CHAPTER 7

“I am just a man by name …”
The Intersectionality of Age, Gender and Socio-Economic Status*

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Abstract
The literature on body image and masculinities has been deficient in fully uncovering the nuances of diversity and the ways that intersectionality informs older men's lived experiences. This paper uses Bourdieu's concept of capital and intersectionality approach to examine how older men in Tanzania perceive their aging bodies in relation to their cultural ideal of masculinities. We specifically explore how the intersections of gender (masculinity), age (aging) and other socio-economic status shape the meaning older men give to their aging bodies in relation to ideals of masculinity. The findings suggest that body strength is vital capital for gender performance, mainly for men with low-socio-economic status. Older men are compelled and struggle to conform to masculine ideals in order to maintain their symbolic capital. In the intersection of age, gender and socio-economic status, men lose much of their privileges as they grow old and compromise their power, status and respect (symbolic capital) in a patriarchal set-up—because they are no longer able enact masculinities that are culturally legitimate. We conclude by arguing that older men need to be supported through interventions that are tailored to their cultural and socioeconomic context. Psycho-cultural interventions are also needed to bridge the gap between cultural expectations and aging realities.

*Key words; masculinity, aging body, intersectionality, Bourdieu capital*
7.1 Introduction

The state of the body is an important marker of aging, (Hurd-Clarke & Korotchenko, 2011), self-images and gender identities (Eman, 2011; Clarke and Korotchenko, 2011; Siverskog, 2015). Work on the body image both within social gerontology and feminism are marked by a focus on women’s body image, as such, research on body image in later life is basically ‘feminized’, and as such men are virtually absent (Twigg 2004; Gillear & Higgins 2011). Aging body is generally perceived to be more challenging for women than for men, as it is assumed that women are more likely than men to lose their physical attractiveness, identity, and social visibility as they age (Sandberg, 2013). The limited attention on older men’s body and older men’s masculinity is exacerbated in part by notion that older men are genderless” (Spector-Mersel 2006; Thompson 2006; Sandberg, 2013) and assumption that masculinities are stable over time and across cultures (Miller, 2016). Calasanti and King (2005, p.3), have previous argued that “studies of masculinity neglect the old just as social gerontology avoids theorizing masculinity. It is surprising that this is still the case. Most studies on men’s masculinity focus on young men’s struggles to enact masculinities through sport, masculinity, sexuality and as fathers (Thompson & Langendoerfer 2016, p.120).

The existing limited research concerning the body image and masculinity in later life has produced complicated and sometimes contradictory mixed results regarding this phenomenon (Hurd-Clarke & Korotchenko, 2011; Lodge & Debra Umberson, 2013; Hofmeier et al 2017). Whereas, some research indicates that older men are prone to cultural pressure to embody youthful masculinity despite their bodily decline (Clarke and Korotchenko, 2011; Siverskog, 2015), some research indicate that older men becoming more appreciative of physical health and more discarding cultural pressure to embody youthful masculinity (Hofmeier et al 2017).

In addition, studies have suggested that men’s perceptions of body image and masculinity are shaped by the intersection of age, culture, race, ethnicity, gender, health status, sexual preference, and social class (Hurd-Clarke & Korotchenko, 2011; King and Calasanti, 2005, 2013; Isopahkala-Bouret, 2017). Arguably, different intersections such as age and gender can produce new forms of masculinities (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005; Bartholomaeus & Tarrant, 2016)—marginalized (Krekula 2007, p.167)—domination (Bartholomaeus & Tarrant, 2016). Yet, the literature on body image and masculinities “has been deficient in fully uncovering the nuances of diversity and the ways that intersectionality informs older men’s lived experiences” (Hurd-Clarke & Korotchenko, 2011, p.15). We argue that an examination of the intersection of age, gender and other socio-economic status offers the possibility to
question the supposed universal applicability of masculinity and related hierarchies (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005; Bartholomaeus & Tarrant, 2016).

Besides, the notion of ‘masculinity’ as an essentially fixed concept has been contested (Whitehead 2002). Scholars are increasingly conceptualizing ‘masculinities’ as plural, influenced by sociocultural factors; i.e. subject to change in new or differing circumstances, and depending on other intersecting identities and broader social structures (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005; Evans et al 2011; Siverskog, 2015). As argued by Kimmel, for men, there is ‘... a culturally preferred version that is held up as the model against which men are to measure themselves’ (Kimmel, 2014, p.4). This paper uses Bourdieu’s concept of capital and intersectionality approach to examine how older men in Tanzania perceive their aging bodies in relation to their cultural ideal of masculinities. We specifically, explore how the intersections of gender (masculinity), age (aging) and other socio-economic (dis)advantages shape the meaning older men give to their aging bodies in relation to ideals of masculinity.

We argue that, intersectionality gives an analytical tool which is able to capture the variety of experiences of older men located at different positions within the interlocking systems of privileges and disadvantages—to avoid stereotyping and simplifying understandings of men/masculinity as homogenous or static categories. Bourdieu’s concept of capital provides an analytical framework for analyzing men’s lived experiences of their own masculinities, and their lived expectations of ideal masculinity (as internalized habitus)—which are contained in a hegemonic normative model in Tanzanian cultural context.

