

**SOCIAL NETWORKS OF OLDER PEOPLE-  
*CIVIC SOCIALISING: A GROUNDED THEORY OF*  
OLDER PEOPLE'S SOCIAL INTERACTIONS IN  
THEIR LOCAL NEIGHBOURHOOD SHOPS**

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## ABSTRACT

The research reported in this thesis aimed to develop a better understanding about the nature and purpose of older people's social interactions in their local neighbourhood shops, and how the interactions may be associated with their well-being.

A review of the literature indicated that older people's interactions in their local neighbourhood shops had not been sufficiently investigated empirically. A subsequent appraisal of journal articles concerned with older people's social networks indicated that the extant knowledge-base had been informed by approaches that tended to reinforce a notion that older people socialised mainly with family and friends. Such approaches were largely quantitative in nature, and commonly employed closed questions, network mapping, pre-determined typologies, or large non-purpose-collected data bases.

My study employed classic grounded theory (Glaser, 1978), an interpretive, exploratory, inductive methodology which involves a rigorous method designed to develop conceptual theory.

The theoretical sample comprised 11 people who were 67 years of age or older, and six shopkeepers recruited from a local shopping precinct situated in a middle-class south-eastern suburb of Melbourne, Australia.

Data were collected through face-to-face interviews and observations in local shops. Analysis of these data indicated that the older shoppers' social interactions in and around their local shops enabled them to display their capabilities, reinforce their identities, scrutinise their neighbourhood, exercise choice, and generally be involved in their community. Moreover, the purpose of these interactions was revealed. Conceptualised as *Consolidation*, it accounted for the participants' main concerns; strengthening their community standing, and preserving the milieu of their local shops with a view to sustaining their ongoing independence. The succinct theory that conceptualised their approach was coined *Civic Socialising*.

This research has made a considerable contribution to the extant knowledge-base about the social relationships of older people with others who are not family or friends. It has highlighted the proactive nature of such social interactions which can enhance self-esteem and autonomy. This new understanding need be considered in future research that is concerned with the social relationships of older people.

The study findings also have significance for policy and social planning that are pertinent to older people, particularly considering an increased focus on them remaining in their communities for as long as possible. We now know how an existing resource, the local neighbourhood shop, can enable older people to remain engaged in community life, and help to look after themselves. Accordingly, at the time of writing this thesis, the findings had been adopted by local government to assist social planning for older people.

The new theory can be tested, or may stimulate future enquiry. For example: Does the conceptual theory *Civic Socialising* involve different nuances in other neighbourhoods? Could a similar beneficial effect be gained where local shops were introduced or reinstated?

The study was subject to limitations. Conducting a literature review and tape-recording participants' interviews are counter to the tenets of classic grounded theory. The use of an explanatory statement may have affected the participants' behaviour or responses. However, these approaches were in accordance with Monash University's regulations.

## **DECLARATION**

I, Joan Francis Stewart hereby declare that the work described in this thesis is my own. I am the principal researcher of all work contained in this thesis, including research work conducted in association with my PhD supervisors. This thesis does not contain written or published materials prepared by others except where acknowledged within the text and has not been submitted to any other university or institution as a part or whole requirement for any higher degree.

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Any errors in this document are entirely my own.

## **PUBLICATIONS, PRESENTATIONS, MEDIA**

### **Publications**

2009

Peer-reviewed paper published in conference proceedings

Emerging Researchers in Ageing Conference, Melbourne, Australia

*How are you today? The shop and its significance for the well-being of older people*

2011

9<sup>th</sup> Asia / Oceania Regional Congress of Geriatrics and Gerontology, Melbourne, Australia

Abstract published in conference proceedings: *The role of the shop in the social lives of older people*

November 2011

Peer-reviewed paper published in conference proceedings

Emerging Researchers in Ageing Conference, Sydney, Australia

*Shop-going and older people*

May 2012

Peer-reviewed paper published in conference proceedings

International Federation on Ageing 11<sup>th</sup> Global Conference, Prague

*Older people's interaction in their local neighbourhood shops*

### **Presentations**

October 2009

Emerging Researchers in Ageing Conference, Melbourne, Australia

*How are you today? The shop and its significance for the well-being of older people*

July 2010

Keele University Gerontology Conference, Staffordshire, England

*Social Networks of Older People: The Shop and its Significance for the Well-Being of Older People*

May 2011

Grounded Theory Seminar, Mill Park, California, United States of America<sup>1</sup>

*Older people and the shop*

October 2011

9<sup>th</sup> Asia / Oceania Regional Congress of Geriatrics and Gerontology, Melbourne, Australia

*The role of the shop in the social lives of older people*

November 2011

Emerging Researchers in Ageing Conference, Sydney, Australia

*Shop-going and older people*

May 2012

International Federation on Ageing 11<sup>th</sup> Global Conference, Prague

*Older people's interaction in their local neighbourhood shops*

December 2012

Victoria Department of Health - Ageing and Aged Care Branch

*Civic Socialising A grounded theory about older people's social interactions in their local neighbourhood shops*

March 2013

Municipal Association of Victoria State-wide Positive Ageing Forum

*Civic Socialising - The role of local shopping in the lives of older people*

Australian Association of Gerontology & Aged and Community Services

Association of NSW & ACT Rural Conference, Orange, New South Wales

*Civic Socialising: a grounded theory about older people's social interaction in their neighbourhood shops*

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<sup>1</sup> This seminar was hosted by Barney Glaser, one of the researchers who 'discovered' grounded theory



## **Media**

October 2011

Interviews

- Radio 774 ABC Melbourne, Australia
- Radio National Drive, Australia

November 2012

*Small shopping strips have key community role for elderly* by John Masanauska

Sunday Herald Sun (and other News Corporation publications nationally)

(Appendix: I)

November 2012

*Local shops vital for age-friendly communities*

Monash University Media release

(Appendix: J)

November 2012

*Local shops assist elderly living*

The Conversation.edu.au

(Appendix: K)

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# **Chapter 1**

## **BACKGROUND AND AIM**

The classic grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967), enquiry described in this thesis was seeded by a casual observation: community-dwelling older people seemed to be taking a proactive approach to maintaining their well-being while interacting in local neighbourhood shops. Subsequently, the research reported in this thesis aimed to develop a better understanding about the nature and purpose of older people's social interactions in their local neighbourhood shops, and how the interactions may be associated with their well-being.

The impression that older shoppers were taking a proactive approach was gleaned from various neighbourhoods where I observed that many older people shopped regularly; sometimes daily. Their social interactions with shopkeepers and other shoppers appeared to be genial and were commonly initiated by the older shopper. Discussions were varied and topics included the weather, sport, politics, local and global matters, and health and family matters.

We do know that throughout their lives people interact with others who may not be regarded as intimates and that such interaction can 'influence their daily mood and distinct aspects of their development' (Fingerman, 2004:189). But it remains that we know little empirically about such social interactions with these 'peripheral ties' or 'consequential strangers' (Fingerman, 2009), especially with regard to older people's interactions with them. Commonly the focus has remained on older people's social interactions with family, neighbours, and friends, and acquaintances associated with volunteering, club-going, and religious associations (Litwin, 2001, Fiori, Antonucci and Cortina, 2006, Seeman, Kaplan, Knudsen, Cohen and Guralnik, 1987, Glass, Mendes de Leon, Seeman and Berkman, 1997). This view was ascertained through my appraisal of journal articles concerned with older people's social networks which I discuss at a later point (pg.135). Not uncommonly, supportive mechanisms for older people have been linked to the composition of social relationships based on these traditional social contacts (Oxman, Berkman, Kasl, Freeman and Barrett, 1992, Lennartsson, 1999, Litwin, 2001). Where interactions with other contacts, for

example, staff and other customers in a local restaurant, were explored, the focus tended to remain on the social support that was given to the older customers (Rosenbaum, 2006).

Yet it was in their local neighbourhood shops that older people were observed engaging in and initiating regular pleasurable social interaction with shopkeepers and other shoppers of all ages. Support in the form of opinion and advice was forthcoming from older shoppers as well as from shopkeepers. Such social interactions seemed in accordance with theories, models, and constructs (hereafter described as theories) associated with the positive psychology approach. Developed in the 1950s and 1960's, the positive psychology approach 'promised to add a new perspective to the entrenched clinical and behaviorist approaches' (Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). The focus turned to personal growth and potential development. In more recent times, theories such as the broaden-and-build model (Fredrickson, 2001), selective optimisation with compensation theory (Baltes, 1997), sense of coherence (Antonovsky, 1993b), self-determination theory (Ryan and Deci, 2000b), and the sense of community construct (Sarason, 1974, McMillan and Chavis, 1986, Colombo, Mosso and Piccoli, 2001), have to some extent offered a positive perspective to growing older. These theories, which I elaborate upon in Chapter 2 (pg.57) promote a view that people tend to be positive, proactive, curious, and social, and aim to achieve autonomy and mastery.

Despite such a positive perspective, it remains that not uncommonly, older people are depicted as dependent and despondent, rather than proactive and resilient. The current research had the potential to enlighten such a view.

Thus, the broad aim of the study became to better understand the nature and purpose of older people's social interactions in their local neighbourhood shops, and how the interactions may be associated with their well-being.

I now define some of the key terms and concepts that are pertinent to the study. Historical and research-based information about local neighbourhood shops and



shopkeepers are introduced, and provide a background for the study. Finally, the study rationale is presented.

## DEFINITIONS

At this stage of the thesis, some of the key terms or concepts require defining. They include *network*, *local neighbourhood shop*, *social interaction*, *well-being*, and *motivation*.

### Network

The term *social network* appears throughout this thesis. Indeed it appears in the title, and is a term commonly adopted by researchers. Early anthropologists were concerned with identifying and understanding networks. They determined that the links connecting community members to each other, and to members of other communities reinforced social norms, fostered cohesiveness, and enabled exchange processes necessary for survival (Mitchell, 1969). The first *sociogram*, a map of the lines depicting connecting ties between individuals or groups, was attributed to Jacob Levy Moreno (1889-1974)(Scott, 1991). Radcliffe-Brown (1881-1955) applied a mapping process to the process and it was noted that the links looked like a web or a net (Scott, 1991).

During the course of the current research however, I became aware as have others, that the term *social network* is not only often misapplied, it is used interchangeably with other terms such as *social support* and *social interaction* (House, Umberson and Landis, 1988, O'Reilly, 1988). This became apparent during the current study's review of the literature and I considered I should clarify how *social networks* were determined and what was the extant knowledge-base about the *social networks* of older people. Thus I investigated this through an appraisal of journal articles concerned with older people's social networks. I present an overview of this appraisal in Chapter 6 (pg.135). I determined that networks were seldom the focus of what was under investigation, and that ego-centric relationships were. That is, the individuals with whom a person interacts were not the focus, nor were the links between those people or the links between them and others. Thus I moved away from

the use of the term *social networks* and opted to use the term *social relationships* throughout the body of my thesis; citations, or referral to citations excepted.

### **The local neighbourhood shop**

In many middle-class suburbs of Melbourne, the local neighbourhood shopping precinct may present as one or two shops, or as a *shopping strip*. A shopping strip commonly comprises a group of shops which face onto the roadway and comprises for example, a milk bar<sup>2</sup>, newsagency, green grocer, licensed grocer, chemist, butcher, and hairdresser.

That local neighbourhood shops were a focus for the current study was influenced by choice, and by the study method and design which are presented in Chapter 3 and Chapter 4.

Before the study was launched, older people had been observed interacting in their local neighbourhood shops. Huge shopping complexes that focused on mass marketing and that served countless suburbs seemed to play a different role to local neighbourhood shops. The scale and function of other types of shops, shopping malls for example, provoked deliberation. Malls can be sizeable and approach the scale and function of the huge complexes, or they can be smaller, serve local neighbourhoods, and have a community focus. Indeed, literature about malls features in the current study's literature review (pg.32) and provide an interesting perspective. However, the data, and the theoretical sampling and constant comparative approaches associated with classic grounded theory, determined that the study ultimately focused on a small local neighbourhood shopping strip.

### **Social interaction**

*Social interaction* conceptualises the getting-together of two or more players. The act of social interaction serves purposes at an individual and societal level, and these can interrelate. Interacting with others is integral to developing a sense of belonging which is considered to be a basic human need (Ryan and Deci, 2001, Baumeister and

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<sup>2</sup> In Australia, a milk bar is a type of general store which sells milk, confectionary, ice-cream, bread, soft drinks, and newspapers

Learly, 1995). It is through social interactions with others that we understand who we are; our identity and our place in society (Stryker and Burke, 2000). Integral to this are observance of cues such as dress, and complex interplay (Goffman, 1959). Sociologist George Mead (1863–1931) believed that successful social interaction involved taking the part of the other, and being able to see oneself as seen by the other. Thus, successful social interaction involves insight, and reciprocity.

At a societal level, social interaction involves ‘reciprocity of service and return service’ (Simmel, 1950:387), and exchange and reinforcement of social norms, a reciprocity which serves to stabilise societies (Gouldner, 1960).

### **Well-being**

A key aim of the current study was to ascertain whether older people’s social interactions in their local neighbourhood shops might be significant for their well-being. *Well-being* can be difficult to define. Cowen (1994) has proposed that due to cultural and definitional variations, a uniformly acceptable definition of psychological wellness may be an illusion (Cowen, 1994). Well-being has been difficult to measure, and accordingly, Higgs and colleagues (2003) created a needs-satisfaction model of quality of life model (CASP) that contains four domains: Control, Autonomy, Pleasure, and Self-realization (Higgs, Hyde, Wiggins and Blane, 2003). The CASP has been applied in research as a measure of well-being (Gilleard, Hyde and Higgs, 2007).

*Well-being* has been defined or conceptualised as *wellness* (Cowen, 1991), *successful ageing* (Baltes and Carstensen, 1996, Strawbridge, Wallhagen and Cohen, 2002), *life satisfaction* (Ryff, 1989) or *quality of life* (Zahava and Bowling, 2004, Higgs et al., 2003). *Active ageing* is a more recent addition to the list of concepts associated with optimising *well-being*. The concept of *active ageing* was introduced in conjunction with a World Health Organisation initiative, and has defined an approach towards ‘optimizing opportunities for health, participation and security in order to enhance quality of life’ (World Health Organisation, 2009, World Health Organisation, 2012). Although it is acknowledged that optimising such opportunities is a human right for

anyone at any age, the concept of *active ageing* has been used as a change agent for empowering older people through social action and policy.

However, despite the good intent of such an initiative, and although older people have been involved and consulted in many associated projects, there remains I believe, a subtle underlying connotation of ‘doing for’ older people. This neglects that many older people may assume empowerment, and in doing so may derive a sense of satisfaction, positive psychological outcome, or *well-being* (Diener, 2000).

The current study has the potential to identify the nature and purpose of older people’s social interactions in their local neighbourhood shops, and thus, how the interactions may be associated with their well-being. Academic interest in the dimensions associated with subjective emotional well-being has been prolific following World War II. Prior to this time the psychological approach had focused on a clinical behaviourist method. However, after the War there was a move towards an approach which was concerned with personal growth and human potential (Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi, 2000).

Indeed, the concept of successful ageing has continued to evolve, embracing dimensions such as happiness, adjustment, affect balance, morale, subjective well-being, and optimal interplay between the individual and the environment (Ryff, 1989). Such a broad range of dimensions highlights the growth and change of focus from previous views, for example, those with a purely biomedical approach. Cowen (1994) proposed that wellness may anchor one end of a hypothetical continuum and sickness (pathology) the other (Cowen, 1994).

Rowe and Kahn’s (1998) model which distinguished between normal and successful ageing defined criteria that included: absence of disease, disability, and risk factors; maintaining physical and mental functioning; and active engagement with life (Rowe and Kahn, 1998). Such models or definitions however, are not always consistent with older people’s self-assessments of successful ageing or well-being. Older people with good health have rated themselves as ageing unsuccessfully, while others with

chronic conditions have rated themselves as ageing successfully (Strawbridge et al., 2002).

Sociopsychological models of well-being have introduced dimensions such as life satisfaction, social participation and functioning, and psychological resources, including personal growth (Bowling and Dieppe, 2005). Lawton (1982, 1989) proposed that as people grew older, the way they interacted with their environment could be significant for maintaining well-being (Lawton, 1982, Lawton, 1989 ) (Lawton and Nahemow, 1973). Wahl and Lang (2006) proposed that such dynamics between people and their environment had been ignored especially in old age (Wahl and Lang, 2006 ). However, in more recent times, environmental factors and the way that older people interact with their environment have regained attention in explanations of well-being (Clarke and Nieuwenhuijsenb, 2009, Wiles, Allen, Palmer, Hayman, Keeling and Kerse, 2009). Cowen (1991) defined well-being or psychological wellness as ‘an idyllic, abstract concept’ but suggested that life satisfaction or gratification in living could also define wellness (Cowen, 1991:407).

Nevertheless, *well-being* featured in the current study, which aimed to demonstrate that social interaction in local neighbourhood shops might be associated with older people’s well-being. I decided however, that no direct measure of well-being would be employed. I proposed that identification of the nature and the purpose of the social interactions would indicate if and how the interactions were associated with well-being.

Thus, it was considered that a working definition of the concept was required.

Accordingly, Cowen’s (1991) model was selected. Cowen (1991) proposed that *competence*, *resilience*, *social system modification*, and *empowerment* interacted and were integral to psychological wellness as they accounted for ‘age-related, situation-related, group-related, and society-related determinants of and impediments to wellness’ (Cowen, 1991:408). These determinants, Cowen proposed, could fluctuate and develop throughout the life course.

This definition of wellness seemed apt as the current study concerned people at a particular stage of life and who were interacting socially in their local neighbourhood shops.

I now elaborate upon Cowen's determinants which also align with some of the theories associated with a positive psychology approach, that is, with a focus turned to personal growth and potential development, which I introduced earlier (pg.2).

*Competence* conceptualises doing well, the things that a person's life role suggests they should be doing (Cowen, 1991), and social interaction is implicit in competence: interacting competently with others 'nourishes a self-view of efficacy' (:404). Competence in interacting with others can be integral to developing a sense of belonging (Baumeister and Learly, 1995, Ryan and Deci, 2001), and of security, which can enhance a sense of fulfilment and well-being (La Guardia, Ryan, Couchman and Deci, 2000). Ryan and Deci (2000) argued similarly that self-determination and a sense of well-being were achieved by satisfying three needs, *competence* (feeling that one is in control), *relatedness* (being connected to, and caring for, others), and *autonomy* (being independent and in harmony with one's self) (Ryan and Deci, 2000a).

*Resilience* is the ability to cope with life challenges. As a concept, *resilience* has originated from the observation that despite severe stressors, people can remain positive and function well (Rutter, 1995). Rutter (1987) described resilient people as having self-efficacy, self-esteem and a range of problem solving skills (Rutter, 1987). Windle and colleagues' (2008) integration of several theoretical perspectives of psychological resilience seemed to support this view (Windle, Markland and Woods, 2008). Genetics may play a part in determining who is predisposed to resiliency, and it is likely that life experience and continuing development may factor also (Baltes, 1997, Erikson, 1963). Thus it is conceivable that people who survive to older ages have special attributes, have become skilled at using their 'social and individual resources' (Hildon, Smith, Netuveli and Blane, 2008:726), and thus generate and maintain self-esteem and autonomy.

*Social systems* include institutions in which people have significant interactions over long time periods. Cowen (1991) believed that because all interaction is integral to experience, institutions such as schools or churches, depending on the way they functioned, could impede or enhance wellness. I propose that while local neighbourhood structures such as shops may not have a mandate on par with a school, they are places where people can interact over time and may therefore be integral to people's well-being.

*Empowerment*, Cowen (1991) surmised, could be enabled at a societal level and 'aligned with the notion of a just society' (:407). Empowerment is an important concept for the current study. Cowen suggested that older people are disempowered by society, but that policies and conditions could enable people to gain control over their lives and thus enhance their wellness. Such a perspective is pertinent to policy-making and social planning and is discussed further later in this chapter.

Thus, having defined the terms *networks*, *local neighbourhood shop*, *social interaction* and *well-being*, it is reiterated that the current study involved investigation of older people's social interactions in their local neighbourhood shops, and how the interactions may be associated with psychological wellness, or well-being.

I considered that Cowen's (1991) model of wellness (Cowen, 1991), Ryan and Deci's (2000) (Ryan and Deci, 2000a) theory of self-determination, and other theories with a positive approach to personal growth and potential development (Fredrickson, 1998, Baltes, 1997, Antonovsky, 1993a, Ryan and Deci, 2000b), could be pertinent to interpreting the participants' wellness or well-being.

It was also proposed that well-being in the context of the current study would involve 'person-related, transactional-contextual, and environmental-societal determinants' (Cowen, 1991:405). These determinants are congruent with the rationale for the study described in this chapter (pg.15).

## **Motivation**

Part of the aim of the current study was to identify the purpose of older people's social interactions in their local shops. Purpose implies the presence of an impetus or a motivation.

The concept of proactive practical intent also aligns with theories associated with positive psychology which I introduced earlier (pg.2), particularly self-determination theory (Ryan and Deci, 2000b), and I elaborate upon these in Chapter 2.

Motivation, the impetus to act, has been described in terms of intrinsic and extrinsic forms of motivation.

The most basic distinction is between intrinsic motivation, which refers to doing something because it is inherently interesting or enjoyable, and extrinsic motivation, which refers to doing something because it leads to a separable outcome

(Ryan and Deci, 2000a)

The construct *intrinsic motivation*, according to Ryan and Deci (2000) reflected 'the natural human propensity to learn and assimilate' (:54), whereas, *extrinsic motivation* 'can either reflect external control or true self-regulation' (:54). Intrinsic motivation was self-initiated, whereas extrinsic motivation could involve external factors such as social pressures, threats or coercion.

This understanding prompted interest about what motivational factors are involved in older people's shop-going.

Certainly there is the need to purchase supplies. The desire or need to socialise has been raised. 'Commercial friendship', that is friendly association with service providers, may satisfy a need for companionship and emotional support (Rosenbaum, 2006, Stone, 1954:44). Tauber (1972) identified motivations for shop-going: diversion; learning about new trends; sensory stimulation; and enjoyment of experiencing status and authority connected with being (Tauber, 1972).



However, motivational factors that seem basic can be complex. I mentioned earlier that socialising was considered integral to the need to belong, a fundamental human need (Baumeister and Learly, 1995). This need has in turn been considered integral to survival instinct, perhaps one of the most powerful motivators for action (Forgas, Williams and Laham, 2005). Whether there was a psychosocial process associated with older people's social interactions that involved such instinct seemed fanciful, but the notion provoked intrigue and an impetus to launch the study.

## **LOCAL NEIGHBOURHOOD SHOPS AS PLACES OF SOCIAL INTERACTION**

Shopping malls serve as gathering places for older people (White, 2007, Lewis, 1990, Graham, Graham and MacLean, 1991). But Oldenburg (1991) was critical of the consumer focus of shopping malls, and of their inability to compensate for the demise of the town square where at one time, the local community interacted naturally (Oldenburg, 1991). Indeed, smaller neighbourhood shops can be preferred by older people because of the opportunity to interact with others from the neighbourhood, and the comfort and confidence associated with familiarity, ease of access, and staff who are willing to assist (Gardner, 2008:101). It seemed likely that such shops could provide a suitable environment where these dimensions could be explored. This was not presumed, but rather, in accordance with theoretical sampling, which data were required was determined by ongoing data analysis.

In some places in Australia, local neighbourhood shops do persist, especially in the middle-class suburbs of Melbourne which were developed after the Second World War. Such suburbs offered an affordable 'good-life' away from the city. Modest cream-brick homes and well-maintained gardens were characteristic. Nowadays some are transforming as younger families locate there (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2006, 2001, 1996, 1991, Glen Eira City Council, 2012). Nevertheless, at the time of writing this thesis it remained that many of these suburbs had a high percentage of older people relative to the general population. In the suburb where the local shopping strip that became the study site was located, people who were 65 years and older comprised 16.7 percent of that suburb's total population (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2011).

Continuous interaction and associated social activity can be integral to people's lives (Altman and Wandersman, 1987). People can develop a special connection to their local area. Such attachment may have practical and emotional aspects that develop over time (Wiles et al., 2009), such as convenience, security, and a sense of identity. Convenience is associated with knowing how to get about and what to expect. A sense of security and a sense of identity are often associated with one's own place and such perceptions are likely to be of increasing importance with advancing age (Andrews and Phillips, 2005). It is clear that 'social and physical environments interact in a complex and dynamic manner' to form life experience (Wahl and Lang, 2004:4). Lifelong interactions in local neighbourhood shops exemplify this.

The local neighbourhood shop as a place of social interaction is steeped in history. People have always gathered to exchange commodities, and such places are social hubs. The eighteenth century marketplace was 'a social as well as economic nexus', 'where one-hundred-and-one social and personal transactions went on; where news was passed, rumour and gossip flew around' (Thompson, 1971). The local marketplace was a readily accessible source of news (Hoggart, 1957), a vital resource when literacy and printed news were scarce. In past times when women were discouraged from mingling, local neighbourhood shops provided an opportunity to socialise (Oldenburg, 1991).

Thus, local shops have significance for individuals, and for communities. Social interaction in local shops may still be important for deciphering who is a friend or an opponent, for forging alliances, and to alert one to opportunities and threats. Such opportunity and information could make the difference between success and failure in life. But individuals interacting together can make a community. Community structures where people have an opportunity to get together and socialise such as coffee shops, bars and hairdressers are places that enable interaction (Oldenburg, 1991). Local neighbourhood shops are places that Macintyre referred to as 'opportunity structures' (Macintyre and Ellaway, 2000:213), places where people have the chance to mingle and where social networks over-lap (Greenbaum, 1982). Foottit (2009) identified that older women used shopping centres to stay connected to the community as well as for shopping (Foottit, 2009). In neighbourhoods or

communities, social interaction in shops and other structures can provide the opportunity for sharing, and for reinforcement of values or norms, and thus help unite people (Putnam, 2000).

Cooperation with others fosters a sense of community, the 'feeling that one is part of a larger dependable and stable structure' (Sarason, 1974). A 'sense of community' and the dynamic factors associated with this - membership, influence, integration and fulfilment of needs, and shared emotional connection (McMillan and Chavis, 1986, Colombo et al., 2001) - are pertinent to the current study and are discussed in Chapter 2.

Local neighbourhood shops can provide an affective image of the community's identity (Smith and Sparks, 2000, Scarpello, Poland, Lambert and Wakeman, 2009, Horne, 1984). They can be 'part of the heart of the community' (Scarpello et al., 2009:111), and provide people with a sense of belonging, and pride of place (Baum and Palmer, 2002).

Ironically, sometimes the role or function of an institution is only appreciated properly, when it is gone. This was exemplified by a participant's comments in Baum and Palmer's (2002) study of people's perceptions about the influence that their neighbourhood had on their participation levels and health. Although the comments were made by younger people, the role and function of local neighbourhood shops, and the effect their removal made for individuals and the community were clear.

(The shops) made a big difference and that's gone now ... they were like a hub, like the hub of the gossip network and the community.

Yes, well there was the butcher's shop, there's the deli, there was the chemist shop, a doctor's, a fruit and veg, drapery. It was a nice little centre but then they built the bigger centre just over there and of course that all vanished. The only thing left is the doctor's and the hairdresser ... You didn't get in the car and drive out of the area and therefore you'd see people

(Baum and Palmer, 2002:354)

Indeed, the demise of local neighbourhood shops in some places has increased the focus on them, and they have become iconic symbols of community. Their removal for development has thus been viewed as a moral affront against people's civil rights.

When local public services such as banks or post offices were taken away, local residents suffered not only from poorer quality services and a greater hassle in reaching services, but felt that the removal of these services had symbolic meanings and indicated lack of interest in or support for the community from local authorities or service providers

(Macintyre and Ellaway, 2000:11)

Removal of an older person from their neighbourhood can also result in a similar sense of loss. Not only because familiar places and faces are missed, but sometimes because an older person's degree of independence has changed too (Phillipson, Bernard, Phillips and Ogg, 1999). Phillipson and colleagues (1999) examined changes occurring to the community life of older people living in three urban areas of England between the 1950s and 1990s. These researchers identified that the way that older people experience such changes was 'rooted in day-to-day observations and contacts with the community' (Phillipson et al., 1999:729). The comment of an older woman who had been relocated exemplified this.

I do feel sort of cut off because it is very difficult from here, there aren't even any shops within the distance that I could walk

(Phillipson et al., 1999:738)

However, that while structures such as local shops provide an opportunity for people to interact, it is not the structure as such that creates a sense of belonging, it is the interaction therein which does.

Local neighbourhood shopkeepers<sup>3</sup> have always played a key role in social interaction. Hosgood (1989) observed of the shopkeeper, that a 'reciprocal ideological relationship which they enjoyed with their customers and neighbours ensured that they were dynamically involved in the culture of the community (Hosgood, 1989:440). 'Consumer-market interactions' (Kang and Ridgway,

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<sup>3</sup> Shopkeeper is a term that may define a shop owner, or a worker employed by the shop owner. Traditionally, in local neighbourhood shops, the owner also served customers.

1996:108), or ‘cultivating’ customers to increase business success is an aspect of the relationship, and a recognised activity ‘carried out with the primary intent of gaining (such) a reward’ (Bigus, 1972:131). Indeed, cultivation strategies such as confiding in clients or self-disclosure are recognised approaches for ensuring customer commitment (Berry, 1995, Jacobs, Hyman and McQuitty, 2001).

