khanum (45) shared her experience of having a special needs child. As she explained, motherhood second time around was quite different. Her account, like the death of her husband is intertwined with her daughter Muhsina's (24) reflection.

Khanum: *The second major thing that really changed my life was um…the incident with the Saira…I was 25 at that time. And um…ja so Saira's incident really, really changed my life I had to um…you know the…I didn't have to think about it but my life just became her all the time after that cos she from being like a normal child she had no sight, she had no…uh…she was you know paraplegic, quadriplegic actually. So that was like a major issue…it turned our like a normal life like in you know a matter of weeks everything changed…and that I think uh…but I think any mother would like do the same, I don't think I've done anything you know out of the ordinary….because any mother would just you know give up everything just to put her child right and I don't regret it but it did change our life.*

NK: *How this incident affect you then and now?*

Khanum: *It was a lot, it was a lot it was really a lot and that mental load took – had an effect on the physical part of my body and you know with depression you, you tend to binge and you tend to…so that is where all the weight started for me I put on a lot of weight…and I used to because I used to think you know there's gonna be a miracle and see her walking again…but uh…deep down inside I knew that's not going to happen but every night when I go to sleep I used to think that…and with her every aspect of her life was very big, the way she slept the way she ate…initially we used to you know I used to even feed her through the nose she had a nasal gastric tube…so and at that time she was no sight at all…so it was hectic days but I make shukr* [Arabic denoting thankfulness] *and you know we didn't give up faith and she's come a long way.*

Khanum spoke about how their lives changed post the incident with her second daughter. She provided some description on how her daughter transitioned from a *"normal child"* to a child with special needs. Her account also captured her sacrifices as a mother which she regarded as any mother would have done the same. The most telling part of her account was the effect this incident had on her a person. She spoke of the physical and mental load as well as her emotional eating and depression which began with this incident. Khanum discussed the hope she held on to in seeing her child walk again. Whilst she knew this could possibly not happen, she celebrated smaller milestones along the way. Again, Khanum's faith helped her cope through this second most impactful event in her life.

Muhsina also touched on having a special needs sibling as part of her narrative. In other parts of her interview, Muhsina spoke of her mother having made a number of personal sacrifices to be dutiful wife, daughter-in-law and mother. Here she highlighted her mother's role in caring for her sibling. She believed because of "*prayer* and *my mother's efforts through physio and occupational therapy she's*

[sibling] *come quite far".* In the context of her father's death, Muhsina's empathetic understanding of the situation, especially with regard to her mother now having to take up employment resulted in her assuming more responsibility with her sister than before. This finding demonstrated the interdependent lives of this mother-daughter couple.

In her interview, Maarya (48) offered a detailed account of her transition to motherhood. She said:

> *"It was very scary because I did not know how I was going to treat my child at first because I used to have flash backs about my childhood and I always wondered whether I would look after Ameerah the way I could, and there were times when I actually used to just leave her with my mother in-law because I did not want to be with her because I did not know how to be with her and there were times that I used to resent her for being here because I felt like she was just an added responsibility"*

Maarya's passage captures a range of strong emotions felt when she transitioned to motherhood. The first half of her narrative concentrated on mainly negative feelings associated with motherhood. She traced much of these feelings back to her own childhood. Maarya was uncertain about how she would care for and raise her daughter. A deliberate avoidance of responsibility is apparent due to her ambivalence towards her child. By her admission, she encountered feelings of resentment which she later sought appeasement and guidance from God. This oscillation of feelings captures her personal conflict in dealing with remnants of her past where her child and being a mother stirred *"flashbacks "*for her. Maarya earlier admitted to her strong dislike towards her own mother for ill-treating and abandoning her. In other segments of her narrative, she commented on not receiving advice on 'womanly issues' such as menstruation, how to behave around boys and how to be a good wife and foster a good marriage. Her reflection points to the absence of a mother figure or other role model who could have offered guidance. Whilst her grandmother had been a source of happiness and comfort for her, her passing removed any maternal support she would have received post-partum. Encouragingly, her mother-in-law may have filled that gap to an extent. Hence, in some ways, Maarya's initial sentiments towards motherhood can be understood in the context of her traumatic past. This has been documented in the literature where such behaviour and feelings is not uncommon (Usmiani and Daniluk, 1996)

Gradually in time, Maarya revealed she became more accepting of her role as a mother and saw her daughter Ameerah as the "*most sweetest child, the most beautiful child".* Just as her emotions were strong at the onset of motherhood, her positive feelings towards her daughter were also extreme.

Although her intentions was to be protective, two incidents in her narrative highlight the extremity of her feelings. Her statement to her husband of "*I will kill you"* if he ever thought of harming her child represented her raw, primal emotion and need to protect and punish. Maarya did not expound what this 'harm' could represent. However given her own experiences of emotional, physical and sexual abuse which she drew much of her protective instincts from, it could be interpreted as such. Secondly, her act where she "*actually hit a child once just because the child interfered with Ameerah"* demonstrated that anyone, even children would face her wrath if her child was hurt. This incident represented a fierce need to protect from all dangers – perceived or real.

Maarya also spoke of the need to "*mould her* [daughter] *into that person that I wanted".* Again this was done with reference of her early life experiences and the consequences thereof, for example, dropping out of school and completing her Matric on her own. Her passage captures on-going efforts to instil a particular mind-set in her child which would set a path different from the one she experienced. This is by far the most recurrent theme in her narrative. Like Rafeedah, Maarya's choices to create an alternative life path for herself and her child was paramount for her. Her last few statements allude to her daughter's illness which she described as a *"breaking point".* The impact of this illness for herself and her daughter is another example of interlinked lives between mothers and daughters in the study. This is presented later in the chapter.

Some daughters reflected on motherhood as a noteworthy event in their lives. In spite of having their children at vastly different ages, daughters Sabah (39), Naeema (43) and Kareema (29) commonly capture elements of readiness, planning and choice. Like mother Maymunah (41) who commented on being a mother at a later age as an enjoyable experience for her. Naeema too felt the same way. She viewed her mental readiness and family support as determinants of her choice to have a child in her late twenties. Mother of three children, Sabah who having married in her mid-thirties, explained *"we"* – as in the husband-wife couple – decided to plan to conceive straight after getting married. She reiterated that having her children close in age was by choice. Whilst Sabah did not mentioned it, it is possible that this choice was made on the assumption of her declining fertility – also referred to as the ticking 'biological clock' – related to her age.

Like with their descriptions of marriage, daughters were also reserved in recounting their motherhood experiences. Mothers expressed their love and high regard for the children and were more open with their emotions by highlighting personal fears and how they overcame it. Daughter's reflections on the other hand were 'practical' in nature hence the references to choice and readiness associated with

motherhood. Noticeably absent in their passages is the bond shared with their children. Whilst non-verbal communication observed in the interviews were indicate of optimistic sentiments on motherhood, there is no evidence in the data which could point to why daughters may have chosen to be unforthcoming in their accounts.

Divorce

Divorce as a significant life event was shared by two mothers, Rukhsana (57) and Rubeena (63). For Rukhsana, being divorced after a few years of marriage and having to raise her only child Safiyya was described as challenging. Rukhsana reflected on society's perception of a single mother and how this affected her at a young age. Rukhsana's reflection captured the mental anguish she faced by societal scrutiny and the lack of moral support.

Rubeena on the other hand openly shared her experience with divorce in her early twenties and again in her mid-fifties. Rubeena shared that part of the problem was that her first marriage was arranged. She did not have a chance to get to know her husband prior to marriage for her father's fear of *"giving them* [family] *a bad name"*. Unfortunately when the true colours of her husband emerged, her father said *"you made your bed, so you lay on it".*

Rubeena's visibly pained retelling of this part of her life was evident during the interview. Orchestrated by her father, she shared she did not have a choice when her schooling was stopped and neither was she consulted regarding the arranged marriage so she questioned how could she have *"made her bed and now has to lay on it"* – although she did not overtly voice this at the time out of fear and respect of her father. Within the marriage, the lack of choice too was a dominant theme. For instance, Rubeena later mentioned that her first ex-husband whom she addressed as her children's father*, "wanted me to wear scarf everyday he wanted my hair covered, my legs covered".* As seen in the passage below, even the circumstances surrounding her divorce at 21 years of age was not by her choice either.

> *"Unfortunately my first husband also didn't want to work. My dad died, he had a shop. He* [ex-husband] *insisted no, the shop has to go to him* [ex-husband] *and my mom said no you know what there is so many children he has got to find a job and out of frustration and you know a small argument my talaaq* [Islamic divorce] *was just given"*

Like Rukhsana, as a young, single mother, Rubeena too managed to succeed despite the adversity she faced post her first divorce. However the circumstances of her second divorce and the impact felt on her lifecourse was far more difficult by her admission. Having decided to re-marry at 41, Rubeena's second marriage was met by initial disapproval and shock by many with most feeling it was inappropriate for her to re-marry given that she had adult daughters of marriageable age. In spite of these remarks, Rubeena pursued the marriage citing love and companionship as her primary reasons.

Her excerpt below cites the dark and painful events that led up to the divorce as well as its physical and psychological effects after the divorce.

> *"I suspected that there was something going on but I had no proof. I had no proof and it was just that I started getting very sick and I didn't know whether I was coming or going and he was drugging me. I used to sleep, I used to get sick, I used to fall from the bed and I used to get the fits very, very badly and he said to my daughters you know you must come and get your mother. It was out of the blue, the first taraweeh* [nightly prayer read during Ramadaan] *night, he set my talaaq* [Arabic word for divorce]. *It took me a while I had to go for counselling. This divorce really blew me because it was somebody that I knew and trusted that broke my home* [infidelity]. *Okay now I feel whatever has happened has maybe happened for the best. I was very sick like after my talaaq and whatever it is. For a whole year I was very confused, I was in the hospital in and out. I lost my memory anything and everything and I was gone so thin from a 36 to a 28. I didn't know what was going on with me because I took my talaaq very, very difficult".*

Rubeena rationalised her second divorce as perhaps having happened for the *"best"* as she is alive and not dead as she believed was the intention of her second ex-husband. Her sharing of her husband's callous acts in the marriage and eventual deliverance of the divorce on the first night of the holy Islamic month of Ramadaan was openly disclosed. Her tone during this segment of the interview bore elements of an undaunted individual determined to share her experience without shame. She acknowledged the physical effect of her divorce; most evident in her drastic weight loss *"from a size 36 to a 28".* Psychologically, she endured memory loss and general confusion thus having needed to be hospitalised and medicated for prolong periods.

By comparison, Rubeena's second divorce at age 55 left a marked impression on her life. It appeared that her resilience to persevere was more notable in her younger years after her first divorce compared to her second divorce later in life. Whilst she did not reflect on a comparison of both divorce experiences,

it can be deduced that her will to survive and succeed was drawn from her strong need to provide for her daughters given their ages at the time of the first divorce. Secondly, she was much younger and opportunities to financially support herself were plentiful compared to her second divorce in her mid-fifties. In both divorce cases, blame and guilt attributed by others was noticeably absent. This – specifically in the case of the first divorce – could have spurred Rubeena on to triumph as she did not face this additional societal stigma. Despite having the emotional support of her daughters, the second divorce had a greater psychological impact, possibly stemming from unresolved emotions from the first divorce. Additionally, the nature of the second divorce was far more insidious than the first which unfolded for all to witness.

Clear in both accounts of divorce was the impact on the lifecourse especially as a turning point for both mothers. Notable changes in character, positive and some challenging traits ensued. This is further discussed in the next theme.

Health Conditions and Illness

For some mothers and daughters past and current health conditions and illness have left or in the process of leaving profound impacts on their physical, mental and emotional well-being. Some of the conditions discussed are also linked to specific life events which may have caused or exacerbated their conditions. Generally, women who shared their experiences of health and illness were open about its effects on themselves and those close to them. For example, Saabirah (57) spoke about her diagnosis of Type 1 Diabetes Mellitus age 20 years of age.

> ***Saabirah**: "Firstly being a diabetic my granddad said uh…they kept on saying things like that, that I shouldn't get married and all of that. I mustn't get children in fact when my husband came to propose to him, they said do you know when the man gets married he wants children? I said yes, so uh…I said well if I get children then good if I don't get children just too bad, so they said ja but if you get children, your children are gonna be abnormal and all that…"*

> ***NK:** "How did the comments about you being diabetic affect your decision to have children?"*

> ***Saabirah:** "I must admit it hurt, especially because family was saying it. It's natural to want to have children, why can't I just because I am diabetic? I knew I'm a diabetic and I also knew that uh…see in the past diabetics, diabetic babies*

were abnormal babies they were fat and you know things like that…so I knew why they were saying all that but it still hurt you know"

For Saabirah her diagnosis was more than just the condition itself. As seen, the implications of her condition pervaded into other parts of her life; thus providing evidence of the "sociality of pain" (Kotarba, 1983; Palmer et al, 2000). Whilst she expressed shock at her diagnosis, she sought medical help to manage her condition. Despite this, Saabirah was cautioned against marriage and bearing children for fear of producing a child (ren) with abnormalities. Interestingly it was her grandfather who held this opinion. She remained resolute in the pursuit of marriage and having children. Her account indicates that she was fully aware of the risk and appeared to be accepting of it. She explained that hearing such hurtful comments was difficult. Saabirah felt her diagnosis should not prevent her what she regarded as a *"natural"* desire to have children. She also acknowledged why such comments were being made given the information and health messaging on diabetes and pregnancy at the time. Saabirah's handling of her diagnosis and the steps taken to allow her to bear children is indicative of her personal agency despite being aware of the risks. Possibly her diagnosis and her decision to have children – albeit at a later age by the prescripts of the time – was a significant part of a life which symbolised personal triumph. Her excerpt provides evidence when a conflict is experienced with the "entangled self". It also supports Weitz (1990), Conrad and Barker (2010) and others' assertion that illness is socially and culturally constructed, where the social response – like Saabirah's grandfather – brings a heightened sense of burden and negativity to the afflicted.

Leading onto a similar issue of difficulties in having children, mother Sajeedah (65) also spoke of her challenges in conceiving. Sajeedah said:

"When my children were born because I had them after long. I had many miscarriages before that. Oh it was such a painful thing to go through. The disappointment finished me. I felt like I was going crazy. I just wanted a baby. It really did worry me a lot till I gave up hope of ever having children and uh…both husband and I were he – my husband were more positive than me"

Experienced decades later, daughters Safiyya (35) and Nour (34) also disclosed their battle with infertility although their experiences were quite different. Married at 18, Safiyya's account offered triumph after a period of struggle. In other words, she became pregnant and had her first child. Nour (34) on the other hand was in the midst of dealing with her infertility struggles at the time of her interview. Nour's poignant account is shared below:

Nour: *My husband and I are trying for a child for like ten years now. I feel like it's just never going to happen. I feel so ashamed that I can't do what my body is meant to do. Like people judge me, or take pity on me. I don't want their pity, I just want people to respectfully understand and stop making me a point of discussion.*

NK: *Okay, what about your emotional state? How are you coping?*

Nour: *Some days are better than others for sure. I get anxiety around family events because it means seeing children and all these mothers oohing and aahing over their children. Great for them but torture for me. It really hurts to see others with kids and I'm just sitting there smiling at everyone and trying to fit in but my heart is breaking on the inside.*

Narratives by Sajeedah, Safiyya and Nour were forthcoming on their infertility journeys. For Nour this part of the interview was cathartic, where she described it as a good feeling in speaking openly her condition. In spite of having married at different ages, faced infertility in distinct time periods, the women's experiences were unique but coloured with several commonalities. These commonalities were powerful emotions felt, family support especially from their mothers and husbands, solution seeking such as fertility treatments or adoption and their reliance on their faith and God as a source of strength and hope. Their experiences resonate with experiences of Muslim women living with infertility in Albania (Tahiri, Kalaja and Bimbashi, 2015) and Jordan (Obeisat et al, 2012).

Excerpts reflected here and other parts of their narratives revealed that their ability to reproduce was threatened, a personal crisis ensued affecting multiple areas in their lives. This included their relationships with their husbands, family, their self-esteem, womanhood and faith. As the literature shows, a crisis presents an opportunity for emotional growth or possible increased vulnerability to distress and despair (Roberts, 2002). This is evident where all three woman rounded off their accounts with encouraging statements on their strengthened belief in their faith and acceptance despite their initial intense feelings – thereby representing emotional and spiritual growth. This finding supports the view that their choices protected their life trajectories in anticipation of subsequent life stages.

