Relational ageing and international policy networks

for the rights of older people:

A network perspective on older age and the Sustainable Development Goals

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
HelpAge	HelpAge International
IGOs	International Governmental Organisations
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IMF	International Monetary Fund
LCP	Lifecourse Perspective Theory
LDT	Lifespan Development Theory
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MIPAA	Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
NPOs	Non-Profit Organisations
RBA	Rights-Based Approach
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SDSN	Sustainable Development Solutions Network
SGA	Stakeholder Group on Ageing (author's abbreviation)
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UN	United Nations
UNDESA	UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
WB	World Bank
WHO	World Health Organization

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Population ageing (**Box 1**) is rising on global political agendas as pressures mount on pension, welfare, health and care systems in a context of increasing inequality, urbanization and globalization. "Old age is often still considered from the economic perspective, with assumptions of what the ageing population will cost" rather than seen as an asset with diverse contributions (HelpAge 2015h:6). The prevalence of age discrimination and marginalization of older people around the world is disempowering and can lead to a loss of rights, status and well-being over the life course. However, Bloom et al. (2008) argue that "the problem of population ageing is more a problem of rigid and outmoded policies and institutions than a problem of demographic change per se," (37).

> **Box 1**: People aged 60+ currently make up 12.3% of the total world population. This is projected to rise to 16.5% in 2030 and to 21.5% in 2050. They currently outnumber children under age five. In 2050 eight out of ten of the world's older people will live in developing countries (UNDESA-Population Division 2015; HelpAge 2015h).

Reimagining older age, defined as aged 60+ years, and promoting the social development of older age populations then "requires an orientation of values, objectives, and priorities towards the well-being of all and the strengthening and promotion of conducive institutions and policies," (UN 1995). Currently, age is still often an after-thought or "add-on" in policy creation, if directly addressed at all. "Global population ageing, therefore, calls for new approaches to development thinking and practice, which needs to become more age-inclusive and recognize the life course impacts of interventions," (Beales 2012).

The post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), facilitated by the United Nations (UN), offer window of opportunity to reframe ageing policies and practices at the global level, as well as to reimagine the experience of older age. International policy networks for the rights of older people, including prominent advocacy organisations such as HelpAge International (HelpAge), are instrumental to the inclusion of older age in SDG processes through advocacy and education.

"Ageing is about more than older people" (AI 2015:49), but rather socially constructed via the systems of relationships through which power and resources flow. These relationships are fluid, constantly in flux, being constituted and reconstituted through processes of contestation and

negotiation (Rodriguez 2001:772). This dissertation is concerned with the qualities and processes of the constitutive relationships of age-related policy networks at the global scale, and their implications for the rights of older people. The following questions will be explored from a network and political economy perspective:

1) How are international policy networks for the rights of older people operating and what are their implications for the SDGs?
2) What role does HelpAge International play in international policy networks?
3) How can the SDGs be a mechanism to bring about rights for older people?

International policy networks for the rights of older people are taken to include both formal policymakers and the interest groups who seek to influence them (Cairney 2014b). These networks include policymakers, politicians, advocacy coalitions and large institutions such as the UN and World Bank (WB) (**Figure 1**). The SDGs and HelpAge will be subsequently explained in more detail.

International policy documents, organisational publications as well as academic and popular literature are utilized to track debates within policy networks and triangulate current challenges and opportunities for the rights of older people. Country commentaries from HelpAge's Global AgeWatch Index provide illustrative examples of lived experience and practice.

While the focus of this research is on the international policy sphere, the unique governance arrangement of the UN as a supranational institution, comprised of sovereign Member States responsible for national implementation of the SDG agenda, highlights the interplay between scales. Thus, some discussion of national-level networks is appropriate.

This dissertation consists of six chapters, including introduction and conclusion. Chapter 2 will frame the public policy space through an introduction of the SDGs and key concepts. Chapter 3 will explore the concept and experience of ageing from a relational perspective. Chapter 4 will present the analytic framework through a discussion of the key components of actor-networks. Chapter 5 will utilize prominent components of network relationships-- rights, solidarity and agency-- as entry points for analysis. Ultimately, this dissertation aims to highlight the prominence of relational networks in shaping the international architecture of older age, and its implications for the lived experiences of older individuals.

Figure 1: Illustration of International Policy Networks for the Rights of Older People

Older-age Advocacy Network

Intl policy networks for the rights of older people

Intergovernmental Organizations

UN-System & Member States
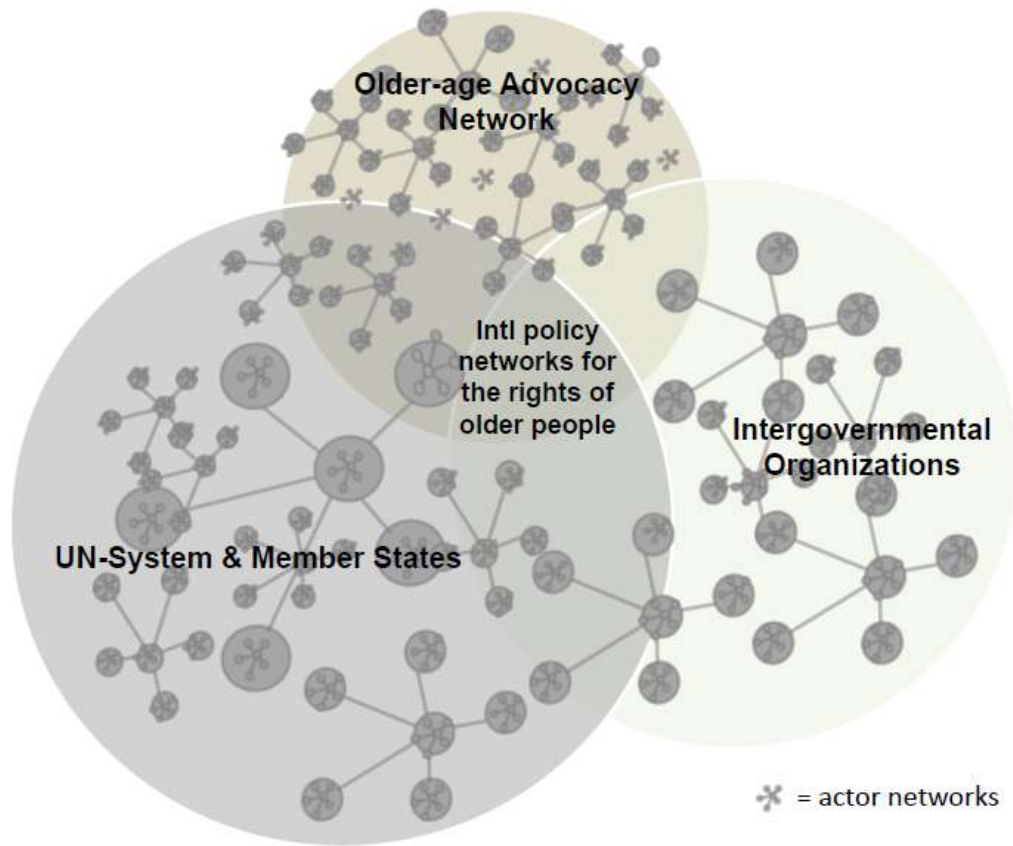
✳ = actor networks

Some relevant actors in each group include:

Older Age Advocacy Network

- HelpAge Global Network
- The Global Alliance for the Rights of Older People
- Global Action on Ageing
- Stakeholder Group on Ageing
- International Federation on Aging
- International Longevity Centre Alliance LTD
- International Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse
- Gray Panthers
- NGO Committees on Ageing in NY, Geneva and Vienna
- International Social Security Association
- International Association of Gerontology and Geriatrics
- Alliances with Major Groups- Children & Youth, Women

UN-System and Member States

- UN independent expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons
- OCHCR
- Member State National Govts
- WHO
- UN General Assembly
- UN-DESA
- UNDP
- UN Regional Commissions

Intergovernmental Organisations

- World Bank
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
- International Monetary Fund

*Note: this list is meant to be illustrative, not exhaustive

CHAPTER 2: FRAMING THE POLICY SPACE

2.1 The Sustainable Development Goals

The UN's post-2015 SDGs will replace the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in 2016 to guide international development and global public policy for the next fifteen years, and therefore offer a timely opportunity to meaningfully address the rights of older people and the requirements to make the world a "society for all ages"—an objective put forth in the 2002 Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA) (UN 2002).

The SDGs are the synthesis of expressed priority areas of Member States and consultations with the global population. The SDGs aim to build on the MDGs, expanding the scope and detail of goals, whilst redressing criticisms through universality, inclusivity and broad-based participation. Underpinned by a liberal, rights-based framework, themes of 'dignity', 'transformation', 'justice', 'human rights' and 'universality' echo throughout (UN 2014; 2015b). They are ambitious, with seventeen goals aiming to eradicate poverty and secure equitable development, 'leaving no one behind', irrespective of age or other status (UN 2015:6). It is an agenda that requires substantial international development cooperation, "a process with many actors, each with their own motives, interests, goals and strategies" (Degnbol-Martinussen & Engberg-Pedersen 1999:I).