### 7.2 Theoretical framework

#### 7.2.1 Bourdieu’s concept of capital

Bourdieu (1986, 1998) identified various categories of capital specifically: economic capital, cultural capital, social capital, and symbolic capital. Economic capital is related to a person’s wealth and income (Bourdieu, 1986). According to Bourdieu (1986) Cultural capital encompasses the skills, knowledge, and dispositions that are typically acquired thorough socialization and education. Social capital entails ‘the connections and networks people implore in their effort to achieve a specified goal while symbolic capital refers to the status, reputation, or prestige that these forms of capital might underpin. According to Bourdieu, the physical body is a form of capital (i.e. the body capital)—can be converted into other forms of capital (Bourdieu, 1986; Shilling, 2003). Habitus is inscribed in the body—conveyed through a range of
bodily activities, including the way one walks, speaks, and acts (Bourdieu, 1977; Shilling, 2003). Habitus according to Bourdieu (1977) is the “system of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles which generate and organize practices and representations that can be objectively adapted to their outcomes without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operations necessary in order to attain them” (p. 72). Habitus “reveals the process whereby social practices such as “masculinity” are incorporated within the body, then to be regenerated through the embodied work and competence of the body (Bourdieu, 1984, p.22).

Habitus can be acquired either formally or informally through a process of socialization (Bourdieu, 1984; Swartz, 2002). The strength of Bourdieu theory of capital is that it focuses on the cultural conditions in which bodies are understood, managed and ultimately experienced (Tulle, 2015). For instance, ethnographic research from a range of cultural contexts in Tanzania suggests that among various tribal societies in Tanzania masculinity is traditionally acquired in a structured way known as “Jando or male initiation rites. Through Jando, young men carry with them messages regarding gender normalcy, roles, power, and appropriate expression and expectations for a man. Jando is a cultural script that regulates male gender performance (Tumbo-Masambo 2004; Abeid et al. 2014; Rutagumirwa & Bailey, 2017). It is therefore anticipated that once these knowledge and skills are acquired, and are internalized—a man will perform his gender roles in accordance to the masculine expectations. There is therefore need to unravel whether the gender capital acquired by men early in life (such as from Jando) are reflected in their perceptions, and particularly in the meaning they assign to their masculinity in later life. Arguably masculine roles are mobilised to men’s advantage in gender hierarchy. Skeggs (1997) argues that gendered capital can be used by disadvantaged agents to halt losses such as loss of bodily ability.

Scholars have emphasized the importance of locating body image in the context of age based, ethnicity-based, class-based and racialized masculinities (Connell, 2000; Robertson, 2007; Griffith, 2012). We argue that by integrating Bourdieu theory of capital and intersectionality, this study reveals how older men at the intersections of socio-economic (dis)advantages give meaning to their aging bodies in relation to masculinity. Arguably these intersecting sources of social identity shape the types of masculinities that men are able to embody and meaning they may assign to being old men (Connell, 2000; Robertson, 2007; Griffith, 2012). Yet, the intersections of masculinity and age have attracted comparatively little theorizing (Bartholomaeus & Tarrant, 2016).
7.2.2 Intersectional approaches

Intersectionality, a concept coined by Crenshaw (1989), suggests that dimensions of social inequality—such as age and gender—vary as a function of each other, are interconnected or interlocked, and are mutually reinforcing/constitutive. Put simply, intersectional approach assumes that identities are multidimensional, consisting of several socially and culturally constructed categories such as age, class, gender, race, ethnicity, and marital status – categories which intersect and thus construct distinct experiences. Making any one of these dimensions visible within an analysis of intersectionality is likely to make the others visible as well (Andersen and Hill Collins 2001).

Intersectionality is not just a tool to facilitate the understanding of experiences and practices of the “minority”, “marginalized’ ‘and the “subordinated’ but is also a multiplicative advantage (Veenstra, 2011). According to intersectionality theorists’ ‘one is never just oppressed or privileged’ (Hill Collins, 1990, p.234), “positions of privilege and disadvantage are reproduced through forms of social interaction (Severs et al, 2016). “This account ties systems of domination and human agency together and recognizes the underlying autonomy of both” (Severs et al, 2016, p.351). Men are not just gendered subjects, but are situated within an array of social factors, including class, race, sexual orientation, ability and other aspects of their lived experience—men experience their aging body and their gender not as separate categories but as intricately linked in their experience (Evans et al. 2011; Sinatti, 2013). By extending the concept of intersectionality to study older men’s body images in relation to masculinity we are able to locate sites where cultural norms of masculinity and social interactions can reproduce hegemonic or subordinate masculinities (Evans et al. 2011; Sinatti, 2013). The multiple social locations of individuals mean that it is possible for them to identify themselves with several categories (Krekula, 2009). 0707388627

Hence, an intersectional approach explores how these factors combine in daily life, because individuals do not experience them in isolation. According to the intersectional framework, neither age, nor class, nor gender stand alone as organizing principles of society; rather, they intersect and simultaneously structure all people’s daily experiences. Yet, within studies of intersectionality, the intersections of gender and age, and most particular old age (men), are often overlooked (Krekula, 2007). Intersectionality is therefore crucial as a way to account for multiple identities and face the problem with identity politics. Intersections of gender, age (aging) and socio-economic status will allow us to grasp how masculinities may be redefined or maintained as people age, or move from different social economic status.
7.3 Methodology