With respect to the spectrum of emotions felt, Sajeedah and Safiyya's accounts offered a greater range as a result of their pathways transitioning from struggle to triumph. Sajeedah's desperation and loss of

hope after having a number of miscarriages is captured when she said *"I felt like I was going crazy. I just wanted a baby".* Safiyya mentioned the pain, blame and guilt she felt at the time. In trying to grasp her feelings, she questioned *"why me"* after all she thought her being young would not be an issue in falling pregnant.

In contrast, Nour's appeared to still be in a state of vulnerability and emotional upheaval. Her strong emotional rendition and tonality in the interview supports this finding. For Nour, her struggle symbolised a 'loss of control' of her body and life where she said, *"I feel like it's just never going to happen. I feel so ashamed that I can't do what my body is meant to do".* Her emotions at the 'loss' month and year after year included feelings of disbelief, anger, sadness, guilt, blame, anxiety and depression often which were cyclical and repetitive. Nour provided examples where these feelings predictably manifested at family gatherings, specifically children's parties and baby showers. Regardless of Nour's state of mind at the time of the interview, she ended with a forward looking and optimistic belief that she will have a baby when God deems it to be the right time.

This statement by Nour again touches on the concept of predestination and acceptance of fate by Muslim women in the study. Thus far it has been mothers who have expressed this with conviction, with Sajeedah being a further example. Nour and Safiyya's accounts capture the strongest sentiments in this regard by daughters in the study.

This detailed reflection on infertility as a life event and point of transition for Sajeedah, Safiyya and Nour indicates the diversity of life straits and the timing of lives and a cohort effect in the cases of Safiyya and Nour (Elder, 1999). Whilst agency here was not completely applicable, mental agency or a hopeful mind-set with the support of important figures such their husbands ensured that further endangerment to the lifecourse did not occur. This was certainly the case for Sajeedah and Safiyya who consequently fell pregnant and had their children.

On another health condition, Rubeena (63) shared her experience of epilepsy through her menstruating years. Rubeena spoke of how her a significant portion of her life was affect by episodes of epilepsy. She mentioned it would affect her the most during her menstruation thus necessitating her to be prescribed strong medication to manage her condition. Despite the risks and side effects of the medication she decided to take the medication. Her primary reason was her daughters, in that the medication helped her manage her condition so that she could maintain employment in order to provide

for the daughters. This was extremely important given that she was a single mother. Rubeena described that the onset of menopause was a possible cause for the cessation of her epilepsy. Her reflection on epilepsy was by her admission *"a very big impact"* as she anticipated it to be a lifelong matter for her. Although she no longer has epileptic episodes, her lived experiences of the condition remain with her (Conrad and Barker, 2010).

Different from other accounts of health conditions and illness presented, daughter Ameerah (22) shed light on her illness which plagued her for almost nine years – the majority of the adolescence. She preferred for the illness to be called a 'spiritual illness' although in her narrative she referred to it as when she *"got sick".* The illness did not require medical intervention but rather healing from skilled religious persons who were experienced with this condition. Her mother Maarya (51) already touched on the upset this illness caused in their lives. Ameerah's account below provides more detail,

> *"Okay when I got sick that…what can I say for me I don't know maybe mentally it uh…it…it…it…affected me it really did affect me because…because of that there…a lot of my…I feel like my, my youth was I was deprived of my youth because of that there I was deprived of a lot of things because of that there and it… I only got better the day I fell pregnant with him* [referring to son], *okay when I got pregnant"* (Ameerah, 23)

Prior to the interview, the researcher was aware that Ameerah faced an illness for a number of years but did not know its true extent. Avoiding any bias or preconceived notions, the depth of disclosure was left to the participant to decide (Okken, 2012). The above excerpt captured the illness albeit on a superficial level. The researcher attempted further probes to fully understand its effect on Ameerah however the material provided did not filter down to that level of detail. Interpreting it as an indication of personal discomfort or an unwillingness to relive detailed moments of the event, the researcher did not investigate further. Further cues of this observation was displayed in her non-verbal communication where Aadila spoke in lowered tones, avoiding eye contact and general body positioning being subtly adjusted to face away from the researcher – vastly different in her mannerism inother parts of the interview.

Ameerah commented that the illness *"deprived"* her of her youth. In her narrative she explained that due to her isolation and feeling unwell, she was not part of normal activities that teenagers in her community did. For example, participating in school and community events – something which she enjoyed and did wholeheartedly prior to her illness. When affected by specific episodes Ameerah

recounted that she had no recollection of what happened. This is evidence by her being unable to fully relate her experience – "*I don't know what like it's so hard to say exactly".* She also touched on how people perceived her and their *"nasty opinions"* of her situation. Ameerah openly admitted that this turned her into a bitter person which she eventually came to terms with. She also explained that she *"got better"* when she got pregnancy with her son. When probed as to what she meant by this, Ameerah explained that she believed that her pregnancy and her son offered her a sort of spiritual protection. She said *"like he was the light to fight the darkness"*.

Whilst the health conditions and illness presented here had profound effects on an individual level, each person was determined to overcome their battles – whether past or current. In spite of uncensored views of others, in their 'mind's eye' was a goal or belief that they will succeed. This finding added evidence of the protection of the lifecourse.

Personal Discovery and Re-Negotiation of Identity

Life transitions, events and turning points presented under this sub-theme included defining experiences over the lifecourse which participants described as having an impact on their ageing selves. Significant to each of the events is the interconnectedness shared between mother and daughter over the same or similar experiences.

For mother-daughter couple Rafeedah (43) and Naadirah (21), their personal and religious discovery resulting in a re-negotiation of identity was an important juncture in their lives. Rafeedah's citation of her personal journey of religious discovery has been alluded to several times in the chapter thus far. Evidence of her *"different path"* were observed in the context of her non-judgemental attitude towards ageing, crediting Islamic literature and seminars with moulding her views on the ageing experience and empowerment as a Muslim woman, attributing Western culture for societal prescripts on dressing and mannerisms, re-forging her connection to religion and God resulting from her ambivalent feelings towards her marriage and lastly viewing her children as an example sent to her by God.

In the passage below, Rafeedah pieces her journey and re-negotiation of her identity in the context of salient life events such as death of her father, marriage and motherhood. Rafeedah shares her internal conflict of 'who am I?' and her realisation of what really matters thus giving rise to her new sense of self-awareness and servitude to religion and God. Clearly observed in Rafeedah's retelling was the predestination and finiteness of life. Within this, Rafeedah believes the submission to a higher being and

the reality of death is what matters. This mind-set has helped mould her discovery and re-negotiation in all facets of her life.

For her daughter Naadirah, her personal turning point materialised after her return from *Umrah* (the non-mandatory lesser pilgrimage made by Muslims to Makkah which may be performed at any time of the year). Having turned 18, Naadirah was resolute in her determination to lead a more fulfilling Islamic life. Naadirah shared:

> *"The first turning point before that* [marriage] *was going for Umrah and then coming back and seeing there's lots of things I want to change in my life. My mommy always taught us if you go for Umrah you move forward in your life don't move back so there's things that whenever we go for Umrah we make an intention to change something wrong that we doing in our life. I felt spiritually uplifted when I came back and in a good space and also I was making dua that Allah grant me somebody that would be good to me and good to my family and Alhumdulillah* [Praise be to Allah] *I got that 3 months later and then I got married"*

As observed, Naadirah's attitudinal shift and subsequent lifestyle change is to an extent influenced by her mother's assertion to *"move forward in life"* after an important act such as Umrah. At age 18, Naadirah's maturity and understanding what that entailed is commendable. Whilst not alluded to by either mother or daughter, perhaps Naadirah seeing her mother living out what she preaches could have been a motivating factor for Naadirah to change her mind-set and reap the benefits of her convictions – that is meeting her husband three months later.

On the subject of marriage, daughter Mehreen (19) commented on her transition to marriage as a gateway for the formulation of a new kind of identity for her. The same was observed for her mother Maymunah, who was faced with transitioning from a mother to a mother-in-law at a young age. The same transition was internalised on different levels for this mother-daughter couple. For daughter Mehreen, looming responsibilities appeared to mostly occupy her mind. She said:

> *"I have this person now* [referring soon-to-be husband] *I have to think about how my life is going to be now, how it is going to be after I'm married I have to set my life according to that I have to think you know what now I'm going to be a wife. I have to learn how to cook how to clean how to do all of those things you know.*

I have to be that and because I'm gonna be the woman of the house now…"

As seen, much of Mehreen's account concentrates on a change in mind-set, lifestyle and what must be done to fulfil her wifely and domestic duties. Much of these to-be-learned duties are regarded as *"have to"* obligations which she equated to her soon to be acquired role as a *"wife"* and *"woman of the house".*Mehreen clearly viewed this as an upward social position – marked departure from her current role (Schaefer, 2014). This represented for her a renegotiation of identity where she has to "*set her life according to that"*. Mehreen did not offer why she felt these specific actions define a successful wife, however such expectation can be contextually linked to her home setting. The conservative nature of her upbringing, for example the norms established by her father within the home as well her living with grandparents can be considered as key drivers behind her conceptualisation of a dutiful wife. Whilst not expressed, perhaps seeing her mother carry out duties and responsibilities in an extended family setting could be further contributing factors to her conceptualisation (Constable, 1984).

Her mother Maymunah on the other hand viewed her daughter's transition into marriage as having a direct impact on her self-perception. Whilst she has mentioned happiness for her daughter in her narrative, her reflection of what this transition means for her reveals her personal anxiety. Inherent in her comments are her preoccupation with being a young mother-in-law and future grandmother. Her anxiety is brought on by comments which she internalised thus bringing about internal conflict (Giddens 2001)

The last reflection under this sub-theme is an open account of a taboo subject in many communities but especially so in Muslim communities - that is pre-marital sex and pregnancy before marriage. The emotions shared by this life event, transition and turning point was shared by mother-daughter couple Maarya (48) and Ameerah (22). The researcher was surprised at the level of outspokenness – albeit with some tones of elusiveness – by both mother and daughter, especially since such occurrences are not usually discussed, certainly with unfamiliar persons. Ameerah shared her account of premarital pregnancy below:

"I fell pregnant before I got married…Uh… um…it was embarrassing not for me so much but for my family I was more concerned about what people would think about my family…okay although I know I did wrong. I did feel there were times that I would get affected when there were comments made about my situation but now if I have to talk to anyone I would say you know what I did fall pregnant before I got married, although it's not a good thing it's a terrible thing but uh…it

> *happened. . It was really, really difficult. In the beginning I used to hate myself…I put my family in an embarrassing situation…I used to hate myself every single time. Then after a while, once it was kind of accepted by the family, we got married but it was a low key thing"*

On the acceptance of the pregnancy, Ameerah commented that her parents and grandparents were supportive once they got over the initial shock. She believed that the marriage legitimised the pregnancy to an extent, thereby giving the pregnancy social acceptance. For herself Ameerah said:

> *I try my best to overlook it, okay I've done it everybody has a past everybody does things maybe not such big things but everybody does things. I sit on my musallah* [prayer mat] *I ask for my maaf* [forgiveness]. *If Allah is all merciful and if He can forgive me and you can't forgive me it's no problem at all as long as He can forgive me. And I have come to terms with it I'm okay with it so it's fine.*

Her mother's Maarya's description of the event is coloured by acceptance but also disappointment and resignation to the fact as written fate by God. Maarya said:

> *"Okay, she made a mistake and she had to get married. That was devastating for me because I brought her up in such a way that I never expected her to do anything and but anyway Allah knows best.*

Ameerah engagement in premarital sex resulting in a pregnancy was labelled by her admission in a highly negative manner. Her initial self-hate and classifying her doings as *"terrible"*, *"demeaning"*, *"embarrassing"* and being unable *"to look them in the eye"* are clear markers of such negativity. Largely absent from her narrative is the responsibility and accountability of her then boyfriend and now husband in the act. She appeared to accept all the blame, shame and guilt associated with her premarital pregnancy; yet her partner was not subject to the same societal scrutiny. Her self-perceived 'fall from grace' is conveyed in her reluctance to reveal the pregnancy as well as the particular difficulty in disclosing it to her mother whom she was aware held her in high regard. This is also supported by Maarya's comments who revealed her disappointment.

Facing this turning point in both their lives is a further example of the interconnectedness of their lifecourses but also a renegotiation of their identities. Both embraced religion as a way to deal with the

consequences – that is through prayer, seeking forgiveness and acceptance of fate. For Ameerah, being thrust into unplanned motherhood amidst disapproval by some required her to work through her emotions from self-loathe to self-acceptance and forgiveness. For Maarya, this involved reliving the judgement and disapproval she endured as a child and young adult with the distinction here being her daughter as the main focus. As they believed; whilst the marriage gave the pregnancy societal legitimacy, this also involved transitioning roles of a young wife and mother-in-law respectively. This event in the lives of this mother-daughter couple capture the multiple layers and transitions a single event may bring. Ameerah's premarital pregnancy is examined in the next theme which uncovers how her ageing self after this event has been impacted.

In the next theme, experiences of mothers and daughters are further evaluated in terms of the construction of the ageing self in the context of the intimate life events, transitions and turning points shared.

Theme Five: Constructions of the Ageing Self

To forge the link between the historical influence of the lifecourse and ageing, mothers and daughters were further asked to reflect on how life events, transitions and turning points shared in the previous theme impacted on them. The conservation was steered to discover on how they viewed themselves in relation to the various experiences they shared; specifically what about themselves has changed, developed or perhaps the remained the same. Study concepts such as 'felt age' and 'desired age' were used to probe for retrospective reflections. As a rounding off to the theme, participants were then asked how they viewed the ageing experience based on their narratives thus far. Here personal fears or feelings of liberation regarding their ageing selves were shared. In the following sub-themes, evidence from narratives which provide support to the works cited as well as those that shed light on the ageing experience in a non-Western context are presented.

Changed Outlook on Life

Linked to her traumatic car accident in Egypt in 2008, Rukaya (43) commented on the re-evaluation of her life after she returned to South Africa. Her newly acquired perspective no longer concentrated on being the *"ideal, perfect, Mr Fixit type of person"* but rather one that "*lives in the moment, but not taking life for granted".* As mentioned, Rukaya believed that her strengths were her greatest drawback when she was faced with adversity in Egypt. Upon her recovery, Rukaya pursued a fresh career angle which she described attaining much joy and satisfaction. Whilst not explicitly stating her divorce, evidence from her qualitative data pointed to a renewed sense of self after the divorce as well. Thus,

these two life events which can also be considered as turning points resulting in a transition for Rukaya, were instrumental on how she constructed her ageing self. To this, Rukaya said "*it taught me to embrace ageing…embrace my life make the most out of it".* Rukaya's previous views on the personal meanings and signs of ageing have concentrated largely on mental balance, gains and growth associated with ageing. Hence it is not surprising that Rukaya's ageing-self has embodied such notions. Rukaya's views complement scholarly work Ranzjin (2002) who emphasized positive psychological ageing.

After the loss of her mother, Rasheeda (52) shared her changed outlook which was represented by her involvement with community upliftment projects gave her a sense of fulfilment. Apart from this, Rasheeda also shared her spiritual connection has strengthened as a result of the death of her mother. She said:

> *"You are in connection with your Creator. You more on a spiritual level you more focused. It gives me peace knowing that this connection helped me then* [when her mother passed on] *and now* [filling the void from the loss] *and definitely will be a part of me as I get older"*

A changed outlook on life based on their lifecourse experiences featured in the narrative of one daughter, namely Mehreen (19). For Mehreen this change in outlook is prompted by her approaching marriage. Her thoughts on the responsibilities of a dutiful wife was shared earlier in the chapter. The theme of expectation with a looming life transition – in her case marriage – is present here as well.