> *"Not leaving older people behind is not about charity or welfare. We have the right to be counted, and to be recognized as assets and essential contributors to the economic, political and social health of our communities," (Beales 2015)*

Ageing is a cross-cutting issue, relevant to all topics and goals of MDGs and SDGs. However, older people were not mentioned in the MDGs and their experiences not captured through the indicators, which focused mainly on women of reproductive and working age and children (UNDESA 2008). Indeed, the core shift from MDGs to SDGs is the "the aim to 'leave no one behind' in the post-2015 framework, which means that no goals can be met unless they include people of all ages," (Beales & Russell-Moyle 2014).

2.2 Public Policy

Policies are "a set of interrelated decisions taken by a political actor or group of actors concerning the selection of goals and the means of achieving them within a specified situation where these decisions should, in principle, be within the powers of these actors to achieve" (Jenkins 1993:30). This includes regulation of pension schemes, social protection and healthcare systems. Public policy serves as a guide to problem-solving action, in a manner consistent with institutional customs and legal frameworks (UN 2015b:5). Ideally policy and legal instruments work together to substantiate rights and equity in lived experiences of citizens.

'Effective' policies are more than political rhetoric supporting certain groups and projects. The substantiation of policy requires political commitment and policy operationalization via clear implementation measures, resources and responsible parties (Walker 2015). Thus, an important side of policy relates to inaction—what policy-makers do not do. "Policy is about power, which is often exercised to keep important issues off the public, media and government agenda," (Cairney 2014).

Policy networks can aid institutionalization of new norms, defined as "the process whereby 'social practices become sufficiently regular and continuous to be described as institutions', that is 'social practices that are regularly and continuously repeated, are sanctioned and maintained by social norms, and have a major significance to the social structure'" (Abercrombie, Hill & Turner 1988: 124, in Levy 1996: 1). In this way, a thoughtful and robust policy space for ageing can potentially have profound long-term impacts on social norms concerning the experience of older age.

2.3 Social Justice and Active Citizenship

'Social justice' is a concept with many different interpretations along a continuum of political and socio-economic rights. For the purposes of this paper, 'social justice' premises on equitable legal protection, equality of opportunity, and 'parity of participation' (Sen 1999; Fraser 2000). Fraser's 'status model' is based on the principle of "equal moral worth" requiring "social arrangements that permit all to participate as peers in social life," (Fraser 2000; 2005:73).

Social justice is deeply connected to the concept of citizenship, which specifies and legitimates rights and duties of actors such as the state, the private sector, and civil society by way of a

'social contract'. Jones and Gaventa (2002) propose 'active' citizenship as "a responsibility attained through collective action and democratic governance, with rights accruing from this engagement," (19). This framing allows discussion of citizenship across spaces and scales (ibid). "Citizenship thus becomes a differentiated relationship of belonging, action and accountability between citizens and the many different institutions that have influence over their lives," (Isin & Wood 1999, in Jones & Gaventa 2002:20).

CHAPTER 3: FRAMING 'AGE'

3.1 'Age' as Social Construction

Ageing is a phenomenon that occurs to all individuals through biological processes, and to populations through declining fertility and increases in mortality (UN 1983; Bussolo et al. 2015:1). While ageing of individuals is in part biological and can be accompanied by some decline in functioning, conceptions of ageing are predominantly socially constructed, evidenced by differing perceptions and experiences of age around the world (Pierce & Timonen 2010; Boundless 2015) (Appendix 1).

This draws attention to the importance of 'identity' as relational—enacted through relations with others (Kabeer 2011:327). Certain aspects of a person's identity are activated as s/he moves through daily life; for example, a person characterized as 'older person' or 'scientist' depending on context. The visibility of older age can trigger this dimension of one's identity to become predominant. "It is from these everyday movements that power emerges" or dissipates (Rodriguez 2001:772).

From this perspective, understanding popular characterizations of older people is useful as they become a lens for decision-making in public policy formulation, the regulation of welfare entitlements, pensions and age-based rights claims.

There is a tendency to associate ageing in a linear manner with chronological age rather than seeing it as a continuum, or dynamic process that affects people differently. Social conceptions of older people have historically been rather reductive and binary- 'senior' as the wise elder, or 'senior' as the vulnerable and frail person, conflating older age with disability and dependency.

The media, which plays an enormous role in shaping public opinion, often reinforces homogenizing and negative stereotypes. In many popular television programs, older people are regularly infantilized with combinations of senility, mentally illness, anger or poor hygiene. In 2010 the term 'Silver Tsunami' emerged in an Economist article on population ageing, equating the rising numbers of older people to a natural disaster (The Economist 2010). Stereotyping can encourage the degradation of older people as a group and can manifest in marginalization, exclusion, isolation and abuse, reinforcing structural and legal barriers (Murphy 2012:8). Baltes and Cartensen (1996) say "It is not surprising that anticipation of ageing is characterized by anxiety and fear both on the part of the individual (*e.g.* fear of loss) and on the part of societies (*e.g.* fears of increased costs and burdens)", but the other side of the coin "involves growth, vitality, striving and contentment," (398). McClure (1992) argues that an objective of democratic action is the elimination of subordinate identities saying "cultural codes have become the 'objects of political struggle'," (Rodriguez 2001:775).

3.2 Theories of Ageing

> *"Human ageing is too rich to be reduced to chronological time and concepts such as chronological age, life expectancies and old age dependency ratios." (Pierce & Timonen 2010:14).*

There are numerous theories of ageing which offer a lens to view the ageing process and context for policy development. The Lifespan Development Theory (LDT) argues for ageing as multidimensional, made up of biological and social processes influencing life development stages at the individual level. LDT sees potential to learn and grow throughout the life-course, and is a notable "move away from the conventional definition of ageing as a period of decline and loss of cognitive functioning" (ibid:12).

The Life Course Perspective (LCP) recognizes the interplay of the individual with the world around them. LCP "directs attention to the connection between individual's lives and the historical and socio-economic context within which these lives unfold," (ibid:15). LCP recognizes the heterogeneity of older people and allows for analysis of generational categories of ageing which shift over time, as well as the differing trajectories for older ageing experiences. This perspective highlights macro-level processes and structures, such as societal roles (ibid).

The World Health Organization has put forward the concept of 'active ageing': "the process of optimizing opportunities for health, participation and security in order to enhance quality of life as people age," (WHO 2002:12). The concept emphasizes the active contributions of older people and the importance of maintaining autonomy and independence within a relational context requiring interdependence and intergenerational solidarity. It draws on LCP, noting that the youth of today are the older people of 'tomorrow', and quality of life depends on the accumulation of experiences throughout the life cycle. Thus, it requires a rights-based approach that "recognizes the rights of people to equality of opportunity and treatment in all aspects of life as they grow older" and "supports their responsibility to exercise their participation in the political process and other aspects of community life" (ibid:13). As these factors influence policy decisions, WHO notes that "it is helpful to consider the influences of various determinants over the life course so as to take advantage of transitions and 'windows of opportunity'" for enhancing active ageing (19). The 2015 World Report on Ageing and Health builds on the 2012 concept to present a framework for action to foster 'healthy ageing', moving beyond 'disease based curative models' to 'older-person-centred and integrated care' (WHO 2015:4).

'Active ageing' has become popular in the international policy realm, although it has been criticized for expecting older people to stay physically active (Ranzijn 2010:716). Ranzjin argues this type of approach can marginalize disadvantaged groups, reproducing the vision of 'productive' people as 'worthy', and suggests alternative concepts of 'authentic ageing' or 'ageing well' might be more successful in promoting social inclusion and diversity (ibid.)

Other theories of ageing examine the impact of power relations on distribution of resources and opportunity; question roots of inequalities between older people; dissect implicit cultural beliefs and values as they shape shared moral assumptions; look at the intersections of inequalities; and track the interplay of macro-processes such as globalization and individualization on social structures, like the welfare state, and on individuals (Pierce & Timonen 2010).

Ursula Staudinger discusses ageing as a broader phenomenon beyond individual experience (IMF 2015). Ageing is a 'moving target', situated historically in time—the aggregate experience of older people now will not be the same as what currently younger generations will experience. Biological advancements have outpaced our social/cultural norms, which must now adjust to the new demographic reality (ibid).

3.3 Factors Affecting the Ageing Process

There are a variety of factors that influence how ageing unfolds for a particular person: one's position in the social structure, biology and individual behavior (Kabeer 2011; Yuval-Davis 2011; WHO 2002; Pierce & Timonen 2010). WHO (2002) attributes social positioning and experience of opportunity and advantage to the combination of economic, social, and environmental factors (physical as well as political and institutional), and health services (19). Social

Box 2: "Low levels of education and illiteracy are associated with increased risks for disability and death among people as they age, as well as higher rates of unemployment" (WHO 2002:29). Lifelong learning opportunities can help to older people keep up to date with new technologies and skill-sets useful for continued employment, as well as generally staying active. SDG Goal 4 calls for lifetime learning opportunities (UN 2015b:12).

factors include collective norms, public policies, societal hierarchies, power relations, gender roles and discriminatory practices (Frediani 2010:176). Both structural and social elements affect individuals' access to resources, tangible (such as healthcare, education) and intangible (such as policies), and opportunities over the life course (ibid:178) (**Box 2**).