7.3.1 Participants
This qualitative study was conducted in the Eastern part of the Tanzania Mainland (Pwani region). The study was carried out among older men, aged 60 to 82 (see table 7.1). The study was conducted from November 2012 to June 2013. We obtained approval from the relevant ethics committees. Purposive and snowball sampling strategies were used to recruit potential participants for the study. Participation was voluntary. Given that this is an interpretive study emphasizing people’s perceptions of meaning (Schoenberg, Miller, & Pruchno, 2011); we used the method of grounded theory to enable identification of the issues from participants’ own perspectives, that is, getting the emic perspectives from the people themselves to reveal their perceptions about masculinity and the meaning of aging body. To achieve this, we asked open-ended research questions such as: What are the traditional masculine ideologies of this area? How do older men in this area give meaning to their (aging) body in relation to ideals of masculinity?

7.3.2 Recruitment procedure and participants’ characteristics
In this study participants were recruited through a combination of purposive and snowball sampling. Purposive sampling was chosen in order to obtain a variety of older adults’ from socio-demographic characteristics. Thus, upon receiving ethical approval we recruited the initial participants (FGDs) in collaboration with a range of gatekeepers, such as Village Executive Officers (VEO), Ward Executive Officers (WEO), and leaders of organizations for older adults. We attempted to minimize a bias in the selection of participants by asking the gatekeepers to target as broad a range of individuals as possible, and to select participants who met the study criteria. Once we identified the initial participants, snowballing technique was used whereby the participants were asked to facilitate the recruitment effort by recommending others who fit the criteria for participation. Our recruitment strategies ensured participants variations such as age, marital status, economic and social status (see table 7.1). Participant’s variations aimed at examining differences between participants along selected criteria. Recruitment was stopped after data achieved saturation.
Table 7.1 Characteristics of participants who were interviewed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pseudonym</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Level of education</th>
<th>Occupation (includes those retired)</th>
<th>Marital status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MzeeAli</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>Primary education</td>
<td>Small business man</td>
<td>Married/polygamy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MzeeAmani</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>Secondary education</td>
<td>Retired unskilled manual</td>
<td>Married/polygamy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MzeeAyubu</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>Secondary education</td>
<td>Retired</td>
<td>Married/Monogamy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MzeeBabu</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>Primary education</td>
<td>Other non-manual</td>
<td>Widower</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MzeeBwaki</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>No formal education/Attended Madrasa</td>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>Married/polygamy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MzeeChande</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>Primary education</td>
<td>Fisher</td>
<td>Married/polygamy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MzeeChilingi</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>No formal education/Attended Madrasa</td>
<td>Farmer/fisher</td>
<td>Married/polygamy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MzeeKimbau</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>Primary education</td>
<td>Retired unskilled manual</td>
<td>Married/polygamy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MzeeKyondo</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>Graduate</td>
<td>Retired/professional higher managerial</td>
<td>Married/Monogamy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MzeeMagari</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>No formal education</td>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>Married/Monogamy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MzeeMbwiga</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>Primary education</td>
<td>Former businessman</td>
<td>Married/Monogamy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MzeeMdundo</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>Primary education</td>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>Married/Monogamy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MzeeMutoka</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>Secondary education</td>
<td>Retired professional lower level</td>
<td>Widower</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MzeeNassoro</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>No formal education/Attended Madrasa</td>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>Married/polygamy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MzeeKimari</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>Vocation skills</td>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>Married/Monogamy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7.3.3 Data collection methods

Data was collected primarily through focus groups and in-depth interviews with older men. In this study the focus group discussions were designed to explore the shared norms of masculinity and aging body. The use of group discussions (FGD) as a method for qualitative data collection has been deemed useful in gerontological research and in cross-cultural research of the aged (Knodel 1995). FGD provides rich insights into shared views, perceptions and group feelings about the phenomenon (Hennink, et al, 2011). The study also adopted focus group techniques to identify an initial set of themes, specifically with a view to guiding the individual interviews with older men. In total ten focus group discussions were conducted with 60 older men. Some of the focus group questions included: What does it mean to be a man in this community? What are the traditional masculine norms in your community? How do these norms influence the ways in which older men perceive their masculinity and aging body? Each focus group discussion involved six participants and lasted between approximately 90 and 125 min. The FGDs were held in locations the participants chose.
Participants were grouped based on social identities such as age (60–69, 70–79, and 80+) and marital status (married-monogamy, married-polygamy, widowed or divorced/single). Assigning participants to groups with similar characteristics removed social norms and hierarchies that could create barriers to open discussion. This approach increased the likelihood that participants would feel comfortable with each other and would therefore contribute openly to the discussion. The small number of group participants (six per group) allowed the moderators to maintain a high level of involvement with the groups and to explore the research topics to the expected depth. At the end of each question we made sure that common opinion had been expressed and agreed upon by all the participants in the discussion. At the conclusion, the moderator summarized the main points covered and asked the participants to verify that the information provided was an accurate summary of the discussion.