Clearly the nature of the relationship between customers and shopkeepers involves forms of reciprocity. In some circumstances it is the customer who may initiate a ‘commercial friendship’ in an endeavour to satisfy a need for companionship or emotional support (Rosenbaum, 2006, Cowen, 1982). Stone (1954) identified that for some customers, ‘strong social bonds tied them to personnel of the stores they patronized’ (Stone, 1954:44). Rosenbaum (2009) identified that that older people gave as well as received; employees such as waitresses obtained emotional support and companionship from their customers (Rosenbaum, 2009).

Such reciprocity between the shopkeeper and their customer is important for the rationale of the inquiry described in this thesis and is discussed further in the review of the literature presented in Chapter 2.

## **THE STUDY RATIONALE**

It was proposed that the knowledge-base about older people’s social relationships could be augmented by the current study. Such extension of the knowledge-base would have potential to improve or augment future research that involved older people. It would also have significance for policies, social planning, and practices that are pertinent to older people.

### **Social relationships of older people**

As I mentioned earlier, and expand on in Chapter 6 (pg.135), current understanding about older people’s social relationships has been informed largely by exploration of aspects of their interaction with family, friends and neighbours, and acquaintances associated with volunteering, club-going, and religious associations.

We know little about older people's proactive, reciprocal roles in maintaining significant relationships with others who have been referred to as peripheral ties or consequential strangers (Fingerman, 2004). This is odd considering that it has been proposed that such relationships help people grow and flourish. Certainly there is little empirical evidence to support how older people's reciprocal interactions with others such as local shopkeepers, may translate to well-being.

I mentioned earlier in the introduction that a common focus for research concerned with older people's social lives was the support *received* through interaction with others, especially from family members (Phillipson, 1997). Yet we *do* know that older people remain active in their support of family and friends, and in their communities (Bernard, Phillipson, Phillips and Ogg, 2001, Phillipson, 1997, Wellman and Wortley, 1990). Indeed there is evidence to suggest that for older people, helping others can contribute to better morale and a sense of worth, and to a perception of better life quality (Kim, Hisata, Kai and Lee, 2000, Stoller, 1985, Sixsmith and Boneham, 2003).

The ways in which older people go about reciprocal interaction in all aspects of their lives, needs to be explored more fully. As I will present in Chapter 2, there is a dearth of research concerned with how older people interact proactively in their neighbourhoods, and how such interaction may relate to well-being. This deficiency may be due to general societal attitudes about older people, a persistence to explore the biomedical model concerned with pathology and prevention (Bowling and Dieppe, 2005), and earlier theory that has portrayed growing older as a time of disengagement from society (Cumming and Henry, 1961).

This notion of proactivity serves to introduce some of the theoretical perspectives about growing older.

### **Theoretical perspectives about growing older**

Several traditional theories and psychological perspectives of growing older have opposed the notion that people remain active and involved into old age. It is difficult to ascertain whether such perspectives have arisen from negative stereotypes and

stigma associated with older people, or to some extent, have caused negative stereotypes and stigma. Cumming and Henry (1961) postulated Disengagement theory (Cumming and Henry, 1961), proposing that it was natural and inevitable that older people withdraw from social life. There was a notion that such withdrawal served a function of mitigating the disruptive impact of their death on society and relationships (Russell, 1981). The notion that older people should give up their social roles aligned with the concept of structural functionalism. Elimination of older people from society helped to maintain the status quo by making way for following generations to thrive (Minichiello, Alexander and Jones, 1992).

The view that older people were not part of society's mainstream was influenced by psychology and medical approaches and practice during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century which viewed the ageing human organism in terms of abnormality and decay. Subsequently, for a time post-World War II, psychological approaches focused on 'repairing damage within a disease model of human functioning', that neglected 'the fulfilled individual and the thriving community' (Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi, 2000:5). As mentioned earlier, in the late 1950s and 60s, psychological theories of well-being were developed to incorporate positive perspectives. Since then, associated theories and models, for example, the broaden-and-build model (Fredrickson, 2001), and selective optimisation with compensation theory (Baltes, 1997), have to some extent countered negative perceptions of growing older.

It is acknowledged that more positive approaches cannot abolish negative aspects of growing older such as loss of function (Cole, 1983). But we do know that older people 'are not just coping with decline; they continue to actively develop themselves on numerous fronts' (Ouwehand, Ridder and Bensing, 2007:873). For example, older Australians contribute the highest number of volunteer hours of any age group (Commonwealth of Australia, 2012). Yet not all older people may want to contribute in such a formal way, and there should not be an expectation that they should do so. Older people help their families and neighbours (Walker and Hiller, 2007, Phillipson et al., 1999), and they participate in a variety of activities (Jansen and von Sadowsky, 2004).

We need to know much more about how older people already choose to interact in their communities and what interaction is meaningful to them. Balanced representation of older people's social interactions and their desire to remain active and involved must be recognised and addressed (Bernard et al., 2001). Without such counterbalance we encourage an erroneous view that all older people are, or are destined to be, dependent recipients who contribute little to their communities.

We know that autonomy has been associated with psychological well-being (Baltes and Carstensen, 1996), and that the physical environment (Phillipson, 2004), and social relationships (Phillipson, 1997), can play key roles in well-being. It has been raised earlier in this chapter that competence, resilience, social system modification, and empowerment, are key interactional dimensions associated with psychological wellness (Cowen, 1991). Thus, this thesis includes consideration of the theories associated with positive psychology (pg.57). It is emphasised that the aim was not to test or prove any of these.

Active and positive approaches to development however, do suggest a degree of autonomy or independence. This point serves to introduce a discussion about the relevance of the current study for policy and planning that is pertinent to older people.

### **Policy and social planning pertinent to older people**

There is a school of thought that older people consistently value the benefits associated with living in their own homes in a familiar community (Zahava and Bowling, 2004, Farquhar, 1995). Initiatives such as the United Nations Principles for Older Persons (1999) and the Healthy Cities movement support this view. The United Nations Principles for Older Persons (1999) in part states that: *Older persons should be able to reside at home for as long as possible*. This principle is underpinned by a philosophy supporting 'the empowerment of communities, their ownership and control of their own endeavours and destinies' (World Health Organisation, 1986:3).



People can become attached to where they live. The names of suburbs can categorise the people who live in them, and they can be associated with personal identity (Altman and Wandersman, 1987). For the majority of older Australians, 'residing at home for as long as possible', is likely to mean continuing to reside in their local neighbourhood in the home they have owned for many years. The security of owning one's home, or 'the great Australian dream' (Baum and Wulff, 2001:8), has been a passionate matter for many Australians. This is the case particularly for those older Australians who contended with uncertain times such as The Great Depression, and World Wars. This ideal has passed to the next generation also, and the 2002-2003 Survey of Income and Housing indicated that in Australia, ownership rates among people over age 65 were above 80 percent (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2009-2010). There are others who, despite not being home-owners, are likely to wish to continue to reside in the same community. Indeed, in 2006, almost 90 percent of people over age 65 resided in the community in privately-owned<sup>4</sup> dwellings (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2001). Population data, however, introduce another perspective. It has been projected, that in 2016, there will be 3.8 million older people 65 years of age and older in Australia, and by 2036, 6.3 million (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare). If we consider these numbers, along with the desire of older people to remain in their own homes, and a policy direction which aims to keep them there, it is likely that there will be vast numbers of older community-dwelling people. While the concept of older people remaining in their own homes may be regarded as an ideal and a human rights issue, enabling such a model is logistically problematic and will pose a challenge for policy makers and planners. A review of Australia's community service infrastructure and capability identified that the current structures and services to enable such an 'independence model of care' were already overburdened or inadequate (The Allen Consulting Group Care Coalition, 2007:36).

In 2012 the Government released their Aged Care Reform Package: 'Living Longer. Living Better'. This reform document outlined a staged five-year framework and funding (\$3.7 billion), to guide initiatives towards forming 'a flexible and seamless system that provides older Australians with more choice, more control and easier access to a full range of services, where they want it and when they need

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<sup>4</sup> 'Privately-owned' excludes hotels, motels, guest houses, hospitals, aged care homes and supported accommodation

it'(Commonwealth of Australia, 2012). It was proposed that funding would be allocated across a range of initiatives that included: helping people stay at home; building workforce capacity in both community and residential care; research support; advocacy; establishing health connections; dementia support; support for people from diverse backgrounds; and, building a system involving changes to financing structures and to quality management. The funding component that specifically directed to helping people stay at home (\$955.4 million) would subsidise:

- an integrated Home Support program
- more Home Care packages with new levels of packages
- greater choice and control through Consumer Directed Care available across all new Home Care packages
- fairer means-testing arrangements for Home Care packages.

A funding component, \$54.8 million, was proposed to help carers access respite and other support, and \$1.2 billion was allocated to build and strengthen the aged care workforce, these funds shared across community and residential care.

The reform document described a proposed boosting of the aged care workforce (those working in community *and* residential care) from 304,000 workers in 2010, to 827,100 by 2050. The report acknowledged however, that the aged care sector currently 'has difficulties in attracting and retaining sufficient numbers of skilled and trained workers' (:15). This, it was suggested, could be rectified through the 1.2 billion commitment dollars to a Workforce Compact to be actioned from 2012 to 2016. The Compact, a proposed funding arrangement with aged care providers for training and improved wages, would, it was proposed, build the capacity of workers in the aged care sector and improve the profile of aged care work.

At the time of submitting this thesis the reform had been scrutinised and critiqued and forms part of the discussion that I present in Chapter 6.

Proposed changes to the current funding system were structured into the reform. However, it is argued in this thesis, that while improved service delivery and

workforce capacity may assist older people to continue to live in their own homes for as long as possible, we must also identify the existing resources that currently enable older people to look after themselves. This has the potential to save money, could reduce reliance on a workforce, postpone the need for support, and result in better outcomes for older people. Older people value their independence. Need for support may be deferred or even eliminated if local environments are enabling. A common approach to enablement has been to modify the immediate home environment (Landorf, Brewer and Sheppard, 2008). Such focus on the immediate home environment is not enough. Remaining in one's home for as long as possible may involve much more than simply staying at home. One's environment extends beyond the home and thus the meaning of one's 'place' has many dimensions.

Thus with policy makers and planners preparing for growing numbers of older people, we need to understand as much as possible about how older people interact with their 'places' and spaces. Such an argument does not stand alone. Yen and colleagues (2009) have argued that 'empirical research on the influence of neighborhoods on health among older adults was limited, despite conceptual models suggesting the importance of environmental determinants of health and well-being among older adults' (Yen, Michael and Perdue, 2009:456). Accordingly, their systematic review of studies about neighbourhoods and the health of older people did identify that 'very few studies directly measured neighborhood features or context that may be relevant for understanding the influence of neighborhoods on health' (:460). Development of policy solutions to improve health among older adults, Yen and colleagues (2009) proposed, required research concerned with the characteristics of neighbourhoods that provide the most support (and that pose the most threat) to older adults. Similarly, Clarke and Nieuwenhuijsen (2009) concluded following their review of the health literature concerned with physical environments for healthy ageing, that there was 'theoretical and empirical neglect of the underlying mechanisms behind the person-environment relationship' (Clarke and Nieuwenhuijsenb, 2009). Cowen (1991) has suggested that 'the community and its primary settings are more likely than the consulting room' for identifying the 'forces that subserve wellness' (Cowen, 1991).

Such an approach, Cowen argued, would require:

the inputs of clusters of scholars and field workers around several orienting themes: (a) how wellness comes about in the first place, including community forces, settings, and policies that can enhance such development, (b) social planning and policy, including empowerment steps at the societal and setting levels, designed to enhance wellness, and (c) developing and applying knowledge to minimize the adverse effects of stressful life events and circumstances and to promote wellness

(Cowen, 1991:408)

It was considered that the current study would provide an opportunity to explore a social process that was integral to a local neighbourhood structure. It was considered likely that the current study had the potential to inform us better, as to how older people might take a proactive approach to growing older. Such evidence would confirm the reciprocal nature of their social interaction and reinforce that growing older is an important part of the life-course, and that older people could benefit from ongoing social interaction in their community.

Thus it was proposed that an enquiry be launched which would aim to explore older people's interactions in their local neighbourhood shops. Specifically, the study would answer the following questions:

- What is the nature of older people's social interactions in their local neighbourhood shops?
- What is the purpose of the interactions and how they may be associated with well-being?

In Chapter 2, the literature search and review are presented and discussed. The literature review indicated the status of current understanding relevant to the proposed enquiry, prior to commencement of data collection in 2009.

The literature review also served to determine an appropriate research design and guided the selection of a suitable methodology. The selection of a methodology is presented in Chapter 3, and the research design is presented Chapter 4.

The analysis of the data, the results, and theory development are presented in Chapter 5. In Chapter 6 I discuss the relevance of the study findings. In Chapter 7 I present my evaluation of the study.

## Chapter 2

### SYSTEMATIC REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE AND OVERVIEW OF THEORIES ASSOCIATED WITH A POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGICAL APPROACH

This chapter describes the search for, and selection and appraisal of, articles and other material that are relevant to the enquiry described in this thesis<sup>5</sup>. It includes a systematic review of the literature pertinent to social interaction in shops, and a review of relevant theories associated with positive psychology.

#### Systematic search for materials concerned with social interaction in shops

The search for materials about social interaction involved several approaches. They included: Internet searches; systematic search of research materials; identifying journals that publish in the area pertinent to the thesis enquiry and searching their publications; searching the reference sections of journal articles; library catalogue searches; interaction with academics, experts, and other students, in person at conferences for example, and investigation of online information.

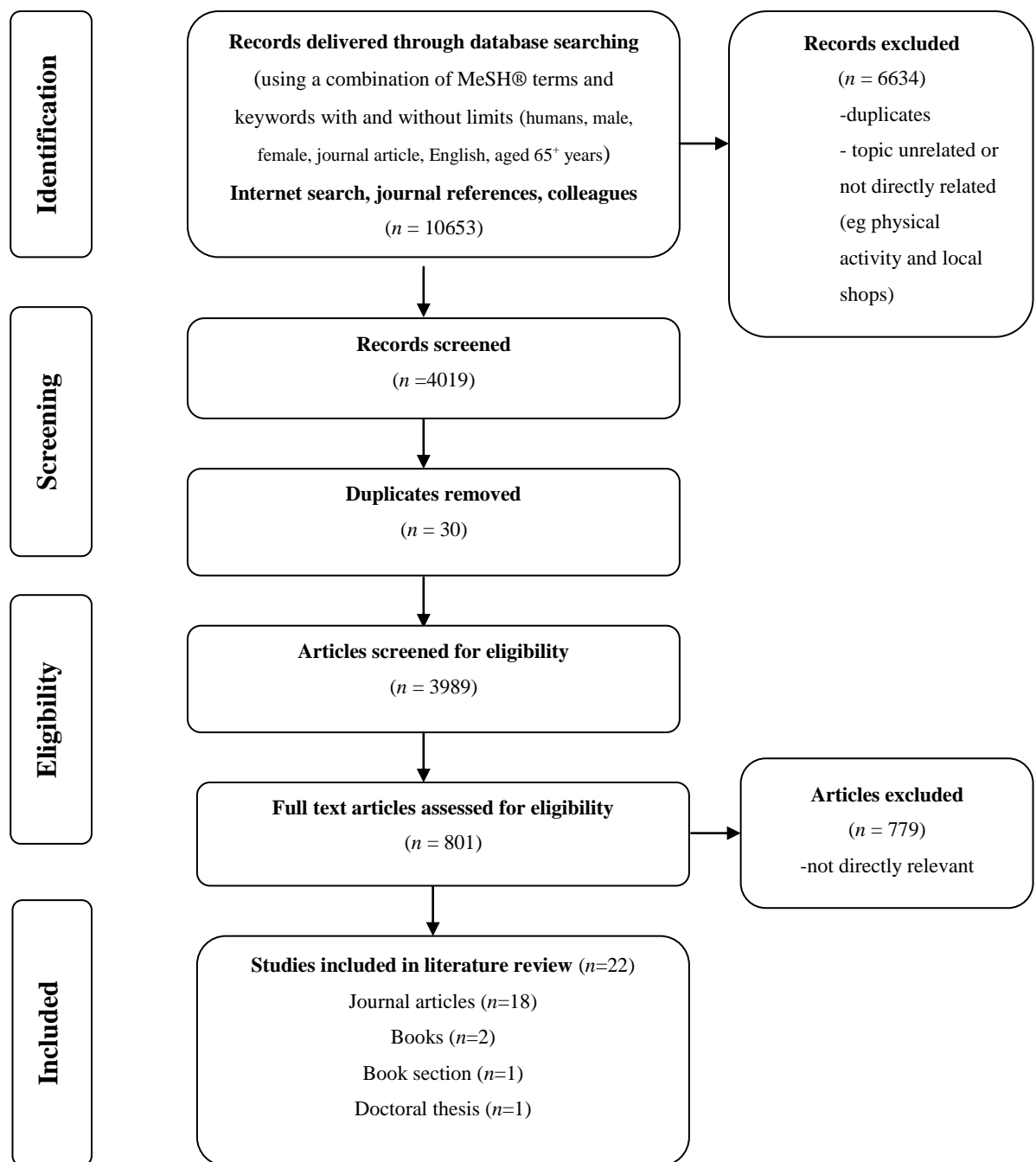
Data bases used for this systematic search were: MEDLINE (EBSCO), CINAHL Plus (EBSCO), PsycINFO, Web of Science (ISI), Family & Society plus (Informit), International Bibliography of the Social Sciences: IBSS (ProQuest), Sociological Abstracts (CSA), SCOPUS Elsevier, and PubMed. A systematic search was conducted of these data bases, for relevant materials up to, and including the year 2009. Databases were searched using Boolean technique, an electronically assisted method where two or more search terms are combined using three main commands, OR, AND, and NOT. This increases, restricts and refines the relevant information found. Further limits or parameters defining the scope of the search can also be applied, for example, *human, male, female, journal article, English, age 65<sup>+</sup> years*. An example of a Boolean search and results are presented in Table 2.1. A flow diagram of the entire literature search process and results is presented in Figure 2.1.

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<sup>5</sup> Conducting a literature review is not a tenet of classic grounded theory. I discuss this issue in conjunction with the research design (Chapter 4) and the study evaluation (Chapter 7)

**Table 2.1 Example of a search strategy using a Boolean approach, showing the output number and the number of relevant articles identified**

Search no.	Search strategy	Database	Output	Relevant articles
1	people, adults, older people OR older adults OR aged OR elderly OR seniors			
2	1 AND shop OR shops OR shopping centres OR malls OR local shops OR neighbourhood shops	PubMed (with limits)	320	2
3	1 OR 2 AND shopkeepers OR merchants OR retailers			
4	1 AND 3 AND neighbourhood OR neighbourhood OR local OR community OR place			
5	1 OR / AND 2 AND shopping OR shop-going OR shopping behaviour OR shopping behaviour			
6	1 OR 3 OR 4 AND reciprocity			
7	1 AND 7 OR 3 OR 4 AND interaction OR participation OR networks	PubMed (with limits)	1081	1
8	1 OR 3 OR 4 AND aging in place OR ageing-in-place			
9	1 OR 5 OR 6 OR 7 AND well-being OR well being OR wellness			



**Figure 2.1** Flow diagram of the literature search

From 10653 records, 22 were retained in the literature review for critique.



### **Further point of definition**

#### ***Older people***

From this point in the thesis the term *older people* will be used to cover all terms used in the literature such as *older adults*, *aged*, *elderly*, or *seniors*; citations excepted.

### **Inclusion and exclusion criteria for materials**

The enquiry described in this thesis is concerned with older people's social interactions in their local neighbourhood shops. There is a body of literature that is concerned with older people's social interactions, and recreation, in shopping malls (Lewis, 1990, Graham et al., 1991, White, 2007), and these materials were delivered as part of the systematic literature search. It was difficult to ascertain whether these articles were relevant because they appeared to be concerned with larger mass public spaces, rather than local neighbourhood shops. As mentioned in Chapter 1, it can be difficult to determine the scale, and the focus, of a shopping mall. However, the decision was made to include the articles in the review of the literature. The view presented in these articles seemed to counter somewhat, my observation of social interactions in local neighbourhood shops. This strengthened the argument for conducting the current study.

The body of work concerned with older people and the neighbourhood environment from the aspect of physical activity such as walking to local shops is acknowledged. However, the focus of the current study was on older people's social interactions in their local neighbourhood shops once they were at these shops. Thus, these materials were not included. Details of excluded literature are presented in Figure 2.1.

After screening materials and assessing them for eligibility, the systematic search produced 22 relevant citations. A summary of the selected articles is presented in Table 2.2 (pg.28).

**Table 2.2 Overview of the literature sourced and reviewed for the social interaction perspective**

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Author	Date	Dissemination	Geographical information	Study characteristics Sample size	Participant type and age in years	Title	Focus / associated outcome	Publisher / Issue
Rosenbaum, M. S.	2009	Journal article	United States of America	Interviews 83 12	Customers 37 to 86 Restaurant owners and employees	Exploring commercial friendships from employees' perspectives	Relationships / Support	Journal of Services Marketing, 23(1), 57 - 66
Blau, M., Fingerman, K.	2009	Book	United States of America	Not applicable	Not applicable	Consequential Strangers-The power of people who don't seem to matter ...but really do	Relationships / Enriched life	New York: W.W. Norton and Company Inc.
Fingerman, K.	2009	Journal article	United States of America	Not applicable	Not applicable	Consequential strangers and peripheral ties: the importance of unimportant relationships	Relationships / Enriched life	Journal of Family Theory & Review, 1 69-86
Philippa Clarke, Els R. Nieuwenhuijsenb	2009	Journal article	United States of America	Not applicable	Not applicable	Environments for healthy ageing: a critical review	Environment	Maturitas, 2009 20;64(1), 14-19.
Scarpello, T., Poland, F., Lambert, N., Wakeman, T.	2009	Journal article	United Kingdom	Interviews 40	Customers 18-64	A qualitative study of the food-related experiences of rural village shop customers	Social interaction	Journal of Human Nutrition and Dietetics, 22, 108-115
Gardner, P.	2008	Doctoral thesis	Canada	'Friendly visiting' 6	Older people 77-89	The Public Life of Older People Neighbourhoods and Networks	Social interaction	Not applicable
Landorf, C., Brewer, G., Sheppard, L. A.	2008	Journal article	Australia	Not applicable	Not applicable	The urban environment and sustainable ageing: critical issues and assessment indicators.	Environment assessment	Journal of Justice and Sustainability, 13(6), 497-514.
Walker, R.B., Hiller, J.E.	2007	Journal article	Australia	Interview 20	Older women 75-93	Places and health: a qualitative study to explore how older women living alone perceive the social and physical dimensions of their neighbourhoods	Experience of living in a neighbourhood	Social Science & Medicine 65, 1154-65
White, R.	2007	Journal article	Australia	Not applicable	Not applicable	Older people hang out too	Commentary about older people's interaction in mass public spaces	Journal of Occupational Science, 14(2), 115-18

...Continued Table 2.2 Overview of the literature sourced and reviewed for the social interaction perspective

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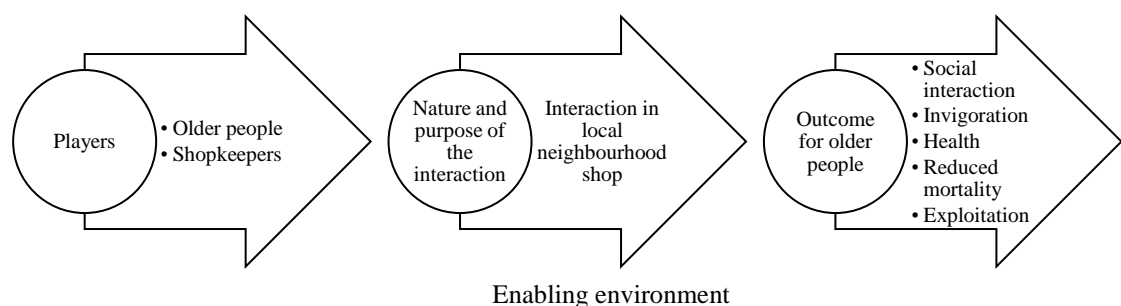
Author	Date	Dissemination	Geographical information	Study characteristics Sample size	Participant type and age in years	Title	Focus / associated outcome	Publisher / Issue
Rosenbaum, M. S.	2006	Journal article	United States of America	Interviews 83 12	Customers 37 to 86 Restaurant owners and employees	Exploring the social supportive role of third places in consumers' lives	Relationships / Support	Journal of Service Research, 9(1), 59-71.
Jansen, D.A., von Sadowsky, V.	2004	Journal article	United States of America	30	Older people 65-92	Restorative activities of community-dwelling elders	Community interaction / well-being	Western Journal of Nursing Research, 26, (4), 381-399
Fingerman, K.	2004	Book section	United States of America	Not applicable	Not applicable	The consequential stranger: Peripheral ties across the life span. In <i>Growing together: Personal relationships across the life span</i>	Relationships / Enriched life	(pp. 183 - 209). New York: Cambridge University Press
Smith, A., Sparks, L	2000	Journal article	United Kingdom	Interview 65  395	Customers  Retailers	The role and function of the independent small shop: the situation in Scotland	Shop function /	International Review of Retail Distribution & Consumer Research, 10, 205–26
Glass, T. A., Mendes de Leon, C., Marottoli, R. A., Berkman, L. F.	1999	Journal article	United States of America	Interview 2761 Death records	Older people 65 <sup>+</sup>	Population based study of social and productive activities as predictors of survival among elderly Americans	Social relationships / survival	British Medical Journal 21(319), 478-83
Yasuda, N., Zimmerman, S.I., Hawkes, W., Fredman, L., Hebel, J.R., Magazine, J.	1997	Journal article	United States of America	Interview Death records	Older women 65 <sup>+</sup>	Relation of social network characteristics to 5-year mortality among young-old versus old-old white women in an urban community	Social relationships / survival	American Journal of Epidemiology, 145, 516-23
Yong-Soon Kang, Ridgway, N.M.	1996	Journal article	United States of America	Not applicable	Not applicable	The importance of consumer market interactions as a form of social support for elderly consumers	Social relationships / support	Journal of Public Policy & Marketing 15 (I) 108-117

...Continued Table 2.2 Overview of the literature sourced and reviewed for the social interaction perspective

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Author	Date	Dissemination	Geographical information	Study characteristics Sample size	Participant type and age in years	Title	Focus / associated outcome	Publisher / Issue
Oldenburg, R.	1991	Book	United States of America	Not applicable	Not applicable	The great good place: cafés, coffee shops, bookstores, bars, hair salons, and other hangouts at the heart of a community	Social interaction	New York: Marlowe and Company
Graham, D.F., Graham, I., MacLean, M.J.,	1991		Canada	Secondary data analysis 300	Older people 65+	Going to the mall: a leisure activity of urban elderly people	Older people's use of shopping centres for sociability reasons	Canadian Journal of Aging, 10, 345-58
Lewis, G.H.	1990	Journal article	United States of America	Interviews (200 hours) <i>n</i> =? Portion of a larger study	Various Managers, retail clerks, shoppers, security staff	Community through exclusion and illusion: the creation of social worlds in an American shopping mall.	Impact of popular and mass culture on religious cultural forms	Journal of Popular Culture, 24, 121-36
Horne, S.	1984	Report	Australia	Interview survey 178  26	Customers  Shopkeepers	A study of milkbars and corner shops in Melbourne. Shopping as a social activity	Social interaction	University of Melbourne
Tauber, E.M.	1972	Journal article	United States of America	Interview 30	Customers 20-47	Why do people shop?	Shopping motivation	The Journal of Marketing, 36 (4) 46-49
Stone, G.P.	1954	Journal article	United States of America	Survey 124	Women 18+	City shoppers and urban identification: observations on the social psychology of city life	Shopping and identity	The American Journal of Sociology, 60, 1 36-45

Materials selected for appraisal were sourced from a variety of disciplines and locations and represented diverse perspectives. There were works produced by social commentators, and research articles. Disciplines included marketing, retail, nutrition, health, and sociology. Locations included America, Australia, Canada, and the United Kingdom. Some of the sourced materials helped orientate me to the area of concern. Other materials such as journal articles describing research enquiries, for example, indicated the current body of academic knowledge about the topic. In addition to the literature about malls, the literature selected comprised material about: third places (Oldenburg, 1991); consequential strangers (Blau and Fingerman, 2009b, Fingerman, 2009); the role and function of shops (Smith and Sparks, 2000, Horne, 1984); food-related experiences of customers in a rural shop (Scarpello et al., 2009); social and productive activities of older people (Glass, Mendes de Leon, Marottoli and Berkman, 1999, Gardner, 2008); association between shop-going and invigoration (Jansen and von Sadowszky, 2004); shopping motivation (Tauber, 1972); shoppers and identity (Stone, 1954); association between place and health (Walker and Hiller, 2007); supportive relationships between staff and older customers, and between older customers in a local restaurant (Rosenbaum, 2009, Rosenbaum, 2006); association between limited contact with local merchants and reduced mortality (Yasuda, Zimmerman, Hawkes, Fredman, Hebel and Magazine, 1997); a potentially negative aspect of older people's interactions with shopkeepers or exploitation (Kang and Ridgway, 1996); and the urban environment and sustainable ageing (Landorf et al., 2008, Clarke and Nieuwenhuijsenb, 2009). Much of the literature was concerned with social interaction between a player or players in a particular environment, the purpose of the interaction or characteristics associated with the interaction, and a resultant outcome for one or more of the players. Several articles related specifically to older people. The framework which represents the focus of most of the literature is presented in Figure 2.2.