Culture and gender are cross-cutting issues. Values, traditions and norms vary across cultures, shaping views of older people and ageing, as well as social models such as property ownership and living arrangements. Here culture and gender norms can intersect to produce compounded outcomes. "Gender relations structure the entire lifecourse, influencing access to resources and opportunities, with an impact that is both ongoing and cumulative," (UNFPA & HelpAge 2012:13) (**Box 3**). Globally driven policy aims to accommodate this diversity, while incorporating

Box 3: Due to traditional gender roles and structural barriers limiting women's access to education, employment, finance and political participation from early life stages, women disproportionately experience poverty and exclusion, popularly termed the 'feminization of poverty' (Chant 2006). Women tend to live longer than men, resulting in the 'feminization of ageing' (WHO 2012:39). These trends produce cumulative and compounded effects, exacerbated in some cases by cultural norms such as traditional ownership structures that disadvantage women, particularly widows, blocking access to assets in later life. SDG Goal 5 specifically addresses gender equality (UN 2015b:12).

"critical universal values that transcend culture, such as ethics and human rights" (WHO 2002:20).

These factors highlight the predominant role of human-created systems of being and of meaning— that is socially constructed and reproduced systems— in shaping the experience of ageing.

3.4 Challenges Faced by Older People

Income insecurity is the most frequently reported challenge by older persons, drawing attention to the importance of economic variables such as access to work (income) and social protection (UNFPA & HelpAge 2012:14). This puts pressure on governments and policy-makers to strengthen pension and social protection schemes in an effort to support economic independence and guarantee a minimum safety net, as well as on families to fill gaps in government provision. The HelpAge Network collaborated closely with the International Labour Organization (ILO) to call for social protection floors, which are included in SDG target 1.3 (ibid:14). While countries in all stages of development struggle with these challenges, they are particularly difficult in developing countries that have high rates of poverty, weak social protection systems and constrained institutional capacities (ibid; HelpAge 2015b).

Health (addressed in SDG Goal 3) and enabling environments are recognized as two further challenges regularly experienced by older people, both intensified by various forms of age-based discrimination (UNFPA & HelpAge 2012:14). Some examples of age discrimination surface in regards to access to information, notably related to sexual health, access to medical and emergency services (i.e. deployment of ambulances), and access to employment due to upper-age limits, as well as various forms of abuse and mistreatment (Murphy 2012).

Older people can often be denied their rights because they are unaware of them, they are discriminated against, or the processes to access entitlements are out of reach. For example, selection processes can be exclusionary, service fees too high, or services too far way (HelpAge 2015g).

3.5 Age and Agency

There is tension between age and agency, defined here as "the capacity to process social experience and to devise ways of coping with life, even under the most extreme forms of coercion," (Long 2001:16). Older people are often not seen as agentic if their capabilities become constrained, however this does not mean that agency is eliminated altogether.

Older-age advocates argue individual autonomy and independence should be fully supported by actors and policies, but with an acceptance and support of the possibility that agency can become constrained at some point due to attitudes that marginalize and exclude along with biological processes. "The varying degrees of dependence many older people experience has often only been seen through a lens of provision of benefits and welfare, but their autonomy is also a component of efforts required to ensure the fullest enjoyment of rights across the life course," (Murphy 2012:12). This challenges policymakers to create age-policy frameworks which support diverse individuals through natural life processes whilst not undermining their agency to be whatever they choose to be for as long as they can.

On one hand, rapidly increasing life expectancies and healthy life expectancies are already forcing a re-evaluation of capabilities, and by extension rights and duties, of older people. However, despite uncontroversial evidence of older people's contributions in both formal and informal economically-based labour, as well as unpaid domestic labour in the home through care of partners and children, older people are generally still not viewed as productive contributors (Beales 2015c) (Appendix 2).

In the context of globalization and market liberalization, the tension between productivity and dependency is probably one of the most critical challenges of ageing debates, as it intersects with those on social protection, income security, poverty and inequality. Flowing from the notion of the social contract, these constructions translate to perceptions of ability to contribute to society, which relates to questions about how societies and cultures define 'work' and deservedness (Long 2001:22). "The pattern by which people are judged to have reached old age, at a point set only in terms of the number of years they have completed, and where the loss of employment status may entail their being placed on the sidelines of their own society, is one of the sad paradoxes of the process of socio-economic development in some countries," (UN 1983:15).

3.6 The Movement for the Rights of Older Persons (Appendix 3)

"As we get older, our rights do not change. As we get older, we are no less human and should not become invisible," – Archbishop Desmond Tutu (HelpAge 2015h: 3).

The issue of ageing and older age emerged in global discourse in the 1980s, triggered by shifts in population demographics and greater awareness of pressures on global resources. During this period the Cold War was nearing its end, and neo-liberalism prompted structural adjustment programs as the main poverty reduction strategy used by the World Bank, bringing developing countries into global markets. The Human Development paradigm appeared as a response to neo-liberalism, putting forth a new set of norms based on human rights-- social justice for all people via equitable expansion of choices and opportunities. This approach is meant to support human agency, incorporating all people and institutions as actors, rather than focusing purely on the State or market. The paradigm still guides many development initiatives in the international space, including the SDGs.

Advocacy for the rights of older persons, as well as development of the post-2015 agenda, have been underpinned primarily by the human development paradigm and the Rights-Based Approach (RBA). RBA works to end discrimination and inequality through helping people recognize and claim their (legal) rights from the State as well as rights for recognition. Again, a central debate is around agency- actors should be empowered to enact rights, rather than passively receiving them from the State. RBA is less clear about accountability obligations of non-State actors, such as international organisations and NGOs. In addition, it doesn't engage with the fact that rights violations can be culturally-based. However, RBA re-politicizes development through stressing accountability, focusing on systematic obstacles to rights claims and on the underlying processes that impede participation (considered a political process).

The issue of human rights, more broadly, came into the global discourse in 1948 when the UN adopted the Universal Declaration for Human Rights (UDHR) (UN 2015b). The Declaration outlines human rights as universal, equal, indivisible and interdependent. (UN 2006:1). The United Nations has since been a core actor in international human rights issues, particularly via the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), but with notable gaps in relation to ageing, evidenced by the absence of a binding convention or dedicated system agency.

Key policy documents and resolutions devoted to older people include: 1982 Vienna International Plan of Action on Ageing (adopted at the First World Assembly on Ageing), the 1991 UN Principles for Older Persons (adopted at the General Assembly of 1991), and the 2002 Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA) (adopted at the Second World Assembly on Ageing). The latter has been the most influential, calling for the mainstreaming of ageing in global development agendas and systematic review of progress, with its three priority themes of development, health and well-being, and enabling and supportive environments (UN 2002). By 2012, evidence showed that since 2002 at least fifty-seven countries have produced official plans for ageing, with twenty-one more in some stage of planning (UNFPA & HelpAge 2012:106).

However, overall the international rights and policy framework still is fragmented with notable protection gaps resulting from normative, implementation, monitoring and information gaps (Murphy 2012:2; UNOHCHR 2012). These gaps are interrelated and mutually reinforcing. With few explicit references to older people in the international rights framework, which is for the most part non-binding (hence non-enforceable) and up to State interpretation, the rights of older people are often left unaddressed and unsubstantiated.

3.7 HelpAge International

In the last two decades, HelpAge International has been a lead actor in older-age advocacy (HelpAge 2015a). HelpAge "helps older people claim their rights, challenge discrimination and overcome poverty, so that they can lead dignified, secure, active and healthy lives," (ibid). Its network formed in 1983 over five countries and now has over one hundred and fifteen affiliated organisations working to progress the rights of older people in seventy-six countries. HelpAge works in close collaboration and partnership with a range of global networks on ageing, which include the International Federation on Aging (IFA), International Longevity Centres LTD, International Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse (INPEA), International Association of Gerontology and Geriatrics and the International Social Security Association (ISSA), and organisations active in the NGO Committees on Ageing in New York, Geneva and Vienna (UN 2015d).

HelpAge advocacy for change focuses on bringing evidence, supporting older voices and targeting lobbying with national governments, international governmental organisations (IGOs),

UN agencies and UN processes to promote the rights of older persons to improved health services, pension schemes, age-friendly enabling environments and lifelong learning opportunities. In 2013, HelpAge launched the Global AgeWatch Index (**Box 4**) to monitor individual country's progress on supporting the rights and well-being of older people using these core issues as its framework and in so doing track global trends on ageing issues (HelpAge 2015b). In 2014 the HelpAge Global Network and the NGO Committee on Ageing New York formed an alliance called the Stakeholder Group on Ageing (SGA) specifically to "advance the interests of older persons in the post-2015 sustainable development agenda" (UN 2015e).

> **Box 4:** The Global AgeWatch Index is the first global index measuring the well-being of older people with internationally-comparable data. It is a multidimensional measure, made up of thirteen indicators in four domains: income security, health status, capability and enabling environment. It shows which domains countries are stronger and weaker in—this provides more detailed information to governments and policy-makers to guide action. It is both a barometer and advocacy tool that can encourage governments to take responsibility for their ageing populations. (HelpAge 2015b).

This advocacy partnership has closely monitored the development of the SDG targets and indicators to ensure they are substantial and age-inclusive. At the time of writing, the efforts of the Stakeholder Group on Ageing has resulted in age being recognized as a key feature in the SDGs along with gender and disability and there are a number of explicit references to 'older persons', 'age' and 'of all ages' in the final SDG document 'Transforming our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development' (HelpAge 2015f; UN 2015b).