> *"You see things differently now because you are more mature because you got to set your life differently because now you got to worry about someone else's child like you know? Got to be there for them because he is going to be my husband"*

Again, much of her viewpoint centres on what she is required to do to create and maintain a happy husband and marriage. Whilst she has expressed that she has matured, the societal and familial expectation placed on her is evident. She viewed her life as two halves, pre and post marriage. Her reference to "*it* [marriage] *has just changed my whole life"* gives a sense of renegotiating the way life has to be lead hereon. Whilst she viewed this a positive change in her life, Mehreen framed the expectation on herself intended to benefit others like her husband and not solely herself. Whilst she adds it is to ensure *"we are both happy"* the primary reasons for this changed outlook remain with her welfare of her husband.

The implication of this mind-set are multiple. With her narrative viewed as a whole, there is no clear evidence that such a mind-set is geared to endanger or to protect the lifecourse. Her choices and agency to perform the wifely duties are indicative of her intention to protect however it also can create the potential for conflict and endangerment. In the context of ageing, this could have consequences for the manner in which Mehreen embodies the ageing experience. That is, it could be marked by fulfilment and purpose or burdened and draining. Ambivalent experiences of marriage were shared by some mothers like Rafeedah (43) and Rukaya (43); which have thus far shown to have an effect on the ageing experience. For now, it can be said that for Mehreen, her current choices in the wake of her changed outlook have placed her on a path which will pave the way on how her ageing self-unfolds in years to come.

Daughters Safiyya (35) and Nour (34) believed their experiences with infertility changed who they have evolved into and certainly how they approach life. Nour in particular stated that her current infertility battles influenced how she views and derives meaning from life. Nour stated:

> *"Even if I overcome my infertility and have a child, it will always be a part of me. It has taught me so much about myself and what matters. I now see life as hopeful and with possibility as long as you keep the faith and trust in Allah. Even if the result is not what you intended…"*

From Nour's passage a direct reference to acceptance and predestination is made. Interestingly, hers is the only link to this important recurrent theme in the thesis; for this sub-theme in particular. Her hopeful perspective resulting from her infertility is clearly observed. Nour's comments here are a positive departure from her highly emotive viewpoints when she first shared her experience of infertility. Her sentiments of her infertility *"always being a part of me"* illustrates the depth at which she has internalised her infertility experiences. Nour's circumstances are somewhat different to many other participants in the study. Other mothers and daughters have commented on past events or looming events. Nour's is one she was currently facing at the time of the interview. In part, her most impactful event is one that is not passed but rather ebbs and flows and is constantly evolving – and with this so too is the influence she feels in her lifecourse.

Acceptance and Forgiveness

Marked by vastly different experiences in their narratives, mothers Sajeedah (65) and Maarya (48) spoke of acceptance and forgiveness. Their perspectives were:

> *"I have grown up* [matured] *from the time that all this* [traumatic life experiences] *happened, I have aged in the sense that I have learnt to forgive my mother. I learnt to move forward in life because you cannot hold a grudge forever. I know that I am older I have aged over the years and I know that you cannot carry on life like that anymore. All of what happened to me made me a stronger person and it made me a person appreciate everything that I have today and it made me appreciate the people I have around me"* (Maarya, 48)

> *"I've been through hell and back because of that* [infertility] *and uh…once I had my child I've been positive after that all along I've been positive. Cos if you see life whatever way you see life it doesn't happen to you, it's the way life happens to you"* (Sajeedah, 65)

Maarya (48) said that despite what she has been through, she has reached a point in her life where she is able to forgive those that have wronged her (Denmark, 1999). Her quote specifically mentions her mother. Earlier in the chapter, abandonment by her mother and the constant labelling and judgement as a result of her illegitimacy and mother's actions were discussed. Thus, for Maarya to link these painful experiences of childhood and early adulthood is proof of her introspection and linkage to her ageing self. For instance, she acknowledged her maturity from these experiences in the context of her ageing. When Maarya's lifecourse is viewed in totality as she chose to disclose it, the linkage between her life stages (childhood, adolescence and later adulthood) and the traumatic experiences in particular could have had an impact on later life transitions. She realised that to move forward, forgiveness was essential. This agency favoured by the lifecourse model yielded benefits for the protection of her lifecourse (Hutchison, 2007). For example, Maarya stated that this change in mind-set made her a mature, stronger and more appreciative person.

Similarly, Sajeedah (65), views this 'letting go' and acceptance as *"the way life happens to you"*. Sajeedah's sentiments are offered in the context of her struggle with infertility in her younger years. Sajeedah's acceptance of her infertility is spurred by the fact that she overcame her struggles resulting in her bearing four children. Therefore her lifecourse was protected in this context. On the other hand, Sajeedah's acceptance could also refer to the loss of her husband. She previously described the physical and emotional drain associated with his loss as *"dullness"* and *"not feeling as lively as when I was young"*. Thus her perspective of accepting *"the way life happens"* is perhaps indicative of her personal healing. Sajeedah's lifecourse trajectory whilst initially endangered by this loss was eventually protected by the choices she made. Her agency and realisation that her life is not only centred on her, but other 'actors' like her children and grandchildren represented other spaces where meaning and fulfilment can

be attained (Elder, 1999; Covan, 2005).

Felt Age and Desired Age

Study concepts such as 'felt age' and 'desired age' were constructed to ascertain how mothers and daughters felt about their current age and whether they harboured a desire to be an age different from their chronological age. The purpose of this was to investigate the impact of life events, transitions and turning points from an alternate angle. Qualitative data that emerged from this segment of the narratives observed a clear flow and synergy between previously cited life events, transitions and turning points and how the ageing self is perceived. Responses offered greater depth and association to the ageing self.

Results for 'felt age' versus 'desired age' were retrospective in nature. Participants referred to how they felt about themselves based on how life 'unfolded' for them. Mothers who cited feeling the same age their biological age and who had no desire to be a different age (younger or older) expressed comfort at the idea of their ageing selves. Their reflections touched on accepting the notion of ageing and the positivity they associate with the ageing experience on the whole. Mothers Rukaya (41), Rafeedah (43), and Zeenat (40) shared similar sentiments albeit with some difference. Excerpts from two narratives are captured below:

> *"I'm very comfortable with being 43. I'm sort of standing my ground a lot more I think I'm a lot more saying what I think and what I feel. I never had issues with getting older. I don't wanna be ashamed of my age you know. Now that I wear my niqaab* [face veil] *a lot of people tell me oh but you look so much older and take the scarf you know it's like somewhere they look at you and they say oh but you look so nice with your hair or you look…but that I'm at the stage where that beauty is for me it's not for anybody else it's for my Creator so my covering and my… I'm on a path wanting to please my Creator first before I wanna please anybody else"* (Rafeedah, 43)

> *"I'm actually enjoying my age. I'm actually enjoying this age where the girls have this age you have an open relationship with them"* (Zeenat, 41)

It may appear as coincidence that all three mothers who held this view are in their early forties. However upon analysis of their narratives, the mothers shared opinions that age forty signalled mental freedom and clarity which was absent in their twenties and thirties. Having being absorbed in wife and motherly duties during those decades; age forty represented a threshold for transition to be 'for and about

themselves'. Their turning forty also coincided with their children entering adolescence or early adulthood which they believed relieved them of some of the tiring aspects of motherhood. Such findings provide support to the lifecourse model with respect to a cohort effect and the timing of lives.

The attitude of 'placing oneself first' comes through clearly in Rafeedah's case. Rafeedah commented on her comfort with ageing. In expounding on this comfort, again, Rafeedah linked her response to her *"path"* discussed in-depth already in the chapter. Her comfort with ageing and choice of wearing the *niqaab* is framed in the context of her pleasing her Creator before anyone else. Hence for her, the transition into her forties and no desire to be a different age is fuelled by the satisfaction and meaning she derives from her religious connection with God.

For Zeenat, her reasoning concentrated on the bonding experience with her two daughters owing to her and their ages. She classified this as an *"open relationship"* which offered the possibility to talk about matters which she may offer advice and relate to their struggles and triumphs in their phases of adolescence and early adulthood. Zeenat did not share any examples of what this may include but given the crux of her narrative in relation to her daughter Faatima, it can be surmised that this could include coping with social transition into university, personal values and decision making and building relationships. In support, her daughter Faatima (19) unbeknownst to Zeenat, also shared the same feelings around the relationship with her mother. Faatima said as *"as you get older you get closer to your mom…"* Therefore, inherent to accounts by both mothers are acceptance of the ageing self in relation to what gives each other meaning.

Mothers who said they felt younger but also expressed a desire to be a younger age framed their responses with hindsight of what transpired in years past. Common to feelings of being younger included their youthful mind-set and ability to *"keep up with their children and times"* as stated by Rasheeda (52). Additionally, the desire to be younger was not driven by unhappiness of their current age but rather an opportunity to relive the freedom of their youth void of responsibility, pleasurable experiences and even tweaking past actions and decisions.

Identifying as someone in her fifties, Saabirah (57) desired to be in her twenties due to the freedom she enjoyed but moreover due to her involvement with student politics at the time. Elsewhere in her narrative, Saabirah stated that her involvement in politics although dangerous – given the political turmoil of the late seventies and early eighties – gave her a sense of heightened purpose due to her

personal experience with the Apartheid system. Picking up on feelings of despondency at her cessation of political activity, Saabirah was probed further on these feelings. She admitted that whilst she remained strong-willed throughout her life, marriage and family responsibility at age 23 *"tamed"* her political will; which if she had a choice she would have still pursued until later in life.

Following on from the desire to relive experiences, Maymunah (41) wished to go back to age 25. Apart from re-living that part of her life with not much responsibility, her response was also aligned to her approaching transition to becoming a mother-in-law at a young age. Just as her daughter Mehreen (19) expressed anxiety of becoming a young wife, Maymunah too has for the second time in her narrative made direct reference to this approaching transition as a young mother-in-law. Responsibilities associated with this transition appeared to be a great concern for Maymunah, hence it is not unexpected that she would choose to relive a time absent from serious responsibilities.

For Rubeena (63), having felt she was in her forties, desired to go back to age 35. She believed that was *"a good age"* for her as it represented a time she was settled – financially and emotionally – mature and had direction in life. Rubeena also added it was also prior to her second marriage. Rubeena did not offer further explanation of her desired age as it related to the timing of her second marriage. However, given the trauma of her second marriage towards the end and what she endured after the divorce, it is understandable that Rubeena chose to return to a time where she had mental clarity and emotional stability. Perhaps had she expanded on her response, it can be assumed that she would have revealed altering her decisions or take completely different ones in view of her second marriage.

In a similar vein, whilst satisfied with her chronological age, mother Amarah (48) preferred to be a younger age for different reasons from other mothers. Related to taking better decisions in her youth, Amarah wished to return to her time in secondary school so she may complete her schooling and *"become somebody and accomplish something"*. Amarah's comments are made in light of her difficult marriage and mistreatment at the hands of her in-laws. She maintained had she *"been someone"* she would have not felt the need to *"make the mistake of getting married early, completed school, and should have saved money"*. Amarah's retrospective account is not about reliving her youth due to the absence of difficulty and responsibility but rather a chance to improve her life in order to protect her lifecourse.

Mothers Sajeedah (65) and Khanum (45) who previously shared frank accounts of their widowhood expressed multiple views on their felt and desired ages – particularly Sajeedah. Sajeedah felt younger but desired to be older. In the first instance, her feeling younger is influenced by her youthful way of thinking and *"still being in touch"* with her children. On her desire to be older, Sajeedah wished to be somewhere in her seventies. Her wish to 'fast forward' her life is captured as:

> *"Because of my grandchildren… I want to see them growing up and felt like some children that are not married, I would like to see all that before I die".*

In the previous theme, *Ageing and the Lifecourse*, Sajeedah cited grandparenthood as an important life event. The significance for her is relayed here as well. She is aware of the finiteness of her life hence she wishes to witness her grandchildren growing up and the marriage of her two remaining children. This in part influenced by later childbearing and the later marriages of her first two children. It is clear that after the loss of her husband, much of the meaning in her life is derived from her immediate family. Hence her desire to be older contributes to this meaning stemming from her children and grandchildren.

Upon further deliberation, Sajeedah also said she wished to be younger, around age 50. Here her response was contextualised in perhaps the two most significant or most spoken about aspects in her entire narrative – loss of her husband and physical degeneration. Apart from leading a life without responsibility like a *"free person"* Sajeedah's desire to be younger is noticeably linked to quality of life. She juxtaposed her desire with her current circumstances. For instance being younger represented being *"physically strong and strong-minded".* Moreover, having a partner alive is favourable. As she has described multiple times in her narrative, she is unable to physically get around with ease and without pain. This physical degeneration coupled with the physical and emotional drain with the loss of her husband exacerbated her physical being and general outlook on life. Hence her desire in part is linked to relive a time of ease, but in the presence of health, physical wellness and companionship – critical components which contribute to her constructed idea of quality of life (Covan, 2005; Brenner, 2007).

Khanum (45) said she felt older due to her untimely widowhood as well as the onset of her second child's illness resulting in her special needs. On her early widowhood, Khanum said,

> *"The moment I lost my husband I felt I have aged 10 years…I honestly feel like I have aged. I'm 10 years older than what I really am. You know maybe I lost my zest for life or something. I feel older than I am"*

The emotional impact at the loss of her husband came across strongly in her reflection. The emotional and physical change within her was felt instantaneously and one that endured in the years since his passing. As such, Khanum noted that she has *"lost my zest for life"* therefore she feels older than her biological age. Desiring to be in her mid-thirties, Khanum said:

> *"When I was 35 she was like you know more settled she could do a few things for herself, she could talk and uh…she could see. Muhsina was also like grown up. My husband was still with us and we used to spend a lot of time together. I felt like those were the good years, we were more mature and we spent a lot of time together as a couple and family"*

Khanum's excerpt illustrates her wish to return to a time of stability and wholeness with respect to her family unit. She described the progress and development with her daughter with special needs – perhaps indicative of the reduced strain and emotional load associated with her condition. Her older daughter Muhsina was *"grown up"* thereby implying she was to an extent self-sufficient. Importantly she added that her husband was alive and focused on the times they spent together as a family and especially as a couple. Her reflection has undertones of yearning for a restored sense of togetherness and support from her husband. As presented in earlier themes, for Khanum to assume the breadwinner role and take on the financial responsibility was no easy task. Hence her desire to return to age 35 is marked by multiple reasons within her family unit.

Like her mother, Muhsina (24) too felt older but desired to be younger. As stated, this mother-daughter couple provided a number of references pointing to their timing and interdependency of lives stemming from shared experiences of the same life events, transitions and turning points. Muhsina shared her feelings on her felt age as:

> *"I feel older than what I am because of the responsibilities that I have to take on. When I wasn't working the whole house was under my care, I had to see to the house, see to the cooking, see to the cleaning see to my sister…so I took care of everything because my mother had to work and I was unemployed at the time"*

On her desired age:

> *"I want to be 18. Because 18 is your youthful age…and that's the time where you have fun, you do all the fun things, go out with friends…meet people and uh…that part of I didn't have it that much because of all the responsibilities"*

As with her mother, Muhsina referenced the illness of her sister and passing of her father. As with previous accounts by other participants such as Maarya (48), Rubeena (63), Sajeedah (65) and Nour (34), the consistency in reference to the same life events, transitions and turning points strengthen the findings on the impact of the ageing self over the lifecourse. Muhsina once again touched on the responsibilities she assumed after the passing of her father. Striking in all her references to her responsibilities was the fierce sense of duty towards her mother and sister. Her emotions during her retelling were indicative of pride and fulfilment. Her empathy towards her mother's grieving and additional responsibility came out strongly in her personal reflection. Whilst this is commended, the true effect on her being resulted in her feeling older than her chronological age.

Her feelings towards a younger desired age captured what she believed she missed out on as a result of her added responsibilities at home. Whilst it does not come across as regret, she added she did not have much of a *"youthful age"* and wished to relive this part of her life. In the interview, the researcher also questioned her on the timing of her desired age. She disclosed that part of her wished to return to this age as her father was alive and *"all was good in her life"*. This desire to return to a time of goodness and wholesomeness featured in her mother's desired age as well. Again, another example of timing and interdependency of lives of a mother-daughter couple in the study.