After conducting the focus group discussions and gaining insights on the norms of masculinity, the in-depth interview guide was developed to gather deeper information about individuals’ perceptions of masculinity in relation to aging body. In total, 15 in-depth interviews (IDIs) were conducted among older men. The interview guide contained open-ended questions that were primarily guided by the findings from the focus groups (i.e., questions from FGDs were re-worded to reflect individual’s experiences). The interviews were guided by questions such as: how has the experience of aging (body change) affected your masculinity? After each interview, the researchers read the transcripts and wrote detailed memos about the emergent perspectives and themes identified in the interviews. These outcomes were discussed with a broader research team, and the issues that were raised were explored further in subsequent interviews with other participants. We continued to collect and analyze data by interviewing new participants until data saturation was reached (Corbin and Strauss 2008). All of the in-depth interviews and focus discussions were conducted in Kiswahili and were led by the first author assisted by two qualified qualitative male researchers. All of the (IDIs) and FGDs were audio-taped with the participants’ consent and were immediately transcribed and translated from Kiswahili into English.

7.3.4 Data analysis
Each transcript was coded line-by-line, using participants’ language as label coding and then the data was entered open in Atla.ti 7 to manage the coding process. Although we utilized grounded theory, we adopted the analytic cycle in which “analysis of qualitative data for theory development is an interaction between existing deductively derived theory and inductively derived empirical theory” (Hennink,
et al, 2011). Through open coding, we identified categories related to the suggested research questions (Corbin & Strauss, 2008) and then used axial coding to organize the concepts and categories discovered in relation to one another. We then employed selective coding—the process of choosing the core categories that all the other categories or themes relate to (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). The validity of the study was further enriched by analyzing memos. At that point, two core themes emerged namely; Masculine habitus and aging body and the intersectionality of gender, age, ability and class.

7.4 Findings

7.4.1 Masculine habitus and aging body
In discussing their masculinity, participants revealed some of the profound ways in which Jando or male rituals influenced perceptions of masculinity and masculine behaviors. Throughout their narratives, various masculine habitus were ascribed to men who are ‘ideal’ (ideal masculinity). Our analysis further suggested that the habitus older men acquired from Jando and subsequently internalized apparently dictate their perceptions, guide their expectations, and shape the meaning they assign to their masculinities. Some of these habitus includes: "a man is protector and provider for family", "a man need to be productive" "a man needs to be courageous", "a man needs to be strong and tough", "a man needs to be independent, responsible and decisive", "hardworking", "decision maker", "head of the family", "superior", "noble", "reserved", domineering, "brave", "powerful". It was common for older men to benchmark their own accomplishment of masculinity against these internalized habitus—these habitus, which provide men with respect and honor, are socially expected, and are therefore performed in compliance with these expectations (symbolic capital).

A theme interwoven throughout participant accounts was that body strength is vital for gender performance, especially for men with low-socio-economic status. For example, Mzee Magari, a farmer (from rural Pwani), with no formal education, established that poor older men must engage in farming activities to be able to provide for their families. Mzee Magari’s remark exemplifies how the intersections of gender, age and poverty, compromise men’s ability to enact ideal masculinity (provide for their families)—lose the respect earned in the past. Like Mzee Magari, majority expressed pressure they feel in seeking to enact ideal masculinity that they cannot fulfil because of bodily limitations related to aging. A concern that was commonly expressed was that the body strength decreases with age, and is accompanied
by a shift in the enactment of ideal masculinity—has consequences on older men’s well-being and the well-being of their families.

“A man is the head of the family...a man must provide for the family for people to respect him... an uneducated man like me depends entirely on the body to survive...When I was a young my family never starved cause I didn’t rely on a specific income generating activity such as farming, though I had farms, I still went into the forest for beehive making logs and would sell them and get money. I used to make charcoal and that and that... you know young body possesses a lot of courage and opportunities... I used to involve myself in many incomes generating activities ...you know when you are young there are many ways of earning an income...Heee because the body supports whatever you do...aging becomes painful especially when the body strength is reduced... it becomes difficult to provide for the family....” (Mzee Magari, 72 years old)

Typically, participants compared their current manhood/masculinities to their younger selves—they see their youth as a core reference point of ideal masculinity. In the intersection of age, gender and class, older men from the low class lose much of their status as they grow old — as they are no longer able to use their body to earn a living. Thus, the aging body is perceived to challenge older men’s ability to actualize as ‘real’ men and thus affects their daily life and symbolic capital. A felt sense of being entangled between the past selves and the current situation was depicted, when participants discussed the change in their daily schedules due to aging and body pains that come with aging. For instance, majority of farmers felt that they are no longer able to fulfil their responsibilities as their bodies are too weak to produce—and are pushed into poverty.

“In the past, I could wake up early in the morning at 5.30 am. This is a normal schedule for farmers here because when you wake up early before the sun rise you will have more time to farm...but I can no longer wake up early like I used to in the past. I have serious body aches especially on my back and legs. I now wake up at around 7.30am ... this really affects my harvest... In the past, I would harvest 50 or more sacks of paddy per year but now I can only manage to harvest 5 sacks or less in an year... We normally say ‘mtaji wa masikini ni nguvu zake mwenyewe’ (the body is the only capital for a poor man), I cannot hire a person to farm for me... where will I get money to pay him? This has led to poverty. Poverty now runs in my family... It is a big shame for a man to fail to provide for the family... (Mzee Chande, 74).
Shared assertions in all focus group discussions included: “the decline in body function pushes older men into poverty”; aging is the main obstacles to older men’s realization of their duties as men”; “we are compromised by our aging bodies but our responsibilities are still the same”; “aging does not excuse men from their traditional role as providers and breadwinners for their families”.