**Figure 2.2 General focus of the literature selected for evaluation**

## CRITIQUE OF THE LITERATURE

### **Access to opportunity structures and enabling environments**

In Chapter 1, the notion that older people interacted socially in their local neighbourhood shops was introduced. It had been argued that local shops, like other community structures, cafes, coffee shops, bookstores, bars, and hair salons, are places where people intermingle (Oldenburg, 1991, Macintyre and Ellaway, 2000:213). Oldenburg (1991) advocated for these *third* places, where people could meet away from home, their *first place*, or work, their *second place*. Oldenburg (1991) proposed that in more modern society, the places where people once interacted naturally such as the traditional village centre had been destroyed by large-scale developments. He maintained that third places now served the important function of fostering community togetherness. Although Oldenburg (1991) was critical of the consumer focus of shopping malls and of their impersonal nature (Oldenburg, 1991), others have noted that older people congregated in shopping malls because they provided a safe, and comfortable environment for social interaction (White, 2007, Lewis, 1990, Graham et al., 1991). White (2007), in commenting about how older people used public spaces such as malls, noted that shopping was not only concerned with consumption, but as shown by Tauber (1972) (whose study is elaborated upon at a later point in this chapter), could involve motivation, experience, emotion, and satisfaction (Tauber, 1972). White (2007) also noted that attendance in shopping malls might reinforce for older people, that they were part of the mainstream community.

Lewis (1990) had noted the evolution of ‘economic monoliths, evolving from the earlier retail form of the suburban shopping center’ (:121). Such places now provided not only retail outlets, but also community and recreation facilities, and professional services, such as legal, medical or optical aid. This type of mall, it had been argued, was ‘fast becoming the standard form, and mixed recreation and community facilities with retail outlets in an effort to integrate the surrounding suburban communities to create a focal point for community life’ (Kowinski, 1985:46). Yet Lewis (1990) argued that a sense of community could be ‘difficult to find among customers at most shopping malls’ (:123) as these places of retail were physically ‘geared for high

turnover' (:123), and were owned by companies that aimed for profits. Retailers in malls aimed to be in an environment that was conducive for selling. Thus tenants were a priority to management of such centres, as was the creation of an environment that was favourable for purchasing (Lewis, 1990). Lewis (1990) conducted an enquiry which aimed to explore the creation and maintenance of community-type social networks within a mall that had evolved over a period of 20 years in a region of America. The study data were collected through interviews with the managers, mall shoppers, security persons and retail clerks, and through observation of group and individual behaviour in the mall. Lewis concluded that the general shopper population regarded the mall as a 'safe and convenient place to shop, but *not* a place to linger or in which to meet friends or begin conversations' (Lewis, 1990:124). Lewis did observe however, that older and younger people gathered there to socialise rather than to buy goods.

Lewis' study indicated that older people had a set pattern of behaviour that involved spending several hours in their preferred area of the complex where they circulated and greeted friends. These people purchased little, although some stayed for a meal. The managers who were involved in the study tolerated but did not endorse the occupancy by the older people because they encroached on the space of others who came to shop. Lewis concluded with a discussion about what he thought may motivate older people to spend their time in the mall. The data collected from the older people who frequented the mall did indicate the presence of a community network. They spoke of shop workers who showed regard and concern for the older people, and of older people who gave emotional support to each other. It was unclear whether some of Lewis' conclusions were supported by data or whether the data had prompted Lewis to associate the data with the views of theorists. Nevertheless Lewis concluded that the mall provided a place for older (and younger) people who were disenfranchised by society to 'draw a sense of self and group identity' (:133), especially for those who had nowhere else to go.

Graham and colleagues (1991) were also interested in the notion that older people gravitated to malls or large shopping complexes for leisure activity not associated with purchasing, but for socialising or 'malingering' (Kowinski, 1985:26). I present

this study in some detail because it raises points of interest. These researchers aimed to 'present a theoretical model to explain elderly people's use of suburban shopping centres as a leisure time activity and to give empirical evidence on the explanatory power of this model' (:346). Such a 'Sociability' model (:347) it was proposed, would reflect both the predisposing characteristics of the individuals who used shopping centres for leisure, and the 'encouraging variables' (:350) such as pleasant environmental characteristics of the shopping centres.

The data for the study was sourced through an analysis of data collected previously through telephone interviews conducted by a 'polling firm' (:348) who also generated a probability sample of 300 non-institutionalised people who were 65 years and older and who resided within one kilometre radius of one of three shopping centres in Montreal. For each of the three shopping centres, 100 participants were selected. Of the 700 telephone calls that located people who were 65 years of age or older (from an original total of 7,296 enquiries), 96 people were excluded because of 'communication problems' (:349), thus leaving 604 eligible respondents from which 300 completed the telephone interview (a response rate of 49.7 percent). Graham and colleagues (1991) explained that due to the response rate and discrepancies between the sample and the population characteristics, the representativeness of the sample was in question. They did suggest however, that as the goal of the research was to test or explain theory, the sample would be adequate to yield useful results.

These researchers constructed a 'Malingering Index' (:349) from responses to four questions about whether the participants attended the shops for reasons other than purchasing goods, for example, to be with other people, or to meet family or friends. Thus the dependent variable or malingering index became 'the extent to which elderly people went to these shopping centres for sociability reasons' (:349). Graham and colleagues (1991) explained that the index could indicate active, or passive, socialising. That is, being around other people, or actually interacting with other people. Predisposing characteristics were inferred from the participants' responses to questions about their health status (self-reported), and their 'sense of isolation' (:350) was inferred from their responses to questions about their contact with friends or relatives during the previous week and about their feeling of loneliness. Data about



encouraging factors were gleaned from participants' responses to questions about how welcome they felt in the centres, and their overall satisfaction with them. Why the participants felt satisfied with the centres was unclear as no data had been collected about ambiance or design features. Because the data collection criteria required that the participants lived within one kilometre of the centres, these researchers considered that access was constant for all.

Two of the shopping centres of interest were defined as very large complexes in the main downtown region. In addition to retail space, one comprised hotels, offices, and entertainment precincts. The second was described as 'glitzy primarily oriented to shopping' (:357). The other centre was situated in a suburb and was described as 'a traditional enclosed shopping centre with a rectangular design, typical national chain stores and a children's play area' (:357). Thus while the first two very large complexes were beyond the scale one would associate with a local shopping centre, the suburban centre did perhaps serve as a community focus.

Graham and colleagues (1991) reported that regression analysis of the Malingering Index on the predisposing and encouraging variables (feeling welcome to stay and satisfaction with the shopping environment) indicated that 21 percent of the variance in malingering was explained by the sociability model. That is, participants' non-shopping leisure time in the shopping centres was associated with their characteristics, and the characteristics of the shopping centres. However, although 67 percent of the sample spent such non-shopping leisure time at the three shopping centres, only a small proportion (nine percent) indulged in such activity frequently. Indeed, there was great variation across different age groups and the sex of the participants. Graham and colleagues (1991) concluded that malingering was significantly related to two age by gender groups (men over 80 years of age, and women 65-69 years of age), to education (those less educated went more), and to feelings of loneliness (those who felt lonely malingered more). Those who were reported as socially isolated (no contact with family or friends in the previous week) malingered more than those who did have contact, however the association was not significant. I challenge this measure of social isolation. Having no contact with friends or relatives in the last week is unlikely to be a robust indicator of social

isolation. Moreover, social isolation may not be an indicator for loneliness. Indeed Graham and colleagues (1991) suggest that ‘perhaps asking about contact during the previous week is too short a period to reveal truly socially isolated individuals’ (:356). In addition, for the question about feeling lonely, participants’ responses were reported as ‘Never’ ( $n=156$ ), or ‘Sometimes/often/always’ ( $n=136$ ). It was unclear whether the latter was the question choice, or whether the responses had been combined. In any case, the difference between the two responses was not statistically significant.

It may seem predictable that respondents who were satisfied with their shopping centres participated in more malingering. Information about why this was so was not provided; ambience was implicated.

Graham and colleagues (1991) concluded that the study showed that ‘among a random sample of urban elderly people, shopping centres are used to fulfil sociability needs’ (:355). These researchers mentioned limiting factors. They had employed secondary analysis of data that had been collected for a purpose other than their study, and the dataset was also incomplete. Construction of encouraging variables from responses to the questions: ‘Feeling welcome to stay’; ‘Satisfaction with the shopping environment’. These questions, I believe, are not strong descriptors for the sociability model. Perhaps the participants merely took five minutes to have a cup of coffee after doing their shopping.

I do not elaborate upon the results further because they are not highly relevant to the current enquiry presented in this thesis apart from the issue of access. Graham and colleagues’ (1991) study was not concerned with the nature of shop-goers social interaction with shopkeepers. Even the smallest of the three shopping complexes that were the focus of the study did not typify my definition of local neighbourhood shops. That is one or two shops, or a small group of shops that serve a local community. In many parts of Australia, these shops face the roadway and have proximal parking.

In summary with regard to the studies concerned with malls, Graham and colleagues' (1991) study aimed to present a theoretical model which would explain older people's use of suburban shopping centres as a leisure time activity. Although the study was analysed with statistical diligence, I question whether these researchers provided empirical evidence in support of the explanatory power of this model considering the data they had at hand. Whether the study contributed to our understanding about older people's social interactions in urban shops is queried also. White's (2007) observation that older people were commonly 'hanging' out in the mall for social contact in a comfortable environment (White, 2007:115), was made some time after Lewis' (1990) and Graham and colleagues' (1991) studies. Graham and colleagues (1991) suggested that a larger sample and more precise measurement might better reveal the relationship between malingering and other factors such as age, sex, health status, and social contact. This may be so, but I suggest that other studies are needed that may reveal why older people are gravitating to malls for social contact. Graham and colleagues (1991) conclude with the statement: 'it is quite clear from this study that the leisure time activity of malingering contributes to some elderly people's psycho-social well-being by providing them with opportunities to be actively or passively sociable in an environment that is familiar to them' (:356). I do not think that this is 'quite clear'.

Also in summary, Lewis' (2007) final comment in his article is poignant and essentially the antithesis of the current study. He suggested that the older people in the mall were tolerated by management because they were 'socially invisible' (:135) to the general shopper population. This comment certainly seems at odds with White's (2007) suggestion that attendance in shopping malls might reinforce for older people, that they were part of the mainstream community. But Lewis' comment, and the reviewed studies about large shopping complexes, the people they attract, and the purpose of the interaction therein, provides a strong argument for conducting the current study. The older people I had observed interacting in their local neighbourhood shops were not just malingering or hanging out. They were socialising and shopping and they seemed to display that they understood themselves to be *rightful* community members who were entitled to interact in their local neighbourhood shops.

This point serves to reintroduce a theme that was introduced in Chapter 1. Enabling environments can be places where people can continue to participate in their communities as they grow older. Conversely, while the concept of opportunity structures such as local shops serves to present an image of a societal ideal, if people cannot access these places they may be excluded from their communities.

Landorf and colleagues (2008) did consider issues of access and the environment. These researchers hypothesised that criteria considered to be important for enabling *ageing in place* were not being considered in assessment of urban environments, where urban sustainability was the focus. These authors used the idiom *ageing in place*, and I clarify this term before progressing. In Australia (and in some circles) ageing in place has become a metaphor for a lifestyle choice of community-dwelling people, and associated initiatives aimed at supporting people to keep residing in their home or in the community for as long as possible. The idiom was introduced in Australia in conjunction with government reforms which included the Aged Care Act 1997. The Act removed the expectation that a person residing in hostel accommodation would need to relocate should their care needs increase; they could age in place. The Act also incorporated a regulated and monitored funding system, and monitored quality framework for government-funded residential aged care facilities. Such ageing in place had benefits for residents, and for aged care facilities. People would not need to move at a vulnerable time; couples residing in a hostel could continue to live in the same facility; quality of care would be stipulated and monitored; and facilities would be reimbursed in accordance to the level of care that each resident required.

Thus returning to Landorf and colleagues' (2008) hypothesis, these researchers emphasised that an environment is usually considered sustainable if it can satisfy and support financially, current and future community requirements. Landorf and colleagues (2008) identified criteria used to assess urban sustainability from assessment tools, and criteria pertinent to ageing in place using established theory. The resulting framework is presented in Table 2.3. The framework was then used to test three sustainable urban development assessment tools to determine the inclusion of ageing in place criteria.

**Table 2.3 Ageing in place criteria affecting urban sustainability**

Sustainability dimension	Sustainability criteria	Ageing in place criteria that affect urban sustainability
Economic sustainability	Growth	Ownership status of dwelling
	Development	Security of dwelling tenure
	Productivity	Disposable income/asset wealth
	Trickle-down effect to the poor	Economic rationale for ageing in place (public)
		Business case for ageing in place (private)
		Opportunity cost of ageing in place: for society
Environmental sustainability	Ecosystem integrity	Opportunity cost of ageing in place: for the individual and their family
		Extent to which the integration of urban and ecological systems facilitate ageing in place
	Carrying capacity	Extent to which the integration of urban and ecological systems enhance the utility of the urban environment for those ageing in place
	Biodiversity	
Social sustainability	Equity	Health infrastructure requirements for ageing in place
	Empowerment	Physical health benefits of ageing in place
		Mental health benefits of ageing in place
	Accessibility	Perceived social status reflected by dwelling: cultural and ethnic norms
	Participation	Perceived threat among those ageing in place arising from aspects of the built environment
	Sharing	Ease of access to social/health services
		Ease of access by social/health services
	Cultural identity	Proximity to family
	Institutional stability	Effectiveness of built environment in facilitating active social engagement for those who are ageing in place

(Landorf et al., 2008)

Landorf and colleagues' work is considered highly relevant to the current study as it demonstrates incongruence between environmental sustainability criteria, and ageing in place criteria. These researchers demonstrated problems with the definition of urban sustainability (given that criteria for sustainability can be place and culture specific (Audit Commission, 2007, The South East England Development Agency, 2007), and how the needs of older people can be overlooked where urban sustainability is the focus. Their framework illustrates the top down, economic-driven perspective; a common approach to planning. Priorities are often fiscally and capacity driven.

This point serves to strengthen the case for the current study which makes the person-centred perspective the priority. An approach it should be emphasised, which is consistent with the World Health Organisation's Global Age-friendly Cities project (World Health Organisation, 2012). The project emphasises that the concept *age-friendly*, is about creating environments that are enabling for people whatever their age.

It seems also that disability rather than enablement is sometimes a research focus. Clarke and Nieuwenhuijsen (2009) conducted a critical review of the current state of the health literature on physical environments for healthy ageing using the International Classification of Functioning Disability and Health as a framework. These researchers found that many studies in this area had been concerned with disability or impairment related outcomes. These researchers argued that the review indicated a theoretical and empirical neglect of the underlying mechanisms behind the person-environment relationship.

It was not implicit what *current* meant in terms of Clarke and Nieuwenhuijsen's (2009) review, however, the bibliography indicated the reviewed literature spanned roughly 10 years prior to 2009. It is also difficult to identify whether a systematic approach was employed for the review. The International Classification of Functioning Disability and Health is based on the concept that health and social functioning are influenced by complex interactions between environmental factors, body functions and structures, and activities and participation. Although the framework does include factors such as gender, race, age, education, fitness, lifestyle, habits, and coping styles, the review focused only on environmental factors.

Clarke and Nieuwenhuijsen's (2009) review did strengthen the case for the need to raise empirical evidence about the person-centred environment, and emphasised the need to turn attention to how older people interact in their neighbourhood environments in their everyday lives.

Perhaps Olderburg (1991) understood that older people could be excluded from access. He proposed that older people who do not have ready access to social

interaction, ‘pursue eagerly’ relationships with ‘a mail carrier, a newspaper deliverer, or a convenience clerk’ (Oldenburg, 1991:49). While this suggestion may seem disappointingly indicative of despondency, I consider that ‘pursue’ is a key word. It indicates a proactive approach.

Yet while the village square of old may have disappeared from neighbourhoods, local neighbourhood shopping strips may be places where older people continue to interact naturally.

Shopkeepers, like Oldenburg’s mail carrier or newspaper deliverer, have been described as ‘peripheral ties’ or ‘consequential strangers’ (Fingerman, 2009:69). The notion that these other people with whom we interact can be important for well-being but who may not be regarded as intimates, was introduced in Chapter 1. Fingerman (2009) argued that such people were commonly sources of fresh and diverse information, and thus, interaction with them was potentially enlivening (Fingerman, 2009). Yet while we understand that people interact with these people, we know little about what really goes on in such interactions, especially where older people are involved. Despite descriptive discussion and theoretical premises about consequential strangers, Fingerman (2009) proposed that we know little about ‘what types of individuals seek a sense of stability in daily life outside the family or when people decide to connect to peripheral partners’ (:81). Fingerman (2004) had proposed also that while younger people had access to diverse peripheral ties, older people’s peripheral ties were more likely to be formal care providers (Fingerman, 2004). Whether ‘such peripheral partners have an impact on older adults’ mood and psychological well-being, above and beyond the disease state and the network of close supportive ties’ (:202) Fingerman believed, was an empirical question. Indeed, there *is* a lack of empirical evidence about older people’s interactions with others who are not providing such formal care; shopkeepers for example.

I proposed that investigation of older people’s interaction with local neighbourhood shopkeepers not only had the potential to confirm that older people *could* sustain social relationships with people other than formal care providers; it could also indicate how such relationships contributed to well-being.

Relationships with consequential strangers can develop over time. Stone (1954), in setting out to explore whether urban housewives preferred to shop at local independent stores, or at large chain stores, ultimately identified various shopper typologies. They included the ‘personalizing consumer’ (:42), consumers who formed personal attachments with shopkeepers which could sometimes approach intimacy (Stone, 1954). Stone surmised that such an attachment was a psychosocial process by which people integrated into their community, particularly if they had little other opportunity for social interaction. The way in which such attachment was forged was not elucidated, but it was implied that people proactively sought to establish and maintain such relationships.

While relationships with consequential strangers or peripheral ties are generally thought to be beneficial, Fingerman (2009) acknowledged that such relationships can also be irritating. However, there is potential for more serious negative consequences, for example, exploitation of vulnerable older people by unscrupulous shopkeepers (Kang and Ridgway, 1996, Rosenbaum, 2009).

Kang and Ridgway (1996) raised the issue of exploitation in their study which aimed to develop a conceptual theory about the implications for older people’s well-being due to their social interaction in shops (Kang and Ridgway, 1996).

Such theory was developed through integration of literature from two perspectives. Kang and Ridgway (1996) sourced social support literature. In general this literature indicated that social support provided by interaction with shopkeepers was beneficial to customers’ health. These researchers also sourced marketing literature concerned with people’s interactions in shopping environments such as larger malls. Such marketing literature, it was proposed, had not considered the health consequence associated with the interaction.

Older people were chosen as Kang and Ridgway’s (1996) population of concern because they believed older people represented people under social, biological, and emotional stress. Such stress level for example, could be associated with the level of social support provided by their family and friends. Kang and Ridgway (1996)



believed that a stressed population was important because it aligned with a particular model of support; the *buffering effect model*. Along with the main effect model, the buffering effect model is one of two main hypotheses of models of support. Unlike the main-effect model which is concerned with a beneficial effect associated with receiving support regardless of a person's level of stress, the buffering model proposes that support is beneficial only if a person is under stress (Cohen and Wills, 1985).

Kang and Ridgway (1996) proposed a framework which is reproduced in Table 2.4. It conceptualised that various health effects were dependent on the potential interplays between the level of a person's social relationships with family and friends, and their level of interaction with shopkeepers. Kang and Ridgway used their framework on which to proffer a series of 'testable propositions' (:108).

**Table 2.4 Conceptual framework for the consumer health implications of shopping behaviour**

	<b>High Social Support</b>	<b>Low Social Support</b>
High Market Interaction	Consumer A	Consumer C
Low Market Interaction	Consumer B	Consumer D

(Kang and Ridgway, 1996:108)

Kang and Ridgway proposed eight propositions about health effect for older people due to their interaction with shopkeepers, three examples being:

P<sub>1</sub>: All else being equal, elderly consumers who engage in frequent market-based social interactions with people in commercial environments are healthier both physically and psychologically than those who do not

(:112)

P<sub>1b</sub>: Elderly consumers who have more frequent contact with commercial establishments that practice relationship marketing are physically and psychologically healthier than others.

(:112)

P<sub>2</sub>: The beneficial effects of market-based social support on health or well-being are greater if the elderly consumer has a relatively low level of true or traditional social supports than if the consumer already has a high level of social support

(:112)

P<sub>2</sub>, it may be noted, is consistent with Stone's typology, 'personalizing consumers' (Stone, 1954:42).

Kang and Ridgway's (1996) hypothesis that was associated with a negative effect proposed that:

P<sub>3</sub>: The elderly consumer's psychological well-being is related negatively to the extent of detrimental or pathogenic social relationships occurring in the commercial environment

(:113)

They did, however, also put forward that:

P<sub>3a</sub>: The negative effect of detrimental or pathogenic social relationships on the elderly consumer's well-being is greater when the consumer perceives that he or she is exploited by the marketer than when he or she does not perceive so

(:114)

Paraphrased, frequent convivial social interactions initiated by shopkeepers towards older people are likely to result in a better benefit for the older person if the intent of the shopkeeper is trustworthy. If an older person is aware that the shopkeeper is insincere or exploitative, there is reduced likelihood that the older person will benefit from the interaction. It must be emphasised that Kang and Ridgway's (1996) propositions were put forward as 'testable propositions' only (:108).

Rosenbaum (2009) however, did raise empirical evidence which pointed to a level of exploitation of older customers by service providers. The study involved, in part, exploration of commercial friendship that was offered to older customers by owners, managers and waiting staff of a particular restaurant. Rosenbaum (2009) speculated that some of the waiting staff might pretend to be commercial friends with their older customers to elicit gratuities. While this finding was not reported directly, it was

inferred: 'service providers who maintain commercial friendships often reap financial rewards by doing so' (Rosenbaum, 2009:64). Thus, it was considered, there was potential for exploitation.

Returning to Kang and Ridgway's (1996) study, there are some aspects which require scrutiny relevant to the study described in this thesis. A reference source for their review was House and colleagues' (1998) review of the literature concerned with social support and health. House and colleagues (1998) concluded that the literature had not produced a clear definition of *social support*, a term used interchangeably with terms such as *social networks* and *social interaction* (House et al., 1988). House and colleague's (1998) concluded also that 'the crude nature of the measures of social relationships leaves indeterminate what aspects, structures, or processes of social relationships are most consequential for health' (299).

This point bears significant relevance for the current study. While Kang and Ridgway (1996) proposed that there may be a health and well-being effect associated with social interaction with shopkeepers, such affect could well be due to something else. For example, my observations indicated that the interactions between older people and shopkeepers involved reciprocating or giving. Let us consider the evidence: older shoppers in their local neighbourhood shops were observed to *give* their opinion and their advice; social interaction involves expectation of 'reciprocity of service and return service' (Simmel, 1950:387); and, for older people, helping others can contribute to better morale and a sense of worth, and to a perception of better life quality (Kim et al., 2000, Stoller, 1985, Sixsmith and Boneham, 2003). Perhaps the older people in Rosenbaum's (2009) study (Rosenbaum, 2009) did not offer gratuities to elicit friendship from the waiting staff; they may have enjoyed giving or reciprocating.

Kang and Ridgway's (1996) acknowledgement of older people's interactions with others who were not family or friends aligned with the proposed current study. However, their conceptual framework for consumer health implications of shopping behaviour did not. These researchers hypothesised that older people with high levels of traditional social interaction would experience less health benefit from interactions with shopkeepers than would older people who had low levels of traditional social

interaction. I do not dispute that older people may be susceptible to loss of social partners. I also understand the rationale for the use of the buffering effect model. But to suggest that ‘because elderly consumers tend to be more socially isolated and vulnerable than others, they may not be on an equal stance with other consumers’ (:113) is provocative of stereotype and stigma.

Fingerman (2009), Kang and Ridgway (1996), and Rosenbaum (2009) highlighted the potentially negative consequences of interactions with consequential strangers. Empirical evidence of what *actually* transpires in interactions between community-dwelling older people and shopkeepers is clearly needed.

Nevertheless, it is difficult to disagree with Fingerman’s (2009) argument that interaction with consequential strangers may have a positive effect on people’s lives. Her views have been based on personal experience, and are supported by commentary and research from many distinguished sources. However, concepts such as *sense of self-worth* or *sense of identity* have been generated largely from philosophical and psychological theoretical perspectives, rather than from empirical studies. However it does seem feasible that interaction associated with local neighbourhood shops might fulfil a need for routine, or be a source of nostalgia (Fingerman, 2009). Kang and Ridgway (1996) and Fingerman (2009) have acknowledged a lack of evidence to support their views and have called for empirical research in support of their work.

Researchers can examine the effects of commercial interactions on consumer welfare using experimental, quasi-experimental, or in-depth qualitative study methods

(Kang and Ridgway, 1996:115)

Additional research is needed to understand how peripheral ties contribute to well-being

(Fingerman, 2009:81)

Motives and benefits associated with shop-going *have* been explored, but the population of concern was younger. Tauber (1972) conducted in-depth interviews with a convenience sample of 30 shoppers in Los Angeles, whose ages ranged from 20 to 47 years (Tauber, 1972). Tauber (1972) identified personal and social motives

that did not relate to core purchasing interest. Some of the personal motives included 'diversion', 'learning about new trends' and 'sensory stimulation' (:47). At first glance it may seem that these motives align with suggested benefits of interaction with consequential strangers; they are a source of new information and experiences. However, Tauber elected to categorise these motives as non-social and indeed, they can be fulfilled without interaction with shopkeepers.

Tauber proposed that as a concept, the store was an 'institution which *serves* (italics in original) the public' (:48). Tauber suggested that for his younger population of interest, a social motive was the opportunity for shoppers to command attention and respect, and enjoy a "feeling of status and power in this limited master-servant relationship" (Tauber, 1972:48). Could status and power be motives for older people shopping in their local neighbourhood shops? Extrapolating this suggestion to an older age group would certainly bring a balanced perspective to Kang and Ridgway's (1996) view of the older shopper being exploited by an unscrupulous shopkeeper.

### **The local shop as a place where people interact**

Shop performance and decline in store numbers are areas of concern for retailers and retail associations. Of interest to consumers and policy-makers is the effect of shop decline on people's health due to reduced food choices. Such interest invariably involves understanding the community, and the social role of local shops (Smith and Sparks, 2000, Scarpello et al., 2009). Smith and Spark's (2000) survey of retailers and consumers, conducted in five locations in Scotland, set out to explore the use and function of independent small shops. These researchers identified that a 'substantial minority' (:214) considered that shops, particularly those in rural or isolated areas, had a social function and acted as a community focus. A certain loyalty to these shops was identified which was associated with need, and reinforced through daily use.

Scarpello and colleagues' (2009) study of customers' use of the local rural village shop, although concerned primarily with identifying themes related to food-choice strategies, produced data that indicated similar results to Smith and Spark's (2000) study. Older people (eight participants were 50-64 years of age, and six were older

than 65 years of age) were represented in this qualitative study which involved in-depth interviews with 40 regular customers. A 60 year old shopper described the local rural village shop as a 'part of the heart of the community' (Scarpello et al., 2009).

This study, despite having a similar focus to Smith and Spark's (2000) study, highlighted that it is difficult to explore the shop in terms of its function without raising issues of relationships and interactions:

There's always somebody there to help, unlike supermarkets when you can never find anybody

People you know who will help you, point out good offers, get things in for you if you need them and who you trust

(Scarpello et al., 2009:112)

Scarpello and colleagues' study did emphasise what older people *received* through their interaction in rural shops. Indeed, although well-intended, it seems hard to escape the image of a vulnerable older person. Scarpello and colleagues did mention that 'the village store was viewed with increasing importance the more one entered older age and frailty' (:113) and that 'providing aid and advice to vulnerable village residents, such as older people, was viewed as one important role for the store' (:113). Evidence for this, however, could not be found in the article, and it remained uncertain whether it existed, was implied, or was interpreted by the authors. The second of the above comments alludes to reciprocity. Intriguingly, *trust* is mentioned, but Scarpello and colleagues do not enlighten the reader as to what *trust* really is, and what is involved in establishing and maintaining *it*.

Horne (1984) did identify factors that were associated with establishing and maintaining trust. Horne's study was concerned with the social activity in milk bars and corner shops in Melbourne. The study data were collected through face-to-face interviews with 26 shopkeepers from three locations and 178 customers via a questionnaire that contained open-ended and closed questions, and observation in shops (Horne, 1984). A percentage (12.9) of customers were 65 years of age or older. The study identified that the shops were associated with a social role which included

an opportunity for customers to meet others from the community. Frequency of attendance at shops over many years helped ‘cement the relationship between customers and proprietors and most other customers’ (:18). More than 25 percent of proprietors said they knew by name or recognised nine out of ten customers. In one location, the ‘homely nature of the relationship’ (:20) was evidenced by women coming to the shop in their dressing gowns. Customers used the shop as a place to identify other families with children of marriageable age. It was revealed that a war pensioner spent all his days in one shop. A baby being weighed on shop scales surrounded by admiring family and friends was observed.