Having provided a weighty account of her 'spiritual illness' and premarital pregnancy, Ameerah too expressed feeling older. Having first fallen ill around thirteen years of age, she noted a strong desire to relive the times she missed out on as a teenager. Ameerah believed she missed opportunities to socialise with her peers during her teenage years, experience the *"ups, downs and craziness of being a teenager"* participate in school events and pursue subjects at school she wished to but could not because of her prolonged absences. She described being *"robbed"* of these experiences hence her desire to go back to this time of her life. Ameerah's sentiments convey a 'rite of passage' or time of experimental life experiences she was not able to fully be a part of. The *"missing years"* as she put it were shown to be important in the development of an individual (Giddens, 2001; Schaefer, 2014). Hence Ameerah's desire to relive these times support the sociological significance of this developmental period.

Daughters who desired to be younger included Naeema (43) and Muneerah (21). Common to both accounts was the desire to relive those times in their lives characterised by pleasurable memories. Having more than twenty years between them, both Naeema and Muneerah commented on the stress and responsibility in their lives. Hence if they could, they would opt to return to a point prior to weight of responsibilities they face. For Naeema, this meant returning to the time she was newlywed and had

her children. She noted this desire as an "*exciting time because you get all the spoiling from your husband"*. For younger daughter Muneerah, she desired to relive her kindergarten and primary school years as she believed *"life was so relaxed and so calm, no stress at all, I just want to feel all that again".* Responsibility as a theme in the ageing process has surfaced in earlier findings by mothers as well, Its recurrence here as described by daughters solidifies its place as an important component as part of the constructed ageing experience by mothers and daughters.

Shaped by her experience of infertility, Nour felt her chronological age but desired to younger. Nour's strong desire to return to her youth to help herself which could be viewed as protecting her lifecourse is apparent. In retrospect, she acknowledged there were signs indicative of her endocrine imbalance but dismissed it as a cosmetic problem. Her linkage of those earlier experiences to her circumstances at the time of the interview illustrated her deep introspection of how her infertility has manifested at different stages of her life. She believed, if she sought help at that stage, perhaps subsequent life stages may have had different trajectories. In her case, an improved health profile, possibly even having even had a child.

The Ageing Experience

Thus far, mothers and daughters have reflected on how they define aging, what they believe are the signs of ageing, discussed what has influenced their personal meanings of ageing, shared significant life, events, transitions and turning points and its impact on their ageing selves. This last sub-theme draws these responses into developing a holistic view of the ageing experience as described by participants. Participants were asked to take their previous responses into account and reveal what they believe the ageing experience entails for them.

Mental and Spiritual Liberation

The parent generation believed that their ageing brought mental clarity and spiritual liberation. This was explained as a *"freeing experience"* from the bounds – societal and familial - in their earlier years. For example, Rukaya (41) whose responses thus far are highly indicative of her internalisation of ageing resting mainly on a mental facet, explained:

> *"I was too bound by everybody else's perception of what I should be rather than being my own person, and now I am like I don't give a damn"*

Given her mixed feelings on marriage and her numerous comments on empowering women to retain their individuality through her work; although she did not allude to it, perhaps her divorce was the catalyst for her sense of freedom captured in her quote. In her narrative, Rukaya also added that she feels liberated from the *"concerns, ideologies and insecurities"* she felt when she was younger. She did not expand in what context she is referring to but again given the pattern of her narrative, this could be assumed to be associated with marriage and identify conflict experienced. At this point in her life, she said it's about her, not in a selfish sense but rather prioritising her needs and aspirations. Older mother Rubeena (63) echoed the same sentiment by saying, "*you have got to make time for yourself, nobody is going to make it for you"*

Mothers Khanum (45) and Zeenat (40) described that the ageing experience resulted in them being wiser and having acquired higher levels of maturity (Ranzjin, 2002; Martinez, 2002). Maymunah (41) viewed as having a *"settled mind"*. This association with ageing has been made in previous themes. Its recurrence here is further evidence of its linkage with participants' construction of the ageing experience. Rasheeda (52) added to this by including her view on spiritual liberation which was reflected earlier in the chapter. On the link between maturity, wisdom and a deepened spiritual connection, Khanum said:

> *"Because as you get older you have more time to yourself, your children are older and they are settling down on their own…so you have more time to read, you do more of what matters, you grow as a person, make ibaadah* [Arabic for worship or servitude] *and that brings contentment. I think uh…maybe spiritually it elevates you so I think it does liberate you in that sense"*

Daughters such as Muhsina (24), Faatima (19), Naadirah (21) and Aadila (25) too believed that the ageing experience included maturity, wisdom and growth. Muhsina described her maturity stemmed from her father's passing and responsibilities that followed. However for Faatima and Aadila, theirs related to personal self-discovery related to their schooling and university experiences.

> *"When I moved schools I had no choice, I had to speak up for myself. At school everyone was outgoing, outspoken, confident and things. I don't know if it's the way they were brought up or what but I know I had to come out of my comfort zone and be more assertive"* (Faatima, 19)

> *"I feel better I feel like I've grown a lot like I feel like I was very naive and I wasn't really open to the world and in a way I wish that I was. I feel I'm always trying to find a balance between who I am, where I'm from and where I'm at, and it's one of those things that you always have to kind of balance and play around with"* (Aadila, 25)

Both daughters described having to 'find their voices' in a space where they believed others had already achieved that. Both accounts revealed the mental trek from a place of comfort to new and challenging spaces which yielded positive growth for both. Whilst Faatima described having attained her assertiveness which she took though to university. Aadila revealed that she was still in the midst of finding a balance in her journey to discovering who she is. Different from the accounts of mothers, although daughters in this sub-theme cited maturity and growth as part of their ageing experience, their reflections appeared to be evolving and still malleable to anticipated experiences.

By comparison, mothers appeared more 'settled' and in some ways 'uncompromising'. Perhaps this was due to their liberation being attained after trials in their life hence their attitude. Implications for the ageing experience may include mothers being better equipped to deal with their anxieties and hopes having reached a point of mental clarity – although this does not represent a 'final mental destination', opportunity for re-negotiation is ever-present. Whereas for some daughters they are yet to reach this personal realisation. As per the lifecourse perspective, daughters are still in a position to exercise agency which may construct different life straits in the way of their acquired maturity over the lifecourse.

Linked to mental liberation was the second positive association with the ageing experience; that is independence. Maarya (48) weighed in on this as an important component to her ageing experience. Her reflection was:

> *"So for me it is like if I can get up in the morning do my hair, do my make-up, dress in the way I feel comfortable and still carry my bag and go to school and drive my car. That is the best part of getting old when I can still do for myself"*

Maarya's reflection on her independence related to her daily routine of self-care and mobility. Clearly for her, this is how she viewed independence in the context of ageing. Her ability to continue to carry out her daily routine is for her *"the best part of getting old"*. Maarya's recurrent life theme of 'fending for yourself and being strong' is mirrored in this segment. Not surprising given the detailed account of her troubled life presented in the thesis.

Strengthening Family Bonds

The third positive association with the ageing experience described by older mothers Rubeena (63) and Sajeedah (65) concentrated on strengthening and enjoying family relations. Excerpts from their narratives were:

> *"I think enjoy your children, enjoy your grandchildren. You are much more matured with your grandchildren than what you were with your children. With your children you didn't have that much patience because you were busy working to provide for them."* (Rubeena, 63)

> *"You feel happy also getting old when you see your children all grown up you've got grandchildren and your life is happy, they treat you well so that's also a positive thing like you know. I have a nice life that I enjoy"* (Sajeedah, 65)

Both accounts capture the joy associated with seeing their children, particularly their grandchildren grow up. Rubeena described having more patience with her grandchildren than with her own children given her earlier reflections on financial responsibility after her first divorce. Sajeedah's account exudes the happiness and positivity associated with her children and grandchildren. Whilst these mothers did not describe any links to a positive state of mind, the qualitative evidence does point to it. Additionally, both mothers do not have husbands resulting from their experience of divorce and widowhood. Hence the place their children and grandchildren occupy in their life is heightened compared to other mothers in the sample. This is evidenced in Sajeedah's case where social meaning derived from interacting with her grandchildren has featured in other parts of the analysis.

Daughters Naeema (43), Sabah (41), Kareema (29) and Safiyya (35) also shared the same feelings around family bonds, specifically with their children. They collectively agreed that the best part of ageing is watching their children grow up, growing with them and their partners.

The inclusion of their children and grandchildren into their personal ageing experiences is evidence that ageing can be experienced as a collective. Accounts thus far have been individualistic, partly even on an existential level focusing on illness and degeneration. The collective experience of ageing in this instance points to the inclusion of other positive and social dimensions in the life of the participant from which significance is derived. Hence this finding is a refreshing angle to the conceptualisation of the ageing experience, particularly for older mothers in the sample Kahlin, Kjellberg, Nord and Hagberg, 2013)

Physical Degeneration

Physical degeneration as part of the ageing experience was a much spoken about topic for both the parent and offspring generation. Reflections were coloured by fear, anxiety and sadness. Such responses cut across all ages with the greatest angst towards physical degeneration being noted by nearly all mothers and relatively younger aged daughters in the sample.

Some mothers like Rukaya (43), Amarah (48), Sajeedah (65), Raeesa (57), Zeenat (40), Maarya (48) and Maymunah (41), Rasheeda (52) and Rukhsana (57) discussed their fears and anxiety of getting older, illness and degeneration associated with the process of ageing. Common to their accounts was their retrospective comparison between their younger selves versus their current older selves. This comparison aided them to articulate the extent of the degeneration they have experienced or anticipate to experience in the future. Some of their views were:

> *"You don't look the same, you can't wear the same lovely clothes that you used to. You can't enjoy the same things that you used to love to eat and do. I feel very sad I feel like everything happened like too fast for me, even though I'm 64 I should accept it but I'm young at heart I suppose. I feel I shouldn't be so…uh…sick in a way… I have just high blood pressure and the arthritis makes me feel sad I can't walk properly and I'm not that old, I don't feel that old"* (Sajeedah, 64)

> *"I used to work for 4 hours nonstop like I'll sit and work on an outfit pattern and before I know it, it's 4 hours passed…now I get like so tired and say I will do it tomorrow"* (Zeenat, 41)

Sajeedah and Zeenat focused on comparing what they were able to physically do and enjoy in their younger years compared to now. Sajeedah's perspective in particular is reflective of the despondency she feels as she ages. Her internal tussle of accepting her reality despite her being *"young at heart"* is evident by her saddened feelings expressed. This is exacerbated by her chronic illnesses. Again, she makes reference to her lack of mobility. It is obvious that her physical difficulty in walking is a concern for her. This is the third time Sajeedah has mentioned it in different parts of her narrative. The benefit of her mentioning it frequently provides evidence of its significance for her. Zeenat's account on the other hand revealed somewhat acceptance of her physical limitations as she ages. The fact that she acknowledges her fatigue and choses to complete the task at another time is evidence of her acceptance.

Rubeena (63) chose to reflect on degeneration by drawing on life expectancy. She said:

> *"I think oh God am I going to see another 5 more years, am I going to see another 10 more years. So that is a bit scary. When you got nobody to rely on you just feel you know pray every day. I make dua that Allah don't make me mohtaaj* (Arabic word for one who is in need – in the context of care). *I am so scared to get old you know? Look we are going to reach there Insha'Allah if the time comes"* (Rubeena, 63)

Rubeena voiced her fear on whether she would be alive in the next five or ten years. She also touched on not having anyone to rely on. Whilst she acknowledged having the support of her two daughters, her comment was made with reference to not having a husband or life partner which she termed as a *"having your back bone".* Assumedly, the lack of which makes her feel unsupported especially as she anticipates growing older. Her concern with not being a burden to others is captured the use of the Arabic word *mohtaaj*. This one word collectively conveys her anxiety and fear at losing the ability to care for herself. To allay her worries, Rubeena revealed that engaging in prayer and belief in predestination is her way of coping with the uncertainty associated with growing older. The theme of predestination has featured several times in the findings thus far. However, the angle of predestination here is made in the context of providing a means of coping with the uncertainty of what may lie ahead in the ageing process for some. Such findings are discussed in greater detail in the next and last theme of the findings.

Daughters' sentiments on physical degeneration paralleled some of the mothers' experiences such as limitations due to physical ability and age. However most of daughters' accounts regarding degeneration related to the loss of youth. This finding ties in with their previous reflections where daughters primarily discussed cosmetic and physical signs of ageing. Words such as *"difficult"*, *"scary"* and *"stress"* accompanied their fears at losing their youth as their age. Some daughters said:

> *"I think the physical changes will probably be difficult and for a lady menopause or the wrinkles because we so worried about how we look"* (Naadirah, 21)

> *"I think it's a bit of both it is a little scary to think you actually getting older and you are losing a bit of your youth…I mean it's inevitable, it's something that you can't avoid, I wouldn't say it's something that I particularly look forward to, but it's there it's going to happen"* (Aadila, 25)

> *"Oh the wrinkles, I stress about all of that, appearance I guess is a big factor for me…especially with the fact that I breakout so much and now I have to worry about the wrinkles as well"* (Kareema, 29)

The loss of youth and vitality appeared to be a major concern for these and other daughters. Wrinkles in particular was mentioned as a worry. It is interesting to note that mothers did not harbour any such anxieties, possibly as they have already experienced their loss of youth albeit on varying levels. The ages of the daughters who had these concerns is also notable – in their twenties. Hence it is understandable that they have such anxiety given that they still are in the 'youthful' part of their lives.

Loss of Independence

Whilst the ageing experience was marked by independence, its converse was also applicable for some mothers. Mothers Maarya (48), Zeenat (40) and Khanum (45) mentioned the loss of independence as one of the difficulties of the ageing experience. Some of their perspectives on the loss of independence was:

> *"The day that I cannot do anything and the day that I cannot use my hands or I cannot use my legs and I cannot have sex then you tell me I am old"* (Maarya, 48)

> *"I'm not afraid of getting old but I am afraid of not being able to do the things I want to do…I want to be independent I want to be able to do things for myself, I don't want to be confined to a bed you know, be a burden or having someone do things for me"* (Khanum, 45)

Findings on Maarya's need to maintain her independence as she ages have been presented. Here her fear of losing her independence are revealed. Much like with her previous reflection on independence, she qualifies the loss of independence in practical terms. In order words, the loss of independence for her is the loss of bodily function. Having been the only participant to refer to ageing and sexuality, Maarya reprises this connection by stating that if she is unable to have sex, then she can be regarded as old. Her take is different in that she does not equate sex only for certain ages – presumably younger – but views it as a pleasurable act for the entire lifecourse (González, 2007).

Khanum's comments are an exemplification of Rubeena's earlier use of the Arabic word *mohtaaj*. For Khanum, loss of independence is represented by the inability to do things for herself, confinement and being a burden. All three scenarios paint an image of a loss of control thereby necessitating assistance from others. Viewing how significant life events such as the illness of her second daughter and the death of her husband unfolded, Khanum transitioned from a place of complacence to that of control. Having lived these many years as a single parent who has shouldered the financial and emotional responsibility in rearing her two daughters, her fears around the loss of independence are justified.

Loneliness

Mothers also reflected that with ageing also comes loneliness and the loss of companionship. Ideas around the loss of companionship first surfaced under findings related to the personal meanings of ageing. Khanum (45) shared her feelings of ageing and loneliness in the context of social exclusion partly due to her early widowhood. Whilst Khanum revisits similar notions, her comments captured here as well as those from mothers Zeenat (40) and Amarah (48) shine a different light on loneliness and the ageing experience (Covan, 2005). Their comments were:

> *I think the loss of companionship is the hardest part for me I feel that…you know with the girls being the age that they are and uh…I want them to live their own life…especially Muhsina, SAmarah is going to be with me but the loneliness is what I'm worried about that.* (Khanum, 45).

> *I feel like I'm lonely…I think after Tasneem* [second daughter, youngest child] *getting married I started to feel this way. It's a sad feeling. I wish we all were together like before"* (Amarah, 48).

> *"I fear where the kids will be. We take care of my mum, she is alone. Will our kids take care of us? Will they leave us alone? What if it will just be me and my husband?"* (Zeenat, 40)

Common to all reflections are the references to their children. Khanum's excerpt can be approached from two perspectives. Firstly, as a mother who acknowledges that her eldest child has assumed responsibility from a young age, but deserves to live their own life. Whilst not explicitly stated, this could include settling into a career of her choice, marriage and having children of her own. Khanum is also aware that her second daughter will remain in her care owing to her special needs. Perhaps being just the two of them invokes a sense of loneliness as her older daughter with whom she converses with as an adult may possibly not be with her. Secondly, she feels the loss of companionship and loneliness

as a young widow. Earlier Khanum said that the passing of her husband changed her and whilst she has the support of her family, there are some matters that can only be shared with a husband. Linking her earlier quotes to the one shared above, it is obvious that loneliness and absence of companionship is an anticipated experience for Khanum as she ages.