Taken together, these accounts suggest that older men’s perceptions of their masculinity in old age are marked by tension between internalized habitus, realities (of their bodies) and their socio-economic status. This was noted to have consequences on their self-esteem and self-worth—holding them in tension. For instance, majority perceived themselves as ‘incomplete’ because they could no longer embody internalized habitus—could no longer live up to the ideal masculine expectations—thus, they could no longer be regarded as real men, either by themselves or others. The feelings of being incomplete and anxiety were commonly highlighted when men discussed about their failure to fulfil their duties (provide for the family)—and thus, their wives taking over their responsibilities. Most of the time, shift in roles and responsibilities (to their wives) go with shift in decision making, authority and respect (symbolic capital). As Mzee Ayubu described:

“...The condition is tough for men ‘wanaume wengi wamebaki kuwa ni wanaume majina tu’ (majority of older men are men by names but have no manhood)...we are no longer real men because we don’t fulfil our traditional roles...in actual sense. Women are the ones heading the family ...women have taken the role of being bread winners...this is not good for our image.” (Mzee Ayubu, 68).

Similarly, many participants recounted times that they were not in a position to provide for the family, feeling their respect and status as men being compromised, some expressed feelings of shame and inferior. As revealed in the following quotes by participants:

“I feel ashamed to eat food that has been bought by a woman ...but what can I do? I have to swallow my pride and eat otherwise ‘nitakufa na njaa’ (I will starve)...by the way, what can I boast of when I am broke and can no longer provide! ...old age is such a disgusting and an unbearable burden for a man...you lose your respect and authority” (Mzee Kimbau, 72).

Some men said that their wives (majority of whom are younger compared to their husbands) contribute an equal or greater amount to family income, challenging
men's authority in the family and calling their masculinity into question. In several
instances, this compromises older men's status, respect and authority (symbolic
capital). As one Mzee Mdundo described;

“...When I was the sole provider everyone in the family respected me, whatever I said everyone would listen... But now no one listens to me. Who would listen to an old, penniless and sick man like me? What do I have to offer? ‘Mikono mitupu ailambwi!’ (Literal translation of this proverb is empty hands can’t be licked) ....I cannot do much, my body grows weaker day by day, I feel bad... older men no longer earn the respect they deserve from their wives and people around. People will respect you only if you have money or property ... whoever has the money controls the family... even marriage is not respected nowadays, wives do not respect their husbands and children do not respect their fathers as was in the past...in my family children listen more to their mother than me. This is disrespectful ... but of course she is the one who leads the family now! In the olden days things were different, a man aged with his power and respect.” (Mzee Mdundo, 72 years).

Overall, the findings revealed that adherence to traditional masculine gender perfor-
mances allows men's status, authority and respect to be maintained in the house-
holds (symbolic capital). Decline in body's strength (capital) due to aging therefore
means that poor older men do not enact masculinities that are culturally legitimate
e.g. as providers and breadwinners— inability to enact masculine roles lowers older
men's esteem. These were among the main reasons why older men question their
manhood. Put simply, manhood/masculinity is an achieved/earned status. A man
has to perform his responsibilities and roles to achieve his status as a real man. Failure
to perform these roles and responsibilities causes a man to lose his position and can
also lose his symbolic capital (e.g. power, respect, status, prestige and authority). In
addition, the findings revealed that achieving masculinity in old age is stressful for
older poor men. These stresses come from the responsibility to provide for and take
care of families with a weakening body.

7.4.2 The intersectionality of gender, age and socio-economic status
Our findings further reveal that despite shared views of what masculinity/manhood
entails, social location was an important aspect on how men enact masculinity in
later life. In particular, we noted that the majority of participants were from poor
socio-economic background typical of older people in Tanzania (see table 7.1).
Thus, the shared social location coupled with the intersectionality of gender, age,
low socio-economic status and marital status, creates an experience that is specific
to these men. Factors such as availability of economic capital (wealth), education and employment history were observed to compound experiences of older men in this study—and shaped their enactment of masculinity. For instance, the majority of older men in this study did not have proper education, no formal steady and reliable job in their prime age—they are not entitled to pensions, so their income generating activities depended on their body’s strength (body capital). For instance, Mzee Kimari, like the majority of farmers, felt that although culturally it is the men who own land while women access it through their husbands, a poor old like him cannot use land to its greatest advantage—no longer able to use land to earn income—unable to fulfil his responsibilities. His narratives revealed that because his body has been growing older, his body capital has diminished not only due to aging but also due to his low socio-economic status. He highlighted:

“...throughout my life I depended on my body to earn income... I use hand hoes to cultivate because I don’t have tractors, I over stretch my body so in my old age the body becomes too weak...too weak to produce...just like scrappers!...” (Mzee Kimari, 70 years).