Reciprocity or two-way relationship was clearly inherent in some of these interactions but such reciprocity is commonly overlooked. While this may be a reasonable or intentional omission when the research focus is concerned with support received through social interaction, social interaction is rarely, if ever, one-sided. I mentioned earlier that Kang and Ridgway (1996) proposed that there was potential for well-being associated with support afforded older customers through social interaction with shopkeepers. These researchers did not consider that well-being may be attributed at least in part, to pleasure or self-esteem associated with contributing to the interaction (Kang and Ridgway, 1996).

Rosenbaum (2006) did identify a level of reciprocity in a study designed to explore how and why third places such as restaurants, coffee shops, and taverns were meaningful in consumers' lives (Rosenbaum, 2006). To gain a theoretical understanding of third places in consumers' lives Rosenbaum (2006) conducted interviews with 44 customers, eight employees, two managers, and two owners of a casual-dining restaurant located in a northern suburb of a major Midwestern city in the United States of America. These data were analysed according to grounded theory methodology (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). Rosenbaum (2006) identified that customers became increasingly loyal to a third place as they perceived that they received social support from staff and other customers. It was reported that ‘empirical verification of the framework’ (:9) which was conducted through the use of a self-administered questionnaire, indicated the main effect of loyalty was shown to be due to social support that was given to customers. An instrument, the Social

Support Questionnaire for Transactions scale (Suurmeijer, Doeglas, Briançon, Krijnen, Krol, Sanderma, Moum, Bjelle and Van Den Heuvel, 1995), elicited information from 150 customers who were aged between 37 and 90 years of age. Reciprocity was clearly not the study focus; an association between loyalty and a supportive environment was. However subsequent enquiry conducted by Rosenbaum (2009) at the same site did take reciprocity into account (Rosenbaum, 2009). Rosenbaum (2009) did identify that 'service providers and customers engage in a mutually beneficial exchange of social support, gifts, and tips' (:57).

However, as I discussed earlier, while the study evoked a strong sense of community, and reciprocity, the study emphasised the advantages and hazards of such interaction for the retailer.

Rosenbaum's studies and other literature evaluated to this point did not provide evidence to support that older people's interactions in their local shops were proactive in nature. However, participants in Walker and Hiller's (2007) study of older women who were residing alone in metropolitan Adelaide made it clear that they did not see themselves as passive recipients of support.

### **Purposive social interaction in local shops and well-being**

Walker and Hiller (2007) aimed to explore how older women who were residing alone in metropolitan Adelaide, Australia, perceived their neighbourhoods (Walker and Hiller, 2007). Twenty women who were between 75 and 93 years of age (average age 82 years) participated in two in-depth interviews conducted three weeks apart. Although much of the reported data were concerned with the participants' interactions with friends and neighbours, an 85 year old described a valued two-way relationship between herself and a shopkeeper.

If I go to the newsagent he comes out and makes sure that I get across the road ok. I have been going to him ever since the lottery office started. He rushed out the other day and said 'guess what? I am going to be a grandfather!'

For this same participant, being 'known' at her local shops contributed to her sense of safety within the area, but this too inferred reciprocity.



Everybody seems to be happy and talk to each other, down the shopping centre someone will say ‘‘haven’t seen you for awhile, are you keeping well?’’, that makes you feel safe

(Walker and Hiller, 2007:1160)

Feeling of well-being associated with social interaction in shops was identified by Gardner (2008) in doctoral research designed to explore the lives of older people who were ageing in place (Gardner, 2008:101). Gardner’s (2008) study involved accompanying older people on their routine outings. Key objectives of the research were: understanding neighbourhoods as places where public life occurs; understanding networks as the social places of public life; and examination of how neighbourhoods and networks shaped the experience of healthy ageing.

Gardner observed the staff of local shops welcoming participants and making an effort help them.

Although many of these places were not big enough to accommodate R’s scooter, the merchandise spilled out into the street and the staff happily (it seemed) came outside of the store to serve him

(Gardner, 2008:101)

While the study did give examples of what the experience *provided* for the older participants, it was clear that the participants were engaging with others and were benefitting from interacting in their ‘natural neighbourhood networks’ (Gardner, 2008:108). There was also evidence that the participants actively sought social interaction in the local neighbourhood.

All our lives as adults we want more peace and quiet but as older people we want less

(Gardner, 2008:106)

Gardner’s (2008) research provided evidence to support that the everyday lives of older people were imbedded in their neighbourhood places and with local people, and that such engagement enhanced their overall well-being (Gardner, 2008). Similarly, Walker and Hiller (2007) concluded that identifying characteristics of neighbourhoods, and the social relationships that exist within them, could assist in

understanding how such interaction could help maintain well-being, and even alleviate illness. These conclusions, however, were not empirically tested by these researchers.

An association between shop-going and well-being was alluded to in results from Jansen and Sadovszky's (2004) qualitative study involving community-dwelling older people who ranged in age from 65 and 92 years. The purpose of the study was to identify activities in which these people engaged, and that they considered to be restorative. Restorative activities have been described as activities associated with improved mental energy function, peacefulness and refreshment, for example, observing nature, or gardening (Cimprich, 1993, Hartig, Mang and Evans, 1991). Face-to-face interviews were conducted with 30 participants (28 women and two men) who were supplied with a definition of restorative activities (cited below), and were then asked to nominate activities that they considered were restorative for them.

Restorative activities are the enjoyable and interesting things we do. They give us a break from our daily routines and allow our minds to reflect. We may feel like our minds have regained some energy after doing these types of activities. A truly restorative activity has all of these qualities:

- It gives you a break and allows you to “get away” from the normal routines of life [“being away”]
- You can engage in the activity deeply enough to feel like you are “in a whole other world” [extent]
- You find it fascinating and interesting, rather than boring [fascination]
- You find it pleasing and easy to do [compatibility]

(Jansen and von Sadovszky, 2004:385)

Data were categorised into 12 categories. Shopping was identified by participants as being restorative, however, Jansen and Sadovszky (2004) did not categorise shop-going specifically. They did however, allocate a category ('Other') to those activities that did not fit any of their designated categories, but which they believed possessed limited restorative activity qualities. Where participants identified 'shopping', these data were allocated to 'Other' (Jansen and von Sadovszky, 2004:387).

In addition to potential health benefits for older people associated with social interactions through shop-going, some researchers have proposed that shop-going may be associated with reduced mortality rates, or with survival. Yasuda and colleagues (1997) interpreted their data to suggest that limited contact with local merchants was associated with reduced mortality among women who were 75 years of age or older (Yasuda et al., 1997). Data were interview material collected from 806 women who were 65 years of age and older, who had been interviewed in 1984, and subsequently monitored for five years. The study was concerned with identifying age-related differences in the association between social network characteristics and mortality. Data were treated quantitatively to identify social network characteristics, availability of network resources, contact with network resources, and integration into the neighbourhood which included interaction with local 'friendly merchants' (:521).

This study was, however, limited in terms of direction of causality. Yasuda and colleagues (1997) appreciated that people would be less likely to participate in this aspect of social interaction if they had pre-existing health problems. These researchers declared uncertainty of the validity of data relating to self-reported health. They also noted the omission of several key factors: consideration for health change relative to baseline health; change in social network and effect on mortality; and psychosocial factors that could be related to social behaviour and mortality. In addition, Yasuda and colleagues (1997) pointed out that the study findings could not be generalised beyond the sample (females from a stable urban community), and that those interviewed could not be considered representative of others in the community who declined to be interviewed.

Such limitations were controlled for in Glass and colleagues' (1999) study which was designed to examine any association between social, productive, and physical activity, and survival in older Americans (Glass et al., 1999). The sample was sizeable, involving 2761 men and women from a random population sample of 2812 people who were 65 years of age and older. Glass and colleagues argued that the physical fitness focus of many studies obscured the health benefits associated with non-physical activities, and thus they designed their study to eliminate this perceived

shortcoming. Data were collected via face-to-face and telephone interviews over a thirteen year period and the main outcome measure was mortality from all causes during that time. Their data comprised sociodemographic, social, productive, physical activities, and health status measures information. Details of social, fitness, and productive activities, and the proportion of participants who engaged in activities either 'sometimes' or 'often' were recorded.

Data analysis controlled for activities that could be associated with fitness, and for the chance that activity levels measured at baseline were measuring health status in other ways. All three types of activity (social, productive, and physical) were independently associated with survival after age, sex, race/ethnicity, marital status, income, body mass index, smoking, functional disability, and history of cancer, diabetes, stroke, and myocardial infarction were controlled for (Glass et al., 1999:478). The authors concluded that while more-active older people had a reduced risk of mortality, social and productive activities lowered the risk of mortality to an equal extent.

A confounding aspect of this study was that church going, visits to cinemas, and participation in social groups, for example, were listed as social activities, while shopping was listed as a productive activity, along with, for example, gardening, preparing meals, and paid and unpaid community work. It is likely that these activities were categorised thus, so that health benefits due to the physical nature of these activities could be eliminated in analysis. Yet the cumulative percentage (85) of the proportion of participants who indicated they shopped 'sometimes' and 'often', was the largest participation rate of all social or productive activities. Over 62 percent of participants shopped 'often'. Thus, the real cause of lower risk of all-cause mortality remained unclear. Was it associated with social interaction, or with being productive?

Glass and colleagues (1999) did acknowledge and speculate about the possible psychosocial benefits of social interaction, suggesting that social and productive activities may be associated with meaningfulness of social roles, and reinforcement of mutuality.

It was clear that my proposed study had the potential to find evidence to enlighten such speculation.

## **SUMMARY OF THE LITERATURE REVIEW**

In broad terms the literature search identified literature concerned with the role and function of local neighbourhood shops, shopping motivation, the shop as a structure that enabled interaction, older people's attachment for their neighbourhoods, older people's relationships and social networks, the relationship between shopping frequency and health, the relationship between social and productive activities, and survival, access to local neighbourhood places of interaction, and the concept of ageing in place.

Studies were appraised for their thoroughness, and for their contribution to understanding older people's interactions in their local neighbourhood shops.

The literature concerned with larger malls indicated that for some older people, malls served as places where they might socialise, and that the interaction could be associated with their well-being. Only two of the three articles concerned with malls were empirical studies (Lewis, 1990, Graham et al., 1991); one (White, 2007) was a commentary. The studies aimed to demonstrate that extended interactions in shopping malls were actively sought by certain older people. The interactions helped them to avoid isolation, provided some level of regard, and, it was suggested, contributed to a sense of identity. The studies seemed to emphasise that the older people who went to the malls to socialise rather than to shop, had nowhere else to go. Many of the participants in Lewis' (1990) study spent long periods of time in the mall. Yet while on the one hand there is some indication that shop workers noticed and socialised with these older people, management merely tolerated them as they did not purchase goods. It also seems that those who did socialise in malls did so with other older friends. Thus they used the mall as a comfortable and safe place to meet. While the studies did provide information about the nature and purpose of the interaction in malls, and alluded to motivational factors, there was little information about what went on in the interactions with shopkeepers, and what it was about the interactions that might have contributed to a sense of identity.

Some of the studies that were reviewed supplied a good level of support for the notion that neighbourhood shops played an important social role in communities and that visiting shops in general could involve more than purchase of supplies. Some indicated that local neighbourhood shops were associated with regular social interactions with shopkeepers and with other shoppers, and that the interactions could be associated with people's well-being.

For example Smith and Sparks' (2000) and Horne's studies (1984) revealed the community and social foci of local shops (Smith and Sparks, 2000, Horne, 1984, Scarpello et al., 2009). Glass and colleagues' (1999) and Gardner's studies (2008) revealed associated social and productive activities of older people (Glass et al., 1999, Gardner, 2008), and suggested that for older people, these may be associated with well-being or health, but it was unclear as to how this came about. Jansen and Von Sadowszky's study (2004) alluded to an association between shop-going and invigoration (Jansen and von Sadowszky, 2004). Tauber (1972) identified motivational factors associated with shopping (Tauber, 1972), albeit with a younger population. Stone (1954) identified that shopping could be integral to affirmation of identity (Stone, 1954). Walker and Hiller (2007) identified an association between local shops and health (Walker and Hiller, 2007). Yasuda and colleagues (1997) identified an association between limited contact with local merchants and reduced mortality (Yasuda et al., 1997). Rosenbaum (2009, 2006) identified supportive relationships between staff and older customers, and between older customers in a local restaurant (Rosenbaum, 2009, Rosenbaum, 2006). Kang and Ridgway (1996) proposed a potentially negative aspect of older people's interactions with shopkeepers or exploitation (Kang and Ridgway, 1996).

What also remained unclear from the current knowledge-base was whether proactive social interactions played a role in older people's well-being. However there was some evidence to support that shop-going could reinforce social roles, bolster a sense of identity, or affirm self-worth. Indeed, much of the research concerned with aspects of older people's social interactions seemed to conclude by highlighting that we needed to know more about this aspect of older people's lives.

Thus the review of the literature highlighted the gaps in the extant knowledge-base and strengthened the argument for planning an enquiry designed to answer the research questions:

- What is the nature of participant older people's social interactions in their local neighbourhood shops?
- What is the purpose of the interactions and how may they be associated with well-being?

These questions were concerned with taking resourceful action. Such action, as suggested in Chapter 1, was likely to be associated with theories associated with positive psychology, a field of psychology concerned with intrinsic motivation and mastery.

I emphasise that the current research did not aim to test such theories, but aimed to explore older people's social interactions in their local neighbourhood shops. Notwithstanding, theories associated with positive psychology are pertinent to the ethos of the study described in this thesis because at the study outset, community-dwelling older people were observed to be taking a proactive approach to their interactions in their local neighbourhood shops.

## **THEORIES ASSOCIATED WITH POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGICAL APPROACH**

In the 1950s and into the 1960s, humanistic psychologists such as Abraham Maslow (1908-1970) and Carl Rogers (1902-1987) 'promised to add a new perspective to the entrenched clinical and behaviorist approaches' (Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Previous to this time there was a '*pathogenic* orientation which dominated all biomedical as well as social science disease research' (Antonovsky, 1993b:725). Although such a position resulted in better understanding about how people survived and endured under conditions of adversity, it remained that little was known 'about how normal people flourish under more benign conditions' (Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi, 2000:5). The newer positive approach focused on personal growth and potential development. In favour with many psychologists and researchers is the

stance that people tend to be positive, proactive, curious, and social (Fredrickson, 1998, Baltes, 1997, Antonovsky, 1993a, Ryan and Deci, 2000b).

It is argued in this thesis that the notion that people strive to adapt their lives and aspects of their environment to enable a sense of purpose is consistent with the ethos of the current study. Thus it was considered pertinent that theories which were aligned with a positive psychological approach should be reviewed. Table 2.5 represents an overview of selected theories that were chosen for discussion.



**Table 2.5 Selected theories aligned with a positive psychological approach**

Theory / model	Reference	Essence of theory	Focus
Broaden-and-build model	Fredrickson, 2001	Positive affect and incremental increase in well-being	Emotions
Selective optimisation with compensation	Baltes, 1997	Adaptation throughout life	Resilience / adaptive process for counteracting loss / decline
Sense of coherence	Antonovsky, 1993	Coping mechanisms and rationale for supportive resources	Stable disposition of personality
Self-determination theory	Ryan and Deci, 2000	Motivation	Innate psychological needs
Psychological sense of community	Sarason 1974; McMillan and Chavis, 1986; Colombo, et al. 2001.	Dynamics for maintenance of a community	Values / Identity

### **Broaden and Build model**

The broaden and build model proposed that that experiences of positive emotions helped people flourish in the short and long term (Fredrickson, 1998). Such a proposal is considered consistent with the ethos of the current research because it had been observed that cheerful social interaction accompanied older people's shop-going activities. Development of the model was influenced, in part, following a program of rigorous research initiated from the 1980s by Alice Isen. Isen's research area of concern focused on the influence of affect on social interaction, thought processes, and decision making. Isen and colleagues demonstrated empirically that positive affect expanded people's creative function capability. For example, Isen and colleagues conducted a series of experiments with groups subjected to neutral or negative affect (a sad film), and those subjected to a positive experience (comedy film clips or a gift of candy). The participants were assigned problem solving, memorising, and creative thinking tasks. Participants who experienced a positive experience performed better (Isen, Daubman and Nowicki, 1987).

Subsequently, Fredrickson and Levenson (1998) demonstrated that positive emotions assisted recovery. They induced negative emotional arousal in participants through having them view a short film that elicited fear and heightened cardiovascular

activity. All participants showed comparable levels of cardiovascular activation. Participants then viewed one of four secondary films designed to elicit contentment, mild amusement, sadness, or a neutral control condition (an abstract visual display). Participants who viewed either of the two positive films recovered faster from the initial negative emotional arousal, returning to their baseline levels of cardiovascular activation in one half to one third of the time than did those who viewed the neutral and sad films respectively (Fredrickson and Levenson, 1998).

It was around this time that Fredrickson (1998) proposed her broaden and build model: joy, interest, contentment, pride and love, were more than signs of well-being, they *produced* well-being (Fredrickson, 1998). She proposed that positive affect strengthened a person's physical, intellectual, and social resources, because joy created the urge to play, interest created the urge to explore, and contentment created the urge to savour and integrate (Fredrickson, 1998).

Fredrickson and Turner (2002) proposed that positive affect and well-being were resources which could be drawn on, building 'upward spirals towards increasing emotional well-being' (Fredrickson, 2001:172). These researchers demonstrated their proposal empirically in a study which involved participants' self-report measure of affect and coping at two assessment periods five weeks apart. They concluded that: initial positive affect but not negative affect predicted improved broad-minded coping; and initial broad-minded coping predicted increased positive affect (but not reductions in negative affect). Fredrickson also proposed an 'undoing effect' (Fredrickson, 2001:221); positive experiences could counteract stress effects to a person's body that were brought on by feeling anxious.

Relative to the current study, it seems reasonable to argue that well-being accumulated by older shoppers through regular social interaction in their local shops might not only help them to flourish, but could also help them to better cope with age-related change such as loss of function, or bereavement.

However, although the broaden and build model appears sound and has relevance for the current study and for growing older, questions are raised. It appears that the

model, while tested empirically, involved younger participants (college students), and the testing ground was the laboratory. This model does not appear to have been tested with older people in real-life situations.

So we must consider that although older people's interactions in local shops appeared to be associated with their well-being, we do not really know what might motivate the interactions or how well-being could be generated.

The next model was chosen for discussion because it proposes important aspects of adaptation associated with growing older.

### **Selective optimisation with compensation model**

The selective optimisation with compensation model has provided a general framework for understanding developmental change and resilience across the human life span (Baltes and Carstensen, 1996, Baltes, 1997). The model introduced by Paul Baltes in 1990 (Carstensen, Isaacowitz and Charles, 1999), in essence, proposed that people maintain a sense of positivity by making adjustments and choices. It also argues that with advancing age, the losses associated with physical and cognitive decline or bereavement increase, and thus the goal of maintaining a positive balance between gains and losses can become increasingly difficult to achieve (Baltes, 1997).

While this concept of adaptation seems fundamental, it is also multifaceted.

It could involve sociocultural context, individual resources, and personal preferences, be implemented in very different ways and by different means, and could be active or passive, internal or external, or conscious or unconscious

(Baltes, 1997:372)

The selective optimisation with compensation model has been shown to be significantly associated with subjective indicators of successful ageing in a study involving a subset of the participants of the Berlin Aging Study (Freund and Baltes, 1998). For this study, subjective well-being, positive emotions, and absence of feelings of loneliness served as outcome measures of successful aging. Assessment of the three domains, selection, optimisation, and compensation, required participants

to select between statements that described the way they approached aspects of their life. Statements reflected the target process of life management (i.e. elective selection, loss-based selection, optimisation, and compensation) or an alternative strategy not related to selective optimisation with compensation. Table 2.6 presents an example of statements. For example, Subjective well-being, positive emotions, and absence of loneliness, were assessed using validated scales, and personality, subjective health, and intelligence were assessed or tested.

**Table 2.6 Example of statements used to assess the strategy that participants used to approach aspects of their lives - adapted from Items of the Short Version of the SOC Questionnaire**

<b>Target process of life management – strategy related to selection, optimisation with compensation</b>	<b>Alternate strategy – strategy not related to selection, optimisation with compensation</b>
<b>Selection</b> When things don't go as well as before, I choose one or two important goals	When things don't go as well as before, I still try to keep all my goals
<b>Optimization</b> I keep working on what I have planned until I succeed	When I do not succeed right away at what I want to do, I don't try any other possibilities for long
<b>Compensation</b> When things don't go as well as they used to, I keep trying other ways of doing it until I can achieve the same result I used to	When things don't go as well as they used to, I accept it

(Baltes, Baltes, Freund and Lang, 1995)

Participants who reported selective optimisation with compensation-related behaviours also reported more positive functioning in areas selected for demonstrating successful ageing. For example, in satisfaction with age, positive emotions, and absence of emotional and social loneliness (Freund and Baltes, 1998). The relationships were shown to be robust even after controlling for other measures of successful mastery such as personal life investment, neuroticism, extraversion, openness, control beliefs, intelligence, subjective health, or age. There are limitations associated with this approach. Freund and Baltes (1998) noted that because their results were based on concurrent correlations, the causal direction of the relation between selective optimisation and compensation, and subjective indicators of successful aging could not be empirically determined.

The selective optimisation with compensation model has face validity theoretically. The model has: been correlated with subjective indicators of successful ageing

(Freund and Baltes, 1998); has provided a good basis for testing differences between the goals of younger or older people, such as growth or loss prevention (Ebner, Freund and Baltes, 2006); and has been used to investigate age-differences in approach to goal pursuit (Riediger, Freund and Baltes, 2005).

Baltes and Baltes (1990) offered an illustration of their model; the pianist Arthur Rubinstein's explanation of his ability to perform concerts with increasing age. Baltes and Baltes (1990) reported that Rubenstein said he reduced his repertoire to certain pieces (selection) that he practiced more often (optimisation) and he slowed the passages prior to the faster movements thus giving an impression of greatly increased tempo (compensation) (Baltes and Baltes, 1990).

But this model, as does the broaden and build model, leaves us to imagine how selective optimisation with compensation could be operationalised by ordinary older people in their everyday lives. With regard to the current study, it *is* suggested however, that older people with some age-related loss of function may select to shop locally, in a familiar environment where shopkeepers know them and offer assistance.

### **Sense of coherence**

Antonovsky (1993) developed the construct, 'sense of coherence', as a counter to the 'pathogenic orientation which dominated all biomedical as well as social science disease research' (Antonovsky, 1993b:725). Antonovsky (1993) argued that the pathogenic orientation did not hold for all people; not everyone under stress became ill. Thus the focus turned towards salutogenesis, the factors that promoted health or that supported human health and well-being (Antonovsky, 1993b).

Some controversy surrounds the sense of coherence concept. It has been suggested that it echoes other concepts such as the hardy personality and self-efficacy (Kobasa, 1982, Bandura, 1977). Thus sense of coherence has been hypothesised to be a stable disposition of personality (Sagy, Antonovsky and Adler, 1990, Antonovsky, Sagy, Adler and Visel, 1990), this thesis, however, is not directed at discussion of such conjecture.

Sense of coherence comprises three concepts: *comprehensibility*; *manageability*; and *meaningfulness*. *Comprehensibility* is having the understanding that things happen in an orderly and predictable fashion, and that life events are understandable and foreseeable. *Manageability* is a belief that one possesses the skills or ability, the support, the help, or the resources necessary to be able to take care of things. *Meaningfulness* is related to believing that things in life are interesting and satisfying and that there is purpose to care about what happens. Thus, if a person's life tends to be more predictable and manageable, they can rationalise adverse events, and approach them with commitment and engagement (Antonovsky, 1993b). Resources such as wealth, cultural stability, and social support can enable a persons' sense of coherence.

This theory has some alignment with the current study. It is feasible that familiarity and predictability associated with shop-going in local neighbourhood shops would enhance an older person's sense of control and of mastery, and thus, an enhanced sense of well-being.

In addition, the concept of control is also associated with motivation; 'the natural human propensity to learn and assimilate', which is also associated with well-being (Ryan and Deci, 2000a:54). Such a notion further provoked interest as to what motivational factors associated with older people's social interactions in their local shops and whether they were associated with well-being.

### **Self-Determination Theory**

Self-determination theory is underpinned by various psychological behavioural models which have supported that it is 'more normative than exceptional' that people are 'curious, vital, and self-motivated', and that their desire is to strive, and to be 'proactive and engaged' (Ryan and Deci, 2000b:68).

Ryan and Deci (2000) have explained that people can be motivated by internal regulation (intrinsic motivation); acting because they want to; or by external factors, such as coercion (extrinsic), however, even an extrinsic motivation can be internalised if the person can rationalise the motivation. They presented the

classroom example of compulsory homework. A child who regarded the task as an imposition or expected punishment for failure, may come to attribute their failures to others or other factors, whereas a child who either simply enjoyed the task, or could see that the task was necessary for a perceived goal, would take responsibility and thrive. Ryan and Deci (2000) also argued that the learning environment; the approach of the teacher, positive feedback mechanisms, freedom to express oneself, and parental support; could affect the way that a child was able to achieve internal regulation. Ryan and Deci (2000) proposed a 'Self-Determination Continuum' (:72) whereby a person's motivation, depending on their 'perceived locus of causality', could range from amotivated, through extrinsically motivated, to being self-determined or intrinsically motivated. Ryan and Deci (2000) argued also that intrinsic motivation and internal regulation were associated with satisfaction and well-being. They believed there was empirical evidence to support that this state of being was associated with *competence* (feeling that one is in control), *relatedness* (being connected to, and caring for, others), and *autonomy* (independent and in harmony with one's self) and in turn, to *well-being* (Ryan and Deci, 2000a:68).

Thus, as the current study was concerned with the purpose or motivation underlying older people's social interactions in their local neighbourhood shops, theoretical sensitivity with regard to self-determination theory was considered pertinent.

### **Psychological Sense of Community**

The 'sense of community' construct, also referred to as 'psychological sense of community' construct has been described as:

The perception of a similarity to others, an acknowledged interdependence with others, a willingness to maintain interdependence by giving or doing for others what one expects from them, the feeling that one is part of a larger dependable and stable structure.

(Sarason, 1974:157)

While the construct may not strictly be regarded as being a theory that is associated with positive psychology, I include it because it epitomises competent functioning and life satisfaction. Although it has been suggested that people's sense of community has declined, there are varying views as to why. It has been argued that

the behaviours and values which were once associated with cooperation in more primitive or farming communities and integral to survival, have in more modern times become redundant (Durkheim, 1964) (Putnam, 2000). In addition or alternatively, as governments and organisations have co-opted the power of individuals, these values have been eroded (Nisbet, 1962). Or, in adjusting to these societal changes, people have relinquished their sense of community in favour of associated potential convenience and commodities (Keyes, 1972).

Despite such description and explanation, it has been argued also, that psychological sense of community had not been described or operationalised (Glynn, 1981). Accordingly Glynn (1981) conducted research which aimed to identify behaviours, attitudes, and community characteristics that represented psychological sense of community. Having done so Glynn proposed to: develop a method to measure these characteristics; to identify a relationship between the characteristics, and qualities such as competent functioning and life satisfaction in the community which countered the erosion of the characteristics; and given that there was a relationship between psychological sense of community, satisfaction, competency, and community characteristics, to propose how psychological sense of community could be fostered (Glynn, 1981).

Following a comprehensive review of the literature, Glynn compiled a form designed to glean participants' perceptions about aspects of the community: the environment; safety; conflict; and the community's capacity to deal with adversity. A questionnaire was completed by 37 participants in eight communities. From the responses, and with consideration for the associated literature, Glynn compiled 178 items which were associated with psychological sense of community. Members of the Division of Community Psychology of the American Psychological Association were requested to scale the items for strength of association of contribution to an individual's psychological sense of community, and the most relevant were identified. The resultant instrument was then completed by 17 respondents who were 18 years or older, from three communities, each with different characteristics. Glynn then tested the results against six hypotheses:



1. Psychological sense of community would differ according to community characteristics such as geography, patterns of interaction, history, function, degree of autonomy
2. Residents who expressed satisfaction with community life would have a greater psychological sense of community
3. Residents who functioned more competently would have greater psychological sense of community
4. Residents whose actual and ideal psychological sense of community were mismatched would have greater dissatisfaction with community life
5. Where actual and ideal psychological sense of community were mismatched, there would be less competence in community function
6. There would be a positive relationship between life satisfaction and competent functioning in that community.

Hypotheses one, two, four and six were upheld. Hypotheses three, and five were partially upheld, the difference it was argued, being that some of the scale items were not applicable to one of the communities. Glynn concluded that 'sense of community is more than a philosophical abstraction' (:810) but may be a group of measurable behaviours and attitudes associated with community satisfaction and competence, whose presence may be predicted by a community's characteristics.

Other studies *have* defined and identified elements associated with sense of community (McMillan, 1976, McMillan and Chavis, 1986). McMillan and Chavis (1986) proposed their sense of community model which consisted of four elements necessary for community coherence and the well-being of community members.

Membership is the feeling of belonging or of sharing a sense of personal relatedness. The second element is influence, a sense of mattering, of making a difference to a group and of the group mattering to its members. The third element is reinforcement: integration and fulfillment of needs. This is the feeling that members' needs will be met by the resources received through their membership in the group. The last element is shared emotional connection, the commitment and belief that members have shared and will share history, common places, time together, and similar experiences

(McMillan and Chavis, 1986:9)

Nearly 20 years after Glynn's study was conducted, Chavis and Pretty (1999) conducted a review of the theoretical and methodological advances in the study and application of sense of community. They identified that the study and application of sense of community was still evolving, the search continued for measures of sense of community, and that researchers were looking at individual and group level effects of sense of community (Chavis and Pretty, 1999).