CHAPTER 4: ANALYTIC FRAMEWORK

The following two sections include an analytic framework and the corresponding analysis. Underpinning the discussion is the idea that ageing, and experiencing older age in particular, are processes that are in large part shaped by human thinking and (in)action. Social policies aimed at redressing the challenges of older people are formulated and implemented through networked individuals across scales. The degree of shared commitment amongst actors to the rights of older people greatly influences outcomes. Thus, in thinking about the SDGs as a

complex site for deliberation over collective action agendas by many intersecting networks of actors, questions of rights, solidarity and agency emerge.

4.1 Actors, Actions and Choices

A constellation of actors (individuals, organisations, firms or governments) is involved in shaping the lived experiences of older people through influence and action. These actors make choices in action arenas, "where institutions, communities, and rules operate, affecting the process of making/realizing choices," (Frediani 2010:179). These choices are influenced by context; interests and incentives; beliefs (including morals); rules; and norms (formal and informal institutions), which in concert form one's guiding policy paradigm: "frameworks of ideas and standards that specify not only the goals of the policy and the kind of instruments used to attain them, but also the very nature of the problems they are meant to be addressing," (Coleman & Perl 1999:697-8). In addition, paradigms inform ideas on causal relationships "which guide policymakers in the selection of their instruments and in the formulation of the 'recipes' for deployment," (ibid). These paradigms help "define a vision for the world", and thus have implications for democracy, citizenship and social justice, particularly when in competition for dominance (ibid:698) **(Figure 2).**

From the political economy perspective, political behavior is strongly influenced by the context and history of space and relationships. Decision-making arenas become "complex environments that have roots in the past and that not only constrain and channel action but actually shape the perspectives, preferences and values of political actors," (Grindle 1999:4). Physical and symbolic space can become imbued with certain power relations that are reinforced with time. Actors bring their ideas, values and beliefs into spaces, either altering or reinforcing the existing dynamics.

These ideas help shape the dominant institutions— formal and informal rules, norms and practices-- operating within, which structure patterns of relationships across and within organisations (Ostrom 2010). Institutions tend to form around the interests of the most powerful, to lower transaction costs and align with social, political and economic interests. The rules and norms of institutions "structure the interactions of citizens, politicians, and would-be politicians by providing incentives and sanctions to behave in certain ways and by distributing bargaining power differently," (Grindle 1999:8).

Figure 2: Policy Network Processes
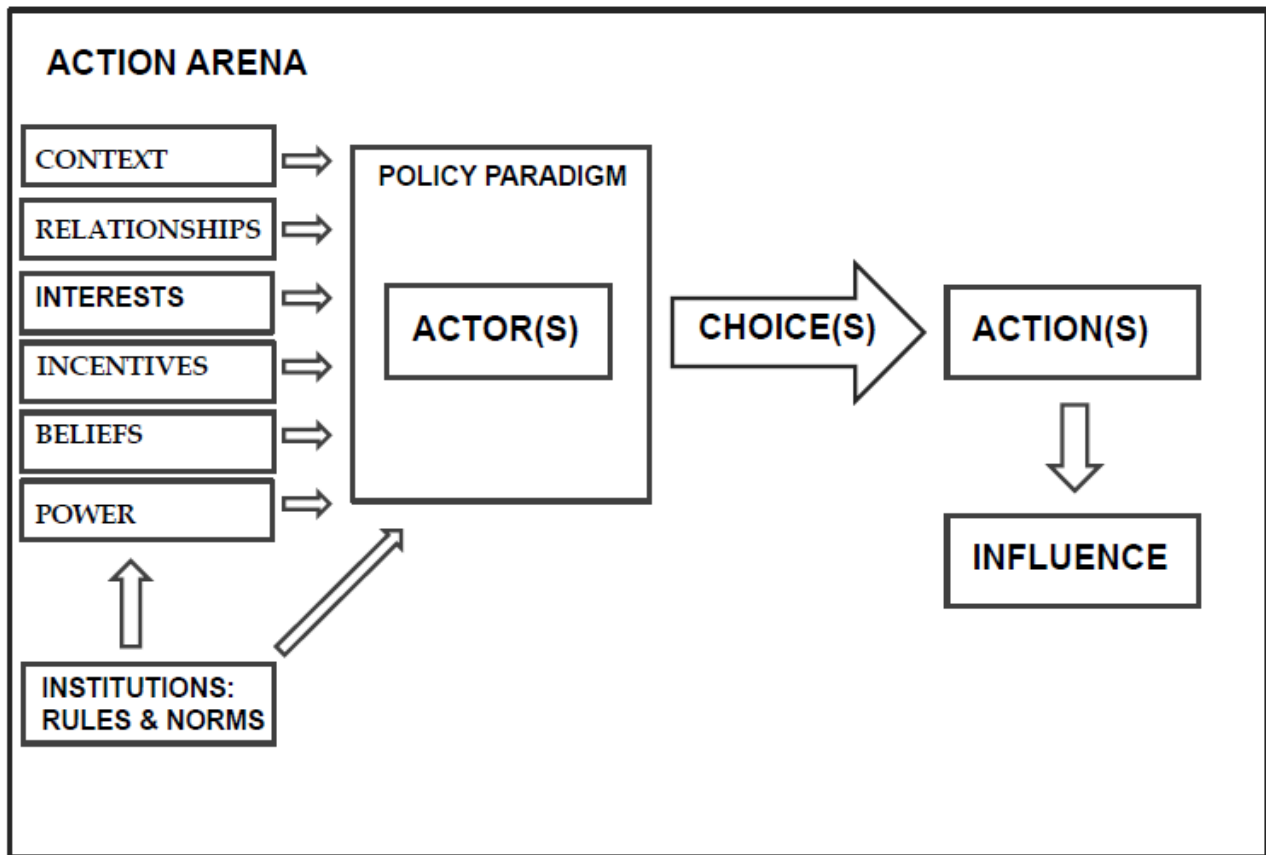
In this way, institutions influence incentive structures and constrain actors (Ostrom 2010; Grindle 1999). They allocate power and decision-making capabilities, determine who is invited (or not) to participate in debates and influence the ways political actors analyze costs and benefits of action options. In short, they "shape the resources available to political actors and the dynamics of policy choice," (ibid:6). Institutions also shape individual preferences, and thus are more "than contexts that inform rational strategic action", they are "the site of ongoing struggles to define public policy and distributions of economic and social power," (ibid). Within the institutional constraints of an action arena, actors make decisions guided, most often, by self-interest and value-systems, including ethics. In a large network, actors' value-systems can be far from uniform, and can conflict.

4.2 Relationships between Actors

Networks operate as a mode of organisation that "facilitates collective action and cooperation, exercises influence, or serves as a means of international governance" (Hafner-Burton et al 2009:560). These relationships often "form around policy problems that involve complex political, economic and technical task and resource interdependencies," (Coleman & Perl 1999:696). Through networks, actors share key resources such as expertise, information, political support and decision-making power.

Coleman & Perl (1999) posit that these relationships vary by "*degree and patterns of integration*, and the manner in which *public power is shared*," the two features being interdependent (694, original italics). The level of integration is defined by shared values and 'boundary rules' defining membership, however not contained to any arena- nation-state or other (ibid:695). Power is more attributed to an actor's centrality within the network, offering greater access to resource-sharing, rather than solely by individual attributes (Hafner-Burton et al 2009:570).

Within these communities, smaller groups termed 'advocacy coalitions' (Sabatier 1993) or 'epistemic communities' (Haas 1992), may form that share sets of deep "normative core beliefs, and from these develop basic strategies and policy positions," (Coleman & Perl 1999:695). This contributes to integration and a solidaristic action orientation, promoting dominance and legitimacy within the larger group as long as consensus over core values remains (ibid.).

Over a period of time and through deliberation and consensus-forming, policy paradigms become institutionalized and a policy community will settle into a period of 'normal politics' (Coleman & Perl 1999:698). "Policy communities stabilize… levels of integration rise, and state actors may see fit to share power," (ibid). The actors perceived to be the most legitimate become the core actors in policy creation (ibid).

'Normal politics' will only remain stable for a period. "In the present period of globalization, the balance among social forces is frequently changing, resources are being redistributed, and ways of thinking and well-used recipes are being challenged," (ibid). Challenges range from simple policy reformulation, to deeper questions about the validity of the paradigm. In this case, actors compete for authority, and new ideologies compete for dominance through processes of contestation and negotiation.

Logically, with increased conflict, policy communities become less integrated. State actors pull back power and civil society actors will be distanced into looser 'issue networks'. This leads to fragmentation of the policy process, with many different policy communities handling different stages, resulting in a disjointed character. When conflict arises, coalition-building shifts to bargaining between actors and action is reduced to the 'lowest common denominator' (Risse-Kappen 1996:73).

4.3 Relationships between Scales: International and National Policy Networks

Policy processes gain an extra layer of complexity when policy networks work at multiple scales of governance, as in the SDGs between the national and international realms. With each scale, the diversity of actors, institutions and contexts expands dramatically, impacting integration and power distributions. A disjuncture can occur from centralized decision-making in one arena to decentralized execution in others (Hafner-Burton 2009:575). So while powerful international actors may shape transnational policies, domestic structures and "national policy networks will remain dominant in the definition, discussion, and selection of policy options as well as in policy implementation" (Coleman & Perl 1999:704).   This increases the importance of policy community mediators that can act as 'pragmatic policy broker' working to lessen conflict, or can work to 'translate' policy ideas and paradigms between policy communities (Coleman & Perl 1999:707).