Notably, retired men especially those men who were previously employed in low-paid formal work, felt under pressure to fulfil their gender roles such as providing for the family due to meagre pension they receive upon retirement. The intersection of low income (meagre pension benefits), age and gender is also complicated by marital status—for men with more than one wife the situation is even worse. Majority find it difficult to cope with new life (new income generating activities) while burdened by aging body, illnesses and lack of stable income—these were perceived to push the majority of them into poverty and distress. For example, Mzee Amani, a polygamist living in urban Pwani with his two wives and nine children, struggles to maintain his family life amidst meagre pension and aging body. He described:

“... soon after my retirement I started to experience financial challenges which affected my ability to provide for the family and pay for my children’s school fees...The pension I receive is too meagre to even meet a weekly budget. So I decided to sell my assets, I had a number of plots at (name of place), I sold them all... I sold all my property until I reached the limit. Right now I have nothing to sell. I cannot even repair my house. You see.... (Pause) I constructed this house when I was working. Look now (showing cracks in house); the house has huge cracks in every corner. No money for maintenance... I don’t have the strength to generate any income...I am just a man by name; nothing left...no respect.” (Mzee Amani, 72).
Generally, the intersections between age, gender and socio-economic status were so self-evident that participants noted that being in positions of poverty or poor socio-economic status rendered older men powerless and socially worthless. Whereas privileged older men who have economic capital afforded more symbolic capital. It was further revealed that poverty of older men threatens marital stability. Older men, specifically polygamists and those with young wives felt the highest pressure due to their marital status. Failure to provide effectively for one’s family was viewed as a major reason men lose control over their wives. For example, using himself as an example, 75-year-old Mzee Mbwiga, highlighted how his wife left him because he could not provide her with basic needs, leaving him humiliated. He said;

“I could not provide her with all that she required….I tried but could not satisfy her desires… without good harvest or any reliable income one cannot afford to meet all these needs…”

Participants’ accounts further suggested that poverty hinder men’s realization of themselves as respected people in their communities. Fear and insecurities (of being disrespected) transcended from the level of the family to that of community. Being poor reportedly exposed men to disrespect and contempt. For instance, some of men with low socio-economic status reported being unable to interact with neighbors from privileged socio-economic status. For example, Mzee Babu, a poor, disabled widower living alone in a squatter settlement in Kibaha (urban Pwani) explained:

“…A poor man like me cannot sit and chat with my neighbors who are better-off, I have nothing to share. What will we talk about? They will be discussing how they will collect the rent from their houses or how many sacks of coconuts they harvested last year, while I will be thinking about what will I eat in the evening? Keeping in mind that I have not had a meal since yesterday…. If you are a poor beggar people will avoid you thinking that maybe when you start chatting you will start begging for money, if not food…. So in order to keep your little respect and dignity, you stay indoors, even if one or two days passes without food, it’s your secret. Nobody will know, they will know the moment they find me dead… (MzeeBabu, 68).

From participants’ accounts we found that, distinctions were largely based on older men’s distance from capital such as economic capital (such as wealth and investment). For instance; due to his economic status (money, business and investments) Mzee Chilingi does not require body strength to enact an ideal masculinity—as providers and breadwinners. His investment (economic capital) enables him to do
masculinity differently—he earns respect and maintains his status (symbolic capital). He shared his experience:

“I don’t have the strength to cultivate or do businesses but I honestly thank almighty God that I haven’t reached the point of asking for financial help from my own children... I prepared myself well when I was energetic so I don’t have to beg...I have a lot of investments; I am just supervising... I am respected in my family and community... things have changed, men are no longer respected because of their age... whenever you start asking for any financial help from your children they start disrespecting you, I have seen this from my colleagues, the moment they call to ask for financial help from their children, the children hang up on them not even wanting to listen to what they want to say...They begin to make fun of you saying: “Oh! Dad is now aging badly!” They do that intentionally to evade their caring responsibilities...but if you are self-sufficient like me, they will respect you; they will even consult you in whatever they are doing...” (Mzee Chili, 69).

Like the majority of older men in this study, Mzee Kyondo was facing physical disabilities that come with age however, his enactment of masculinity differs from that of many older men in this study due to his socio-economic status. Mzee Kyondo, is a 71-year old graduate who previously worked as a regional secretary. His and his wife’s social status’ seemed to play a paramount role in the way he enacts masculinity. He provides a broader conception of masculinity. For example, although he holds similar views on superiority of a man in the family, due to his education background and economic status he didn’t feel threatened by his wife financial contribution to the family. Thus, he did not experience the pressure to fulfil family obligations. He said:

“I can honestly say after more than 35 years of working and feeding the family... paying children’s school fees, it does not really bother me that she is now the one bringing food... she is still working at (name) primary school...I am glad children also help a lot, especially paying for my medical bills...they respect me as a father and as the head of the family... even the holy books say that a man is the head of the family no matter what...My wife also respects me, she knows her place in the family... I think the respect you get from your wife or children has a lot to do with how we were raised....even though I am incapacitated, I am respected and well cared for by my wife and children....as I said, this has to do with how they were raised ...if you raise them well they will
never disrespect you in your old age, even in your worst condition…. (Mzee Kyondo, 71)

Like, Mzee Kyondo, Mzee Mutoka, an 80-year old widower, provides a broader conception of masculinity based on aging. Mzee Kyondo perceives aging as a time to define his identity separate from ideal masculinity and to focus on aging capital. For Mzee Mutoka, ‘being old’ outweighs the fact that he is not masculine. He explains:

“I feel good to be still alive; being old is a respect and life credit given by almighty God, most of my age mates have already passed away, I must feel proud of myself and people should respect me for my age ... the fact that I am still breathing is enough for me, I must feel proud... being weak at this age is a fact of life not something to be ashamed of ... as a man grows older, he become wiser and that’s what is important at this age”; I did what I was supposed to do when I was able bodied...! (Mzee Mutoka, 80).