Chipuer and Pretty (1999) have argued for consideration of environmental factors, sensitivity to cultural and historical variations, and attention to definition of 'community' across different age groups (Chipuer and Pretty, 1999).

Colombo and colleagues (2001) have claimed that the general view of community that was put forward tended to be based on an idealised view of members sharing common values and connectedness, with the notion of psychological sense of community grounded on membership, inclusion, feeling of belonging, and emotional bond. They proposed that a more realistic model may take into account 'the dynamic and conflicting components that may be present at the level of the local community, in particular within urban contexts' (Colombo et al., 2001:462).

Such a view is consistent with that of Rapley and Pretty (1999) who have argued that the methods for determining whether people have a sense of community are imperfect and tend to force data to fit a model (Rapley and Pretty, 1999). They have proposed that a sense of community may be better determined by studying ordinary people in their natural environment (Rapley and Pretty, 1999). There has been debate also as to whether sense of community 'manifests itself at the community as well as individual levels' (Chavis, Lee and Acosta, 2008:636).

The current study has the potential to bring new understanding to these debated aspects of the construct, sense of community, within the context of local neighbourhood shops.

## **SUMMARY OF THEORIES**

The presented theories tended to fall broadly into two categories: those concerned with coping or adaptation (Antonovsky, 1993a, Baltes, 1997); and those concerned with a proactive approach to situations (Fredrickson, 2001, McMillan and Chavis, 1986, Ryan and Deci, 2000b). Certainly aspects of each of the theories share elements that support the view that people tend to be positive, proactive, curious, and social, and continue to try to adapt their lives and aspects of their environment and to enable a sense of purpose. Some of these theories have been developed through research conducted with younger participants, commonly in laboratory situations. Gerontologists are cautious about extrapolating the findings of such research to older populations. However, it is suggested that the theories presented could apply at any stage of life as they are concerned with personal development, motivation, and mastery.

Such theories provoked consideration of the notion that older people might play an active role in maintaining their own well-being.

While the theories had potential for underpinning the proposed study, in a real-world everyday sense, the nature and purpose of older people's interactions in their neighbourhood shops remained to be discovered. It is emphasised that the study aim was not to test these theories. Indeed, it appeared that although these theories applied to people in commonplace situations, they had not been developed through empirical exploration of older people's everyday situations. To reiterate Rapley and Pretty's (1999) view, the methods for determining whether people have a sense of community have tended to force data to fit a model (Rapley and Pretty, 1999). So although these theories had potential for underpinning the current study, it was possible that the current study has the potential to inform theory.

Following the review of the literature, it was clear that a research approach was required that would not only explore older people's interactions in their local neighbourhood shops, but would also discover their purpose for doing so.

As was flagged in Chapter 1, classic grounded theory was ultimately considered an appropriate approach for the proposed enquiry. It is an exploratory method that requires the ‘discovery’ of theory from data and is suitable for use in research concerned with explanations of behaviour. It involves a rigorous process of data collection and analysis that results in a conceptual theory or hypotheses which explains the main concern of the participants and what it is that they do to continually address their concern (Glaser and Strauss, 1967).

However, the decision to use classic grounded theory was not made without consideration for other methods. In Chapter 3, the process leading to the selection of a suitable method is presented.

This is followed in Chapter 4 by a presentation of the research design.

## **Chapter 3**

### **PLANNING THE STUDY**

In Chapter 2, the review of the literature was presented. Such a review was conducted to ascertain the status of the current knowledge-base pertinent to the current study. It revealed a moderate level of understanding about: the role that local neighbourhood shops play in communities; older people's interactions in local neighbourhood shops; and older people's social interactions with shopkeepers and with other shoppers. There was some evidence to suggest that the interactions may be associated with older people's well-being or health, but the underlying mechanisms were not explored. Overall it was identified that there was little empirical evidence available that was directly related to the current study which aimed to better understand the nature and purpose of older people's social interactions in their local neighbourhood shops, and how the interactions may be associated with their well-being.

The review of the literature thus strengthened the argument for conducting the planned enquiry.

In this chapter I discuss the paradigms and methodological approaches that were considered for the study, and the rationale for the decision to use a classic grounded theory approach. I also outline the data collection process.

### **PARADIGMS OF ENQUIRY**

Approaches to research are commonly described in terms of paradigms of enquiry; either quantitative or qualitative.

In broad terms, quantitative approaches employ mathematical models and statistical treatment of data. They “are well suited for *“when”, “how much” and “how many”* questions. Such deductive approaches are suitable for problem quantification, and for testing of theories, interventions and new treatments” (Neergaard, Olesen, Andersen and Sondergaard, 2009:2).

Qualitative approaches generally aim to examine ‘personal meanings of individuals experience and actions in the context of their social environments’ (Polgar and Thomas, 1995:109). Such approaches can also be used to test or prove theory. More commonly they are used to explore and present detailed descriptions or interpretations, or to develop theory, otherwise known as an inductive approach.

Various approaches to qualitative enquiry have developed over time. Guba and Lincoln (2005) depicted *moments* of qualitative research (Guba and Lincoln, 2005). A summary of these moments of qualitative research is presented in Table 3.1.

**Table 3.1 Summary of Guba and Lincoln’s (2005) moments of qualitative research**

Era	Moment	Perspective	Focus
1900-1950	Traditional	positivist / reflective of scientific approach	accounts of field colonialising experiences
1950-1970	Modernist	diverse forms of data collection, analysis and writing	deviance and social control
1970-1986	Blurred genres	borrowing from different disciplines	thick description of local situation
1986-1990	Crisis of representation	interpretive	issues of gender, race and class
1990-1995	Postmodern	narrative accounts, critical	‘the other’
1995-2000	Post experimental inquiry	diverse forms of writing	researcher and subject collaboration, heuristic
2000-2004	Methodologically contested present	development of meta-perspectives on the use of qualitative data analysis software	narrative analysis and evaluation research
2005-	Fractured future	confronting the backlash against perceived relaxing of standards	reconnecting social science to social purpose, culturally and indigenous specific

(Guba and Lincoln, 2005)

It should be noted that although moments are presented chronologically and appear to have timeframes, these moments still coexist in the present (Guba and Lincoln, 2005). Although the moments are concerned with qualitative approach, to some extent they reflect an ongoing struggle to situate a research approach somewhere on a

continuum, where the scientific quantitative paradigms are situated at one end, and qualitative paradigms of enquiry are at the other. Research design, approach, and sometimes theoretical orientation of the researcher can situate a study within one of the moments.

Evolution of moments has sometimes been reactionary. For example, in the mid to late 1980s there was increased focus on research that sought to capture experience as told by participants, especially in areas that were regarded as critical in terms of race and gender. Feminist or racial oriented studies for example. However, in the first half of the 1990s there was increased sensitivity about researchers 'taking over' participants' views. Purist argued, for example, that only a disadvantaged black woman, not a privileged white male or female researcher, was in a position to capture and relate the situation of disadvantaged black women. This awareness of *othering* (Fine, 1994), refined some researchers' approaches and encouraged those being researched to voice narrative accounts of their own experiences.

Some areas of research became so diverse, creative, and prolific that criticism arose about the thoroughness of some of the approaches. This heralded consideration for an evidence-base. In more recent times, however, these 'more scientific' approaches have been challenged by those who still argue for interpretive social science approaches, and so the debate continues and research approaches continues to evolve.

In planning the current study, clearly the decision about paradigms required a deal of consideration for the research design, the goal being to represent the research question in a way that would result in a worthwhile contribution to the extant knowledge-base. In the next section, I give an overview of the methodologies that I considered could underpin the current research. I then summarise my rationale for the use of the methodology I selected for the current study.

## SELECTION OF A METHODOLOGY

Symbolic interactionism, phenomenology, ethnomethodology, ethnography, and grounded theory were methodologies that were considered for their suitability for underpinning the current research. Symbolic interactionism and phenomenology adhere to a philosophical or theoretical stance. These tend to come under the general qualitative paradigm. Ethnomethodology, ethnography, and grounded theory tend to be value-free paradigms of enquiry, that is, they do not adhere to any philosophical or theoretical stance. Network analysis, although not essentially a methodology, was also considered. In broad terms most of these methodological approaches are concerned with the 'motives, meanings, actions and reactions of people *in the context* (italics in original) of their daily lives' (Minichiello, Aroni, Timewell and Alexander, 1990:6). Classic grounded theory approach is interpretive, and is concerned with development of a conceptual theory.

These methodologies are associated with various data or methods and where appropriate these are mentioned in the following presentation.

### **Symbolic interactionism**

Symbolic interaction owes its origins largely to George Herbert Mead (1863 -1931), and its development has been attributed to others such as Erving Goffman (1922-1982). Symbolic interaction proposes that people adopt one of multiple possible roles depending which is required for a particular circumstance. Goffman maintained that when a person comes into the space or presence of another person, he seeks out information about that person, ranging from the way the person dresses to the way he or she acts. If the actor does not know the other party, he derives cues from his or her behaviours, often applying untested stereotypes to that person. Goffman suggested that people adopted one of multiple possible roles depending which was required, and for success in the role, they needed to be supported by other actors to help maintain the façade (Goffman, 1959). This interaction order concept (Goffman, 1983), helped shape the symbolic interactionist approach to the post-modern era. Some proponents conceded that people's actions and interactions needed to be considered with relevance to the forces imposed by societal conditions, norms and values. Herbert Blumer (1900-1987) developed Mead's perspective and proposed



three basic premises of symbolic interactionism: human beings act toward things on the basis of the meanings they ascribe to those things; the meaning of such things are derived from, or arise out of the social interaction that one has with others and society; and, that these meanings are handled in, and modified through, an interpretative process used by the person in dealing with the things he or she encounters (Blumer, 1969).

For example: The local shop is where an older man buys his supplies. He may be painfully aware that society views him as redundant but he was once the star of an elite cricket team and he always wears his old cricket cap. The local shop-keeper calls him *Cap* (Captain) and their chat reinforces his sporting conquests. The interactions between the two, bolsters the older man's identity, sense of worth, and vigour.

Other scholars influenced the way in which social researchers attempt to understand why people interact in the way they do and why. For example, Kenneth Burke 1897-1993 maintained that social interaction and communication should be understood in terms of a *pentad* (Burke, 1978). Such a model pertained to the proposed study.

Burke's pentad comprised:

Act:	the action
Scene:	where the action is situated
Agent:	who is performing the action
Agency:	the methods or tools used to perform the action
Purpose:	goal of the action - entelechy (a vital force that directs an organism toward self-fulfilment)

(Burke, 1978)

The current study comprised:

Act:	interactions
Scene:	local neighbourhood shops
Agent:	older people and shopkeepers
Agency:	socialising
Purpose:	to be determined

Blumer also drew from William Isaac Thomas, and from what became known as The Thomas theorem: 'If men define situations as real, they are real in their consequences'(Thomas and Thomas, 1928). This antipositivist philosophy heralded a move towards interpretive inquiry. The research approach for a study underpinned by symbolic interaction may collect interview or observation data about interaction between two people or several people with a view to identifying and describing behaviour that is in accordance with symbolism interactionism. Data could be collected from people within similar environments (a local shop) but with the different characteristics (age or cultures) and the findings of each compared. Alternatively, people with the same characteristics could be observed in different environments. On the other hand, rather than using interview or observation data, literary accounts, or film, for example, could be analysed in accordance with symbolic interaction philosophy.

### **Phenomenology**

After World War 1 when much of Europe had been destroyed along with the social order and people's belief systems, Edmund Husserl (1859-1938) sought to develop a philosophy of certainty (Eagleton, 1983). Husserl emphasised that how people consciously perceived the real world around them was how it was for them. Although Husserl's student and colleague Heidegger (1889-1976) had somewhat different approaches to such phenomenology, they proposed that reality was what it was to each person. Such reality could be arrived at as an individual, or through interaction with others. Approaches such as phenomenology were not regarded as scientific. Nevertheless, in the 1970s, there was a move towards a positive psychology approach and some researchers endeavoured to accurately describe people's lived experiences A study employing a phenomenology approach can access data from people's accounts, observation, poetry, and film or still images such as art or photos. It has been argued that researchers who employ phenomenology can be reluctant to impose a method 'since that would do a great injustice to the integrity of that phenomenon' (Holloway, 1997:144).

### **Ethnomethodology**

The term *ethnomethodology* was coined in the 1960s through the writings of American sociologist Harold Garfinkel (1917-2011). Adherent to no theory or methodology, ethnomethodology is concerned with understanding how people in everyday settings reason and formulate their actions. Such actions may be often taken for granted because they are commonplace (Dowling, 2007). Data associated with this method could commonly comprise observation of a person, such as a shopkeeper, the aim being to identify how they cope with people they observe shoplifting. It has been argued that any such an approach which involves the researcher being present can change or distort the reality of the situation (Smith, 1991).

### **Ethnography**

The ethnographic research approach was founded on the idea that humans are best understood in the fullest possible context. Such approach generally involves the researcher being immersed in a culture and participating in the life of a group of people. This may involve the researcher being overlooked, or may involve the researcher accounting for, or reflecting upon, the effect created by her being there. In addition to observing, an ethnographer may collect participants' accounts or stories, take photos, produce images, map networks, or study participants' documents.

### **Classic grounded theory**

Classic grounded theory is a research approach that was realised when Barney Glaser (1930- ) and Anselm Strauss (1916-1996) were conducting research on dying patients in 1967 (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). Anselm Strauss (1916-1996) was a research assistant of Herbert Blumer (1900-1987) who helped develop symbolic interactionism. With Barney Glaser (1930- ) Strauss co-founded grounded theory an approach which is often purported (incorrectly) to be underpinned theoretically by symbolic interactionism.

Classic grounded theory is 'a general induction method possessed by no discipline or theoretical perspective or data type' (Glaser, 2005:141). It involves constant comparison of data through theoretical sampling and is designed to develop a

succinct or parsimonious, conceptual hypothesis or theory, commonly about a basic psychosocial, or social structural process. Although classic grounded theory method may result in generation of several conceptual hypotheses, parsimony is aimed for; full and thorough data collection and analysis is likely to achieve this aim. The approach was influenced by Lazarsfeld (1901-1976) who according to Glaser advocated the point, that qualitative hypothesis could be described mathematically and that statistical formulas could be described qualitatively (Glaser, 1998). Since 1967, grounded theory has been developed and redefined by others (Charmaz, 2000, Strauss and Corbin, 1990). At the time of writing the current thesis, Glaser has remained critical of these others. Glaser and Holton (2004) maintained that Glaser alone adhered to the original version and that Strauss, along with his student and later colleague Juliet Corbin, did not (Glaser and Holton, 2004). Glaser continued to call attention to differences in intent and outcome between the two methods (Strauss and Corbin, 1990). Straussian grounded theory according to Glaser (1992) was contrary to the flexible open approach of the original grounded theory. He argued that it did not deliver substantive theory, but forced concepts, blocked conceptual grounded theory and instead, arrived at full description. While Glaser maintained that full description was a legitimate research outcome, he considered that full description was a result of qualitative data analysis, and not of grounded theory. Glaser has also been critical of Charmaz's constructivist grounded theory approach (Charmaz, 2000), arguing that a classic grounded theory requires no additional definition or theoretical underpinning (Glaser and Holton, 2004).

### **Network mapping**

Although not strictly a methodology, but rather a method, network mapping was considered as an approach that could underpin the current research and could enable data collection. In Chapter 1 I defined the network mapping approach (pg.3) which, I reiterate, evolved from early anthropological enquiry concerned with identifying and understanding the links that connected community members to each other, and that connected community members to members of other communities. Network mapping has been embraced by various disciplines and is an approach employed by gerontologists and sociologists wishing to identify aspects of older people's social relationships.

Network mapping however was found to be an unsuitable approach to employ for the current study. I present a more detailed discussion about why I drew such a conclusion in Chapter 6 (pg.135). Network mapping could have indicated the pattern of shopkeepers with whom a sample of older people interacted. However, determination of such structure would not provide in-depth information about the nature, or the purpose of the relationship.

## **METHODOLOGICAL DEFENCE**

The current study could have been designed to employ any one of the considered methodologies with varying results. Consideration of the research aim and questions, and practicalities such as method, and available data, guided the selection.

Symbolic interactionism and phenomenology, but especially symbolic interactionism, have strong underlying philosophical and theoretical underpinning. To take such an approach could have a detrimental effect on a research process, especially one that aimed to explore a previously unexplored phenomenon. This is because these approaches impose an a-priori assumption about the way that any interaction is interpreted.

An ethnomethodology-based study could have elicited understanding and description about how older shoppers and shopkeepers in their everyday setting formulated their everyday actions. The approach would require the researcher to become immersed in the culture associated with the local neighbourhood shop and this was not considered practical from a time perspective. As far as could be ascertained, the approach did not advocate a method. The issue of lack of specific method was also common to symbolic interactionism, phenomenology, and ethnography.

Suddaby (2006) has contrasted phenomenological and grounded theory approaches. Phenomenological researchers use interview or dialogue data and the participants' words in their raw form may comprise the primary units of analysis so as to capture faithfully, and present, their experiences. Grounded theorists are not primarily concerned with subjective experience, and for them, interview data 'are a means of eliciting information on the social situation under examination' (Suddaby, 2006:635).

Indeed, a grounded theory study may identify an underlying basic psychosocial or social structural process that the participants may be unaware of.

The classic grounded theory approach was associated with a rigorous method that was likely to produce a credible and sound result. The method involves an inductive approach to data analysis. It aims to generate a parsimonious theory or a succinct hypothesis that ‘fits the real world, works in predictions and explanations, is relevant to the people concerned and is readily modifiable’ (Glaser, 1978:142). I had employed grounded theory methodology previously at post graduate level and was conversant with the method. I considered that the familiarity and confidence in applying the approach would maximise the likelihood of a successful outcome. I was aware that Barney Glaser was personally involved in workshops designed to support grounded theory researchers<sup>6</sup>.

The classic grounded theory approach is ideal for enquiry into areas about which little is known and as confirmed by the literature review, little was known about the nature and the purpose of older people’s social interactions in their local neighbourhood shops. The current study aimed to reveal the nature and the purpose of the interactions. ‘Purpose’ implies motivation and the study also aimed to reveal any impetus associated with the interactions. Thus it was considered that a basic psychosocial or social structural process might be fundamental to such interactions.

Thus the classic grounded theory approach was considered most apt. Whereas some of the other approaches might enable description of the interactions or reveal the participants’ experiences in their local shops, the classic grounded theory approach would ‘discover’ the underlying process or approach and conceptualise it as a substantive theory.

In the next chapter, Chapter 4, the classic grounded theory method is elaborated upon as part of the presentation of the research design. In Chapter 5 the technique will be further described in conjunction with the analysis of the current study data, and theory development.

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<sup>6</sup> Subsequently, in May 2011, I attended a workshop that was hosted by Barney Glaser

## **Chapter 4**

### **RESEARCH DESIGN**

This chapter outlines and discusses the research design.

A sound research design can help ensure that an enquiry will result in credible findings. It can also help ensure that associated experiences for the participants and the researcher are optimal. Thus preparation of the research design should include deliberation upon: ethical considerations; controlling for bias; the sampling strategy; the study site; tools or instruments; data collection; and the approach taken to data analysis.

Methodology is integral to the design and in Chapter 3, the selection of the methodological approach and the subsequent decision to employ a classic grounded theory approach were discussed. In this chapter I present an overview of the classic grounded theory method and the other components of the research design. In Chapter 5, I exemplify the method in conjunction with the description of data analysis and the development of the conceptual theory.

#### **Ethical considerations**

Prior to commencement of data collection, ethics approval was sought from, and was subsequently approved by, the Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee (Appendix B). Application for approval to commence the study required a detailed description of the intended enquiry. Participants were to be informed that they could withdraw from the study, and that privacy and confidentiality requirements, and data security and safe storage requirements were met. The ethics committee required assurance that the participants would be in no danger of physical, psychological or emotional harm, and of the action to be taken if any of the participants experienced distress during or after their interviews. Researcher safety was also addressed.

All the participants were supplied with a document explaining the proposed research and their participation (Appendices C and E) and before commencing data collection,

they were asked if they understood the information. Where interviews were to be tape-recorded and then transcribed <sup>7</sup> or notes were to be taken by the researcher, approval was sought before commencing data collection. The participants were informed that they could request removal of all or part of their data. In the case of observation conducted in shops, the researcher assured the shopkeeper that they would not initiate interaction with customers. The participants signed an Informed Consent document (Appendices D and F). No gratuities were offered. Following the interviews, notes of appreciation were mailed to the participants. No participant expressed dissatisfaction, indicated distress, sought to cease an interview, withdrew data, or requested to be withdrawn from the study.

Copies of the forms and certificates related to ethics approval can be viewed in the Appendices section:

- B: Human Ethics Certificate of Approval
- C: Explanatory Statement, Shoppers
- D: Informed Consent, Shoppers
- E: Explanatory Statement, Shopkeepers
- F: Informed Consent, Shopkeepers
- G: Interview guide, Shoppers
- H: Interview guide, Shopkeepers

### **Controlling for sources of potential bias**

Bias can arise in: reading-up on the field; specifying and selecting the study sample; executing the experiment (or exposure); measuring exposures and outcomes; analysing the data; interpreting the analysis; and, publishing the results (Sackett, 1979).

Some of these bias sources require consideration at the planning stage of a study. For example, a systematic review of the literature (as was conducted for the current study and described in Chapter 2), increased the likelihood of producing materials of high

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<sup>7</sup> Tape-recording interviews is not a tenet of the classic grounded theory approach. This is discussed in this chapter, and in conjunction with the appraisal of the current study (Chapter 7)



quality in an unbiased and transparent way. However, a literature review is not a tenet of classic grounded theory, and I return to this point in this chapter.

A study sample and setting can introduce bias. A setting may be associated with a particular socio-economic group, thus the findings may not be able to be transferred to other populations. People who decline to take part in a study could have introduced different or significant data. Such potential sources of bias generally require consideration about how to control for, or minimise them, either at the data collection stage or during the analysis phase. While potential data associated with participants who decline to participate is unavailable for analysis, the classic grounded theory method which I elaborate upon in this chapter can control and reduce the effect.

### ***Researcher preconception***

One should aim to approach a study with a relatively open mind. But to suggest that a researcher can approach any study without preconceptions is naïve. It is recognised (Becker, 2009) that no researcher ‘enters the field without a set of preconceived ideas about the problem to be studied’ and that it is ‘human nature to hypothesize and give meaning to the world’ (:256). We are also reminded (Denzin, 2001), that ‘the qualitative researcher is not an objective, politically neutral observer who stands outside and above the study of the social world. Rather the researcher is historically and locally situated within the processes being studied. A gendered, historical self is brought to this process’ (:3). Indeed, I possessed pre-existing knowledge and training and I was an older shopper. These pre-existing factors could not be changed.

I had conducted a literature review and had read widely throughout the study, yet a tenet of the classic grounded theory approach has been to forgo a literature review (Glaser, 1998, Glaser and Holton, 2004). Glaser and Holton (2004) have maintained that a ‘grounded theory involves an emergence of theory from the data the problem must also emerge from the data’ (:256). Thus, consulting the literature before commencing the study, they proposed, would result in ‘clouding the researcher's ability to remain open to the emergence of a completely new core category that has not featured prominently in the research to date thereby thwarting theoretical

sensitivity' (:12). It is clear that approaching the data with a pre-conceived or a 'pet theory' is likely to result in data being forced to 'reflect the analyst's preoccupation' (Glaser, 2005:106). But it could be naïve to suggest that the grounded theory researcher is not influenced by existing substantive theory, or that a new theory developed during a grounded theory analysis has no association with standing theories. Indeed it would be 'difficult to find a grounded formal theory that was not in some way stimulated by substantive theory' (Glaser and Strauss, 1967:79). The realistic view is that one is 'trying to achieve a practical middle-ground between a theory-laden view of the world and an unfettered empiricism' (Suddaby, 2006:635).

I discuss this breach of tenet further in conjunction with the research appraisal in Chapter 7 (pg.156).

### ***Reactive affects***

The Rosenthal (1968) effect and the Hawthorne affect (1939) are reactive effects. These effects are often inevitable and can be difficult to control for (Roethlisberger and Dickson, 1939, Rosenthal and Jacobson, 1968). The Rosenthal effect occurs where the expectation of the researcher alters the participants' performances. The Hawthorne effect is always a potential threat to the outcome of studies where simply being selected to be in a study can affect the way that participants behave. Participants may try to guess the hypothesis (for the current study, the study rationale) and go with it or against it (Heppner, Wampold and Kivlighan, 2008). The Explanatory Statement (Appendices C and E) could have prompted a Rosenthal effect. Participants could have responded with an expectation in mind. During observation, shopkeepers could have acted in a way that was indicated in the Explanatory Statement.

One way of controlling for such effects can be to remove the researcher from the data collection process, for example, employing an interviewer. This was not practical for the current study and I believe that it was valuable for me to be immersed in all the data. Separate interviewers and observers would have removed the researcher from collecting valuable observational data, and this alternative was thus rejected.

Polgar and Thomas 1995) suggested that structured data collection methods may to some extent control but not necessarily eliminate these effects (Polgar and Thomas, 1995). However I believe that conversely, keeping interviews largely unstructured, as was proposed for the current study, could potentially reduce the Rosenthal effect. When participants are left to speak freely without prompting they can become less inhibited and thus may express frank feelings.

### **The study site**

A shopping strip<sup>8</sup> situated in a middle-class south-eastern suburb of Melbourne, Australia, became the site for this enquiry. The site was selected because:

- analysis of data collected from the initial convenience sample (one participant who was not recruited from what became the main site) indicated who or what to sample next (theoretical sampling)
- the shopping strip was located in a suburb in which people who were 65 years or older comprised 16.7 percent of that suburb's total population (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2011)
- it was considered that there would be numbers of older people who had resided in the area for many years and therefore would have established a rapport with the local shopkeepers (this was later confirmed during the interviews)
- reconnaissance of various sites prior to recruiting the initial participants revealed that significant numbers of older people shopped at what became the study site; this was considered beneficial for recruiting participants
- both women and men shopped there, as couples, or alone, therefore it was considered that the opportunity to enlist male and female participants would be enhanced
- the shopping strip represented the quintessential suburban shopping strip that is common to many suburbs in the Melbourne area, comprising a variety of shops including a milk bar<sup>9</sup>, chemist, newsagent, green grocer, licensed grocer, hairdresser, and butcher

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<sup>8</sup> A shopping strip is a group of shops commonly situated along a neighbourhood road or street

<sup>9</sup> A milk bar is a type of general store which sells milk, confectionary, ice-cream, bread, soft drinks, and newspapers

- as the study progressed, theoretical sampling influenced the decision to concentrate the study around one site and develop a well-developed substantive conceptual theory from the data associated with that site

### Sampling strategy and recruitment

The sample ultimately comprised 11 shoppers (8 females and 3 males) who were 67 years of age or older<sup>10</sup>, and six shopkeepers (3 females and 3 males). It is emphasised that the sample number was related only to saturation; when new data ceased to indicate new concepts and the conceptual theory was fully developed. The demographic characteristics of participants are presented in Table 4.1. Many of the older shoppers had resided in their own homes in the neighbourhood for sixty years since the neighbourhood's inception. A few had moved there in more recent times. Shopkeepers included those who had been involved in the shopping strip for decades, and others who had taken over businesses more recently. In all but one case, the principal shopkeepers were also the shop owners.

**Table 4.1 Demographic characteristics of participants**

Participants	Sex	<i>n</i> = 14
Older shoppers invited	Female	10
	Male	5
Older shoppers who participated	Female	8
	Male	3
Age of older shoppers	Minimum	67
	Maximum	88
	Mean	79.6
Shop owners who worked in their shop (all invited agreed to participate)	Female	2
	Male	1
Non-shop owners who worked in their shop (all invited agreed to participate)	Female	1
Other shop workers who worked with interviewed shopkeepers (data mainly observational)	Male	2

<sup>10</sup> I did not ascertain the ages of two of the male shoppers but estimated that they were 75 or 80 years of age

One older shopper was not from what ultimately became the main study site. This participant was chosen (convenience or purposive sampling) to launch the data collection and analysis process. This participant's data were included in the analysis process.

Non-English speaking people were not included as English was my first language. To hire interpreters for lengthy interview sessions was impractical. Also, I needed to be able to manage the interview process, and to ensure the best outcome for the participant and for the study.

One older shopper was European born and had emigrated to Australia 60 years earlier. Nine of the participants who agreed to be interviewed had travelled to the shops by car. One had been a passenger in a car driven by a spouse. Two participants had walked to the shops. Whether the sample was representative of all the older people who visited the local neighbourhood was unknown. However this was not critical for the current study which was interpretive and was not concerned with such representativeness but aimed to develop conceptual theory.

Four older shoppers (two male and two female) who were invited to participate declined. Whether those who declined would have brought different data to the study cannot be determined. This is discussed in the study evaluation in Chapter 7.

Older shoppers were approached as they shopped and shopkeepers were approached in their shops. Recruitment took place over a period of two years from 2009 to 2011.

An overview of the study sample type, data source, data collection method and type, and analysis timeline is presented in Table 4.2.