Amarah previously shared her thoughts on the elevated social position accompanied with her being a mother-in-law and grandmother. However her quote above captures another angle of the ageing experience for her. Amarah's comments are directed towards the marriage of her second and youngest child. She believed her loneliness stems from this event. Although Amarah did not delve into their relationship as mother and daughter, it can be assumed as a close bond characterised by support and care; hence the feelings of sadness, loss and loneliness. This is further evidenced by her wish of everyone still living together like before. Conceivably this desire creates a scenario where she is needed in the familial roles she takes pride in and thus derives purpose from.

As a mother of two adolescents and a young adult, Zeenat voiced her concern of whether her children will take care of her and her husband in their old age as she does with her own mother. In her narrative she explained that her children have an extreme sense of independence which she fears may affect their duty to care for her and her husband as they age. She acknowledged that they live in a world different to the one she was raised in hence her concern of loneliness and possibly abandonment by her children.

Responsibility

Unlike mothers, daughters described the weight of responsibility associated with the ageing experience. Their anxieties were noted as:

> *"Being an adult it's hard, more responsibility and having others depend on you whereas you wouldn't have to depend on people so much"* (Aadila, 25)

> *"Your responsibility become more and more, I feel like as the eldest, my responsibilities are to look after my brother and sister before they never expected it, now they do"* (Faatima, 19)

Embedded in their accounts of responsibility as one ages, is the notion of dependency of others on them. Aadila does not explain who the *"others"* are she referred to, whereas Faatima made direct reference to her siblings. The expectation to take up responsibility and ensure those who are dependent on you are

supported is clear. Both did not reveal why they felt this way however parallels from their lives can be drawn to reach a plausible conclusion. Both are university educated and have great expectation to succeed owing to their backgrounds and successful parents. Additionally in Faatima's case – as she pointed out – she is the eldest, therefore setting an example to her adolescent siblings is probable. Thus, these quotes captured the expectation associated with responsibility associated with the ageing experience for some daughters, particularly younger aged daughters.

A holistic representation of the ageing experience for participants has emerged in part. The last theme to follow completes this representation by presenting findings on coping strategies and expectations of ageing.

Theme Six: Coping Strategies and Expectations of Ageing

As a fitting conclusion to the ageing experience, mothers and daughters were asked about their coping strategies and expectations of ageing. Once again, responses provided in earlier themes gave insight to some of the reflections shared here, particularly the personal meanings and signs of ageing and the impact of significant life events, transitions and turning points. Thus far, several references by participants to ageing and religion have been presented. The discussion hereon will draw on those references to illustrate the holistic ageing experience for mothers and daughters.

Religious Beliefs and Practices

In understanding coping mechanisms related to the ageing experience, religious beliefs and practices – as defined by participants' personal understandings – were shared. Mothers and daughters offered similar opinions on beliefs and practices which have aided or impacted the way their ageing self is perceived at this point of their lifecourse. Although responses were not expansive; it illustrated the deep connection between their religious beliefs and practices and the ageing experience.

Acceptance and Understanding

Mothers and daughters commented that Islam teaches acceptance and understanding of all things, including the process of ageing and the ageing self (Mehta, 1997; Covan, 2005). Some of their reflections on how they have come to accept and understand their ageing selves through their religious beliefs and practices included:

> *"I think when you grow older it* [religion] *becomes really important. But with getting older I think religion helps you accept your way of life, the way you live and the way you age"* (Maymunah, 41)

> *"Because whatever happens to us is not in our hands, it's in Allah's hands, so you make dua most of the time, that becomes your priority in life. When you are younger you not so serious about prayer. When you get older you feel guilty you can't do that, you feel guilty when you do you know you don't read Qur'an or you don't make dua. So reading and namaaz* [Urdu word for Muslim prayer] *helps you to accept it* [growing older] *because you not frightened to die"* (Sajeedah, 65)

Despite each being on their own life strait, coloured by different experiences; all three accounts capture the importance of religion in the context of ageing. No singular belief or practice was identified as a defining coping mechanism although references were made to the daily prayers and reading the Qur'an. Acceptance was explained to include growing older, the way a person ages, appreciation and caring for the mind and body and acceptance of death.

Sajeedah also disclosed the growing importance of religion as one ages. This finding was also significant for some daughters in the study. They shared that with ageing comes religious obligation which is meant to help you achieve greater acceptance in life. Daughters Naseema (21), Kareema (29) and Muneerah (20) commented on the need to embrace and prioritise religion – especially being steadfast in their daily prayers – in their lives as they get older. As Kareema said, *"The fact that I'm growing older makes me more aware that I need to be more religious"*

On acceptance, when asked what specifically about themselves as ageing persons they have accepted, mothers Rukaya (43) and Sajeedah (65) spoke about their body image. They said:

> *"Your body is your temple. It is an amanah* [Arabic word for trust/ given in trust] *given to you. It is Allah's gift to you so what you do with it you are going to be answerable what you did to your body. I take care of myself, I love what I look like. I do Zumba* [exercise workout incorporating dance and aerobic movements] *which is my loveliest hour of the week, you have this energy going, your mind is refreshed…"* (Rukaya, 41)

> *"Accept your body image, it's from Allah, Allah knows best, I've accepted mine. I wish I was thinner but I'm grateful because Allah gave me this body. I don't feel*

it's perfect but I'm grateful for it" (Sajeedah, 65)

Terming the body as an "*amanah"* and a *"gift"* summed Rukaya's importance placed on the physical form. Echoing sentiments by Khanum (45), she also believed the body must be taken care off. She shared her experience of doing Zumba weekly, which is her way to take care of herself from a physical perspective but also that which yielded psychological benefits for her. Sajeedah spoke about her body image on the whole. Whilst she expressed a desire to be thinner, the realisation that her body was given to her by Allah, trumps any other feelings she may harbour. For Sajeedah, this finding in particular is salient as her previous accounts on her physical being has slanted toward the negative. She has voiced disdain at her physical limitations and restricted mobility owing to her chronic illnesses. Hence for Sajeedah to express gratitude at her body image is indicative of her acceptance through her religious beliefs and practices.

Rafeedah (43) on the other hand, has accepted that death is an inevitability of growing older and life. She said:

> *"Being able to have the time now, to know that we have an end. The only true reality for me is that we are all going to die…there is no other definite. So the preparation from my deen* [Arabic word for religion] *is that we all going to have an end…"*

Furthermore on acceptance, daughters Naeema (43) and Faatima (19) added similar views:

> *"You must not fight it, so I don't know the people that go for all this Botox nonsense. I think it is ridiculous, you must not be ashamed of your age you must not try and hide it"*

> *"You can't fight it, you can't be upset that you getting older, I know my death can come at any time. When we older, death is going to happen"*

Both accounts strongly condemn the resistance to the ageing process. For Naeema this meant not being ashamed of one's age and to conceal it. Instead ageing is something to be openly embraced and accepted. For Faatima, growing older also means the acceptance of death.

Predestination

An extension of acceptance and understanding, predestination has been a substantial and recurrent theme in shaping the ageing experience for the parent and offspring generation (Mehta, 1997). Previous references to predestination were made under themes that discussed the signs of ageing, personal influences on the construction of ageing, life events, transitions and turning points, its impact on the lifecourse and lastly participants' feelings towards the ageing experience. Referred to in different contexts, it fundamentally remained as God's will for the individual. The quotes below solidify the link between ageing and predestination as described by both generations of Muslim women.

> *"I think everything Islam is a way of life, it's God's will that you need to age at some stage so I think it's our taqdeer"* (Saabirah, 57)

> *"Well it* [ageing and getting older] *has to take place, that's a fact it's a decree of Allah"* (Rasheeda, 52)

> *"Logically it helps you so much knowing that this is Allah's plan this is supposed to happen to you and to be content with that"* (Naadirah, 21)

> *"Our lives are written by our Creator. What He wills, will be. As I age, I see the wisdom in that. Maybe there is a reason I don't have children now. I just need to trust in His planning and timing"* (Nour, 34)

None of the women in the study voiced objection to the concept of predestination. Whilst elements of choice and agency featured in several findings, there was a greater understanding that such choices remained within what God had pre-willed for them. As such, each of the reflections above and elsewhere permeate a sense of agreeable surrender to a greater power. Ageing is evidently viewed as part of *"taqdeer"* (Mehta, 1997). A core belief as shared by mothers Rafeedah (43) and Rubeena (63) mentioned that even before a person is born, their destiny as already been ordained – including successes, failures, illness and even death. Mothers and daughters also described that one of the most important characteristics of being a Muslim is that they remain in a positive state of mind, whatever the circumstances. Daughters Naadirah and Nour provided evidence in this regard by stating that one's predestination is related to being content and trusting the timing of how life unfolds. By implication, disagreeing with what has been planned is likened to questioning God and His choices. The notion that *"Allah knows best"* was often used to round off responses, especially in the retelling of difficult or challenging experiences (Mehta, 1997).

In the context of the ageing experience, predestination helped women in the study to first accept their life events, transitions and turning points and the impact on their ageing selves. Some of these were traumatic, difficult and some joyful. Whatever the circumstance, mothers and daughters did not did not express regret at the way life unfolded instead voiced acceptance. This is particularly observed in the experiences of illness and degeneration in the lives of older mothers Saabirah (57), Sajeedah (65), Rubeena (63) and some daughters like Nour (34) and Ameerah (22).

Personal Meanings of Successful Ageing

As presented in the *Literature Review*, successful ageing is a key concept in gerontological research. Much of the definitions of successful ageing have surfaced within a Western context. This study presented an opportunity to understand how successful ageing can be interpreted in a non-Western setting, amongst a minority group of women. Mothers and daughters were asked on what they believed successful ageing to be. The aim was to understand the intergenerational similarities and differences in the construction of successful ageing.

Responses were varied with some commonalities between the two generations. Some spheres that comprised the wider definition of successful ageing for the study featured more prominently amongst both mothers and daughters. Conversely, some dimensions to successful ageing were present in the responses by one generation only. This diversity across both generations is verification that successful ageing in the context of the study is multi-dimensional whose meaning is derived from an array of lived experiences presented in the study (Bowling and Dieppe, 2005)

Physical Wellness

As with previous themes, the concern of ageing on a physical level by both mothers and daughters was included in the construction of successful ageing as well. Physical wellness was the most commonly featured dimension of successful ageing. Some of the views expressed by mothers and daughters were:

> *"If you are ageing well, it's your face and looks, nothing else can age you well. Also, if you can still walk without a stick then that's ageing well"* (Maymunah, 41)

> *"When people are happy, they got happiness on their faces and they look wholesome, they are smartly dressed and walking properly with no pain, no, sickness"* (Sajeedah, 65)

> *"You can see a well-balanced person and it makes a big difference because you actually look ten years younger if you look after yourself"* (Naeema, 43)

> *"Ageing well, if you look younger than you are, then you aging well"* (Aadila, 25)

In sum, physical wellness meant looking younger than your chronological age, the absence of illness and pain, mobility, health and vitality. As articulated before, the face in particular was associated with youthfulness by women in the study. Here, it's association resurfaced with physical wellness in the construction of successful ageing as shared by Maymunah. Sajeedah and Naeema commented on the overall physical wellness of a person in what they believed successful ageing was. Words such as *"wholesome"* and *"well-balanced"* were used to convey the holistic view of physicality. Critical to *"looking younger"* was self-care, physical activity, healthy eating and happiness. The third component was the absence of illness and unassisted mobility. Not surprising, Sajeedah who commented multiple times on illness and degeneration voiced these as contributing factors of physical wellness towards successful ageing. Assumedly, the lack of these factors in her life signalled a somewhat 'failure' towards her own successful ageing. Hence having no illness and good mobility in part defined successful ageing for her. The importance of physical wellness as part of successful ageing can be explained by its overtness and visibility – such as the face, posture and gait – for all to see. Unlike other dimensions like mental wellness, physical signs cannot be masked, hence the anxiety and the importance placed on the physical dimension of successful ageing is explicable.

Mental Wellness

Daughters described mental wellness as a vital component of successful ageing. The mental dimension of successful ageing was not mentioned by sampled mothers. This finding is surprising as mothers provided significant accounts of ageing as a transformative, largely psychological experience which also denoted acquired maturity and wisdom over the lifecourse. The absence of the mental facet of successful ageing for mothers could be attributed to how ageing has affected mothers thus far in their lifecourse. For instance, illness and health conditions were one of the significant life events mentioned by mothers. Perhaps they have experienced ageing on a more physical level hence their responses. Whilst this may be true, daughters citing mental wellness as a factor of successful ageing is possibly linked to their evolving maturity and realisation of the importance of mind-set and mental clarity as they age.

Some of the responses in this regard were:

> *"I think it is a more mental thing to age well. You should feel good about yourself more than just be like oh I am so old inside you should feel like you know what I am old but I can do whatever I want"* (Naseema, 21)

> *"Successful ageing is also becoming more spiritually inclined and they realise that they have to be closer to Allah and obviously mentally as well because they have been through so many life experiences they have the wisdom now you know to give advice"* (Muneerah, 20)

Naseema commented on the 'feel good' aspect of mental wellness. Similar to her mother, Rukaya (43) earlier views on ageing as individual projection, Naseema believed that what is felt is projected. Whilst she acknowledge ageing is a reality, it should not be a limitation to what an individual may accomplish. Hence for her, the correct mind-set is vital to successful ageing. The likeness of her views in relation to her mother Rukaya is evidence of the intergenerational transmission of views on ageing. It further provides evidence of socialised experiences between key social actors in the lifecourse which are in a position to influence one's outlook – providing meaning is derived from such a perspective.

Muneerah highlighted successful ageing also embodied a spiritual connection to God and greater wisdom. Her mother Rasheeda (51) shared her feelings of fulfilment and purpose influenced by her spiritual connection to God under the construction of her ageing self. Whilst mothers themselves did not cite mental wellness as an element of successful ageing their views were in part represented through the reflection of their daughters. In other words, as with Naseema and Rukaya, Muneerah and Rasheeda's parallel views also provide further evidence for the intergenerational diffusion of ageing.

Financial Wellness

Like with mental wellness, financial wellness was viewed as a component to successful ageing by only two daughters. They said:

> *"Financial stability is important. Making the effort and making a success of it"* (Naeema, 43)

> *"You've got a BMW, you've got a big house, and you've got money so you've successfully aged. That's for me doing well and successful ageing"* (Ameerah, 22)

Having presented Naeema and Ameerah's views on ageing thus far, their reflections stem from past and current lived experiences. For instance, Naeema previously shared the strains of financial responsibility associated with raising two daughters under influences on the personal construction of ageing. Hence, her pinpointing financial stability and wellness as to what she regards as successful ageing is expected. Like with Sajeedah (65) the 'lack' in her life is a contributor to her overall personal definition of successful ageing.

The same is observed with Ameerah. Due to her 'spiritual illness' and premarital pregnancy, Ameerah mentioned being *"robbed"* of certain life experiences which has somewhat limited her to what she is able to achieve. For instance, her being unemployed without having completed her tertiary education signals a failure for her. As she put it, "*my past really does now and again creep up on me and at those moments I feel terrible"*. Her quote may be interpreted as materialistic however for Ameerah, it is about achievement – something which she was unable to do. Her feelings are at times exacerbated by observing her peers achieving the successes of a young adult such as "*a good, steady job or having completed their studies".* This finding provides increasing proof that the absence or desire for better circumstances are linked to personal definitions of successful ageing.