4.4 Agency and Social Change

Central to theories of social change are the notions of power and agency. Long's (2001) actor-oriented approach recognizes the "interplay and mutual determination of 'internal' and 'external' factors and relationships" as well as "the central role played by human action and consciousness," (13). In this approach, all actors have some degree of agency, whilst it might be constrained by context.

On one side, policy change occurs when dominant actors perceive that new rules will better serve realization of desired outcomes. On the other, policy change events result from collective action by subaltern groups, through ongoing processes of contestation and renegotiation, and relational power built through networks. Castells (2012) says:

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"For the networks of counterpower to prevail over the networks of power embedded in the organisation of society, they will have to reprogram the polity, the economy, the culture or whatever dimension they aim to change by introducing in the institutions' programs, as well as in their own lives, other instructions, including, in some utopian versions, the rule of not ruling anything. Furthermore, they will have to switch on the connection between different networks of social change, e.g. between pro-democracy networks and economic justice networks, women's rights networks….and so on," (17).

When enough pressure is generated it can force new rules. Lister & Nyamugasira (2003) draw attention to the role the civil society organisations and INGOs can play as 'pressurizers', as well as monitors and popular mobilisers (99-101). In this way, 'everyday politics' of politicians and civil society actors can, over time, have a transformative effect on institutions, embedding new norms. "The critical passage from hope to implementation of change depends on the permeability of political institutions to the demands of the movement, and on the willingness of the movement to engage in a process of negotiation," (Castells 2012:234).

CHAPTER 5: ANALYSIS

This network perspective lays a foundation from which to interrogate the flow of paradigms through the SDG space and their implications for the rights of older people. To realize rights, some form of solidaristic action-orientation is needed amongst actors. These three components- rights, solidarity, and agency- are subsequently used as entry points for further discussion.

5.1 Rights

The rights-based orientation of the movement for the rights of older people and of SDGs is fundamentally about the "protection of an agreed set of norms and values," generated by a global network of actors over time, including Member States, policymakers, organisations and citizens (Frediani 2010:182). Embedding a discourse of rights sends the message of political solidarity and 'belonging' to global citizens, specifically older people, as rights are universal, intrinsic and unconditional (Standing 2005:91). A key dimension of the SDGs is a declaration of commitment—an active choice— by Member States to the value of human rights, including access to resources, development, and self-determination. This commitment is tied to formal

and informal responsibility for action to substantiate those rights, for which policy is a primary instrument.

While new age-policy frameworks may form in the international rights-based SDG sphere (if age is incorporated into the indicators) responsibility for implementation will be decentralized to national policy communities. Thus, domestic actors have autonomy to interpret and tailor policy frameworks, based on needs, priorities and paradigms. When ideals translate into the real-world context of finite resources and a proliferation of policy communities, policy commitments can become diffused down the chain of command due to de-prioritization or limited understanding and knowledge of the problematic (**Box 5**). The relatively limited domestic implementation of the MIPAA is evidence of the former.

Box 5: When HelpAge conducted focus groups in 2011 and 2012 for the Ageing in the 21st Century report (UNPF & HelpAge 2012), a key question was around knowledge of the MIPAA. Responses showed that only those citizens who had been in touch with HelpAge had any knowledge of it. If citizens do not have access to the information, it is difficult to make informed decisions, ask for action and/or call for implementation (Beales 2015d).

5.1.1 Citizenship

National citizenship paradigms dictate the composition of network relationships through guiding the boundaries of the political community, the rights and duties of actors, the mode in which rights are accessed and the actor(s) responsible for substantiation. Competing paradigms emerge in conflict with the liberal rights-based paradigm, and can be embedded more or less in different policy communities, operating concurrently. Estes & Phillipson (2002) argue that a significant change in the political economy impacting older people's lives was the move to more individualized and privatized structures for health care, pensions and social care driven by neo-liberalism (279). This trend was embedded and perpetuated by actors such as the World Bank, the World Trade Organization and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development through international development aid and a focus on macroeconomic policy (ibid) (**Box 6**). The asymmetrical power relationship between these IGOs and, particularly, citizens of developing states manifests in clientelistic relationships across scales (Grindle 1999:20).

Box 6: Yves Guérard of the International Actuarial Association criticizes the World Bank's stance on pensions in particular, suggesting that the increased risk on individuals results in lower pension coverage than should be expected. "This shift has been a major undertaking in social engineering away from solidarity, pooling of risk and redistribution, towards individual wealth accumulation, inheritance and gender differences that should be benchmarked separately against the objectives of poverty alleviation vs. asset accumulation or maintenance of standards of living," (IAA 2006: 2).

The goal of a 'rational' economic model is 'fiscal efficiency', rather than human rights fulfillment, incentivized by utility and competition (Elson 2002:1). The institutional incentives then can prompt politicians and policy-makers to view ageing as a threat to the economy, then de-prioritizing older people's needs and redirecting resources elsewhere (Onder, H. & Pestieau 2014). The assumption is that the market is the most efficient distributor of resources, which shifts the terms by which tangible and intangible resources (like rights) flow through the network between actors, creating membership boundaries. As the role (and responsibility) of the State is minimized, "citizens as 'users' become self-providers as well as consumers of services," (Cornwall & Coehlo 2006:5). So, while some actors in the international policy networks for the rights of older people may share use of the language of 'rights', the process of rights can vary. For example, while UN documents may speak of older people as full citizens bearing rights, the operational model of the World Bank Group sees older individuals more in terms of the productivity/dependency binary. Bloom et al (2008) agree arguing the World Bank's lens for LCP focuses on patterns of economic contributions and needs over the life cycle (15).

These "'parallel traditions of citizenship' which parallel different ways of defining identities, affiliations and the 'boundaries of belonging'…can bolster hierarchy, exclusion and conflict between different groups rather than equality, universality and dignity for all," producing "dilemmas of citizenship", that mediate access to representation, recognition and resources (Ndegwa 1997 and Kabeer in Kabeer 2002:14-15). As a result, even *de jure* equality can be accompanied by *de facto* inequalities and stratified citizenship—the unequal distribution of political and material rights throughout a population, i.e. equal laws do not necessarily result in equal experience.

In the context of an already fragmented international legal framework, this is extremely problematic for many older people. As many are income-constrained through retirement or participating in the *informal* market on unfavourable terms due in part to age, this model causes barriers to access to social protection and leads to a decline of rights to income, health and security overall, linked to age for some. "Those people whose participation does not fit this norm typically have lesser rights, which they can frequently only exercise as dependents on those who do fit the norm," (Elson 2002:6). These processes exclude older people, essentially punishing them for not being formally economically productive while simultaneously creating conditions that encourage dependency. Branco (2014) describes the resulting status differential, "by means of commodification, human rights end up filled with exchange value while emptied of political significance, and individuals upgraded as customers while downgraded as citizens."

Older individuals develop coping mechanisms in response to such unequal structural terms. This can include relationships of adverse inclusion for the working poor—inclusion embedded on terms that may be stable but are essentially exploitative (Wood 2003). Many older people, particularly in developing countries, must continue to work into their late years to support themselves and their families due to income insecurity and lack of sufficient social protection schemes (HelpAge 2015b). Choice is constrained, and significant contributions are often under-recognized. Baars (2009) highlights "the paradoxes and unfortunate conflicts facing older people who are confronted with the rules of institutions and organisations that combine chronological age and participation or entitlement in areas such as employment, social services and care," (in Pierce & Timonen 2010:14).

In a statement on the SDGs, Rosa Korngeld-Matte, the UN independent expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons, said "the new agenda can help change attitudes and perceptions of older persons from being considered recipients of welfare to rights holders with responsibilities," (UN 2014b). Kornfeld-Matte is an important mediator between policy communities. She can encourage recognition of older people's "right to have rights" (Isin & Wood 1999:4) as a group and individually. Recognition of group rights demonstrates not only respect for difference, but recognition of the particular needs of the group to realize social justice. "A focus on equitable outcomes requires a differentiated approach to rights that actively addresses the realities of power and inequalities institutionalized in societies," (Jones & Gaventa 2002:11).

On the other hand, the successive Global AgeWatch Index and World Bank reports show the diversity of older age experiences evidenced by increasing inequality amongst older people (HelpAge 2015h; Bloom et al 2008). Those who have had access to education and resources throughout the lifecourse are more likely to accumulate assets that allow for a very different experience of older age. "There is a social content [of macroeconomic policy] which in much of the world is biased against those who rely on labor rather than financial assets to make a living; and against those who provide most of the unpaid care that families and communities require" (Elson 2002:8). That said, the Global AgeWatch Index has also highlighted the gaps in data on age, with internationally comparable data on poverty in old age missing in ninety-four countries. Access to more internationally comparable data could be useful to better understand lived realities of older people around the world.