**Table 4.2 Overview of the sample type, data source, data collection method and type, and analysis timeline**

	2009			2010						2011				
Date	04/11	05/11	09/11	26/2	26/2	26/2	18/3	18/3	27/4	28/4	12/11	28/4	29/4	10/5
Sample type	Convenience (not from study site)		Theoretical →											
Data source	Older shopper	Older Shopper	Older Shopper	Shop Keeper	Older Shoppers (2)	Older Shopper	Shop Keeper	Shop Keeper	Older Shopper	Shop Keeper	Older Shopper	Older Shopper	Older Shopper	Older Shopper
Sex	Female	Female	Female	Female	Male	Male	Male	Female	Female	Female	Female	Female	Female	Female
Age	78	81	77		? (75-80)	88			80 <sup>+</sup>		79	88	67	83
Data collection method and data type	Face-to-face interview	Face-to-face interview	Face-to-face interview	Face-to-face interview & Observe	Face-to-face interview	Shopper initiated interview	Face-to-face interview	Face-to-face interview & Observe	Face-to-face interview	Face-to-face interview & Observe	Face-to-face interview	Face-to-face interview	Face-to-face interview	Face-to-face interview

### **The sample size**

The sample size may seem small but a classic grounded theory study is not reliant upon numbers of participants; it is not concerned with statistical power but aims to develop a conceptual theory. Moreover, the sample size cannot be predetermined. Analysis of data will indicate who or what to sample subsequently and this process generally continues until saturation is achieved. That is, when no new concepts are coming forth from the data and the conceptual hypotheses have been verified as being grounded in the data. Saturation is not contingent upon sample size.

Indeed it has been demonstrated that saturation (albeit from thematic analysis of interview data) can occur within twelve interviews and that basic elements for meta-themes can be apparent after six interviews (Guest, Bunce and Johnson, 2006).

In addition, a classic grounded theory method generally involves revisiting and reanalysing each participant's data many times as new concepts, or aspects of concepts are identified in subsequent data.

The argument made here in defence of the choice of sample size is also supported by the findings from Mason's (2010) study which reviewed five hundred and sixty doctoral studies using qualitative approaches and interviews as the method of data collection. Mason found great variation in sample size (Mason, 2010).

The smallest sample used was a single participant used in a life history study, which might be expected due to the in-depth, detailed nature of the approach, while the largest sample used was 95 which was a study utilising a case study approach. The median and mean were 28 and 31 respectively, which suggests a generally clustered distribution

(:13)

The most common sample sizes were 20 and 30 (followed by 40, 10 and 25)

(:13)

Mason demonstrated that sample sizes were commonly multiples of ten, and the researchers' rationales for their sample size were not based on any guidelines for achieving saturation but rather, were adherent to the guidelines put forward by others. He concluded that this demonstrated that the approach to the selection of

sample size was pre-meditated and not adherent to the principles of qualitative research; the concept of saturation was generally not well understood.

Smaller studies with modest sample sizes employing theoretical sampling and a constant comparative approach may culminate in saturation more quickly than studies in which larger amounts of data are collected prior to analysis (Guest et al., 2006).

In any case, it is ultimately the responsibility of the researcher to be clear about their research design. They must be able to demonstrate a clear audit trail that accounts for how the participants were recruited, how the data were collected, treated, and analysed, and how saturation was achieved.

### **Data collection**

Data were collected via interview, and observation conducted in shops. An overview of the study sample type, data source, data collection method and type, and analysis timeline has been presented in Table 4.2.

The older shoppers all chose to be interviewed in their own homes. The appearance of the participants and their personal environments helped set the context for the study and were a valuable source of data. Even conversations that were not primarily concerned with their shopping experiences provided valuable data.

Shopkeepers indicated a preference to be interviewed in their shops. Their time was more limited than that of the older shoppers. These interviews were not tape-recorded; notes were recorded in writing by the researcher. Where observations were conducted in shops, notes were recorded in writing by the researcher.

Data were collected through interviews, most commonly lasting 60 minutes. Shopkeeper interviews were shorter in duration and were conducted in six shops.

The decision was made to tape-record and transcribe interviews with the participant older shoppers. Glaser (1998) has remained resolute about not tape-recording while



interviewing participants (Glaser, 1998:107). Glaser (1998) maintained that taping interviews ‘delays theoretical sampling’, ‘necessary to both extend the theory as it delimits it’ (:108). This could certainly be the case where a researcher may tape-record many interviews, and then proceed to analyse all these data. However, I believe that tape-recording participants’ accounts during a long interview is vital. The alternative, note-taking, can distract the researcher and participant, can inhibit responses, and can interrupt the ‘flow’ of an interview. Being able to listen to the tape-recordings later is invaluable. Participants’ pauses, and their laughter, can be valuable data in addition to their dialogue. Tape-recording ensures that all of a participant’s interview data is collected. All these data can be stored. Transcription of such data enables thorough analysis and also provides an audit trail detailing how the conceptual theory was developed.

Initially, interviews were for the most part unstructured. These participants were simply asked, ‘Tell me about your most recent shopping trip’. It was vital, especially during the initial interviews, that the participants were not plied with leading questions, so as not to introduce bias. Sources of potential bias are discussed further in the evaluation of the study in Chapter 7. At the conclusion of some of the earlier interviews, questions that had been sourced from the literature about the reasons that people shop (Tauber, 1972), were put to the participants. Ethics application required the preparation of a sample interview guide (Appendices G and H) essentially a list of questions that the researcher thought might be relevant.

As the analysis process matured, part of the interview time was used to elicit data pertinent to the developing concepts and conceptual hypotheses. This approach aimed to compare, clarify, or verify the developing concepts and conceptual hypotheses. For example, this process resulted in identifying that the data that initially were coded *Friendliness* did not indicate affability, but rather, they conceptualised reliability, and were subsequently coded *Trust*. This is elaborated upon on in Chapter 5 (pg.108).

The analysis process might result in several conceptual hypotheses being generated however, the aim is parsimony or succinctness, and ‘to generate a theory that

accounts for a pattern of human behaviour' (Glaser, 1978:93). Thus, a main hypothesis that accounted for all the variation in the data was the aim.

I appraised and kept notes about the interview process. Such notes helped refine the interviewing technique with a view to improving the quality of subsequent data collection and analysis.

### **Treatment of data**

I transcribed the tape-recorded interview data. Glaser (1998) argued that transcribing tape-recordings (which he did not advocate in any case) was a time waste factor (Glaser, 1998). However I believe that transcribing such data is beneficial if not indispensable. During the analysis process a researcher may return to the study data over and over as new data become available which is also an aspect of theoretical sampling.

Transcripts enabled me to present evidence related to my analysis process and to display an audit trail (Sandelowski, 1986). A researcher would struggle to present a thesis without such evidence. While the current study did not aim to describe personal meanings, Polgar and Thomas' (1995) sentiments hold true for the presentation of a grounded theory: 'the narrative should be adequately detailed so as to illuminate for the reader the personal meanings that the reported events had for the subjects' (Polgar and Thomas, 1995).

### **Data analysis approach**

In Chapter 3, the method of enquiry for the current study, classic grounded theory, was described as 'a general induction method possessed by no discipline or theoretical perspective or data type' (Glaser, 2005:141). The value-free stance of this approach to enquiry does not mean that a resultant theory will have no theoretical basis, but it does highlight that a researcher should remain objective with regard to the development of the theory.

I reiterate that inherent in the approach is constant comparison, and theoretical sampling. Constant comparison is a rigorous process which involves comparing and

contrasting data against data, data against developing concepts, concepts against developing conceptual hypotheses, and hypotheses against hypotheses. Constant comparison contrasts to the scientific method which tends to separate data collection, and analysis. Deciding which data are required is driven by the analysis process (theoretical sampling). The process does not cease until all the data that are relevant have been integrated into the conceptual theory, and no new concepts can be identified through new data sources. Thus conceptual theory will be grounded in the data; data saturation is complete.

The classic grounded theory method takes the analysis beyond a description of the phenomenon under investigation. The theory, which may involve a basic psychosocial or basic social structural process, accounts for 'what is going on'. The idiom 'what is going on' appears commonly in grounded theory dialogue and to some, it may seem like jargon, or lacking in scholarship. However, the phrase is considered relevant and useful because it reinforces that a grounded theorist is exploring a phenomenon free from a-priori assumption.

For the current study I continually 'asked' of the data: *'What is going on in these data?'* *'What conceptualises the main concern being faced by these older shoppers?'* *'What conceptualises what they are continually doing about their concern?'*

Subsequently the researcher *will* discover what really is going on; the theory will explain the reality of the process or situation under investigation (Glaser and Strauss, 1967).

There is a rigorous technique associated with a classic grounded theory analysis. It involves: coding (open, theoretical, and selective) the data; delimiting the scope of data generation; interchanging of indicators; memoing; and pacing)

## **Overview of the classic grounded theory method**

### ***Coding (Open, Theoretical and Selective)***

The current research design determined the interview data would be tape-recorded and transcribed (pg.90). I now present an overview of the analysis process using the

classic grounded theory method. I emphasise that although the process appears linear, this is unlikely to be the case; many of the earlier 'steps' are repeated many times.

Listening to the recorded interviews was integral to the analysis process. Speech inflection, emphasis on words, anger, amusement, and laughter are all noted. The recordings may be listened to several times before being transcribed and again at various stages of the analysis process. The painstaking and intimate process of transcribing enables word flow and patterns in the data to be noted. Each transcription is read several times prior to commencing what is essentially a deconstruction of the data. The researcher scrutinises the data line-by-line for words, sentences or phrases that indicate concepts or patterns of behavior. These data are named or coded and initially there may be many codes. Such an 'open coding' approach has been referred to as 'running the data open' (Glaser and Holton, 2004:13).

Theoretical sampling enables the coded concepts to be tested. It may become apparent that some of the coded data relate to similar concepts and all these may be grouped under a common label. These are continually tested against all the data and where it is identified that they relate to a similar pattern of behaviour they are categorised as a theoretical hypothesis. Hypotheses are continually tested until they can be verified as core variables which account for the main concern of the participants. Such hypotheses may be associated with or influenced by existing theory, or may appear to be unique. The researcher refers constantly to the theoretical literature so as to be conversant with different theoretical perspectives but at the same time remains open-minded. Once the researcher is satisfied that a particular variable explains most of what is going on, the data collection and coding processes tend to become more selective and delimited to data that relates in a significant way to the core variable(s).

### ***Delimiting***

When the main theoretical concepts have been determined the process becomes largely bounded. No new data account for new concepts. The analysis process

focuses on elaborating and integrating the core variables and their properties (Glaser and Holton, 2004). The indicators are interchangeable; all the theoretical hypotheses (or a main theoretical hypothesis) account(s) for a substantive theory. At any stage however, the researcher may identify a new concept and must determine how these data integrate with all the data or developed hypotheses.

### ***Interchangeability of indicators***

As mentioned in the previous section, as data analysis progresses it becomes apparent that all the conceptual indicators relate to the same conceptual hypotheses or hypothesis; theoretical saturation occurs.

### ***Pacing***

Pacing relates to the time it takes for the above processes to mature the data, and for the researcher to identify abstract concepts and to develop theory. The various analysis steps can vary throughout the enquiry. Data may indicate a conceptual hypothesis readily, while at other times the researcher can struggle to understand how a piece of data or a concept relates to the whole.

### ***Memoing***

Memoing, the notes made by the researcher, begins with the first data collection and analysis, and continues throughout the analysis process. Such notes may be about the process of data collection and analysis, concepts, nominating a code or categorising a theoretical concept, theoretical insights, and quandaries. Memos assist the researcher to retain pertinent, creative thoughts and to ‘capture, track and preserve conceptual ideas’ (Glaser, 1998:180). As ‘memos mature’, the ‘core category and its resolving of the main concern of the participants is confirmed over and over again’ (Glaser, 1998:184). Analysis of memos can provide a key for unlocking the puzzle that the enquiry provokes. This was the case for the current study and is described as part of the description of the analysis (pg.130).

In the next chapter, I present my analysis of the study data in accordance with the classic grounded theory method.

## Chapter 5

### ANALYSIS, RESULTS, AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE CONCEPTUAL THEORY

This chapter describes the most challenging yet stimulating part of any classic grounded theory enquiry; the development of a new conceptual theory. In this chapter I describe how the conceptual theory, namely, *Civic Socialising* was ‘discovered’.

*Civic Socialising* conceptualises the nature of the participants’ social interactions in their local neighbourhood shops, and the purpose of such interactions, conceptualised as *Consolidation*. *Consolidation* conceptualises the participants’ approach to maintenance of their community standing, and of their preservation of the milieu of their local neighbourhood shops with a view to ongoing autonomy. Such an approach helped their current needs to be met. They could shop in a familiar, convenient, and hospitable environment where they were recognised and treated with respect.

However, before commencing the description of the analysis of the current study data, an overview of the study to date is presented to reorientate the reader.

In Chapter 1 the proposal for the current study, and the study aims, ‘to better understand the nature and purpose of older people’s social interactions in their local neighbourhood shops, and how the interactions may be associated with their well-being’, were introduced.

In Chapter 2, a review of the relevant literature was presented. The materials sourced through a systematic review, were evaluated for the thoroughness of their research design, and for their contribution to contemporary understanding about older people’s interactions in their local neighbourhood shops. The review highlighted that there were gaps in the extant evidence-base. It provoked scrutiny of the approaches that were employed generally by researchers who aimed to determine older people’s social relationships, and indicated that dependence was a focus of such research. These findings strengthened the argument for planning an enquiry that was open to other perspectives.

In Chapter 3, the process of selecting an appropriate research methodology, subsequently, classic grounded theory (Glaser, 1998), was discussed. In Chapter 4, the research design was presented. The sample (pg.86) data collection (pg.90) treatment of the data (pg.92) and data analysis employing classic grounded theory method (pg.93) were presented.

## **STUDY SYNOPSIS**

### **The participants and the data**

The participants comprised a theoretical sample of eleven older shoppers who were between 67 and 88 years of age, and six shopkeepers associated with a shopping strip located in a middle-class suburb of Melbourne, Australia.

Data were collected through my interviews with older shoppers, my interviews with shopkeepers, and my observation conducted in shops. I took notes during the observations. Interviews with older shoppers were tape-recorded face to face and I transcribed the interviews (and analysed these data) after each interview session.

The current study began with the collection of data, but not all the data. Concepts were identified and coded, and conceptual hypotheses were built and tested repeatedly with existing and new data until a parsimonious conceptual was developed. At this point the reader is reminded of the notion of parsimony (pg.78). Although the classic grounded theory method may result in several conceptual hypotheses, the aim is to develop a succinct theory that accounts for all, or most of the variation in the data.

### **Analysis**

The painstaking and intimate process of transcribing enabled word flow and patterns in the data to be noted. Each transcription was read in its entirety several times prior to commencing what was essentially a deconstruction of the data. Phrases, sentences, or words were scrutinised. The following questions were asked continually of these data: *What is 'going on' conceptually in relation to the participants' interactions in their local neighbourhood shops? Do the participants have a purpose related to what is going on? If they do, what conceptualises what they doing about it?*

I appraised and kept notes about the interview process. Such notes helped refine the interviewing technique with a view to improving the quality of subsequent data collection and analysis.

Examples of two phases from an early part of the analysis of two participants' transcribed data are presented in Tables 5.1 and Table 5.2. They illustrate a dynamic, interactive process that involves notes about observations, insights, memos, suggestions for further data collection, and, in the second phase, the flagging of coded concepts. Similar versions were produced for all the transcripts during the analysis process, and there were many subsequent phases. It may be observed that my comments are frank and raw but such free-thinking is integral to the analysis process. Perceptions and insights are regarded as more data to be analysed, integrated, and tested.



**Table 5.1 Phase 1 of data analysis**

Extract of interview transcript number 1

Interview 1 / Phase 1		Detail	Observation	Memo	Explore
Researcher	Can you tell me --- just about your most recent shopping trip where you go whether you enjoy them what you do just	Participant not from subsequent study site and does not have a local neighbourhood shop			
Participant	Um when I went to * (country town) - I lived there as I told you for 4 years and L (friend) and I went to the shops and I found them <b>very</b> very polite and helpful um very – -they wanted to help you – far better than down here	Participant’s manner is very ‘direct’ but also ‘brittle’ some how	Is the customer different when on holiday? And the shopkeepers may know participant’s friend	Various personas	How do older shoppers see the status of the shopkeeper?
		She speaks in a ‘clipped’ (defensive)? manner	Participant not having to economise here	Customer service	Do shopkeepers have an awareness of such?
		But spoke forcefully when making a point – seems as though she is sure about the service she should receive in shops	Shopkeepers obliging in the country - different service in the country (non city) or is it tourist destination / trade / market opportunity? Polite / Friendly – but described by participant as what one would expect re service Yearning for friendliness aspect of ‘country life’? An ‘innate’ urge for ‘community’?	Superior status to shopkeepers?	Are shopkeepers ‘different’ with older shoppers?
Do you think that country town ...					
	Yes - yes – they had more time they didn’t mind how long we were in a shop – what we spoke about – um – -very friendly far more friendly than down in Melbourne	More time – but is participant not talking about the approach in the country town – rather, is she is describing the lack of it in the city?	They probably <u>do</u> have more time in the country  Accommodating? Friendly?	City shopkeepers don’t show respect for customers – don’t know their proper ‘place’	What is friendly?  How do you know ‘friendly’

Extract of interview transcript number 2

Interview 2 / Phase 1		Detail	Observation	Memo	Explore
Researcher	Can you tell me --- just about your most recent shopping trip where you go whether you enjoy them what you do	Participant from study site with local neighbourhood shop			
	Well I shop up here mostly Yes	At the local shopping strip			
	And ah only occasionally that if I've got -- the bigger items that I would go to (the supermarket) down here because I -- (sigh) I think if we don't keep our shops going here they'll close and you know one day maybe <b>I'll</b> get to the stage where I don't drive there are some people who don't drive up there that can are close enough to walk to the shops and I think most of the shops I don't know - about the grocers whether they deliver or not but I do know that they <b>used</b> to under the previous ownership and ah and I know if you wanted to the green grocer would and even though they don't but they would to people <b>and</b> the same ah with the er bottle shop and um you know	Participant talks as a strong vigilant confidant person who is proactive in local affairs	Participant has a car -- is able to 'shop around' but appears to do so for convenience more than for economic reasons  She seems to have considered this and can see the sense of preserving the local shopping strip for her own advantage and understands she can play a role in this	Proactive in the community  Exercises choice	
	Do you - and I know you said that you - believe in supporting that shopping strip because you want it to remain there do you -- shop - there in preference to (the supermarket)		Informed		

Extract of interview transcript number 2 ... continued

Interview 2 / Phase 1	Detail	Observation	Memo	Explore
Oh <b>yes</b> I mean I don't think you know I mean for instance I don't have one of (the supermarket) <b>cards</b> you know because I don't believe in – (the supermarket) closed down like our local um petrol station because they can't compete with the prices and they have to buy their fuel because I only know this because of further down * there was a fellow had he had a small garage and so of course they have they are mainly because they <b>fix</b> cars but they also had petrol you see and ah but they have to get it in in such big <i>loads</i> and their outlay is say sixty thousand or more at a time but they have to wait so long to get their their um money back whereas you see if you get if you have one of ah (supermarket) cards you get 4 cents off per litre and and now they've got the cards it makes it easier you don't have to you get you know and I always say I 'no don't have one ah and I don't believe in it' and I let them know I don't believe in it	Word emphasis indicates her opinions	So she can choose where to shop without financial constraint – and once again demonstrates proactive stance against supermarket monopolies  Participant is active in acquiring information	Power play	
So how often would you - would you shop up here at the little shopping strip				
Oh I'd go up every second day		Frequent		
How often would you shop at (the supermarket)				
Bout once a week				

**Table 5.2 Phase 2 of data analysis**

Extract of interview transcript number 1

Interview 1 / Phase 2	Detail	Observation	Memo	Explore	Concept / Code
Researcher	Can you tell me --- just about your most recent shopping trip where you go whether you enjoy them what you do just				
Participant	Um when I went to * (country town) - I lived there as I told you for 4 years and L (friend) and I went to the shops and I found them <b>very</b> very polite and helpful um very – -they wanted to help you – far better than down here	Participant’s manner is ‘direct’ but also ‘brittle’ some how	Is the customer different when on holiday? And the shopkeepers may know participant’s friend	Do shopkeepers have a variety of personas depending on the customer? Is this just customer service?	Cultivating customers
		She speaks in a ‘clipped’ (defensive)? manner	Participant not having to economise here	Clear about what she expects re service	Cultivating
		But spoke forcefully when making a point – seems as though she is sure about the service she should receive in shops	Shopkeepers obliging in the country - different service in the country (non city) or is it tourist destination / trade / market opportunity?	Expectation about how shopkeepers are meant to ‘behave’	Superiority / Status
			Polite / Friendly – but described by participant as what one would expect re service	<u>the shopper cultivating the shopkeeper?</u>	How do older shoppers see the status of the shopkeeper?
			Yearning for friendliness aspect of ‘country life’? An ‘innate’ urge for ‘community’?	Does the shopper consider they hold superior status (than the shopkeepers?)	Defending / Demanding (self social standing)
			there is anger	Do shopkeepers have an awareness of such?	Control
			Is the person controlling / managing status within their environment?	Are shopkeepers ‘different’ with older shoppers?	Social status manipulation (by older person)
Do you think that country town? ...					
	Yes - yes – they had more time they didn’t mind how long we were in a shop – what we spoke about – um – -very friendly far more friendly than down in Melbourne	More time – but is participant not talking about the approach in the country town – rather, is she is describing the lack of it in the city?	They probably <u>do</u> have more time in the country	City shopkeepers don’t show respect for customers – don’t know their proper ‘place’	What is friendly?
			Accommodating? Friendly?	shopkeeper ‘anarchy’ / shopkeeper showing lack of respect for the older shopper or downplaying their status	How do you know ‘friendly’
					Social status manipulation (by shopkeeper)

Extract of interview transcript number 2

Interview 2 / Phase 2		Detail	Observation	Memo	Explore	Concept / Code
Researcher	Can you tell me - just about your most recent shopping trip where you go whether you enjoy them what you do					
	Now I did meet you up at the shops so can you tell me a bit about your just normal - what you do how you shop where you go					
	Well I shop up here mostly	At the local shopping strip				
	Yes					
Participant	And ah only occasionally that if I've got -- the bigger items that I would go to (the supermarket) down here because I -- (sigh) I think if we don't keep our shops going here they'll close and you know one day maybe I'll get to the stage where I don't drive there are some people who don't drive up there that can are close enough to walk to the shops and I think most of the shops I don't know -about the grocers whether they deliver or not but I do know that they <b>used</b> to under the previous ownership and ah and I know if you wanted to the green grocer would and even though they don't but they would to people <b>and</b> the same ah with the er bottle shop and um you know	Participant talks as a strong vigilant confidant person who is proactive in local affairs	Participant has a car -- is able to 'shop around' but appears to do so for convenience more than for economic reasons  She seems to have considered this and can see the sense of preserving the local shopping strip for her own advantage and understands she can play a role in this  Informed	Proactive in the community  Exercises choice  Using local shops too to keep options open for future		Protecting
	Do you - and I know you said that you - believe in supporting that shopping strip because you want it to remain there do you -- shop - there in preference to (the supermarket)					

Extract of interview transcript number 2 ... continued

Interview 2 / Phase 2	Detail	Observation	Memo	Explore	Concept / Code
Oh <b>yes</b> I mean I don't think you know I mean for instance I don't have one of (supermarket) <b>cards</b> you know because I don't believe in – (the supermarket) closed down like our local um petrol station because they can't compete with the prices and they have to buy their fuel because I only know this because of further down * there was a fellow had he had a small garage and so of course they have they are mainly because they <b>fix</b> cars but they also had petrol you see and ah but they have to get it in in such big <i>loads</i> and their outlay is say sixty thousand or more at a time but they have to wait so long to get their their um money back whereas you see if you get if you have one of ah (supermarket) cards you get 4 cents off per litre and and now they've got the cards it makes it easier you don't have to you get you know and I always say I 'no don't have one ah and I don't believe in it' and I let them know I don't believe in it because -	Word emphasis indicates her opinions	So she can choose where to shop without financial constraint – and once again demonstrates proactive stance against supermarket monopolies  What's to make it plain that she doesn't shop at (the supermarket) cause she has to financially and she's also emphasising she's well off  Participant is active in acquiring information The Electoral Division * is an Australian Electoral Division in Victoria created in *. When it was created it was a fairly safe Liberal Party seat, but demographic changes have made it increasingly strong for the Australian Labor Party - since *	Protecting the working class against the capitalists- but for own advantage too		Power play
So how often would you - would you shop up here at the little shopping strip					
Oh I'd go up every second day		Frequent			
How often would you shop at (the supermarket)					
Bout once a week					

It is emphasised that the classic grounded theory analyst does not aim to *describe* per se what is going on. Rather, the objective is to ‘abstract’ the data, or to raise the data to a conceptual level. Thus the aim was to identify theoretical, psychosocial, or social structural processes that were associated with what was going on, and develop from these, a succinct conceptual theory. This point is elucidated when the analysis process is discussed and illustrated with examples of data at a later point in this chapter.

Initially, the researcher may name or code conceptually, many components of the data. However, as the analysis and data collection progresses, it becomes apparent that many of these coded data represent similar concepts, thus these are defined by a common name or code. Sometimes early codes may be rejected or redefined and this is exemplified and discussed at a later point in this chapter.

Ultimately, six coded concepts (*Trust, Identity, Status, Surveillance, Censorship, and Choice*) were established. However they were not all identified at the same time and this point is described later in this chapter.

Through ongoing data collection and analysis, and intense scrutiny of the data, the coded data were ‘distilled’ into categories; essentially conceptual hypotheses. These accounted for all the data and indicated consistency and theoretical saturation. Ultimately, hypotheses were integrated into a succinct conceptual theory.

### **Determination of code names and concepts**

In Chapter 4, it was argued that it would be naïve to suggest that a grounded theory is not influenced by existing substantive theory, or that a researcher can completely disregard their understanding of theoretical perspectives. Thus the researcher’s experience, training, knowledge of standing philosophical and theoretical perspectives, and associated vocabulary are bound to inspire the coding process. As the study was concerned with human interaction, some aspects of ‘what was going on’ in the data were likely to include phenomena that had been researched or theorised by others. Being aware of a broad body of theoretical work and integrating it while at the same time maintaining an open mind is referred to in classic grounded

theory as being theoretically sensitive (Glaser, 1978). It is integral to conceptualising the data and developing codes and concepts. Such literature is also data.

While a conceptual theory arrived at through a classic grounded theory approach is likely to be unique, concepts identified in the data may align with recognised theories or concepts. This does not present a problem provided the researcher maintains an open mind and has not approached the project with a preconceived theory. To reiterate a point made in Chapter 4, to approach a study with a 'pet theory' is likely to result in data being forced to 'reflect the analyst's preoccupation' (Glaser, 2005:106).

Because the current study was concerned with well-being, theories concerned with positive psychology, some of which were presented and discussed in Chapter 2, served to develop my theoretical sensitivity, as did the material concerned with the concept of well-being.

Thus, some, but not all of the codes or labelled concepts which were identified or developed, correlated with, or demonstrated aspects of, recognised concepts or theories. For example, it was apparent that some of the data were concerned with the participants' projection or reinforcement of their personal identities. A great deal of literature is associated with various aspects of identity and some of it was examined. Seminal works commonly from the area of social psychology have been concerned with concepts such as: presentation of self (Goffman, 1959); identity negotiation (Swann, 1987); identity theory (Stryker and Burke, 2000); the social production of identity (Weigert, 1986); self and society (Giddens, 1991); perspectives on identity (Biggs, 2005), and social interaction (Blumer, 1969, Goffman, 1983, Weigert, 2008). Some of these concepts and theories have been associated with other philosophical approaches such as symbolic interactionism. As discussed in Chapter 3, symbolic interactionism is an approach that is concerned with the way that interaction with others shapes and affirms our personal image. Symbolic interactionism is congruent with the notion that a person's psychological well-being is strengthened if their self-view is congruent with the view that others have of them (Goffman, 1959). Thus, people choose the interaction partners and the social settings that will assure the



feedback and responses they need to achieve and maintain congruence or harmony (Stryker and Burke, 2000, McCall and Simmons, 1966).

Thus although the study was not underpinned by any concept, theory or philosophical stance, as the analysis process continued, I examined all manner of theoretical literature. It was likely that my knowledge-base, and ongoing examination of such literature, aided my conceptualisation and interpretation of the data during analysis. I emphasise however, that such a theoretically sensitive approach is markedly different to one that is driven by preconception.

### **Validation of coded concepts and categories**

As data were analysed, theoretical codes and hypotheses were reviewed independently by each of my supervisors. Where opinion was divided, resolution was achieved through review and discussion. However, I accept responsibility for the analysis process, concepts, codes, and the conceptual theory.

### ***Presenting a classic grounded theory analysis can be challenging***

Representation and presentation of a classic grounded theory study can be difficult. There tends to be a 'jumble of literature consultation, data collection, and analysis conducted in ongoing iterations' (Suddaby, 2006:637), but presenting the theory accordingly 'would be neither efficient nor comprehensible to the majority of researchers who work in the positivist paradigm' (:637).

The analysis process is clearly not linear. It involves revisiting data repeatedly as codes, concepts, and hypotheses are delineated, verified, modified, or redefined through collecting new data. However, I made the decision to present the process for the current study in a somewhat linear fashion as a series of steps or stages. Table 5.3 represents the entire process which I 'break down' and discuss as stages in the body of this chapter. At the commencement of the description of each stage, the relevant parts of Table 5.3 will be highlighted.

My description of each stage commences with an explanation about how the concepts were identified and labelled, and is followed by a description of the

development of the conceptual hypotheses from these concepts. The explanations and descriptions are illustrated with data.