Unlike the majority of older men in this study, his perception of old body is linked to positive (e.g., wise, life credit) attributes, to him positive attributes of old age outweigh negative ones. For example, in his account there was an inclination towards identification with ‘old age respect’, which indicated that honor and respect because of one’s age are important for male self-esteem than other attributes. According to him, a significant sphere of recognition lies in life credit. He also explained that traditionally, older men were respected because of their knowledge and were listened to. Children were responsible for taking good care of their older parents.

7.5 Discussion
The findings of this study reveal that in the cultural context of participants, Jando, or the male rituals, serve as a model that regulates gender-normative practices. Generally, older men appear to have internalized and embodied masculine habitus acquired from Jando—dictate their perceptions, guide their expectations, and shape the meaning they assign to their aging bodies. The findings seem to back up Butler’s argument that, (1990, p.25) once internalized, gender traits (masculine habitus) provide a framework through which individuals assign meaning to their daily life, develop a sense of identity, and organize their perceptions. Using Bourdieu (1998) concept of capital, our results go one step further by revealing that, older men are compelled and struggle to conform to those ideals (internalized masculine habitus), in order maintain their position in gender hierarchy—to get rewards (Connell, 1995; Calsanti and Slevin, 2013)—maintain their symbolic capital such as power,
authority, respect, status and self-esteem that come with it. Given that men who do not perform ideal masculinities may lose their symbolic capital i.e. loss of power, respect, authority, or lack of self-confidence—these attributes are associated with subordinate masculinity. As argued by Bourdieu it is only when the individual’s practice of action responds to the cultural or collective expectations that the individual can be rewarded with symbolic capital or ‘a doxical submission to the injunctions of the world’ (Bourdieu 1998, p.103).

Bourdieu’s argument that physical body is an important capital seems to be confirmed in the data. The findings suggest that bodies are perceived as the vehicles through which older men from low socio-economic status embody gendered selves—earn their living and their symbolic capital, as opposed to men who are situated, albeit differently, in an intersecting source of privilege (springing from economic capital, social capital and class position). Additionally, by using Bourdieu’s concept of capital (Bourdieu, 1986) to analyze our findings, we are able to see that other forms of capital (economic, symbolic, and cultural capital) are under threat due to the decline in the functionality of the aging body. However, our results call into question Bourdieu’s argument that, the physical body (body capital) can be converted into other forms of capital, we argue that, as older men age their abilities to convert body capital into other resources or capitals tends to decline (Shilling 2003). Since, as men grow older their bodies deteriorate in that the body cannot perform what it used to perform “in terms of strength, flexibility and endurance” (Drummond, 2003). Just as we argued in our previous study (Rutagumirwa & Bailey, 2017), we argue that at the intersections of gender, age and class, diminishing of body capital often reads into poverty in later life (Help Age International HAI, 2011 2011), aggravate poverty of marginal and degendering” or the devaluation of late life identities (Spector-Mersel 2006; Calasanti 2010; Rutagumirwa & Bailey, 2017). These, findings seem to build in particular on the work of previous researchers such as (Calasanti and Slevin 2001) and (Drummond, 2003) who argued that the less capitals one has, the more he will need his body's strengths to survive and perform masculinity. Likewise, this study supports Butler’s (1993) argument that, the body is a symbol of cultural construction and a site of gender performativity. Arguably, the symbolic values attached to body functioning become specifically important to men’s sense of self.

Our findings further reveal that the “habitus” that older men acquired and internalized through the cultural socialization of Jando actively functions in their later life; molding their perceptions, and shaping their social practices. This confirms Bourdieu’s argument that structural (dis)advantages can be internalized into relatively durable
dispositions that can be transmitted intergenerationally through socialization and produce forms of self-blaming behavior. Besides, older men’s struggle to embody youthful masculinity affirms Spector-Mersel’s argument that in the absence of distinctive cultural guidelines as to how to be an aging man (cf Thompson & Langendoerfer 2016, p.137)—the rules that older men followed are nuanced versions of the idealized masculinity script. Taking into consideration the cultural vagueness about how older men should do masculinity, older men see their youth as a core reference point of ideal masculinity (Thompson & Langendoerfer 2016, p.137). Our findings further indicated that the masculinity older men strive to embody has an impact on their emotional well-being. Specifically, the discrepancies between older men’s experiences of aging and the cultural ideals of masculinities (as internalized habitus) affect their process of self-identification and leads into emotional forms of anxiety and distress (Antoninetti & Garrett, 2012). As consequences, the majority of men perceived themselves as failures and incomplete, unworthy, powerless and inferior (Thompson & Langendoerfer 2016)—because they could no longer embody internalized habitus. As Kimmel (2005) put it “these are the feelings of men who were raised to believe themselves entitled to feel that power, but not feel it” (p.40).