5.1.2 Accountability

The substantiation of rights is also deeply intertwined with vertical accountability mechanisms between networked actors, such as access to information and 'voice'. This highlights the importance of access to legal literacy campaigns and voice platforms for older citizens on one side, as well as the SDG indicators and the monitoring and evaluation framework on the other. "Moreover the influence of multinational and intergovernmental institutions over people's lives urges recognition of the need for accountabilities and rights to be enforceable across national boundaries," (ibid:20).

Information is power, and thus indicators become profoundly political (Foucault 1991). Indicator selection can align with the self-interest of influential leaders, moving away from a social justice orientation. "Indicators are the product of a lengthy social process, which at every stage is shaped by the bias of the agents involved," (Sumner 2007:11). MDG and SDG indicators have also been critiqued as guided by rational economic logic, creating a contradiction between discursive commitments and practice (ibid:5, 8). Indicators are also constrained by the data available.

According to Sen, choosing indicators means to "choose the aims and ends of the society" through influencing incentive structures (Rigon 2013). Policymakers and politicians will adapt initiatives to achieve successful outcomes along indicator measures. Thus, while inappropriate indicators can be used to sidestep challenging resource-based scenarios, thoughtful indicators

can increase pressure where political will is lacking, encouraging an effect that mimics solidarity. To this end, HelpAge advocates for "crosscutting lifecourse indicators across the goals and targets to pick up shared issues of ageing, gender, disability and other issues, and to review them through ongoing and open statistical dialogues," for ages "up to and over one-hundred", as well as for concrete improvement in collection, use and analysis of data on age (HelpAge 2015d; SGA 2013).

At the time of writing, the list of SDG indicators still appears to exclude older age experiences, based on data that is drawn from surveys that measure up to age forty-nine, sixty-four and seventy-four, leaving in some cases almost half of people's lives uncounted (SDSN 2015) (**Appendix 4**). This is problematic and threatens the translation of discursive SDG commitments on age into concrete action plans by actors less integrated into the older age policy network (and therefore potentially less committed or informed), particularly as the policy plans travel across scales and countries. Grindle (1999) says, "In contrast to the general consensus that exists about macroeconomic policy, many of the newer reforms do not have well-recognized templates that explain the central problem and the appropriate solution to it," (21). Thus gaps in information pose barriers to accurate understandings of the realities of older people needed to inform policy planning at both national and international levels (HelpAge 2015d). Without appropriate data, older people remain invisible, especially the poorest and most vulnerable (SGA 2015).

While HelpAge, NPOs and CSOs can advocate for and shape the discourse around rights, it is really the State's responsibility to substantiate them. However, these groups can be crucially instrumental in monitoring progress of goals for older people—a role more akin to active citizenship, and articulated in international spaces (Burrall & Maxwell 2006:10). Additionally, while they mediate between different policy spheres and act as proxies for civil society, CSO, NGOs and policy actors do not negate the need for the direct participation and voice of older people in the SDG policy spaces (Ackerman 2004)—a position endorsed by HelpAge (HelpAge 2015e).

5.2 Solidarity

The entire SDG process is an effort to mobilize solidarity around a new vision of how the world should (and can) be, with 'partnership' understood as a central means to implement the plan.

Older-age advocacy networks are campaigning for older people to fit within the boundaries of belonging for that vision. In a general sense, solidarity manifests horizontally in networks through the relational process of creating shared meanings and collective capabilities to achieve desired common goals. Socially oriented networks also aim to interrogate unequal power relations. Solidarity success then derives in part from emphasis of similarities between actors, rather than differences. Frediani (2010) describes this 'power with' others as "a term that describes common ground among different interests and the building of collective strength through organisation and the development of shared values and strategies" (181). Each actor that enacts the new vision in her/his own way, moves the network closer to institutionalizing the new norm.

However, Routledge and Cumbers (2009) draw attention to the difficulties with actually achieving 'mutual solidarity' in practice. "The construction of mutual solidarities is not a smooth process: they involve antagonisms (often born out of the differences between collaborators) as well as agreements: they are always multiple and contested: fraught with political determinations," (ibid). The legitimacy of the UN has drawn governments, policy network actors, NGOS, civil society and the private sector to join. Yet, operating from the supranational level down to the local, this particular initiative is a complicated one for which to elicit deep commitment, substantiated by action on all points, due to the heterogeneity of the vast network. Again, place-specific demographic needs, organisational ideologies and access to resources (including power) contribute to or undermine solidarity for movements (ibid).

With such an array of actors and a tremendous agenda, ideas for shared visions become somewhat fragmented in practice despite age being a cross-cutting theme and universally relevant (UN 2015h). 'Age' may not be a priority agenda item for some, or might be but with more 'urgent' items ahead. Countries that have higher proportion of older people already may have more incentive to create policies to address this group, whereas younger populations may not feel the pressure yet. If the agenda is perceived as threatening existing priorities, it may prompt actors to pull power back rather than voluntarily redistributing it—a conflict between self-interest and moral predispositions. In a large bureaucratic institution such as the UN, this means that changing norms is slow and more incremental, rather than sudden. The tempered enforceability, being more reputational than legally sanction-able further softens pressure to act on issues outside of actor's self-interest.

The intention for the SDGs is to build on all previously defined international instruments, including the MIPAA, which does offer a form of solidarity via continuity (UN 2015b:5). However, as mentioned, just less than a third of countries had implemented national ageing policies as of 2012 (UNFPA 2012:106). In any country, regardless of demography, it is a reality that issues and groups compete for agenda-space and resources. In cases where 'older age' is in competition with other groups, such as 'youth' or 'working age' (**Box 7**), perverse incentives can incite neglect of older people in order to meet other goals. This impacts the flow of resources such as information, policy, and finance

Box 7: Several Global AgeWatch country commentaries (Portugal, Armenia, Ireland and Norway) acknowledge social support resources overtly being redirected away from older people to support younger people (HelpAge 2015b). In some places with relatively young populations, particularly African countries, younger people are seen as 'engines of growth'. In others, where youth unemployment is very high, there is a perception that older people are taking jobs away from younger people and fear of the trend worsening. A 2008 World Bank report claims though that "low fertility will cause lower youth dependency that is more than enough to offset the skewing of adults toward the older ages at which labor force participation is lower," (Bloom et al 2008:v).

needed to support older age beyond narrative means (Simmons & Birchall 2008:2137). To encourage solidarity around ageing, the global campaign promoted by HelpAge 'Age Helps' emphasizes the current and potential contributions of older people in effort to incentivize policymakers to refocus attention and resources to older populations (HelpAge 2015f).

At the international level, the older-age advocacy network has engaged with the UN and other major actors in an ongoing way for over twenty-years, but now enter the SDG space as a newer actor, less integrated and one 'issue network' of many. While the broader networks of the SDG space formally acknowledge the rights of all people, norms still exist that tend to exclude age due to oversight or discrimination. The need for insistence on the inclusion of older age in the SDG goals and indicators within national and global broad-based consultations is evidence of this. It has been important to counter the negative characterizations and marginalization of older age to avoid broader society 'democratically' reproducing existing exclusion in the SDG space.

The exclusion of older age in Development Goal processes is not new: older age was not included in the MDGs or within the SDGs until pressure mounted (HelpAge 2015d). Age was not accepted as a specific 'major group' (alongside children and youth and women, for example)

when Major Group System for citizen involvement for sustainable development progress was put in place at the Rio 2002 conference (Beales 2015d). These exclusions have limited the space in which to have proper discussions and debate about age-related policy and practice with broader policy communities as well as influence how age is to be properly integrated in current and forthcoming policy debates such as Climate Change and Habitat.

Castells (2012) and Routledge & Cumbers (2009) highlight the way in which people construct (new) meaning and forge alliances through communication and moments of 'togetherness', particularly when notions of connectivity, relationality and commonality feature. This impresses the importance of access to significant spaces of communication. The UN is specifically designed to be a deliberative and democratic space to "promote free and equal participation", cooperation and consensus-building (Della Porta 2013:24; UN 2015c). However, certain theorists like Fraser and Mouffe argue that these spaces are never neutral, that participation is never equal, and that voices are excluded, resulting in a democratic deficit (Ruiz 2014; Risse-Kappen 1996:74). In this way the 'public sphere' actually reproduces power imbalances rather than challenging them (ibid: 18). Schneider argues for a communicative approach more in line with active citizenship: collaboration (in Miessen 2010:91). Collaboration embraces diversity and conflict by allowing contestation, while still working to common ends.

To gain legitimacy in the international policy space, older-age advocacy coalitions have built relationships and collaborated with key political allies. These actors are instrumental in influencing additional actors. A few significant leaders with overlapping policy- and issue-network membership include UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon; Special Advisor of the Secretary-General on Post-2015 Development Planning, Amina Mohammed; Archbishop Desmond Tutu; and Sir Richard Jolly (UNFPA & HelpAge 2012; HelpAge 2015h; AI 2015). These actors have supported the actions of the Stakeholder Group on Ageing and have contributed to HelpAge network publications and events, as well as taken messages about ageing to other networks. Enrolling more actors in the 'project' through wider alliance legitimizes voice of older age advocates and raises visibility of the network (Long 2001:17).