**Table 5.3 The entire development of the conceptual theory, *Civic Socialising***

Stages		1	2	3	4
<i>Theoretical hypotheses</i>		<i>Authentication</i>	<i>Influence</i>	<i>Membership</i>	<i>Consolidation</i>
<b>Codes (concepts)</b>	<i>Trust</i>	?	?	✓	✓
	<i>Identity</i>	✓	?	✓	✓
	<i>Status</i>	✓	?	✓	✓
	<i>Surveillance</i>	Not yet identified	✓	✓	✓
	<i>Censorship</i>	Not yet identified	✓	✓	✓
	<i>Choice</i>	Not yet identified	Not yet identified	Not yet identified	✓

*Civic Socialising*

### **Codes - accepting, rejecting, and redefining coded concepts**

The processes of identifying concepts, coding them, and rejecting or refining them were mentioned earlier in this chapter. For example, at an early stage of data analysis, some of the data that indicated friendly interactions were coded *Friendliness*.

*Friendly* was a term that most of the participants used when describing their interactions with local shopkeepers. This seemed unsurprising initially, and the reader is reminded of my pre-study observation: ‘Interactions with shopkeepers and other shoppers appeared to be genial’. Indeed a few participants did mention that the relationship between them and a particular shopkeeper approached friendship.

However, *Friendliness* became one of the first coded concepts to be scrutinised, queried, and ultimately redefined by another code. In the context of *all* the data, it was apparent that the interactions referred to by the older shoppers were not primarily about the concept of being friends. Such interactions, it became apparent were better defined by the concept, *Trust*. That is, these data indicated a certainty that the shopkeeper would not only be affable, but also be prompt, obliging, affirming where required, and would supply good quality goods consistently.

*Mm they wouldn't go there (to local shops) just because of the friendliness.. they know that the people understand that are shopping there what they the shopkeeper can recommend* (Female shopper, age 80)

*Service-because of good service that's right that's it they do they are very friendly* (Female shopper, age 80)

*I like to go somewhere where the the same person (the shopkeeper) because he knows what you're taking and he can point out to you if there is something you know he asks you* (Female shopper, age 79)

Trust was, however, reciprocal.

*See we're (the older shoppers) they (the shopkeepers) say straight to us 'You're our bread and butter' (bold type denotes emphasis) cause we go every week* (Female shopper, age 81)

Researcher:

*How much of that friendliness that shopkeepers show you how much do you think.. is friendliness and how much of it do they do to cultivate customers*

Participant: (Female shopper, age 80+)

*Um ....I think there's a lot of cultivating customers I think a lot of them it ah makes a difference .. if they can get your trust and I'm sure that a lot of it's to do with the customers as far as um they'll come in again that sort of thing*

Researcher:

*But that's that's when I started to look more at by what they meant by friendly and I started to realise it's not just friendliness its more about trust and ..*

Participant: (Female shopper, age 80+)

*That's right ..it is*

Thus, the data coded initially as *Friendliness*, were re-coded, *Trust*.

### ***Trust***

Thus the data coded *Trust*, conceptualised reliability and assurance. Such a concept resonated with a comment made by a participant in one of the studies which I discussed in the review of the literature presented in Chapter 2.

The ...people (shopkeepers) you know who will help you, point out good offers, get things in for you if you need them and who you trust

(Scarpello et al., 2009:112)

Kang and Ridgway (1996) also referred to trust when they proposed that it was important that older shoppers could trust shopkeepers lest they be exploited.

Data coded *Trust* aligned with the construct, Sense of Coherence, and specifically to the associated concept of *Comprehensibility*; the understanding that things happen in an orderly and predictable fashion, and that life events are understandable and foreseeable (Antonovsky, 1993b).

Participants in the current study had articulated the concept of being able to trust that local shopkeepers were consistent in their approach and that this was important to them.

Following the identification of the concept coded as *Trust*, the ‘stages’ of developing the conceptual theory commenced.

## DEVELOPMENT OF THE CONCEPTUAL HYPOTHESES

### Stage 1: *Authentication*

The conceptual hypothesis *Authentication* was developed from the concepts coded as *Identity*, and *Status*. Table 5.4 represents the process. It may be noted that the concept coded *Trust* does not at this stage feature in the development of the conceptual hypothesis coded as *Authentication*. Although there was some early indication that the concept of *Trust* was integral to a reassurance that shopkeepers would authenticate the shoppers' identities and their status, I was unable to verify sufficiently at this stage how the concept of trust integrated. Such is this type of analysis process. It demonstrates that data do have to 'earn their place' in a hypothesis.

**Table 5.4 Development of a conceptual hypothesis: *Authentication***

Stages		1	2	3	4
<i>Theoretical hypotheses</i>		<i>Authentication</i>	<i>Influence</i>	<i>Membership</i>	<i>Consolidation</i>
<i>Codes (concepts)</i>	<i>Trust</i>	?	?	✓	✓
	<i>Identity</i>	✓	?	✓	✓
	<i>Status</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓
	<i>Surveillance</i>	Not yet identified	✓	✓	✓
	<i>Censorship</i>	Not yet identified	✓	✓	✓
	<i>Choice</i>	Not yet identified	Not yet identified	Not yet identified	✓

*Civic Socialising*

### *Identity*

The concepts of identity negotiation, and associated reciprocity, were introduced at an earlier point in this chapter. Interaction between people however, occurs in places (Stryker and Burke, 2000, Swann, 1987, Cowen, 1991, Oldenburg, 1991, Macintyre and Ellaway, 2000). In Chapter 1 I introduced the notion that the function of everyday places and institutions are integral to such interaction (Cowen, 1991, Oldenburg, 1991, Macintyre and Ellaway, 2000), and that local neighbourhood shops exemplify such places.

The concept coded *Identity*, signified data that were concerned with two levels of interaction in the local neighbourhood shops. Some of these data were concerned with affirmation of each older shopper's unique identity or image. Other data were concerned with recognition, and reinforcement, that the participants were part of the local community. Sometimes these two aspects were inextricably linked. Data coded as *Identity* were also concerned with familiarity and an understanding that one would be recognised and thus be assured of favourable interaction and attention.

I noted that the clothing and general appearance of the older shoppers projected their individual identity. Swann (1987) has called such displays 'identity cues', which serve to 'tell others whether one is liberal or conservative, wealthy or destitute, easygoing or meticulous, prudish or promiscuous' (Swann, 1987:1040). Such action and interaction have been recognised as strategic and involve ulterior motives (Katovich and Reese, 1993).

This is also reflected in Gross and Stone's (1964) view on the concepts of role and identity.

One's identity is established when others place him as a social object by assigning the same words of identity that he appropriates for himself or announces. It is in the coincidence of placements and announcements that identity becomes a meaning of the self

(Gross and Stone, 1977:3)

Construction and reinforcement of identity involves negotiation and reciprocity. For example, to project an image of being male or female, and have that image confirmed by others, can affirm a person's sense of self. Clearly an individual may interact with a diversity of people in a variety of situations. In addition, they may have multiple roles such as employer, employee, mother, daughter, or wife. Ting-Toomey (1993), in her work on intercultural communication has built on the work of others and emphasises that such identity images might be cultural, social, or personal (Ting-Toomey, 1993). Such identity images, it seems, can affect a person's motivation to communicate with others, and their personal self-esteem. I observed that different shops and shopkeepers provided an opportunity for older shoppers to present different aspects of themselves, and shopkeepers tailored their interactional

style to suit the personality and style of each older shopper. The shopkeepers who were regarded highly by the participants were those who nurtured the individuality of each. A shop staffed by young women was a focus for some of the older men who I observed on several occasions, 'showing off' for the women staff and making them laugh with their cheeky banter. The interactions had a youthful atmosphere. Such an approach in another environment could have been regarded as inappropriate, however, the image these men projected and their behaviour were affirmed by the staff.

Yet in another shop staffed by men, some of these older men were observed endorsing another part of their identity. They behaved more macho, and discussed sport, and again were validated by the shopkeeper's response.

Some of the women participants described how they enjoyed flirting with these male staff and engaging in cheeky inuendo. When I asked the shopkeeper about this he responded.

*Some of the older women shoppers love it and are cheeky too...they call the butchers 'darling' (Shopkeeper)*

One female shopper projected a appealing feminine image. This was clearly part of her representation that she enjoyed. She mentioned that she had become less mobile and could no longer shop for clothes without help. She stressed that she loved perfume and the staff in a local shop were integral to her being able to affirm this part of her persona.

*Oh yeah oo yes I go past them and if there's anything and the girls there often say do you want to try this (laughs) so they're very good in that respect (Female shopper, age 81)*

Being recognised is one way that image and identity are affirmed and older shoppers clearly enjoyed being recognised by shopkeepers. Form of address was integral to negotiation of identity; some participants were addressed by their given names and others by their surnames.

*Very yes there's one lass (shopkeeper) there I know \* she remembers my name*

(Female shopper, age 88)

*I mean I can be walking past not go in 'Hello \*' (her name) you know 'How are you' (Female shopper, age 77)*

*'Oh here comes the Joneses' (pseudonym, and bold type denotes emphasis) you know (laughs) and its everybody in the shop knows us the girl who owns the place and everybody you know you can sort of have a joke and everything like that (Female shopper, age 81)*

While it could be argued that the shopkeeper approach was associated with business acumen, observation belied this. Where the shopkeepers interacted in this way with local older people, their approach seemed sincere.

Data concerned with participants' views of interactions in the larger shopping complexes contrasted with data about their interactions in local neighbourhood shops. In their local shops the participants' identities were reaffirmed, but less so in the larger complexes.

*See in the big shopping centre they don't really know you... you could be a **chair** (bold type denotes emphasis) they could walk past you and wouldn't know you're there (Female shopper, age 81)*

*The **main** supermarket yeah and sometimes you get to know a few on on the register but you don't really **know** anybody (Female shopper, age 80)*

*The supermarkets don't call you anything all they want is your money (laughs) (Female shopper, age 78)*

Importantly, it seemed that being recognised indicated that one had a 'safety net'. This had significance for the development of the final conceptual hypothesis. The significance, however, did not become apparent until the hypotheses were well developed, and this is discussed at a later point in this chapter.



*That's right yes and you know them (local shopkeepers) and you can ask for exactly what you want* (Female shopper, age 80)

Identity negotiation and recognition involved 'playing by the rules of engagement' and being afforded respect. The significance of this was illustrated by data which demonstrated where the rules of engagement were flouted. For one older shopper, the correct form of address (surname) according to her culture of origin was associated with proper protocol. The local shopkeepers honoured this. But she spoke of another service provider who was *not* from the immediate shopping strip and who did *not* observe her preference, despite her insistence. In this other arena, not only did they not use her surname, they used a shortened form of her given name that was incongruent to her actual name. She was passionate about the affront.

*At \* they (the service providers) call me \* (the incorrect form of her name) and I hate that (laughs) because my name is \* and I told them I'm not \* but they every time they \* and I don't like being called \* ... I resent strangers calling me by my first name because there you don't do it because it is too intimate*  
(Female shopper, age 79)

The data coded *Identity*, were also concerned with recognition and reinforcement that each person was a member of their local community. While clothing demonstrated personal identity, a level of uniformity was apparent among the older shoppers in the local shopping precinct. All were smartly attired; women wore makeup and their hair was styled.

Individually and collectively, the presentation of older shoppers projected a middle-class image. This point it should be noted, interrelates with the data coded *Status*, the next concept discussed. When I mentioned to a participant that I had noticed the smart presentation of the older shoppers, her quick, but bemused response affirmed that she understood immediately.

*It's not a grotty (poor quality) area (amusement) it's the only way I can put it*  
(Female shopper, age 81)

Wishing to explore the concept, I complemented another participant about her appearance and remarked on the similar presentation of the other participants. The participant described ‘them’ collectively as a community but at the same time she distanced herself from others who she understood were less able. Such denial is significant and is discussed later in this chapter.

*Yeah well I think most of them do even ..some of them that are incapacitated (sic) you know they’ve got walkers and and they try and and keep up you know the the um what they’ve always done try and look reasonably all right when you’re shopping* (Female shopper, age 80)

Image maintenance and collective display of uniformity reinforced the status of the community. This was also demonstrated by the neat presentation of the participants’ homes and gardens. The impression was reinforced by the participants’ comments about where they observed that middle-class values were not adhered to.

*A lot of houses are rented now and run down and don’t look the same people don’t look after them as they’re renting a **lot** (bold type denotes emphasis) of them that’s what’s changed* (Female shopper, age 79)

Whereas older participants garaged their cars, the bigger developments in the neighbourhood meant that cars were parked on the street, thus detracting from the preferred image.

*Many more cars are left in the street - that’s what happening it’s a shame that the council will allow it* (Female shopper, age 80)

While being recognised as an individual was affirming, being known also as a member of the community was associated with being well-regarded and with being received in a congenial manner. This was made clear by participants as they talked about the benefits of shopping locally where one was recognised as a ‘local’.

*They'll (shopkeepers) always say 'G'day' you know... 'How are you' sort of thing as though you're reg in the (a regular in the community) (Female shopper, age 77)*

### **Status**

Data concerned with the concept coded *Status*, were related to data coded *Identity*, but they, and other data, indicated another unique concept. Data coded *Identity*, were concerned with establishment, projection, and reinforcement of personal and community image. These data were concerned with the concept of societal positioning and power. Being middle-class, and having a position in the community, was associated with status. This in turn was associated with authority, rights, and receiving an expected approach from shopkeepers. In the early stages of analysis, other codes that were proposed for these data included *Power*, *Power play*, *Supremacy*, *Superiority*, and *Control*.

The interactions between older shoppers and shopkeepers were associated with tensions, minor dispute, and confrontation. Some of these data served to offset the reference to friendliness mentioned earlier in the discussion; participants expected, and were unwavering about, the approach they believed they warranted.

*I feel if I'm buying something they (shopkeepers) **should** (bold type denotes emphasis) be polite to me (Female shopper, age 78)*

*But you won't go back if you're not getting the right - service - **regardless** I don't care if you I don't care if you're only paying a dollar (Female shopper, age 77)*

*I think if you go somewhere and they're pleasant to you regardless of if you're only buying a three dollar cup of coffee (Female shopper, age 81)*

*Status* however, was not one-sided. A shopkeeper was asked about such power play and although clearly aware, was non-committal. The reply was laconic.

*The \* (shopkeeper) is in a position to advise (shopkeeper)*

Another aspect related to the data coded *Status*, were data that indicated that the local neighbourhood shop enabled participants to foster their class status and that it was reinforced through affirmation that others were also of a similar middle-class status.

*You see everybody you know no one's...wealthy, wealthy, wealthy, but then again with the way the houses are (laugh) if you sold your house in that area at the moment you would probably get a fortune* (Female shopper, age 77)

*But the point is - ah no it's it's a nice you feel **safe** (bold type denotes emphasis) how can I put it you don't see anybody there and you think oh I don't like the look of them* (Female shopper, age 81)

The literature was consulted in an attempt to determine what was already understood about the concept of class status. A seminal work was sourced: Barnes' (1954) study of Bremnes, a small fishing town in Western Norway (Barnes, 1954). Barnes main focus was to explore the way that a small society was organised, and if a class system was evident, how it was determined. In this small community, he noted similar standards of clothing and housing. Others from areas outside of Bremnes were regarded as having higher or lower class status but were not regarded as equals. Similarly the current study identified that the local neighbourhood shopping area enabled participants to present themselves in a way that indicated their middle class appearance. Participants in the current study were equally distinguishing about outsiders.

*You see you walk into (shop) and everybody's the the same sort of people* (Female shopper, age 77)

Maintaining one's status through keeping up one's image seemed to be important. Data that were also related to the concept coded *Identity*, illustrate this and are reiterated.

*Yeah well I think most of them do even ..some of them that are incapacitated (sic) you know they've got walkers and and they try and and keep up you know the*

*the um (their appearance) what they've always done try and look reasonably all right when you're shopping* (Female shopper, age 80)

### **Formulating and testing a conceptual hypotheses**

At this stage of the analysis there was an indication that data coded *Identity*, and *Status* indicated that the social interactions in local shops were associated with validation or authentication of the older shoppers. Thus the conceptual hypothesis categorised *Authentication*, was proposed. That is, older shoppers, through the social interactions associated with their local shops, affirmed or authenticated themselves as unique individuals and as community members.

As mentioned earlier, although there was some indication that the data coded *Trust*, were integral to reinforcement of identity and status, I had not sufficiently integrated these data at this stage.

Two new concepts were identified. These concepts delineated data concerned with concepts ultimately coded *Surveillance* or *Censorship*.

## Stage 2: *Influence*

While data were coded separately as *Surveillance*, and *Censorship*, these coded concepts are presented here collectively. This is because data that were concerned with various levels of watchfulness or vigilance (*Surveillance*) were often associated with subsequent action (*Censorship*). Table 5.5 represents the development of the next theoretical hypothesis categorised *Influence*, which accounted for these coded concepts.

**Table 5.5 Development of a conceptual hypothesis: *Influence***

Stages		1	2	3	4
Theoretical hypotheses		Authentication	Influence	Membership	Consolidation
Codes (concepts)	Trust	?	?	✓	✓
	Identity	✓	?	✓	✓
	Status	✓	?	✓	✓
	Surveillance		✓	✓	✓
	Censorship		✓	✓	✓
	Choice	Not yet identified	Not yet identified	Not yet identified	✓

*Civic Socialising*

The older participants were watchful and stayed abreast of any changes to their neighbourhood. Some of the data pertaining to this also illustrate the significance of other data that a researcher is likely to collect during the process of visiting participants in their homes. Such data can provide important contextual material. During preliminary introductory discussion in the participants' homes before the tape-recording commenced (and sometimes later during an interview) several participants related with pride and fondness, their memories about the general neighbourhood. A number of participants were eager to point out that neighbouring houses had been removed and were being replaced by larger ones. They tended to be rather annoyed about the changing face of the neighbourhood. I recorded such comments and occurrences in writing as soon as I could after each interview.

The following comments were tape-recorded, but they exemplify similar comments made by other participants before tape-recording commenced. They are relevant to

the context of the neighbourhood, and to the concept of circumstances changing over time for the participants.

*The people are coming in buying a home pulling it down and building two units two story units or a monstrosity like this next door* (Female shopper, age 80)

*A lot of young ones coming in yes there's a young family built that place next door last year and .. they're of \* (nationality) descent he's \* (nationality) I know and but um we've got \*s (nationality) the street **lot of** (bold type indicates emphasis) different nationalities* (Female shopper, age 80)

*You notice in the neighbourhood to you know when they sell a house you wouldn't know who you're getting* (Female shopper, age 80)

Older shoppers were mindful about the way that shopkeepers managed their business in regard to the entire shopping strip. 'Rules of engagement' between shopkeepers and older shoppers was mentioned in relation to data coded *Identity*, but these data also align with *Surveillance* and with *Censorship* data. For example, I mentioned that older shoppers participated in cheeky repartee with certain shopkeepers. When this was explored with a shopkeeper from the point of view of today's political correctness and approach to sexual harassment, the shopkeeper simply responded:

*Staff and shop-goers manage the level of interaction.*

Rules of engagement were complex. While this same shopkeeper dealt swiftly with a non-'local' who stepped over the line by challenging the shopkeeper about the quality of goods, the same shopkeeper accepted the challenge of an older shopper.

*I'll say, 'Will that be nice and tender that rump steak'. '**Perfect**' he'll say and when I cook it it's not its tough so I next time I go next week I tell him. And he said 'well it looked good didn't it' I said 'yes but it wasn't it was tough as ' he **never** . ah . compensates you for anything .. but .. after that ... the meat's good* (Female shopper, age 80)

While this may indicate that shopkeepers could not afford to offend their local customers, it does illustrate the two-way interaction. It also belies the notion that was raised in Chapter 2 about older people being vulnerable in retail situations (Kang and Ridgway, 1996, Rosenbaum, 2009). It also indicates being able to have control over an outcome.

The data coded *Status*, *Surveillance*, and *Censorship* did interrelate. It may seem obvious to state that shops that did not keep an expected variety of goods were not supported and went out of business. Gentle enquiries were made with older shoppers about their role in shaping the profile of their shopping strip by ‘removing’ unsuitable businesses. Participants were aware but their responses varied.

One participant was frank about her role in a business failing but her comments also illustrated a level of patience and persistence.

*Yes well I I consciously made an **effort** (bold type indicates emphasis) cause I thought well it would be good to to stay local if I could to support the local shops ... cause there wasn't quality there (at the local shop that went out of business) and there wasn't service very very slow service* (Female shopper, age 67)

Yet another participant spoke in terms of the failure of the shopkeeper.

*The the \* (shop) didn't do very well didn't get the best of things in and they (the produce) didn't keep well and they (the shopkeeper) didn't want to throw them out so they (the business) came worse and worse* (Female shopper, age 79)

However, the action of one or two older shoppers did not cause businesses to fail; the actions of many older people brought about such change.

Data coded *Surveillance* or *Censorship* also indicated that undesirable elements in the community were identified promptly and that action was taken. Participants were forthright about taking action. Interview materials were rich in these data; older shoppers and shopkeepers related many instances of activity that occurred in and



around their neighbourhood. The data reported here however, are restricted to those that related to interactions in the local shopping strip.

Shopkeepers were quick to identify whether a customer was passing through, or was a newcomer who required watching, and perhaps educating. In contrast to the personal greetings observed between shopkeepers and those recognised as 'locals', I observed that those who were not recognised by the shopkeeper were treated politely but with a degree of aloofness. Where the local rules of interaction were breached, action was taken. For example, a shopkeeper related that a customer who was not 'a regular' had asked a question about the quality of the produce. The shopkeeper had responded with strong words which had caused the customer to leave the shop angrily and in his anger he had damaged his car. This was regarded as a just outcome.

*'He won't be back'*, related the shopkeeper smugly.

When an older shopper noticed a person was continually using a shopping strip car-parking spot but was not shopping, council was notified promptly.

Similar data indicated that older shoppers monitored the business activity of local shop owners and could become collectively confrontational about where proposed business changes affected the shopping strip. For example, several older shoppers had mentioned the action taken to stop a shopkeeper extending their business scope to include the sale of liquor. They considered that the shop would threaten another shop owner who would go out of business and thus the entire viability of their shopping strip could be compromised.

*One business would go broke and then you'd have a chain reaction* (Female shopper, age 77)

When it was suggested to another participant in an indirect way that local residents took action, she was aware of the same situation and was blunt about it.

*Oh yes that was the \* (shopkeeper) yes he wanted a \* (licence) but we already had a \* (licence) see so we all howled that down ... you're not going to spoil the trade for the other people* (Female shopper, age 88)

The conversation continued:

Researcher:

*And all of you caused this to happen?*

Participant:

*Yes mm*

Researcher:

*That's the power of the neighbourhood*

Participant:

*Yes yes popular vote*

Researcher:

*You're keeping that how you want it*

Participant:

*Yes that's true too*

Data coded *Surveillance* or *Censorship* also indicted that participant older shoppers were aware and concerned about the threat posed by larger shopping complexes. They were disdainful of big businesses (and governments) which they considered greedy and self-concerned and which disregarded the needs of older people.

*I always go in the (local) milkbar there to get the paper I feel sorry for them because I don't know how they **live** they have go with the supermarket just down with bread and milk and everything charge much the supermarkets can charge much less than the poor old milkbar does* (Female shopper, age 83)

*Its money... making the big dollar* (Female shopper, age 88)

*It's all commercial it's all money money money* (Female shopper, age 67)

In the introduction to this section on coding it was proposed that the data coded *Surveillance*, and *Censorship* (and *Choice*) were not concepts that were already familiar to the researcher. They were ‘best fit’ codes for variations in the data that were identified during the analysis process. From a theoretical sensitivity viewpoint, the concepts coded *Surveillance* or *Censorship* were explored in the literature. There was some indication that these concepts were associated with the concept of structural functionalism and maintaining the status quo. These data also aligned with basic survival instinct. Human beings and other animal species tend to remove or manage those who do not conform to the norms of their group.

The concepts coded *Surveillance* or *Censorship* could also be viewed from the viewpoint that people are inclined to inquisitiveness. This notion aligned with some of the theories associated with positive psychology which argued that people were proactive, and curious (Fredrickson, 1998, Baltes, 1997, Antonovsky, 1993a, Ryan and Deci, 2000b).

These coded data also aligned with Phillipson and colleagues’ (1999) “‘neighbourhood keepers” who were vigilant about the changing fortunes of the localities in which they have “invested’ much of their lives”” (Phillipson et al., 1999).

Yet while the conceptual hypothesis categorised *Authentication*, remained viable, it was considered that the data coded *Surveillance* or *Censorship*, did not integrate satisfactorily with the concepts coded *Trust*, *Identity*, and *Status*, to form a succinct hypothesis.

### Stage 3: *Membership*

In Stage 3, following ongoing consultation of the literature, the conceptual hypotheses categorised *Authentication*, and *Influence*, and the data coded as *Trust*, were integrated into the conceptual hypothesis categorised *Membership*. This development is illustrated in Table 5.6.

**Table 5.6 Development of a conceptual hypothesis: *Membership***

Stages		1	2	3	4	5
		Conceptual theory				
Theoretical hypotheses		<i>Authentication</i>	<i>Influence</i>	<i>Membership</i>	<i>Consolidation</i>	
Codes (concepts)	<i>Trust</i>	?	?	✓	✓	<i>Civic Socialising</i>
	<i>Identity</i>	✓	?	✓	✓	
	<i>Status</i>	✓	?	✓	✓	
	<i>Surveillance</i>	Not yet identified	✓	✓	✓	
	<i>Censorship</i>	Not yet identified	✓	✓	✓	
	<i>Choice</i>	Not yet identified	Not yet identified	Not yet identified	✓	

The conceptual hypothesis, categorised *Membership*, accounted for all the variation in the coded concepts (*Trust*, *Identity*, *Status*, *Surveillance* and *Censorship*). This hypothesis, I believed, aligned with McMillan and Chavis' (1986) Sense of community that included: belonging; the group mattering to its members; trusting that members' needs would be met through their membership in the group; shared history, common places, time together and similar experiences; and, endeavouring to make a difference to the welfare of the group (McMillan and Chavis, 1986).

The analysis process could possibly have ceased at this point, with the coining of a theory that conceptualised how older people in their interactions in their local neighbourhood shop were concerned with fostering community membership.

However, another variation in the data was identified. These data were coded as the concept *Choice*.

#### Stage 4: Consolidation

Data coded *Choice*, were concerned with decision-making or selection. These data integrated with all the other coded concepts and accordingly, with the other conceptual hypotheses. The concept coded *Choice*, strengthened the commonality and overlap between the coded concepts and this signified that the analysis was moving towards saturation. Identification of the participants' main 'concern' and how they resolved their main concern became clearer. Table 5.7 illustrates this part of the analysis process.

**Table 5.7 Development of a conceptual hypothesis: Consolidation**

Stages		1	2	3	4	<i>Civic Socialising</i>
<i>Theoretical hypotheses</i>	<i>Codes (concepts)</i>	<i>Authentication</i>	<i>Influence</i>	<i>Membership</i>	<i>Consolidation</i>	
		<i>Trust</i>	?	?	✓	
		<i>Identity</i>	✓	?	✓	
		<i>Status</i>	✓	?	✓	
		<i>Surveillance</i>	Not yet identified	✓	✓	
		<i>Censorship</i>	Not yet identified	✓	✓	
		<i>Choice</i>	Not yet identified	Not yet identified	Not yet identified	

Interactions in local shops involved choice. Participants chose to shop where their personal and community identities would be validated, where they would be shown respect, and importantly, where they could exercise their opinions and exert their influence.

Social interactions with shopkeepers could be chosen according to need. This was articulated by a shopkeeper when asked about the profile of his customers.

*Mostly women, especially in the past but now widowed men too. They like the interaction because they're lonely; love a joke and talk about sport* (Shopkeeper / Shop owner)

The local shop was an arena where older shoppers could choose to present themselves and be visible thus showing others that they were alive, and capable.

The following examples of dialogue serve to illustrate the concept coded *Choice*. The first was made by a person who lived alone. The second comment was made by an older shopper who had once interacted often in the local shops while her partner was with her, but was now living independently and was enjoying it. She not only socialised with a variety of friends, she almost spurned the local shops and her previous contact there. The comments conceptualise that through interacting with certain shopkeepers, and by choosing when and if to interact, participants could affirm their individuality and their autonomy.

*Well yes – because I said if **I don't go** (bold type denotes emphasis) I don't talk*

(Female shopper, age 78)

*I've sort of got **plenty** (bold type denotes emphasis) now without having to interact there with the shopkeepers* (Female shopper, age 83)

Data coded *Choice* were associated with being able to choose to be independent. Merely *having* the choice to shop in local neighbourhood shops meant that participants could validate themselves as independent people. These older people could continue to live their usual everyday life. They did not need to be disabled because their bodies were failing in some way.

*Well you can go there (the local shops) even if you are on a walking frame you know or walking with a stick I mean you can make it that far from here* (Female

shopper, age 79)

Being able to access services at their local shop meant they could choose to not burden their families with all their needs. They could choose the amount or type of family assistance they required.

*And you see the thing is they (through the shop) do mending like ah I don't have a machine anymore and my hands don't work (shows hands) so if it's a zip in here or ah well will you take this up* (Female shopper, age 77)

Such desire for independence and maintenance of the connection with a community is consistent with findings from recent research about older women living in their community (Walker and Hiller, 2007).