Independence

Independence as part of the ageing experience has been cited by mothers and daughters thus far. Independence represented the ability to care for yourself, maintain an unassisted daily routine and to be more self-assertive. As a component of successful ageing, independence is similarly represented. Some reflections were:

> *'Well to me it means you are not sickly, you are not mohtaaj to anybody. You know you can walk, your hands are there you are using it (*Rubeena, 63)

> *It means getting older but still able to do know most of the stuff that a young person does …they* [older persons] *don't need assistance and they* [older persons] *still independent* (Khanum, 45)

Rubeena reprised her anxiety at being a *mohtaaj* in the context of illness and care. In her case, independence meant the absence of illness and full bodily function. Rubeena's angst is juxtaposed against her experience of epilepsy during her menstruating years and her prolonged hospitalisation and depression after her second divorce. Her health condition in all instances required assistance from others as she was incapable of caring for herself. Rubeena described this as a time of not knowing "*if she was coming or going"* – thus indicative of her of lack of mental presence and clarity. Rubeena has experienced first-hand what a loss of independence felt like and what being a *mohtaaj* really was. Her quote is reflective of the impact of lived experiences, where fears are developed and can have an influence on how the ageing experience is viewed. Hence for Rubeena, independence is vitally important to her conceptualisation of successful ageing.

The remaining two accounts concentrated on performing tasks unassisted. Khanum and Kareema's perspective is similar to Rubeena, however these are not drawn from personal life experiences. Instead they are influenced by observing older persons in their family. In part, their views are revealing of their personal anxiety at their anticipated ageing experience, especially in their later years. Again, the converse to the fear towards one's ageing is expressed as an integral part of successful ageing.

Saabirah (57) voiced that her life experiences such as schooling away from home, the loss of her mother at a young age as well as her diagnosis of Diabetes Mellitus Type 1 gave her a sense of independence in the way she approached life. She described that these events made her stronger as a person which allowed her to face adversity on her own and with confidence.

For mother Rubeena (63), independence was also a result from her experience of divorce in her early twenties as well as having to be the primary carer for her two daughters. Even after her second divorce, Rubeena maintained her independence – decision making, financial and living arrangement – stating she does not wish to be a burden on her daughters, although they are more than capable of caring for her. For her, she viewed her ageing self as one that must safeguard her independence.

After the loss of her father, daughter Muhsina (24) described being more assertive and independent. The impact felt with the loss of her father can be understood in the days and months that followed the death. As Muhsina highlighted, decisions about their remaining family unit were being made by other family members – not always in favour of their welfare. Hence 'finding her voice' as the elder child in the midst of her mother's grieving and depression is understandable. In tracing the changes within herself and as she ages, Muhsina noted that she felt more mature after the loss of her father. Apart from having

to take up additional responsibility within the home, she confessed that her added maturity resulted in her being unable to *"identify and reason"* with her peers of her age. Whilst her responses pointed to a changed outlook as a result of the turning point she experienced, it does however lean more significantly to a newly gained sense of independence and decision making. There were also undertones of protection for herself and for her mother and sister embedded in this sense of independence. Muhsina's reflection is supportive of the lifecourse model where human agency shown here was vital in the construction life pathways amidst opportunities and challenges.

Acceptance

Mother-daughter couple Rafeedah (43) and Naadirah (21) touched on acceptance on a mental and physical level as part of their construction of successful ageing. As with other mother-daughter couples, their corresponding views are demonstrative of the intergenerational transmission of understandings surrounding the ageing experience. Their accounts were:

> *"I think when we accepted things for what they are and you pleased with what's happening around you…and you've accepted that certain things good or bad has happened and they happened for a reason …and you content"* (Rafeedah, 43)

> *"Successful aging being happy with what's happening to your body and the way you age…understanding that it's going to happen and it's inevitable instead of fighting with it"* (Naadirah, 21)

Earlier interpretations of acceptance under religious beliefs and practices meant acceptance of growing older, the way a person ages, appreciation, care for the mind and body and acceptance of death. The distinction here is that the above accounts focused on being pleased and content with how the ageing self evolves – both positive and negative. It is striking but not unexpected that both mother and daughter had similar beliefs on acceptance in their personal definitions of successful ageing. Rafeedah and Naadirah had parallel life transitions and turning points owing to their *"different path"* associated with personal discovery and re(negotiation) of their identity. Seemingly, their positive experiences of their personal journeys filtered into their understandings of successful ageing. This finding provides further evidence that the historical influence of the lifecourse impacts how individual and intergenerational ageing is conceptualised, in this instance, successful ageing.

GENERAL DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This qualitative, exploratory study revealed how a sample of twelve South African Muslim mother-daughter couples constructed their perceptions of ageing over the lifecourse. It examined the influence of acculturation, introspection as well as the meanings attached to family and community spaces, relationships, life events, transitions and turning points. The main purpose of this chapter is to show how the study met its objectives and answered the main research questions posed in the *Introduction*.

A general discussion of the perspectives shared by mothers and daughters and the implications of their views are presented. Through the reflection of the main findings, ageing as a topic of sociological significance is linked to the literature, theoretical framework, wider debates and discourses with the aim of illustrating the gaps bridged and emerging knowledge generated by this original research. The discussion presents the emergent, alternative and personalised constructions and images of ageing amongst two generations of Muslim mothers and daughters in the context of South Africa. Additionally, the discussion presents evidence of intergenerational transmission of perceptions of ageing – a novel contribution to sociological research in South Africa.

Linked to the objectives and research questions raised, the thesis drew on multidisciplinary understandings of ageing. It revealed a dichotomous chasm between two schools of thought – best described as 'old' and 'new' gerontology. The study moved beyond the tendency of early gerontological research that illustrated ageing as an individual and social issue marked by decline, loss and "in need of being fixed" (Miller, 2018: 2). Existing bodies of knowledge that argued for ageing as a bio-medical issue were also included with the intention of presenting a holistic understanding of the ageing experience. However, the research largely joined efforts by scholars like Covan (2005), Denmark and Zarbiv (2016) and Miller (2018) in portraying how people's lives – women in particular – are improved by gains and growth as they age (Ranzjin, 2002). From a gender perspective, the thesis reflected on writings that emphasised women and ageing in a positive light. It departed from bio-medical conceptualisations of women and ageing limited to illness, menopause and frailty (Haber, 1983). By recognising the positive benefits that accompany ageing, the research touched on multiple dimensions like family and communal relationships and personal life stories reflective of defining times and 'rites of passage' to help broaden knowledge of how Muslim women interpret their ageing selves.

The theoretical framework hinged on two major models, namely the lifecourse perspective (Elder, 1999) and symbolic interactionism (Mead, 1934; Blumer, 1969). The lifecourse perspective was useful in illustrating the impact of life events, transitions and turning points on individual and generational views on ageing. Symbolic interactionism solidified the link in how evaluated life events, transitions and turning points over the lifecourse were interpreted and given significance thereby contributing to the construction of the ageing experience. Lastly, additional framing from the writings of post-colonial feminism (Mohanty, 1986; 2002; Hamid, 2006; Van der Spuy and Clowes, 2007) were included to strengthen the case and focus on Muslim women in South Africa by acknowledging their contextual distinctness.

Semi-structured in-depth interviews was the study's primary source of data. Secondary sources included global and local scholarly works on a range of relevant topics which contributed towards a rounded assessment of the topic. As the study was a relatively unexplored area in terms of research focus, context and sample; narrative inquiry as a means to discover the layered meanings of ageing through the interconnections of the theoretical framework was substantiated as a suitable approach for data collection and construction (Sandelowski, 1991; Connelly and Clandinin, 1990; Etherington, 2007; Sools, 2013). Through continued reflexive consideration of the researcher's 'insider' role and 'dual identity', the researcher drew out perspectives and sensitive content, some of which was not previously revealed by participants in their personal and social spaces (Drake, 2010 cited in Berger (2010); Berger, 2010). Allowing for participant-based constructions of the ageing experience as well the researcher's willingness to probe for new and hidden meanings generated the depth and richness of findings that emerged. As a result, several contributions to existing knowledge and avenues for future research of sociological significance in South Africa further enhanced the value of this study. Based on these positive yields, narrative inquiry is therefore recommended as a tool for constructing data for studies aiming at accessing in-depth personal stories of difficulty or triumph; not easily disclosed. Additionally, narrative inquiry is thus beneficial in collecting data amongst persons or groups of people who have not featured prominently in social science research.

Supported by Schaefer (2014), the theoretical framework recognised participants as individuals who comprised of multiple facets such as the biological, psychological and sociological located in a context which included social institutions, norms and networks. Findings showed that voices of the 'private' and 'public' were reflective of South Africa's myriad social-cultural and political forces pre and post liberation (Billington et al, 1998). Participants' narratives revealed that these entwined voices were influential in how the 'historical self' characteristic of agency and diversity for both generations was constructed (Hareven, 1994). Additionally, the social structure represented by the family and the

community as a ‘collective’ – or not – facilitated how social interaction occurred thereby producing individual statuses and social roles. The resulting harmony or conflict experienced formed the foundation for contextualising the self and society for the parent and offspring generation. In this context, the study findings are thus confirmed by the lifecourse approach which emphasised socialisation by way of social factors and agents such as the family, community and religion that influence individuals throughout their lives (Hareven, 1994; Schaefer, 2014).

Differences in social interaction and meanings attached to the sense of community were evident in study. Mothers stratified their communities according to race and social position. This was traced back to their experiences of having lived under Apartheid. Their ‘placement’ of individuals was not intentional but rather how they perceived the normality of their lived realities under Apartheid (Vahed, 2007). Despite their awareness of restricted movement and racial mixing, mothers were far less critical of their communities than daughters. In fact, some mothers commented on the social and economic relatedness of their communities (Waldrop, 2012). For them, their communities represented meaning for them in terms of place, interest and identity (Farahani, 2016). Evidence of parallel views between some mother-daughter couples raised in the same community albeit over different generations also surfaced. This related to conservatism regarding religion. Having viewed their communities as a ‘collective’, these sentiments as part of their ‘historical self’ were shown to shape their outlook on life and their ageing selves in terms of acceptance, maturity and wisdom.

In their reflection, younger daughters in particular voiced their conflict and struggle at integrating into the communities they lived in as children and young adults. Their reflections highlighted their observed divisiveness within their communities through self-imposed boundaries of communities related to limited cultural and social experiences resulting in feelings of disconnection and disharmony (Brenner, 2007). For others, class and economic perception created division between peers, especially within the school environment. Additionally, mixing with different religions and races was viewed by some as initially challenging and by others as their ‘norm’. The thesis argued that the opening of social and cultural spaces and unrestricted movement post-1994 was a segue for Muslim women to explore, create and re-define understandings of everyday living. Instead, the findings revealed that for some, choosing to remain with ‘comfort zones’ where boundaries were reinforced and less permeable was a preferred option. That said, the choice to remain within or venture out was still shown to influence the construction of the ageing self and importantly the transfer of intergenerational perspectives of the ageing experience.

Strikingly, mothers were far more critical of their 'private' contexts than daughters. This was particularly observed amongst mothers who were raised in extended homes. Arising tensions due to living arrangements, traumatic events and inter-personal conflict between siblings surfaced in the narratives of older mothers in particular. Daughters were mostly positive in their retrospective recall of their family homes, both nuclear and extended. Findings that emerged illustrated that relationships and activities done as a family coloured their affirmative experiences. Common to both experiences of the spectrum was the presence of 'dominant' voices within the home. Within the extended home, grandparents, specifically grandmothers were shown to be particularly influential. For some, this represented homeliness and exemplary wisdom which transferred onto how some participants viewed ageing. For others, the orthodox views of some grandmothers reinforced conservatism, limited mixing between genders, races and other religions. Other 'dominant' voices included overbearing older siblings and fathers as it related to language and communication, gender roles within and outside of the home, cultural assumptions and expectations for the lifecourse (Mead, 1934; Schaefer, 2014). Furthermore, traumatic events within the home – albeit with just one participant – provided compelling evidence on the impact of such events on the self and for anticipated life experiences (Hutchinson, 2007).

These goings-on and 'voices' in the family home was referenced in narratives in building a holistic conceptualisation of the ageing experience. These 'little stories' pieced together across the thesis provided insight into how the ageing experience was characterised by anxiety, fear or liberation. These findings are confirmed by the principles of the lifecourse perspective; which stated that experiences of one life transition will have an impact on later transitions or events where it may either protect the life course trajectory or endanger it (Hutchison, 2007). Additionally the findings are demonstrative of Cooley's 'looking glass-self 'in that who we are is the product of our social interaction with other people (Schaefer, 2014). In the context of the thesis, the ageing self – not a static phenomenon but one that continues to develop and evolve – were shown to be a product of the voices within 'private' and 'public' contexts. Therefore, the thesis showed that for both generations, living in liberated South Africa added sociological significance to their construction of their ageing identities. The findings make it clear that the social behaviour of two generations of Muslim women was conditioned by the roles and statuses they accepted, the groups they belonged to as well as the institutions within which they functioned (Albrecht, Jacobs, Retief and Adamski, 2014; Schaefer, 2014). Given the multiplicity of the findings generated by contextualising the self and society amongst a minority group of women; further studies adopting this exploratory approach for individuals or groups perceived as difficult to access is advocated for.

One of the aims of the study was to explore the personal meanings associated with ageing. At the outset, the thesis presented definitions by diverse scholars reflective of their orientation on the topic. For some, ageing was viewed as chronological, with an emphasis on declining physiological abilities, loss of viability and increased vulnerability in later life (Schramme, 2013; de Magalhães, 2013). Differing scholars such as Vincent (2006) stated that viewing ageing as a biological failure devalues diversity across the lifecourse. Complementary to this view, Scherger (2009) asserted that age designated an individual's transition through time thus revealing itself as a multidimensional construct consisting of physical, psychological and social processes of ageing. In support, narrative evidence produced revealed the multidimensionality of ageing as understood by participants akin to some of these aspects.

Findings that emerged on the personal meanings of ageing supported both academic camps of thought. Reflections by mothers and daughters were multifaceted and embraced positive and less than desired aspects of ageing. An intergenerational replication of views between some mother-daughter pairs provided evidence of the transfer of opinions across generations. Ageing was constructed as a transformative experience embodying certainty, self-confidence, maturity and wisdom. Inherent to this was the notion that what is thought about our ageing selves is projected through thought and action. Ageing also represented upward social mobility through meanings attached to social roles – for example, mother-in-law and grandmother – perceived to be an elevation in the lives of mothers in particular (Denmark, 1999). Consequently, such positive, progressive and alternate meanings of ageing developed by participants in the study are further contributions to efforts by scholars like Minichello and Coulson (2005) and Miller (2018).

Likewise, contemplations that reflected on physiological and mental degeneration, illness, pain and exclusion supported claims by Ebrahim (2002) and Caplan (2005). Findings of this nature were expected to surface across the thesis however the depth of concern with ageing on a physical and cosmetic level was not anticipated. The findings in some measure supported the idea of 'vieillese ingrate' or unpleasant old age as coined by Hummel (1998) cited in Quèniart and Charpentier (2011). These perspectives were found in both generations of Muslim women thus confirming this assertion by Perrig-Chiello (2001). Intergenerational transmission of views was mostly observed in this regard. Certain mother-daughter couples offered mirrored opinions on the 'losses' and 'declines' associated with ageing. As a possible extension to conclusions made by Caplan (2005), distinctiveness observed in the thesis related to specific aspects of ageing on a physical level which affected each generation differently. For example, mothers commented extensively on ageing and degeneration related to illness and pain. Daughters were far more concerned with the loss of youthfulness, vigour and suppleness.

Their generational concerns could be explained by the positioning of their present age on the life course referred to by Kohli (1986) as "temporalization". In other words, mothers, particularly older mothers were to an extent found to have accepted their physical form owing to 'rites of passage' such pregnancy, childbirth and even illness; hence their understated interest on ageing on a cosmetic level. The realisation of limited scope of control of physiological changes associated with an ageing body for mothers, which produced less resistance and promoted acceptance is echoed by Ballard et al (2005). Most daughters offered their opinion in the context of not having gone through similar experiences of older mothers. The 'flexible image' of their physiology opened their ageing path to either loss or preservation. Hence, the anticipation of growing older and the envisaged physical effects thus illustrated their overt concerns with the cosmetic and visual signs of ageing.

Given the substantive findings connecting ageing, pain and illness, opportunities to probe for opinions on the medicalization of ageing arose. Central notions by pro-senescence scholars were put to participants (Gunasekaran and Gannon, 2011; Niccoli and Partridge, 2012; North and Sinclair, 2012). Both generations unanimously disputed "disease-directed" thinking associated with ageing (Rattan, 2014:200). Seeing ageing as treatable by medical intervention was voiced as generalised and stereotypical; even by those mothers who were expressly vocal on their personal experiences of ageing, pain and chronic illness. Mothers and daughters countered this dominant biomedical opinion by stating that ageing is natural, inevitable and shaped by internal perception, thereby linking it to findings on ageing and projection – thus demonstrative of participants' holistic construction of ageing across the thesis.