The HelpAge network and the Stakeholder Group on Ageing have also built solidarity alliances with other issue networks such as women, youth and disability (HelpAge 2015d) and "post-2015 coalitions" (HelpAge 2015c). This intersectional and intergenerational approach effectively draws attention to the interconnectedness of life experiences, bridging the sectoral divides of advocacy coalitions and seeing across identities. "The participants, while being engaged with

'others' belonging to different collectivities across borders and boundaries, act not as representatives of identity categories or groupings but rather as advocates, how they are reflectively engaged in 'rooting' and 'shifting' and how their strength lies in the construction of common epistemological understandings of particular political situations rather than of common political action" (Yuval-Davis 2011:12).   Joining voices and crossing common boundaries of political space raises the profile and impact of the movement, increases bargaining power and reinforces the interdependency of rights. "The ability to influence others or to pass on a command (e.g. to get them to accept a particular message) rests fundamentally on 'the actions of a chain of agents each of whom 'translates' it in accordance with his/her own projects'—and power is composed here and now by enrolling many actors in a given political and social scheme," (Latour 1986:264 in Long 2001:17). The pressure power generated from these relationships transforms "voice from access, to presence, to influence" (Goetz & Gaventa 2001 in Gaventa 2006). As the older-age advocacy network integrates further into the broader network, the more potential they will have to shape policy.

5.3 Agency

Routledge & Cumbers (2009) argue that global networks for social justice are indicative of "emergent forms of transnational political agency" expressed in the international system. These networks of actors, such as the older-age advocacy network, aim to change the structure of the relationships between them, rather than simply existing within (Kahler n/d:10). Further, they aim to enhance 'agency freedom'—the freedom to choose and self-determine—of individual actors and the group through contesting the socio-structural factors affecting ageing (Frediani 2010:176). Walker (2015b) posits that in networks, supporting agency of all actors is crucial to keep from elite capture and reduce forms of coercive power, particularly invisible power (Lukes 2005; Gramsci 1971; Foucault 1977-78).

Long (2001) argues agency can be recognized when "particular actions make a difference to a pre-existing state of affairs or course of events—embodied in social relations and effective only through them" (17). In the SDG space, the older-age network acts as a pressurizer, continually voicing and reinforcing the message that older age must be meaningfully incorporated in the agenda and addressed through policy. At the same time, they are educating broader networks on the lived realities of older people and advising policymakers on particular factors for

consideration, such as the different needs between rural and urban older residents, or those in conflict situations.

The SGDs provide a rare window of opportunity for civil society actors to be invited to participate in a form of co-production of the development agenda with government officials and policymakers. While consultations have the tendency to be tokenistic gestures (Jones & Gaventa 2002:26), it has been possible through the intergovernmental negotiations conducted through the Open Working Group for the Stakeholder Group on Ageing to bring evidence and wording to influence the text, with results to show. The older age advocacy network's presence and persistent pressure effectively influenced the action. This is a notable victory which has opened a dialogue and sets a precedent for future action. Yet the long-term substantiation of policy agenda commitments will be the test of how and to what extent the SDGs support the agency of older people and will require the continued engagement of older people in the implementation of the goals.

The final SDG document declares "People who are vulnerable must be empowered" including all older persons (UN 2015b: 6). The categorization of older people as vulnerable can increase attention and visibility, but can also stigmatize, taking away agency and status. Recognizing vulnerability without also recognizing value, as is done for migrants (ibid: 8), for example, can be problematic. Further, this commitment is to be undertaken "in conformity with international law" (ibid), but as mentioned, the legal framework has many gaps that impede its effectiveness. Devereux & Sabates-Wheeler (2004) acknowledge that vulnerability is attributed to a point in the life cycle, but argue for a reframing of the problematic to both empower and redress causes of vulnerability. "If rather than focusing on risk as an exogenously given factor to be managed, vulnerability is conceptualized as emerging from and embedded in the socio-political context then our attention would no longer be focused on how to design a policy so that various groups face less risk in a given context, but on how to change this context to minimize risk for a range of vulnerable groups" (6). This perspective provokes a transformation of the dominant paradigm rather than working within status quo.

Within the SDG space, the older-age advocacy network is also actively challenging the status quo of disempowering characterizations and trying to create a new knowledge of older people as capable individuals and assets to the global community (HelpAge 2015c). This reframing aims to influence the experiences of older people today, but also to shift the broader structural process of ageing through challenging the relationships which produce it, pushing the SDGs to

facilitate socially just institutions as a means to socially just ends for older people. Network actors advocate for institutions and actors to support autonomy, capability and independence of older people—not to the extent that individuals become isolated, as in the rational economic approach, but in a way that frees individuals from exclusion and oppression. The premise is that individuals should have autonomy and choice over their lives and outcomes.

In this way, the advocacy network also challenges the false binary between autonomy and dependency, and challenges oppressive relationships of care. Staudinger says "Human life is about agency, gaining agency, but also about embracing the loss of this agency — the dialectic between being agentic and being constrained needs to determine our culture in a society of longer life," (IMF 2015). Recognizing there will be a period of dependency at the end of life, as in the beginning, she says we need to create systems that allow for a dignified dependency, when the stage is reached (ibid.) Yuval-Davis (2011) argues that normalizing this process and accepting "everyone at certain times of their lives becomes dependent on care, can be the normative basis for the development of 'ethics of care'" (8). The concept of 'ethics of care' "relates more to the ways people should relate and belong to each other rather than to what should be the boundaries of belonging…but they can't be avoided once we start questioning who cares for whom and what are the emotional and the power relations which are involved in this interaction" (ibid:7).

Outside of the formal SDG space, the HelpAge network contributes to several campaigns related to them, such as Action/2015, Action2015 All Ages and Age Demands Action which actively engage civil society actors to use their voice to influence the SDG space from the outside (HelpAge 2015e). HelpAge recognizes that it is the responsibility of the 'global older citizen' to create visibility and use their voices to demand to be counted (Beales 2015b). The network supports various platforms for voice, learning and action, which expands agency and helps older people to be informed of their rights and choices. These initiatives validate the diverse (and shared) experiences of older people, empowering them to create change themselves, through facilitating dialogue with other actors, such as governments NGOs and service providers (**Box 8**). This 'pressure from below' is a way that everyday politics of everyday citizens can spur accountability and responses from policymakers.

Box 8: 'Older Citizens Monitoring'

This initiative "empowers older people to claim their rights" through encouraging them to take an active role in collecting data on access and quality of services to lobby policymakers and providers for improvements. It promotes the position that "age helps" and that older people are the experts on their experiences. The initiative encourages government accountability on MIPAA commitments and has been piloted in Tanzania, Kenya, Jamaica, Bolivia and Bangladesh with concrete results (HelpAge 2015g).

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

In the interlinked connections between organisations with shared ideas working within the international policy networks for the rights of older people, power is derived both from individual actors and multiplied exponentially through the relationships between them. This relational power is what will affect relational ageing. Kabeer (2011) says it is through "collective efforts that individuals find the capacity to challenge injustice: it is the 'collective struggles of the dispossessed' that have won the 'rights of citizenship'," (327).

Analysis illuminates the ways in which the international older-age policy space is complex and contradictory, made up not only of actor networks but also networks of spaces and scales. Per Sen's (1995), "equality in one space brings inequity in another"-- decisions in one sphere, regarding rights for example, may not hold into another due to the heterogeneity of actors, interests and paradigms. In this context, solidarity is best elicited when able to appeal to both self-interest and moral values. Movements for solidarity can be exclusive in an effort to minimize conflict and increase consensus, but to incite more transformative change that addresses structural constraints to social justice concerns, these conflicts need to be made visible and overtly negotiated. While actors may only be partly enrolled in the project (Long 2001), small steps can still aid long-term changes to institutions and can support agency of older people. However, institutions are sticky-- without checks and balances in place to ensure accountability on commitments, it is easy for projects to get lost. This is a particular challenge with decentralized execution of macro-policy goals.

Be that as it may, action 'from below' reflects up—the more older people and advocates working with a common goal, the louder and more legitimate the movement is, and the more difficult to ignore. A few key leaders, like HelpAge, who both translate the lived everyday experiences—the 'norms of below'— and work with others to fashion policy demands help create recipes for new ways of thinking and doing. "Such transnational networks highlight the emergence of a new form of politics in which citizens are working together across national boundaries to advocate for their common needs and concerns to both national and transnational institutions," (Beck 1995 in Jones & Gaventa 2002:20). The important idea of mutuality- in responsibilities, solidarity and action—emerges as crucial for social change, aligning with notions of active citizenship.

Despite several barriers to the integration of older people, such an extensive process as the SDGs is a remarkable collective project in the context of current and future challenges. The SDG as a space for action has 'room to manoeuvre' for change towards substantiation of the rights of older people- social, organisational and technical support in a strategic moment of conscious re-visioning of development practice (Safier 2002; Levy 2015). The challenge for advocacy networks is to maintain pressure and visibility of areas where there is a disjuncture between political commitments and practice. Continuing to lobby for appropriate indicators and supporting data improvements appears to be a strategic and tangible point for focus.

While the marginalization of older people can be disempowering, the margins can also be a strategic space of opportunity and resistance (Ruiz 2014). Kabeer (2011) argues, "to become a citizen in such contexts is to transcend the constraints of ascribed status, to acquire the capacity to question and challenge these constraints, to formulate a vision of a more just society and act in pursuit of this vision," (326). Through everyday acts of political contestation which activate citizenship and challenge normative cultural representations, networks for the rights of older people can force a reimagination of ageing post-2015.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: 'Varied experiences of age around the world' from Global AgeWatch Index Country Commentaries 2014 & 2015 (HelpAge 2015b)

Armenia: "is a traditional country and social relations are relatively strong: older people are respected and valued.**"**

Cambodia: "Many younger adults migrate away from their home villages for employment opportunities leaving their parents as primary care givers for grandchildren."