The findings of this study have revealed that older men are situated at the intersection of identities—class, education, employment history, age, marital status combined with gender and age—that compel and shape the meaning they give to their aging bodies in relation to masculinities. Similar to Calsanti and Slevin (2013), we argue that even those who are more privileged lose some attribute of idealized masculinity such as “body’s strength” in old age, however, their body decline are offset/compensated by their social location (privileges). The findings are also in line with Connell (2005) and Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) who argue that there are multiple masculinities embodied by men depending on intersecting forms of differences such as age and class and also Messerschmidt’s (1993) argument that ‘men will practice different masculinities depending on their position in social structures and, therefore, upon their access to power and resources.

Lastly, the findings of this study reveal that, the intersections of age, gender and other socio-economic status are important in terms of how aging bodies and masculinities are perceived. By using intersectionality theory as a theoretical framework, we have been able to trace how age, class, and gender intersect and together shape symbolic capital such as power structures in form of ideals of masculinities. For instance, the study reveals that in the intersection of age, gender and socio-economic status, men lose much of their privileges as they grow old and compromise their power,
status and respect (symbolic capital) in a patriarchal set-up—because they are no longer able enact masculinities that are culturally legitimate.

7.6 Conclusion

In conclusion, we argue that although cultural norms are set up in a way to benefit men for example, provide them with symbolic capital (such as decision makers, head of the family, powerful and have authority over women), it may also hurt men by exerting pressure on men to live up to the expectations and symbolic capital accorded to them by society. Put simply, men are also victims of the cultural practices and specifically the patriarchy system. Failure to live up to masculine expectations is depicted as manifesting itself in emotional cost. The findings of this study provide insights upon which we engage with masculinities as constructed entities that are not fixed. The fluidity of masculinity reveals men can also become victims of norms, move from hegemonic masculinity to subordinated masculinity. As our findings reveal, aging (body decline) undermines the role of older men as providers and this affect men’s status, power and authority (symbolic capital).

We argue that men’s status, power and authority (symbolic capital) can be weakened due to aging. Inability by men to perform their gender roles change gender relations within households—including the overall shift in gender roles and power relations. However, due to qualitative nature of this study we cannot use these findings to draw any general conclusions, thus future research should continue to examine gender dynamics in households, specifically whether shift in gender roles in the household mark the shift in symbolic capital (authority, power, respect and decision making).

Older men have been traditionally excluded from gender mainstreaming interventions and equity policies. This study calls for interventions that take into account the interlocking disadvantages that perpetuate poverty and marginality in later life. Interventions with older men must focus to the diverse ways poverty and a sense of masculine discrepancy can motivate how they perform their gendered roles. Thus, gender empowerment programs and interventions must focus on the broader context of gender dynamics with a holistic perspective. Furthermore, older men need to be supported through interventions that are tailored to their cultural and socioeconomic context. As the findings reveal, masculine habitus internalized turns into negative body image—detrimental effects on older men’s well-being. Thus, practitioners can help older men to learn to cultivate positive body image by focusing on what the body can do in old age rather than how it is expected to do. On body
acceptance and appreciation, psycho-cultural interventions are needed to bridge the gap between cultural expectations and aging realities. Stress resulting from the inability to enact masculinities that are culturally legitimate was exacerbated by the participants’ socio-economic status such as poverty, minimal levels of education, and other socio-cultural obligations related to family responsibilities. Further implications of these findings suggest that a closer look at these interlocking systems of privileges and disadvantages helps to shed light on the complex factors that can produce vulnerability in old age and can also offer insight into possible ways in which state support programs, services, and policies can be revised to support older men.

7.7 Limitation and future research

One of the limitations of this study lies in the fact that the majority of older men in this study were from low-socioeconomic status and very few were from privileged socioeconomic status, thus the role of various and intersecting social identities were not voiced well. Besides, given that the findings are largely derived from older men of low socioeconomic status, it is likely that poverty caused the older men to develop an instrumental relationship with their body, and that the impacts of poverty overshadow the perceptions of the body in relation to masculinity. Therefore, future research should continue to explore perceptions of the aging body among men who differ in terms of socioeconomic status and location. It is also important to see that the older men are not passive victims but active agents who are also involved in strategies to maintain or improve their positions. Future research should explore the strategies employed by older men to deal with changing masculinities due to aging and changing socio-cultural contexts, including their negotiations of gendered self-attribution.

Our findings are derived from older men who largely share cultural backgrounds; therefore, future research should explore the experiences of men who differ in terms of cultural background, age group, and marital status. Furthermore, the majority of old men are from the generations when masculinity identities were forcefully socialized during puberty rituals (Jando) thus this result should be interpreted in that context. Besides, research increasingly shows that Jando is losing ground as the primary source of socialization among youth in Tanzania (other socializing agents such as family, media, and religious are taking over) therefore future research should explore masculinities from different generations.
Lastly, it appears, then, that the status of men and masculinity has been “historically variable—for example, as few participants commented, traditionally respect for older men depended on culturally dignified status markers and accumulation of life experiences than enactment of masculinity, therefore, future research should continue to explore whether masculinity and status of older men constituted as older men navigate complex modernity and traditional values.
References