Findings related to both generations agreement on the subject may to some extent be explained by the meanings they attached to disease in the first instance (Broom, Booth and Schubert, 2012). Explicit understandings and significance attached to disease was not spoken about during interviews. However it can be surmised that understandings of disease could have shaped by beliefs, cultural values and norms (Dilworth-Anderson and Brent, 2002). For instance, disease could have been thought of as a condition where bodily function is disturbed (Wood, 1986 cited in Larson, 1999). From an interactionist perspective such meanings could have been juxtaposed against real life social interactions with the elderly in their lives. Findings in the case of some mothers and daughters provided confirmation in this regard. Participant's described family members, specifically mothers and grandmothers as key influences to their construction of ageing. Their accounts were based on the physical and mental wellness they observed amongst their aged mothers and grandparents – even in the presence of illness and limited mobility. In the context of their experiences, ageing did not represent 'disease-orientated' thinking, as normal bodily – and mental – function as they observed was not disrupted by ageing

(Schramme, 2013). Moreover, narrative evidence produced suggested that ageing is a blessing and viewed as a part of life thus requiring understanding and acceptance in the context of Islam.

Such findings surfaced at various junctures in the research and thus represented the intersection and increased importance between religion and ageing. Findings that countered the medicalization of ageing were approached from lived realities, characteristic of individual and nuanced understandings of disease, confirmed by Broom, Booth and Schubert (2012). Such an approach to understanding symbolism of disease in the context of ageing is noticeably absent from methodologies adopted by studies in clinical and medical literature in general (Broom, Booth and Schubert, 2012). Given the emergent and alternate ideas of ageing and disease generated by this research, research methodologies that extend beyond a bio-medical focus are encouraged. Likewise, the findings make a compelling research case to understand the significance assigned to ageing, pain, illness and disease in non-Western settings, such as South Africa and especially amongst under-researched individuals and groups (Sooryamoorthy, 2015).

A recurrent focus by participants related to the emphasis on outward and visible ageing as it manifested in lived experiences. Case in point; dressing as an indication of age garnered multiple opinions on appropriate dress across the ages and thus revealed ageist attitudes, particularly among younger daughters. Daughters' opinions supported the "mutton dressed as lamb" analogy as reflected by Hurd-Clarke, Griffin and Maliha (2009:723). They distinctly expressed that older women should dress appropriately and modestly. Conversely, mothers did not express such comments for the younger generation. Instead, mothers concentrated on personal choice and appropriateness within the bounds of modesty and what is acceptable in Islam. The debate on appropriate and modest dress for both generations can be traced to socialisation within the family and communal contexts (Billington et al, 1998; Schaefer, 2014; Almila, 2016). Norms established within the family home and by whom in particular manifested in what is deemed as appropriated and modest dressing in the context of ageing. As an example, one daughter raised within conservative Islamic ideology – (beliefs and practices as stipulated in the Qur'an and authentic the collection of traditions containing sayings of the Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be upon Him) with accounts of his daily practice (the *Sunnah*) – provided critique directed at older women and her peers. Her perspectives were shaped by the 'private voices' of influential 'social actors' in her extended home; thus confirming assertions (Constable (1984).

While there are studies that investigated the significance attached to the *hijab* in multiple research contexts such as those by Sader (2008), Murji (2010) and Almila (2016) and duly confirmed by findings in the thesis; this thesis has gone further in taking such associations and exploring its meaning in the

context of intergenerational ageing. Perspectives from daughters in particular were able to show the association between *hijab* and age. Moreover, a shift in understanding over time associated with the *hijab* emerged where the *hijab* was previously observed to be donned by older women whereas it is no longer the case. Now, with the advent and permeation of social media as well as *hijabi* beauty and lifestyle influencers, the *hijab* and modest Western dressing has become more appealing especially for younger women. This was supported by findings which showed *hijab* brands, colour, styling and choice of fabric represented a marker of age for daughters. The findings thus revealed a clear division of preference between the choices of older and younger Muslim women (Almila, 2016). Findings also supported previous research which linked acculturation and dress choice amongst South African Muslim women (Muthal, 2010; Albrecht et al, 2014). Clothing choices as well as the *hijab* was found to be an outward display of the social and cultural construction of age among participants (Twigg, 2010).

Further related to apprehensions on 'public ageing', findings on the face and body produced personal anxieties from both the parent and offspring generation. The face in particular was underscored to represent youthfulness, suppleness and beauty across the ages. Supported by Ballard et al (2005) the desire or pressure to present a youthful, socially acceptable image through age-resisting activities was present in both generations. For those favouring age-resisting activities, evidence of intergenerational transmission surfaced where one generation appeared to influence the other in the uptake of anti-ageing products. Narrative evidence between certain mother-daughter couples produced support for this. The preservation of youth, mainly a youthful face was significant amongst these findings thus confirming the importance placed on 'public ageing' (Woodwark, 1991; George and Hole, 1998; Ballard et al (2005). On the contrary, findings were also able to show that body image was accepted – albeit with some desire for slimmer figures. Building on acceptance of the body through understandings of 'private ageing', perspectives by mothers were influenced by the role of religion, beliefs and practices (Ballard et al, 2005). Understanding the body as a "gift" which is to be treasured and taken care of facilitated this understanding and acceptance – thereby strengthening the presence of Islamic discourse in the study.

The multidimensionality of ageing brought about by the study – such as 'private' and 'public' ageing in the context of participant experiences – provided evidence to what Gilleard and Higgs (2000) regard as 'cultures of ageing'. The researcher's efforts to connect alternate imagery and opinion during the course of narratives resulted in unexplored angles for ageing research. Thus, new insightful spaces for the expression of individualised versions of ageing emerged as one of the novel contributions to bodies of knowledge focusing on progressive gerontological research.

As stated, chronological age, relationships, life transitions, turning points and its impact through different life stages, shape the lives of individuals from birth to death. (Hutchison, 2007). The main argument of the thesis is that perspectives of ageing, particularly intergenerational perspectives are influenced by these events and are thus formed organically and refined over the lifecourse – often unawares unless intentionally raised as was the case in this research. Evidence gathered by linking the lifecourse approach in shaping the ageing experience for both generations were rich and extensive thus offering further confirmation for the choice of the narrative enquiry approach in the study (Sandelowski, 1991; Etherington, 2007)

Based on life experiences willingly shared by participants, the types of life events, transitions and turning points verified a noticeable cohort effect in the lives of some women. The study found that some mothers and daughters who were born in the same historical period, experienced similar social changes in the same sequence and in the same age range (Hareven, 1994; Waldrop, 2012). Examples of this included the development of the 'historical self' under Apartheid. This cohort-effect was observed as the economic and social relatedness of communities mothers lived in, their personal experiences of conflict with the Apartheid system and daughters' description of their communities as it related to their peers embarking on similar social transitions such as attending university or marriage in the same period. Particular life events and transitions in both generations such as marriage and motherhood also demonstrated a cohort effect in the way the transition or departure from previously held roles occurred. For instance, anxiety at the increased responsibility and maturity needed in marriage and motherhood – particularly at early ages – were cited by mothers and daughters. Supported by Billington et al (1998) and Schaefer (2014), responsibilities were shown to be shaped by socialised experiences within the home, by particular 'dominant' voices thus creating expectation. Failing which, resulted in feelings of anxiety and conflict as described by mothers and daughters. These 'rites of passage' were shown in some measure in developing a renegotiated identity in the context of newly assumed roles which in turn aided in constructing the ageing self, based on the lived realities experienced over the lifecourse (Billington, et al, 1998).

Support for one of the main arguments of the thesis, that is transmission of attitudes on ageing at an intergenerational level, was facilitated by another key principle of the lifecourse approach – linked or interdependent lives. Several instances between specific mothers and daughter couples affected by the same life event, transition and turning points were presented. The participants' description of their experiences and impact of on their ageing selves were testament to the interdependency of lives in the context of the study (Elder, 1999; Hutchinson, 2007). Death of a significant other, illness, and challenges experienced in motherhood as well as personal rediscovery were identified by the study as particular

events which created interlinked lives and a replication of views on ageing between certain mother-daughter couples. Whilst the depth of emotional experiences and resultant transitions and turning points varied by generation, the findings confirmed that the family is the nexus for experiencing and interpreting phenomena in socio-cultural and historical contexts (Mead, 1934; Billington et al, 1998; Elder, 1999; Hutchinson, 2007; Schaefer, 2014).

Linked to the interdependency of lives, research findings were also aligned and supported by further tenets of the lifecourse approach, namely human agency and developmental risk and protection (Elder, 1999; Hutchinson, 2007). 'Stories within stories' – references and connections to previous life stages – across narratives revealed how diverse life straits were created through agency and protection of the lifecourse. These were consistently connected by participants when experiences of different life stages were explained. The most profound evidence in this regard occurred in the lives of two mothers in particular. Conflicting and traumatic experiences of childhood, adolescence and early adulthood had potential risks for transitions into later life stages, such as marriage and motherhood. Hence, this presented evidence of endangerment to the life trajectory, should agency with the intention to protect the lifecourse not be exercised. Fortunately in the cases of these two mothers, personal realisation owing to greater and positive socialised experiences created alternative pathways which protected their lifecourse. These findings were shown to have progressive impacts on the construction of their ageing selves. For example, maturity and willingness to forgive as a component of the ageing identity and spurring entirely new life straits lead to personal (re)discovery. This agency was linked to the creation of interdependent lives between their daughters and themselves in the way significant life events such as illness and religious and personal discovery were interpreted and impacted on the ageing experiences.

Further evidence in the way of agency and diversity of the life trajectory was offered by the study. This is significant on two levels. Firstly, agency was shown to be a crucial factor in how women in the study described and coped with their lived realities. Early feminist writings depicted non-Western women – in this instance South African Muslim women – as ahistorical, powerless, uneducated and tradition-bound collective (Duits and van Zoonen, 2006). In disputing these reductionist views, revelations of participant narratives for both generations in the study confirmed that their identities are drawn from their personal histories, demonstrated upward socio-economic mobility and challenged many of the 'traditional' bounds of their communities and places of work (Chapman, 2016). Even in adverse circumstances, such as ambivalence in marriage, widowhood, divorce, illness and violation of bodily integrity, 'stories within stories' revealed the need to question and exercise personal agency; thereby mitigating risk and protecting the lifecourse.

In so doing – and the second level of significance – the image of the 'Third World Woman' was efficaciously countered across the thesis by qualitative evidence gathered in the study. (Mohanty, 1986). As shown, the notion of a 'singular monolith' ideology did not resonate with findings generated by this thesis. Instead, alternative, progressive and in some ways contemporary portraits of South African Muslim women emerged in the study. Evidence in this regard pointed to the frankness in disclosure in general but especially of sensitive and socially taboo or controversial subjects such as sexuality within a marriage, premarital pregnancy and infertility. Additionally, the thesis has shown that Muslim women in the context of their experiences are not bound to social roles limited to that of a mother, daughter, wife or sister. Although participants did place prominence of some of these social roles by choice and not submission (Mahmood, 2005). Again, through personal agency and various socialised experiences and the evidence of diversity of life experiences, the findings challenged the notion that Muslim women have a shared identity or vision (Reddock, 2019). Instead the thesis presented several examples which challenged collective preconceptions of Muslim women, thus supporting notions that Muslim women are not pre-constituted asocial beings and certainly have the capacity to develop social, personal and historical agency (Mohanty, 1986; Hamid, 2006).

The development of atypical representations of South African Muslim women continued through the assessment of the impact of the lifecourse in the construction of the ageing self. A central argument to the thesis thus far has been proven through emergent findings which have shown that beliefs about ageing are formed and shaped by an individual's experiences and broader societal attitudes. Levy (2009) further speculated that these beliefs influence behavioural, psychological and physiological pathways which are postulated to effect health outcomes associated with ageing. Subsequent findings from the research were able to confirm Levy's (2009) assertion. As such, findings gathered linked lived realities to the 'crossroads of ageing'. That is, what did the shared experiences mean for how participants perceived themselves ageing?

Qualitative evidence showed that the impact described by mothers were wider in scope and included more introspective elements as opposed to daughters. This can be possibly linked to their depth of experiences over the lifecourse. Specific mother daughter couples cited similar impacts based on the same life events, turning points and transitions. However, distinct to each account was the profundity of the experience as related by the individual. This is supported by the principles of the interactionist perspective where meanings derived – in this case the impact of experiences in the lifecourse – are unique to the individual resulting from their socialised experiences (Billington et al, 1998). Further support to 'new' gerontology was evidenced by positive links to the ageing self, demonstrative of gain and growth in both generations (Ranzjin, 2002; Coven, 2005; Miller, 2018).

Positive impacts such as a changed outlook, acceptance and forgiveness, a sense of independence as well as fulfilment and purpose transpired as impacts of lived experiences in participant narratives. Such findings challenged studies like Muraca-Muir (2012) which asserted that older women are prone to depression in later years compared to younger women. On the contrary, the study found lessened negative emotions, improved psychological health, improved social skills and greater emotional control especially amongst mothers were critical to the formulation of the ageing self. Confirmation of positive ageing are found in the writings of Sastre, Vinsonneau, Neto, Girad and Mullet (2003) and Kessler, Mickelson, Walters, Zao and Hamilton (2004) and Denmark and Zarbiv (2016). Central to the realization of these impacts were the consistent reference and interconnections to the same life events, transitions and turning points mentioned in previous parts of personal histories. This verified the significance assigned and internalization of these events over the lifecourse (Shaefer, 2014).

Denmark and Zarbiv (2016) claimed that older women who yearned for their younger years is a misconception. This was addressed in the thesis through study concepts such as 'felt age' and 'desired age'. The scope of experiences and emotions associated with life events, transitions and turning points resulted in participants feeling no change, older or younger than their chronological age. Findings in this regard were mixed, thereby offering support to Denmark and Zarbiv (2016) in some cases but also refuting their claims in others. In confirmation of Denmark and Zarbiv (2016), some women in both generations expressed feeling their chronological age and harbored no desire to be younger. This was explained by their comfort with their ageing selves and positivity they associate with the overall ageing experience (Denmark and Zarbiv, 2016). Women in both generations who desired to be younger expressed their desire as an opportunity to return to a time void of serious responsibility and pleasurable memories characteristic of childhood, adolescence and early adulthood. This finding refutes Field (1997; 1999) who viewed a return to these times cited by older women as the least satisfying period of their lives. In other cases the desire to return to younger ages was interpreted as an opportunity to protect the lifecourse – given what is known in hindsight. Most of the desired ages were found to be on the cusp of challenging life events, transitions and turning points such as death, divorce, illness and difficulties in early marriage. Protection of the lifecourse entailed taking better decisions or entirely different ones. Some women in both generations also expressed feeling older and desired to return to a time that represented wholeness, mental balance and quality of life. This finding connected the importance and presence of certain individuals in the family unit – who have long since passed away – who contributed to feelings of wholesomeness and satisfaction with life, namely a husband or a father (Constable, 1984).

Whilst the thesis has reflected on nascent findings in support of 'new' gerontological conceptualisations of ageing, substantial qualitative evidence was also generated offering confirmation to conclusions

arrived at in past literature (Kleinspehn-Ammerlahn et al, 2008; Kim and Moen, 2002). This illustrated that whilst mothers and daughters in the sample may have shared progressive stances on the way ageing can be conceptualised in a non-Western context, evidently there are still traces of well-documented notions associated with fear, loss and anxiety characterising the ageing experience (Bedford and Johnson, 2005; Hurd-Clarke and Korotchenko, 2011). Debates covering both spectrums is proof to the holistic construction to ageing by Muslim women in the study.