China: "There are over 480,000 Associations of Older People, covering all parts of China; and over 700,000 cultural centers for older people. These centers provide important platforms for older people to participate in social and culture activities."

Ghana: "Family structures in Ghana are very traditional with very tight connections between family's members. Often family members will care for older people when it becomes necessary but this is mostly inadequate."

Jamaica: "has a compulsory contributory pension scheme which is accessed at aged 60 (women) or 65 (men). However, it is generally only persons employed in the formal sector who contribute, so the majority of people do not receive a pension after 65. As a result, significant numbers of people must continue to work well into their older years."

Kyrgyzstan: "Age discrimination in health care provision is widespread. Some older people have reported how ambulance services ask for the patient's age and routinely discriminate against people over 50."

Sierra Leone: "it is no longer unusual for retirees aged 65 and over to have a parent(s) that is still alive…Most families are unprepared to handle a parent's increased dependency. Adults often find their aged parents need support at a time when their own lives are most complicated and their responsibilities heavy. If your parents are 80 or older, you are likely to be in your 60s or 70s and may be adjusting to age-related changes-retirement, reduced income, widowhood, poor or failing health-and may not be able to provide the assistance a parent needs."

Spain: "Despite the modest pensions, older people are helping their families by substantially caring for grandchildren and dependent persons. Many older people in Spain also financially support their adult children who live at home. This has been instrumental in maintaining social stability amid high unemployment rates in Spain."

Switzerland: in April 2004 **"**launched a national campaign with the slogan 'Alles hat seine Zeit' ('A time for everything'), designed to raise awareness of the fact that senior citizens should not be viewed as financial burdens but rather as valuable members of society."

Tanzania: "Killings of older people, primarily women falsely accused of witchcraft, are commonplace."

Thailand: "Guided by related national policies and laws, older people are included as one of the target groups of the Ministry of Labour which is promoting work and employment in old age; and the Ministry of Education which facilitates vocational training for older people."

USA: 'The incidence of poverty among older people is higher than many other countries. This reflects, among other things, the modest benefits provided by the state pension, which varies based on average career earnings, and that the program does not have a guaranteed minimum benefit. The old age poverty rate rose substantially from 2010 to 2012, likely reflecting the persistently high unemployment rates that followed the recession. Old age poverty rates vary significantly between different racial and ethnic groups.'

*APPENDIX 2: 'Contributions of Older People' from Global AgeWatch Index Country Commentaries 2014 & 2015 (HelpAge 2015b)

Portugal: "Record levels of unemployment, in particular among young adults, have also put extra pressure on pensioners, whose support to the younger generations has increased since the beginning of the economic crisis."

Malawi: "The health of older men and women, their care-giving and care-receiving are closely intertwined. Increasing care needs of rising numbers of older people will be a challenge particularly for their families and communities. At the same time a large number of older people are caregivers for grandchildren whose parents have migrated in search of work; or who have died of HIV-related illnesses."

Moldova: "According to the National Bureau of Statistics 2011, 25% of the economically active population has left to work abroad. In many cases the children of the migrants are left behind to be cared for by grandparents. In that way, older people make an enormous contribution to their families and communities. …According to HelpAge 2010 research grandparents take over the parenting role in 9 out of 10 cases where both parents have migrated and most often for vulnerable and poor households, pensions remain the primary source of income due to irregular remittances sent from overseas."

Vietnam: "According to international data used for Index, 69.5% of Vietnamese people between 55 and 64 are still working. According to national data, about 60% of people aged 60 to 69 are working. Most older people are self-employed or do unpaid work in the family."

APPENDIX 3: Milestones on the path to substantive and equal rights for older persons

Date	Organization	Event
1950	IAGG	International Association of Gerontology and Geriatrics established (IGAA 2015)
1980	ILO	Older Workers Recommendations No. 162 (ILO 1990)
1982	UNGA	First World Assembly on Ageing. UNGA endorses Vienna International Plan of Action on Ageing. (UN-DESA 2015)
1983	HelpAge	HelpAge Network set up by five organisations in the UK, India, Kenya, Columbia and Canada. (HelpAge 2015a)
1991	UNGA	General Assembly adopts the United Nations Principles for Older Persons- outlines 18 entitlements for older people which relate to independence, dignity, self-fulfillment, care and participation. (UN-OHCHR 2015b)
1992	UNGA	International Conference on Ageing meets as follow up on Vienna Plan and adopts a Proclamation on Ageing. (Ibid)
1994	World Bank	World Bank publishes two important documents: World Bank (1994a): Averting the Old-Age Crisis: Policies to Protect the Old and Promote Growth, New York (Oxford University Press). World Bank (1994b): Population and Development: Implications for the World Bank, Washington, DC. (WB 2015)
1994	UNDESA	International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD)- recognizes economic and social impacts of population ageing around the world. (UN-DESA-PD 2015b)
1999	UNGA	1999 declared International Year of Older Persons by the UNGA. Theme: Towards a Society for All Ages Objective: Promote the UN Principles for Older Persons (UN-OHCHR 2015b)
1999	UNDESA	Follow up on ICPD- stresses need for all countries to address population ageing. (UN-DESA-PD 2015b)
2000	UNGA	Millennium Declaration made at UN Millennium Summit- launch of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). (UN-DESA 2008)
April 2002	UNGA	Second World Assembly on Ageing- Member States makes a Political Declaration and adopts Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing. MIPAA calls for change in "attitudes, policies and practices at all levels to fulfil the enormous potential of ageing in the twenty-first century" (UN 2015a)
2007	UNDESA	The United Nations Commission on Population and Development (CPD) dedicates session to changing age demographics and adopts resolution for to address age-policy issues. Secretary-General reiterates commitment to ageing and relevance to development. (UN-DESA-PD 2015b)
2007	WHO	WHO Establishes Age-Friendly Cities initiative (WHO 2015)

2007-2008	UN Commission on Social Development (CSD)	CSD undergoes first review of MIPAA progress (UN-DESA-PD 2013)
2009	OHCHR	Human Rights Council Advisory Committee submits working paper on "The necessity of a human rights approach and effective United Nations mechanism for the human rights of the older person" to the Human Rights Council. Paper calls for in-depth study of age discrimination and consideration of an international convention on human rights of older people. (UN-OHCHR 2015b)
2010	OHCHR	The Independent Expert on the question of human rights and extreme poverty dedicates annual report to importance of social protection systems in realizing human rights of older people. (UN-OHCHR 2015b)
Sept 2010	OHCHR	Human Rights Council asks Special Rapporteur to prepare study on substantiating rights of older people. Study prompts HRC panel discussion on the rights of older people, with focus on health, and possible responses. (ibid)
Oct 2010	OHCHR	General recommendation made on older women (ibid)
Dec 2010	OHCHR	Open-ended Working Group on Ageing established by the UN (ibid)
2011	WHO & European Union	Dublin Declaration on "Age-friendly cities and Communities in Europe" (WHO 2015)
July 2011	OHCHR	UN Secretary-General's session report submitted with focus on the rights of older people (first time) (ibid)
Sept 2011	OHCHR	Panel discussion held on realizing rights of older people. (ibid)
Oct 2011	OHCHR	International Day of Older Persons- 10 year anniversary of MIPAA (ibid)
2012	OHCHR	High Commissioner for Human Rights focuses on the human rights of older persons with an overview of international instruments and corresponding recommendations to improve them. (ibid)
2013	HelpAge International Global Network and the NGO Committee on Ageing in New York	Stakeholder Group on Ageing is established to work for the rights of older people in the post-2015 SDG process (HelpAge 2015c)

2013	UN Commission on Social Development (CSD)	Second review of MIPAA (UN-DESA-PD 2013)
2013	UNDESA	World Population and Aging Report (UN-DESA-PD 2013)
Jan 2013	OHCHR	Public consultation held on the human rights of older people
April 2013	OHCHR	Report produced based on consultations concluding that "while most international human rights instruments are applicable to all age groups, including older persons, a number of human rights issues that are particularly relevant to older persons have not been given sufficient attention either in the wording of existing human rights instruments or in the practice of human rights bodies and mechanisms." (UN-OHCHR 2015b)
Sept 2013	OHCHR	Mandate adopted for Independent Expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons (UN-OHCHR 2015b)
April 2014	OHCHR	Social Forum organized focusing on best practice for realization of human rights of older people (ibid)
May 2014	OHCHR	First Independent Expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons appointed (ibid)
June 2015	World Bank	WB Publishes Golden Aging Report (WB 2015)
2016	UN	Launch of Post- 2015 Sustainable Development Goals (UN 2015)

*APPENDIX 4: 'SDG Goals and Indicators' (SGA 2015)

The Stakeholder Group on Ageing has called attention to many gaps in the indicators. For example, Goal 2 relates to hunger and explicating mentions the needs of older people but indicators focus only on children under five years. Goal 5 relates to violence and discrimination against women but only measures experiences up to forty-nine years. See SGA 2015 for more details.