Positive and progressive associations with the ageing experience as described by the parent and offspring generation included mental and spiritual liberation, maintaining a sense of independence and strengthening family bonds (Bowling and Iliffe, 2001). Decidedly, positive associations were found equally in the narratives of both the generations. The study established that positive factors of the ageing experience tended to involve other individuals like children and grandchildren, thereby making the ageing experience a collective one (Denmark, 1999; Denmark and Zarbiv, 2016). On the other hand, negative constructions of the ageing experience such as physical degeneration, loss of independence, loneliness and responsibility were largely individualistic citing the person as the central locus. As with previous findings, the consistency in reference to particular life events, transitions and turning points were additional verification of the significance these events had in the lives of participants. Importantly, this was shown to strongly link to the development of their ageing identities and experiences.

Findings related to coping strategies and the expectations of ageing solidified many of the previous associations made in the thesis. That is, ageing is holistic, encompassing the psychological, physiological and spiritual realms (Scherger, 2009). One specific and recurrent association emerged throughout the study; namely the Islamic discourse and ageing. The research sought to investigate and understand the role of religious beliefs and practices in the construction of ageing amongst Muslim mothers and daughters. As alluded to, religion and ageing featured in every thematic area of the thesis. Both generations traced much of their substantiations of their opinions, where relevant, to the role and place of Islam in their lives – some more strongly than others. Mothers in particular voiced the connection between life events, transitions, turning points to Islam and its link to the construction of ageing. Other references to the Islamic discourse was made in the context of influences of personal constructions of ageing and 'public' and 'private' ageing as it related to dress, cosmetic ageing and body image. Case in point, one mother-daughter couple both commented on their personal and religious re-discovery of themselves. It thus emerged that religious beliefs and practices had an overall positive impact on the way the stressors and transitions of ageing are handled. This was a recurrent theme in both their narratives, especially for the mother thus providing evidence of its significance in their life strait (Mehta, 1997; Thomas, 1997; Ahmed, 2005). As such, the similarity of their views on religion

and ageing provided further support to interdependent lives and importantly the intergenerational transmission of views on ageing (Hutchinson, 2007).

Predestination or *taqdeer* stood out as the foremost connection to the Islamic discourse in the context of the study. Whilst findings pointed to choice and agency over the lifecourse, there was a greater understanding amongst both generations that such choices remained within what God had pre-willed for them. In acknowledgement, participants described having deeper levels of understanding and acceptance, even in the presence of illness and physical limitations. Engagement in regular prayer and devotion was explained as achieving greater acceptance to ageing and the finiteness of one's life. On the whole, this understanding facilitated a greater level of acceptance and coping with the unfolding of the life trajectory (Morgan, Tyler and Fogel, 2008). Such findings are supported by Mehta (1997) who showed that acceptance of the ageing process in the lives of older Muslim women is by the will of God. As an extension to Mehta (1997) this study has shown that acceptance as it related to the Islamic discourse and ageing was also present in the narratives of younger women in the study. Such findings are additional contributions to emergent 'cultures of ageing' which are embracive of new or alternative conceptualisations of the ageing experience (Gilleard and Higgs, 2000; Morgan et al, 2008).

Studies on successful ageing have delivered perspectives primarily from a Western point of view (Rowe and Kahn, 1987; Baltes and Baltes, 1990; Fisher, 1995; Torres, 2001; 2009). An original contribution of this research is the construction of successful ageing in a non-Western setting amongst a minority group of women. Multi-dimensional perspectives of successful ageing surfaced in the study thus confirming much of the writings of what constitutes successful ageing (Bowling and Dieppe, 2005; Dupuis and Alzheimer, 2008). The distinction however related to the reasoning behind the inclusions of these dimensions.

Bowling and Dieppe (2005) claimed that the main themes reflective of what constitutes successful ageing originated from psychological or biomedical approaches or a combination of the two. The former emphasised the absence of illness, disease and the optimisation of life expectancy, whereas the latter concentrated on life satisfaction, social participation, and mental growth (Bowling and Dieppe, 2005). Results confirmed the inclusion of both the biomedical and psychological spheres in participants' construction of successful ageing. Findings showed that successful ageing was understood as a multi-faceted concept and included: physical, mental and financial wellness, independence and acceptance. These dimensions surfaced in other themes as well. However its reappearance in the context of successful ageing solidified its prominence in the ageing experience for both generations. Inclusions of

themes that defined successful ageing for participants were juxtaposed against their lifecourse. This was observed in cases of 'lack', 'loss' and 'gains' over the lifecourse as well as fear and anxiety transpiring from challenging, unpleasant or anticipated experiences.

Physical wellness was the most commonly discussed facet of successful ageing for mothers and daughters – albeit from different perspectives. Successful ageing in this context meant looking younger than one's chronological age, the absence of illness and pain, mobility, health and vitality. Such findings connected outcomes from previous thematic areas of the thesis, thus reproducing findings that are consistent and robust. For example, mothers and daughters who emphasised their own physical struggles as they age, viewed physical wellness as a key component to successful ageing – hence referring to the 'lack' in their lives as a precursor or desired image of successful ageing. Independence as a contributing factor to successful ageing was interlinked with physical wellness. Independence was considered in relation to unassisted daily and routine physical activity by mothers in particular. Views revealed personal anxiety and fear towards ageing on a physical level. Hence their fear at anticipated experience of ageing necessitated the inclusion of independence as a dimension of successful ageing.

Similarly, financial wellness was included as part of the construction of successful ageing; specifically by daughters. Place alongside their lived realities, the aspiration for being financial stable or not having attained the desired level of financial wellness at this point of their lifecourse predicated the inclusion of financial wellness as part of successful ageing.

Successful ageing was not only defined by negative connotation. The study findings re-affirm that ageing can be successful (Van Bauwel, 2018). As stated, 'gains' in the lifecourse also gave expression to positive psychological benefit in the conceptualisation by the study sample. This 'feel good' aspect to mental wellness was interpreted as a balanced mind-set, positive projection and a spiritual connection to God (Denmark and Zarbiv, 2016).

The final dimension to successful ageing concentrated on acceptance. Linked to earlier findings on the Islamic discourse, acceptance in the context of successful ageing was regarded as acceptance of growing older, the way one ages, appreciation and care of the mind and body and acceptance of the ultimate finality, death. Additionally, findings of these last two components also represented an intergenerational replication of views between mothers and daughters; thus strengthening the thesis's argument for the intergenerational transfer of opinions on ageing.

Confirmatory in some respects (Bowling and Dieppe, 2005; Bowling and Iliffe, 2011) findings on successful ageing in the thesis also offered renewed understandings on successful ageing from a non-Western perspective. As this research is one of many attempts to bridge perspectives of ageing outside the predominant areas of research foci in the past, the thesis recommends further studies to gain a better understanding of ageing and successful ageing in particular.

Some recommendations with regard to the necessity to develop a South African sociological agenda of relevance in the post-Apartheid South African context as asserted by Alexander (2004) and Burawoy (2004) were made, and a few more are offered based on the significance of the findings.

The findings are suggestive of a South African based inquiry into the contemporary meanings of feminism as stated by Van der Spuy and Clowes (2007). However, this is beyond the scope of this thesis. While this study has unearthed alternative images of South African Muslim women in the context of intergenerational ageing; similarly in other contexts, further development of ethnic, unconventional and insightful imageries of minority groups are encouraged .

Studies referred to in the thesis focused on research studies at scale. Whilst, insightful in their findings, the thesis recommends focusing on minority ageing research (Zubair and Norris, 2015). As this thesis is one such effort, further efforts involving other groups aimed at understanding the cultural construction of ageing is advocated for.

In sum, this thesis offers originality on three points. Firstly a distinctive presentation of South African Muslim women from diverse backgrounds. Secondly unconventional and progressive imageries of ageing through unique and personal retelling of events over the lifecourse trajectory. And thirdly, the intergenerational research perspective revealing the mutability and bearing of socio-cultural contexts on two generations of related Muslim women and their interpretation of ageing and their ageing selves.

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APPENDICES

Appendix One: Participant Information Sheet

Hello, my name is Neloufar Khan. I am a PhD student in Sociology at the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg. My study seeks to investigate how Muslim mothers and daughters in South Africa interpret and understand the concept of ageing. For this reason, I would like to invite you to participate in the study.

Your participation in the research is entirely voluntary. If you chose to participate, you will be handed a consent form which will mention the key points of this participant information sheet and ensure that these points are understood by you.

The entire interview process will be done separately between mothers and daughters and will be conducted in English. Both interviews will either be completed on the same day or on separate days depending on your and my schedule.

The duration of each interview is anticipated to last a maximum of one hour. If need be, upon your consent and convenience, follow up interviews will be scheduled in cases where further clarity is needed. The conversation will be relaxed. There are no trick questions or correct or incorrect responses. Interviews will be digitally recorded and will be held separately with mothers and daughters so as to encourage openness, privacy and ensure confidentiality. All the information you provide will be kept confidential where efforts will be made to ensure that you cannot be identified. A false name will be assigned to you in cases where I will quote you directly.

If you chose to withdraw from the study, you are free to do so at any time without any explanation. I will respectfully abide by your request. If you have participated in the entire interview session and upon completion feel emotionally disturbed; the counselling services of a registered clinical psychologist in your area will be made available to you.

There will be no compensation (material or monetary) for your participation in this study. Your participation is entirely voluntary. The research study has received ethical approval from the University of Witwatersrand: Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC Non-Medical) – Protocol number: H13/11/10

If you are satisfied with the information provided and have decided to participate in the study; please request a consent form from me to provide your informed consent to participating in the study. After you have provided written consent, we will begin the interview shortly or make arrangements for an interview date and time.

If you are not satisfied with the information provided and have decided not to partake in the study, you are welcome to hand the participant information sheet back to me and indicate your withdrawal from the study.

Thank you for taking the time to read the participant information sheet for my PhD research project.

(September 2014)

Appendix Two: Participant Consent Form

I, _____,
hereby confirm that:

- A participant information sheet was provided to me for my reading when invited to partake in the study; I have read and understood the participant information sheet;
- I understand the purpose of the study;
- I understand the research process and what is required of me as a participant;
- I have had the opportunity to ask questions at any time during my reading of the participation information sheet, where these questions upon my asking have been answered satisfactorily by the researcher;
- I understand that all personal information will remain confidential and that all efforts will be made to ensure that I cannot be identified;
- I agree that direct quotes may be used for the purpose of the thesis or written publications as long as my identity is kept confidential;
- I have been made aware and understand my rights as a participant in the study;
- I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without any explanation
- I acknowledge that I will not receive any compensation (material or monetary) for my voluntary participation in the study;
- I acknowledge that I am aware that the study has received ethical approval from the University of Witwatersrand's Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC Non-Medical) Committee – H13/11/10

Based on the above conditions, I hereby agree to participate in the PhD research of Neloufar Khan titled '*Veiled and Vocal: Intergenerational Perspectives on Ageing amongst Muslim Women in South Africa'* as fulfilment of her requirements for a PhD in Sociology at the University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.

Participant's signature : _____

Student signature : _____

Date : _____

(September 2014)

Appendix Three: Informed Consent for Audio Recording

I,

_____,

hereby confirm that:

- I agree to the interview(s) being digitally recorded and transcribed by an independent and professional transcriber.

Based on the above condition, I hereby agree to participate in the PhD research of Neloufar Khan titled '*Veiled and Vocal: Intergenerational Perspectives on Ageing amongst Muslim Women in South Africa'* as fulfilment of her requirements for a PhD in Sociology at the University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.

Participant's signature : _____

Student signature : _____

Date : _____

(September 2014)

Appendix Four: Interview Schedule

Family and Social Context

1. When and where were you born?
2. Can you tell me about your family?
3. Can you elaborate on your relationship with your parents? Siblings? Grandparents?
4. Can you describe the community you grew up in? Do you have memories of the place?
5. How did you and your family fit into community life?
6. What major events in your community do you remember has had an impact on you growing up?

Concept of Ageing

7. What does ageing mean to you? How would you choose to define it?
8. Where do you believe your ideas on ageing originate?
9. From where and what do you think other people base their opinion and understanding on ageing?
10. What do you regard as the 'signs' of ageing?

Exploring Life Transitions and the Ageing Self

11. I would now like to talk about turning points or transitions in your life. Can you describe any? What were you doing then? What were you like then? What have been the most influential experiences in your life?
12. Have there been any historical events that you feel have had a major impact on your life and the choices you made?
13. How have these events impacted on the way you see yourself? What do you think has stayed the same about you throughout life? What do you think has changed? Explain.
14. Based on your life experiences, how would you describe your 'felt age'? Explain.
15. How would you describe your 'desired age? Explain.
16. If you could go back to any age, which age would it be and why?
17. Linking to your life experiences, do you feel differently about yourself now from how you felt when you were younger? How?
18. Can you tell me how you feel about growing older? How do you view the ageing experience?
19. How do you feel about people around you who are ageing? Family, friends? Strangers?

Notions of Ageing Well

20. Do you think a person should prepare for growing older?
21. Do you believe your religious beliefs and practices have had an impact on you and the way you see ageing and yourself as an ageing person? Explain. Which specific practices and beliefs are you referring to?
22. What do you regard as successful ageing? What contributes to successful ageing? What do you feel is necessary for someone to age successfully?
23. Do you believe people accept their ageing? What do you think makes others more ready to accept their ageing than some? Explain.

24. Did you have any expectations at points in your life about what growing older would be like for you?
25. How have you come to terms with your ageing?

Aesthetics, Personal Grooming and Lifestyle Choices

26. Do you believe there is a need for women of certain ages to 'look' a specific way? Who 'decides' on these images? Explain.
27. Do these societal images impact on the way you see your ageing self?
28. What do you regard as appropriate dress for a woman of your age? What about younger women? Older women? Who 'decides' on these images? Explain.
29. Do you believe it is okay that women of all ages may diet either to lose weight or maintain their figures? Explain. Do you wish the same for yourself?
30. Do you believe that engaging in recreational or leisure activities (e.g. gym or yoga) has positive benefits to maintaining one's body image? Explain. Do you engage in this yourself? Explain.
31. What is your opinion on anti-ageing aesthetic products and treatments?
32. Do you have a personal grooming regime? Do you use any anti-ageing products or treatments?
33. We have reached the end of the interview; do you have any additional questions you would like to ask?

Appendix Five: Participant Demographics

Pilot Study						
Pair	**Name**	**Relation**	**Age**	**Occupation**	**Marital Status**	**Place**
1	Rukhsana	Mother	57	Retail Assistant	Divorced	Laudium
	Safiyya	Daughter	35	Administrator	Married	Laudium
2	Faheema	Mother	53	Teacher	Married	Lenasia
	Kubrah	Daughter	26	Physiotherapist	Single	Lenasia
3	Zohra	Mother	65	Home Executive	Widow	Durban
	Farnaaz	Daughter	45	Retail Manager	Married	Durban
Main Study						
Pair	**Name**	**Relation**	**Age**	**Occupation**	**Status**	**Place**
1	Rukaya	Mother	43	Life Coach	Divorced	Johannesburg
	Naseema	Daughter	21	Student	Single	Johannesburg
2	Maymunah	Mother	41	Teacher	Married	Durban
	Mehreen	Daughter	19	Student	Single	Durban
3	Maarya	Mother	48	Teacher	Married	Durban
	Ameerah	Daughter	22	Home Executive	Married	Durban
4	Rubeena	Mother	63	Home Executive	Divorced	Johannesburg
	Naeema	Daughter	43	Retail Manager	Married	Johannesburg
5	Sajeedah	Mother	65	Home Executive	Widow	Johannesburg
	Sabah	Daughter	39	Secretary	Married	Johannesburg
6	Khanum	Mother	45	Teacher	Widow	Durban
	Muhsina	Daughter	24	Administrator	Single	Durban
7.	Saabirah	Mother	57	Ex-Teacher	Married	Lenasia
	Aadila	Daughter	25	Curator	Single	Lenasia
8.	Rafeedah	Mother	43	Self Employed	Married	Laudium
	Naadirah	Daughter	21	Teacher	Married	Laudium
9.	Amarah	Mother	48	Home Executive	Married	Durban
	Kareema	Daughter	29	Administrator	Married	Durban
10.	Rasheeda	Mother	52	Teacher	Married	Durban
	Muneerah	Daughter	20	Teacher	Single	Durban
11	Zeenat	Mother	40	Self-Employed	Married	Laudium
	Faatima	Daughter	19	Student	Single	Laudium
12.	Raeesa	Mother	57	Retired	Married	Laudium
	Nour	Daughter	34	Psychologist	Married	Laudium