Being identified as a community member was discussed in conjunction with the concepts coded *Identity*, and *Status*, and ultimately, in the conceptual hypothesis categorised *Membership*.

The local shopping strip was a dynamic local area which participants chose to nurture through taking either active interest, or formal civic action. They participated in a variety of ways and at different levels. It was evident when conducting interviews in participants' homes that although not living in close proximity to one another, most were aware of common issues to do with the shopping precinct. This was indicative of a true network. By illustration, I present some of these data.

*Yes yes popular vote ...Oh yes that was the \* (shopkeeper) yes he wanted a \* but we already had a \* see so we all howled that down* (Female shopper, age 88)

*No it (perceived need for more parking) affects the shopkeepers too but there is not enough parking there and ah and some of the .. er ah I've rung up (local council) about too* (Female shopper, age 77)

*Well um when you found out what was happening (proposed changes to a shop) you either agreed or disagreed* (Female shopper, age 88)

*There were four hundred objections* (Female shopper, age 77)

That participants chose to be civic minded, at least within the context of their local neighbourhood shops, appears to contrast with reported low levels of civic participation for people who were 60 years of age or older (Baum, Bush, Modra,

Murray, Cox, Alexander and Potter, 2000). Yet although their actions were community-minded, the choice to shop locally was to some extent driven by their self-interest.

*I go up the laneway (a service laneway at the back of the shops-not really a car parking area) well I know I can park behind \*s ... they've (shopkeepers) said I can (Female shopper, age 77)*

**The breakthrough - the present and the future - the two dimensions associated with the conceptual hypothesis, *Choice***

It was at this point in the analysis that a nuance associated with the data coded *Choice*, provided a breakthrough in relation to the development of the final conceptual theory.

Up to a point, it had been identified that the coded concepts concerned with the conceptual hypothesis categorised *Membership* indicated that the older shoppers were maintaining the status quo; the current state-of-affairs ***at the present time***. However, it became apparent that the concept coded *Choice*, was concerned with not one, but two time dimensions. Other data indicated ***the future***.

Thus on the one hand, in the present time, by maintaining a convenient, comfortable, reliable and predictable environment, the older shoppers had greater control about managing their circumstances and taking on other life challenges. I explored this with a number of participants: *I got a sense that the people who live in this area keep those shops in business cause they want them to stay*

*To stay that's right that's right (Female shopper, age 79)*

*I shop there because we've **got** (bold type denotes emphasis) to have a grocer shop (Female shopper, age 77)*

*If they don't get the customer turnover they close up (Female shopper, age 80)*



Yet other data indicated awareness that the current situation would be important if they were to continue to live independently in their community in the future.

*You see I can walk up there still I might get to the stage where I can't walk*

(Female shopper, age 88)

*We've got **everything** (bold type denotes emphasis) if we wanted it... say we don't drive a car anymore you could go down here and almost get anything you want* (Female shopper, age 80)

*If they're going to make us all have .. drivers' tests and then they say well you're not able to drive that will **force** people to look for the local shops and then you don't have a choice and because through that .. it **will** continue on because we want those who want to be independent and not rely on relatives or whatever to **drive** you to shops if you want to be* (Female shopper, age 67)

Even the participant who currently chose to socialise away from the local neighbourhood shops sensed that there was a time she may need to re-focus on her local shops.

*Nobody knows what's ahead of us do we but that could be a big part of my life up there if ah if I even if I couldn't drive I if they took my licence away from me I suppose ah I would go up those shops much more and probably **enjoy*** (Female shopper, age 83)

Nevertheless, combined with this awareness about the future was a level of denial or taboo about an uncertain future. Such denial seemed congruous with Higgs' (1995) proposal that 'active seniors have purposefully to separate themselves from, but live in fear of, the fourth age', a time of loss of citizenship rights and loss of their autonomy (Higgs, 1995:548).

*I **hate** to think* (Female shopper, age 78)

*I **hate** to think there are some people who don't drive up there that can be close enough to* (Female shopper, age 77)

*I can walk up there still I **might** (my emphasis) get to the stage where I can't walk* (Female shopper, age 88)

One participant, for example, had obviously thought about the future and had devised a strategy, yet it remained that her perceived future seemed to have a rather nebulous quality.

*I think if we don't keep our shops going here they'll close and you know one day maybe **I'll** (bold type denotes emphasis) get to the stage where I don't drive there are some people who don't drive up there that can are close enough to walk to the shops and I think most of the shops I don't know - about the grocers whether they deliver or not but I do know that they **used** to under the previous ownership and ah and I know if you wanted to the green grocer would and even though they don't but they would to people **and** the same ah with the er bottle shop and um you know* (Female shopper, age 77)

The coding process was complete. No more variations were identified in the data and the concepts had all been validated and integrated. The concepts coded *Trust*, *Identity*, *Status*, *Surveillance*, *Censorship*, and *Choice* identified data that indicated a psychosocial process associated with older shoppers' social interactions in their local shops.

At this point the reader is reminded again of the notion of parsimony. It can be challenging to be satisfied with not identifying the 'whole unit' about what is going on but only a 'core process within it' (Glaser, 2001:14). Although classic grounded theory method may result in several conceptual hypotheses, the aim is parsimony or succinctness.

Sorting of my conceptual memos helped develop the new conceptual hypothesis: *Consolidation*. *Consolidation* accounted for all the variation in the data, and thus accounted for the older shoppers' main 'concern'; to strengthen their position in the community for the present time *and* for the future.

The substantive theory, coined *Civic Socialising*, conceptualised the continual resolving of this concern.

<i><b>Civic Socialising</b></i>
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The theory, namely *Civic Socialising*, conceptualised the nature of older people's social interactions in their local neighbourhood shops.

*Consolidation* conceptualised the purpose.

In the next Chapter I discuss the significance of the new conceptual theory, namely *Civic Socialising*, for the extant knowledge-base about the social relationships of older people.

## Chapter 6

### GENERAL DISCUSSION

*Civic Socialising* is a new substantive conceptual theory that accounts for the nature of older people's social interactions in their local neighbourhood shops and the purpose of such interactions; the upkeep of their standing in their community, and the preservation of the milieu of their local neighbourhood shops with a view to ongoing autonomy.

In Chapters 1-5 of this thesis I presented: the study aims, 'to better understand the nature and purpose of older people's social interactions in their local neighbourhood shops and how the interactions may be associated with their well-being'; the status of the related literature; the selection of a research methodology (classic grounded theory) (Glaser, 1998); the study design; and the analysis of the study data.

This chapter involves a discussion about the considerable contribution that the current research has made to the extant knowledge-base about the social relationships of older people, and the significance of the thesis finding for:

- future research that is concerned with the social relationships of older people, and
- policies and social planning that are pertinent to older people

#### **The extant knowledge-base, the gaps, and why the gaps existed**

In broad terms my review of the literature presented in Chapter 2, indicated that older people's interactions in their local neighbourhood shops had not been sufficiently investigated empirically. A theoretical knowledge-base about the value of interactions with others who were not family or friends existed (Blau and Fingerman, 2009b, Blau and Fingerman, 2009a, Fingerman, 2004, Fingerman, 2009), (Kang and Ridgway, 1996), but few studies had explored such relationships empirically. Local neighbourhood shops had been recognised as a places that enabled social interaction (Oldenburg, 1991, Macintyre and Ellaway, 2000, Smith and Sparks, 2000, Scarpello et al., 2009, Horne, 1984), but older people's proactive interactions in them remained largely unexplored empirically.

In Chapter 1 I mentioned that during my review of the literature I became aware as have others, that the term *social network* is not only often misapplied, it is used interchangeably with other terms such as *social support* and *social interaction* (House et al., 1988, O'Reilly, 1988). I needed to clarify what *social networks* were. I subsequently appraised a selection of journal articles concerned with older people's social relationships that had been published between 1979 and 2011. The articles were sourced using Boolean technique, similar to that employed for the current study's main literature review (pg.24). 'Network' was one of the key search terms. It was apparent that from around 1979, researchers had commonly adopted approaches associated with network mapping for studies that aimed to draw association between such networks and health or other effects. The table presenting an overview of the 22 appraised articles appears as Appendix A. The appraisal indicated that the extant knowledge-base about older people's social interactions had been informed largely by research approaches that tended to elicit data about older people's interactions with family and friends. A point of definition (pg.3) was identified: networks were rarely the focus and ego-centric associations were. Such approaches were largely quantitative in nature, and commonly employed closed questions, network mapping, pre-determined typologies, or large non-purpose-collected data bases, the data of which were sometimes over interpreted. The limitations that these methodologies imposed will now be briefly reviewed.

Commonly data that were accessed from large datasets were allocated to a pre-existing network or a network typology. Three studies (different datasets) (Kawachi, Colditz, Ascherio, Rimm, Giovannucci, Stampfer and Willett, 1996, Litwin and Shiovitz-Ezra, 2010, Seeman et al., 1987), categorised data to Berkman & Syme's (1979) assessment of family, friends, relatives, church membership, informal and formal group associations (Berkman and Syme, 1979). In one of these studies (Litwin and Shiovitz-Ezra, 2010), Lubben Social Network Scale, LSN-6, a method of assessing kin and non-kin interaction (Lubben, Blozik, Gillmann and Iliffe, 2006), was also cited. One of these studies (Litwin and Shiovitz-Ezra, 2010), assigned the identified networks to a type depending on 'levels of interaction between the old persons and their family, friends, neighbours, and community groups' (Wenger, 1991:151). Three studies (Golden, Conroy, Bruce, Denihan, Greene, Kirby and

Lawlor, 2009, Litwin, 2001, Scharf, 1997), classified data according to Wenger's (1991, 1997, 2002) Practitioner Assessment of Network Types schedule (PANT) a clinical tool developed to assess social support networks for older people who are considered at-risk because they lack contacts that may provide them with support (Wenger, 1991, Wenger, 1997, Wenger and Tucker, 2002). Nine studies assigned data to the categories, family, friends, neighbours, confidants, and attendance at church or other organisations (Berkman and Syme, 1979, Fiori et al., 2006, Giles, Glonek, Luszcz and Andrews, 2005, Lennartsson, 1999, Litwin, 2010, Olsen, Olsen, Gunner-Svensson and Waldstrøm, 1991, Oxman et al., 1992, Reed, McGee, Yano and Feinleib, 1983, Fratiglioni, Wang, Ericsson, Maytan and Winblad, 2000). Two used hierarchical mapping technique (Antonucci, 1986, Janevic, Ajrouch, Merline, Akiyama and Antonucci, 2000), which required participants to identify social contacts according to three levels of closeness (closest /close/somewhat close) which elicited information essentially about family and friends (Ajrouch, Antonucci and Janevic, 2001). One approach employed interviews to identify with whom participants reciprocated companionship, and emotional and instrumental support, and essentially identified family and friends (Rook, 1987). Another study sought information about participants' kin networks (family) and non-kin networks with whom they had: a fifteen-minute or longer conversation during the previous three months; engaged in other activities or material exchanges such as instrumental support (money, food, or help when sick); or, exchanged advice (Fiori, Consedine and Merz, 2011). A key conclusion from this appraisal was that methodological approaches and the categorisation of social relationships data in the aforementioned studies failed to elicit information about interactions with others such as local shopkeepers.

It is noted that three studies did vary from the traditional approach. One study, in addition to collecting information about interaction with family and friends, collected information about organisational ties, *and* friendly merchants (Yasuda et al., 1997). One collected information about social, fitness and productive activity and did identify shop-going (Glass et al., 1999). The third study took a qualitative approach and did elicit information about relationships of proximity (neighbours),

relationships of service (business personnel including cab drivers, sales clerks, and wait staff), and relationships of chance (strangers) (Gardner, 2011).

Wenger's (1991, 1997, 2002) Practitioner Assessment of Network Types schedule (PANT), featured in several of the identified studies (Wenger, 1991, Wenger, 1997, Wenger and Tucker, 2002). I should make it clear that assessment that uses a recognised tool such as PANT (1991, 1997, 2002) may be carried out with the intention of determining specifically, the availability, or lack of availability of family and friends, and of community interaction (Wenger, 1991, Wenger, 1997, Wenger and Tucker, 2002), with a view to estimating likelihood of support. While it may appear that Wenger's (1997) typologies are concerned only with those relationships that give support to older people, close inspection of the PANT revealed that reciprocity in relationships *has* been accounted for (Wenger, 1997). However this aspect seems to be rarely explored by the researchers who have employed the assessment tool. For example, the *Locally integrated support network*, while associated with interaction with nearby family, friends, neighbours, and community groups, did account for recognition of *reciprocity* between the older person and their network members. Wenger considered this typology the most common and robust for support. Wenger's network types have been found to correlate with levels and duration of formal services, and to measures such as health, morale, social isolation and loneliness (Wenger, 1997). However, while Wenger's research is heartening because we *do* know that older people remain active in networks of support for family and friends, and in their communities (Bernard et al., 2001, Phillipson, 1997), the PANT instrument has been used as a measure of older social networks where assessment of such risk, and reciprocity with network members, were not the study foci (Litwin, 2001).

The review of the literature, and my appraisal of articles concerned with older people's social relationships identified that dependency, risk of social deficit, depression, disease, and mortality were common themes. Where the structure of an older person's social situation had been identified, the focus tended to remain on the emotional support that the older person *gained* through the interaction (Rosenbaum, 2006, Rosenbaum, 2009). Not uncommonly, the function of social relationships was

implied from their structure. Few studies accounted for the notion that older people might take a proactive approach to such interactions. Older people's vulnerability due to associations with exploitative shopkeepers was also mentioned (Kang and Ridgway, 1996, Rosenbaum, 2009).

My review also indicated a re-emerging focus on the effect of the environment on remaining independent with advancing age (Clarke and Nieuwenhuijsenb, 2009), and highlighted that the previous knowledge base about this area had been somewhat neglected. For example, Lawton and Nahemow (1973) and Lawton (1982) proposed an ecological theory of adaptation and ageing (environmental press or E-P) which demonstrated that as people grew older, the way they interacted with their environment could be significant for maintaining well-being (Lawton, 1982, Lawton and Nahemow, 1973). But it seems that the potential of the model 'has remained largely unfulfilled because few empirical studies have rigorously explicated and tested E-P hypotheses as required to build a coherent body of knowledge' (Kendig, 2003:612).

### **Closing the gaps and extending the knowledge-base**

In contrast to most of the approaches that I identified, I employed an interpretive and exploratory approach (classic grounded theory). I focused on older people's relationships with people other than their family or friends. I remained open to the possibility, as informed by the theories associated with positive psychology approach that I discussed in Chapter 2 (p.57), that older people could be proactive and resilient.

Subsequently, the current study has provided empirical evidence which has indicated that older people may not be wholly reliant on family or friends for social interaction. The study has also indicated that social interactions with local shopkeepers can contribute to older people's well-being through a type of interaction that is discrete to, and unique from, that associated with familial roles and obligations. I have demonstrated empirically that local shops can provide an opportunity for older people to display their capability, scrutinise their neighbourhood, exercise choice,



and take regulatory action. The current research approach enabled the identification and demonstration of the participants' forthright approach in their community.

The methodology employed in the current study enabled the *purpose* of older people's interactions in neighbourhood shops to be revealed. This was part of the study aim. At the outset, I proposed that the notion of *purpose* suggested intent, stimulus, or motivation. Thus I reviewed Ryan and Deci's (2000) theory of self-determination (Ryan and Deci, 2000a:54), which I introduced in Chapter 1 (pg.10) and elaborated upon in Chapter 2 (pg.64). Ryan and Deci (2000) proposed that *intrinsic motivation* reflected 'the natural human propensity to learn and assimilate', while *extrinsic motivation* could 'either reflect external control or true self-regulation' (:54). Moreover, Ryan and Deci (2000) proposed that extrinsic motivation could involve external factors such as social pressures, threats or coercion (Ryan and Deci, 2000a:54). The current study's participants articulated such threats.

*I think if we don't keep our shops going here they'll close and you know one day maybe **I'll** (bold type denotes emphasis) get to the stage where I don't drive there are some people who don't drive up there that can are close enough to walk to the shops and I think most of the shops I don't know - about the grocers whether they deliver or not but I do know that they **used** to under the previous ownership and ah and I know if you wanted to the green grocer would and even though they don't but they would to people **and** the same ah with the er bottle shop* (Female shopper, age 77)

*Ah how can I put it .... I hope it never gets to the stage you become a nuisance - (wry laugh) but I think nowadays there's things (such as a retirement village) around for older people to **go** (bold type denotes emphasis) to you've got a choice oh my my fear was always it was my mother's too (to go into aged care)* (Female shopper, age 81)

*If they're going to make us all have .. drivers' tests and then they say well you're not able to drive that will **force** people to look for the local shops and then you don't have a choice and because through that .. it **will** continue on*

*because we want those who want to be independent and not rely on relatives or whatever to **drive** you to shops if you want to be* (Female shopper, age 67)

Ryan and Deci (2000) proposed that a proactive approach to dealing with such threats would result in self-determination and well-being (Ryan and Deci, 2000a). Whether social interactions in local shops might be associated with well-being was part of the broad aim of the study. *Well-being* is a concept that can be difficult to define, but as described in Chapter 1 (pg.7), Cowen's (1991) model of wellness was selected as the working definition of well-being for the current study. Cowen (1991) proposed that certain conceptual dimensions (*competence, resilience, social systems modification, and empowerment*) interacted and were integral to psychological wellness. The model was considered apt for the current study because Cowen (1991) had proposed that these conceptual dimensions accounted for 'age-related, situation-related, group-related, and society-related determinants of and impediments to wellness' (Cowen, 1991:408). Some of these conceptual dimensions are also fundamental to the theories associated with the positive psychology approach (Baltes and Carstensen, 1996, Baltes, 1997, Carstensen et al., 1999, Antonovsky, 1993b, Ryan and Deci, 2000a), that I introduced in Chapter 1 (pg.2) and elaborated upon in Chapter 2 (pg.57).

As the current study progressed it became clear that the conceptual theory *Civic Socialising* was underpinned by data that demonstrated the participants' skills (*competence*) and their strength (*resilience*) as they proactively sustained their local shops (*social system modification*) and thus were ultimately enabled (*empowered*) through increasing their opportunity for their ongoing autonomy.

Through the current study, I have demonstrated how older people's reciprocity with local shopkeepers can contribute to the community. The participants exercised their influence to ensure that local businesses remained viable, and local shopkeepers reciprocated with assistance, favours, and respect. Such reciprocity indicates the generation of what has been conceptualised elsewhere as *social capital* (Kawachi, 1999, Putnam, 1993, Putnam, 2000). Prior to the current study, how social capital was manifested was unclear, especially for subgroups of society such as older people

(Sixsmith and Boneham, 2003). The exploratory approach of the current research has enabled us to understand, perhaps for the first time, how social capital can be generated by reciprocity between people (Lin, 2001), and how ‘social insideness’ or ‘social credit’ (Rowles, 1983:302), are amassed and disbursed. Crucially, the conceptual theory *Civic Socialising* is underpinned by data that demonstrated that the participants did not ‘rest on their laurels’; they continually generated social capital. I reiterate these data.

*See we’re (the older shoppers) they (the shopkeepers) say straight to us ‘You’re our bread and butter’ (bold type denotes emphasis) cause we go every week* (Female shopper, age 81)

*I go up the laneway (a service laneway at the back of the shops-not really a car parking area) well I know I can park behind \*s (a particular shop) ... they’ve said I can* (Female shopper, age 77)

The current study has enabled us to understand how older people’s everyday social interactions can help sustain a concrete capital asset such as local neighbourhood shops. In turn, such local shops can continue as places that facilitate the generation of social capital. Perhaps for some of the participants, their motivation to strengthen their own position in their community was paramount. But in doing so, the community was also strengthened.

*A real bonding for the community (interaction in local shops) ... you know like you feel safe you know (bold type denotes emphasis) these people you look after each other if someone saw someone being hassled or whatever you know we’ve seen them down the shop um like it expands out* (Female shopper, age 67)

While the current study has proffered empirical evidence for an existing construct such as *social capital*, it has also exposed that the tensions or challenges that are inevitable in community interactions have been poorly accounted for elsewhere. The current research approach has enabled ‘the dynamic and conflicting components that may be present at the level of the local community, in particular within urban contexts’ to be revealed (Colombo et al., 2001:462).

In Chapter 5 (pg.118) I mentioned a seminal work; Barnes' (1954) study of Bremnes, a small fishing town in Western Norway (Barnes, 1954). I remind the reader that Barnes identified social mechanisms which helped to regulate the class system of Bremnes. The current study has shown how the participants similarly employed such regulatory tactics. My study identified the challenges associated with community life and revealed how the older participants 'took on' such challenges. Participants spoke of perceived unwelcome changes to their neighbourhood; traditional homes being replaced by large developments; newcomers who did not share their values. Such change can be threatening for older people who have been in the same neighbourhood for many years (Phillipson et al., 1999). The current research approach has demonstrated that while the participants could not do much about such threats, their social interactions in their local shops enabled them to assert a level of control over the milieu of their local shops. Their social interactions in and around their local shops involved vigilance, the grooming of new shopkeepers, and taking action against those who they perceived did not conform to community standards or values. While such social interaction strengthened the participants' standing, it also functioned as a social regulator for the neighbourhood. Their proactive approach to maintaining their local shops involved exclusion and inclusion.

*My argument was if they allow there's not room for two \* (type of shop) .. there's only room for one and if they allowed another one in ah one business would go broke and then you'd have a chain reaction because he would stay **open** (bold type denotes emphasis) ...the \* (other shop) misses out ah .. so you see that's was that reaction and that's why we all wanted everything to stay the same* (Female shopper, age 77)

Such regulatory strategy was explained by another participant.

Participant: (Female shopper, age 88)

*We already had a \* (type of shop) see so we all howled that down ... you're (the shopkeeper who proposed the development) not going to spoil the trade for the other people*

Researcher:

*And all of you caused this to happen? (stopping the development)*

Participant:

*Yes mm*

Researcher:

*That's the power of the neighbourhood*

Participant:

*Yes yes popular vote*

Researcher:

*You're keeping that how you want it*

Participant:

*Yes that's true too*

My research approach has better defined another construct, *a sense of community* (Sarason, 1974, McMillan, 1976, McMillan and Chavis, 1986, Colombo et al., 2001), a construct that I presented in Chapter 2 (pg.65). Definition was previously stymied for several reasons, but older people's roles had been underrepresented or almost disregarded (Rapley and Pretty, 1999).

Environmental factors had also been underrepresented (Chipuer and Pretty, 1999), with regard to the construct. My study has demonstrated how access to one's local community and ongoing social interactions can be integral for maintaining a sense of membership, belonging, and emotional connection (McMillan and Chavis, 1986:9).

There has been debate also as to whether sense of community, which I discussed in Chapter 2 (pg.65), 'manifests itself at the community as well as individual levels' (Chavis et al., 2008:636). My earlier discussion about the participants strengthening community social capital by strengthening their own position in their community, I believe, exemplifies this (pg.141).

Thus, my study which has incorporated classic grounded theory has enabled a significant contribution to the knowledge-base about older people's social relationships. I have identified that the extant knowledge-base was limited largely

because of the methods that had been employed previously, and because of a focus on dependency. These factors tended to perpetuate an understanding that older people interacted mainly with family and friends and were dependent on them for social interaction.

I have demonstrated empirically that older people may not be wholly reliant on family or friends for social interaction. I have also demonstrated empirically that local shops can provide an opportunity for older people to continue to interact proactively in their communities. There is clear indication that such interactions can contribute to their well-being.

## **THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE EXTENDED KNOWLEDGE-BASE**

### ***Future research***

The current study has highlighted some opportunities for improvement with regard to commonly employed approaches that are used to determine older people's social relationships. Clearly a research approach that aims to identify with whom an older person interacts socially may need to consider how to best identify their potential full range of social relationships; family and friends, shopkeepers and others. This could be critical where the aim of such research is to draw association with, for example, another factor such as a risk of social isolation. An older person may live alone but interact extensively with local shopkeepers. An older person who has a family may still be isolated socially. The following comment was made by a participant who had several children.

Researcher:

*I think you said to me the other day when I first met you that sometimes if you didn't go out to the shops for a chat you might go for days*

Participant: (Female shopper, age 78)

**Yes** (bold type denotes emphasis) *I have days when I don't open my mouth*  
(forcefully spoken)

The current research approach and study have highlighted that it may be crucial to ascertain, the nature *and* the purpose of social interactions. Merely ascertaining a person's social structure (whether it includes family, friends, or shopkeepers) may not give any indication about what the arrangement furnishes, or how it furnishes it. It may also be important to ascertain the discrete value of each part of a person's social 'setup', and whether such social relationships are passive or proactive. Such information cannot be obtained through some of the current commonly employed methodological approaches.

In summary, the current research has identified how older people can interact with others who are not family or friends, and build social capital for themselves and for their community. Clearly, an enabling environment was a key factor.

Gerontologists have proposed that the effect that the home, public, and community environments might have on ageing well, remain overlooked in the literature (Wahl, Iwarsson and Oswald, 2012). I mentioned earlier (pg.138) that this may be due in part to a failure to test earlier hypothetical models (Kendig, 2003). The current research approach however, has enabled us to understand better, how older people can interact in their local neighbourhood where the environment is enabling, and thus enhance their opportunity for ongoing autonomy. Such new understanding is timely when we consider Australia's ageing population which has prompted policy and planning initiatives with a focus on *ageing in place*.

### ***Policy, social planning, and practices, which are pertinent to older people***

In Chapter 2 (pg.38) I described how the idiom *ageing in place* came about with the introduction of government reform which included the Aged Care Act 1997. I also described how the expression to *age in place* has become a metaphor for a lifestyle choice of community-dwelling people, and with associated initiatives aimed at supporting people to keep residing in their home or in the community for as long as possible.

Ageing in place in the community has been promoted as a lifestyle *choice* of many older people, and as an ideal. In 2012 the Australian government released

information about the Age Care Reform Package: 'Living Longer. Living Better' (Commonwealth of Australia, 2012). This reform document outlined a staged five-year framework and funding (\$3.7 billion), to guide initiatives towards forming 'a flexible and seamless system that provides older Australians with more choice, more control and easier access to a full range of services, where they want it and when they need it' (Commonwealth of Australia, 2012). Allocation of funds for care services were proposed that would help people to continue to reside in their communities. At the time of writing this thesis, at the State level in Australia, programs such as HACC (Home and Community Care) (Aged Care Branch Victoria Government Department of Health Australia, 2012), provide assistance to older people who are residing in the community.

On the one hand, assisting older people to continue to live in the community seems to be in line with what older people want. Research (multi-disciplinary, multi-method) conducted by the Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute has identified that over 90 percent of the study sample (1604 home owners who were 55 years of age or older) preferred to remain in the community for as long as possible with the support of professional care services rather than move into supported accommodation (Judd, Olsberg, Quinn, Groenhart and Demirbilek, 2010). However, according to Steve Macfarlane's comments via *The Conversation*, keeping older people in their own homes may be "another case of economic rationalism dressed up in the language of consumerism and "choice", and whether such a move is "just better for the governments who would otherwise have to fund institutional care as the alternative" (Macfarlane, 2013), is moot.

Certainly older people may associate remaining in their own homes in the community with independence. But they associate supported living with loss of independence and of privacy (Crisp, Windsor, Anstey and Butterworth, 2012). Indeed, extensive consultation with older people conducted by the Australian peak body, Council on the Ageing, has indicated that while remaining in one's own home was a choice of some older people, others indicated they would move if they could afford to (The Council on The Ageing Consultations on Aged Care Reform, June 2012). Such consultation identified a need for more and better supported



accommodation options. The report indicated that people wanted more choice about whether they wanted to be cared for at home or in an aged care facility. Overall, participants said they were concerned about the quality of care in residential settings, and that there was insufficient help available in the community (The Council on The Ageing Consultations on Aged Care Reform, June 2012). Indeed it has been recognised for some time that while the number of community-dwelling older Australians who require assistance to remain in their own homes is growing, the current structures and services to enable an ‘independence model of care’ are already overburdened or inadequate (The Allen Consulting Group Care Coalition, 2007:36).

It remains to be seen if the current government can even bring the reform proposals to fruition (Kendig, April 25 2012). But even if the aged care reforms are realised, it is likely that the care packages for community care (the current planned and managed care services system that is means tested but subsidised) and for care in residential aged care homes, will almost certainly remain restricted. It is likely there will be a dearth of community support services, *and* options for residential care. There may be numbers of older people struggling on in the community. It has been proposed that equity in the family home could be used to fund community care options but also that older people could be resistive to such a funding arrangement if they wish to bequeath the family home (Crisp et al., 2012). Even if older people can access residential aged care, they may prefer to struggle on rather than risk losing their home. Such a decision could have dire consequences if the local environment is not enabling. The following dialogue illustrate how unsympathetic planning and development of a large non-local shopping complex disabled (and disempowered) one of the current study’s participants.

*To get to the post office used to be inside the building now it’s outside the banks are outside so you’ve got to go from one end of the place right around to the other well that’s pretty hard if you on these sort of things (the walking frame)* (Female shopper, age 81)

Cowen (1991) suggested that older people were disempowered by society but that policies and conditions could enable people to gain control over their lives and thus

enhance their wellness (Cowen, 1994). Policy and social planning decisions can affect the environment, and people's opportunity to exercise their choice.

Clearly the participants found their local neighbourhood shopping precinct environmentally enabling. Other participants articulated how simply *having* the choice to shop locally enabled them.

*Well you can go there (into the local shops) even if you are on a walking frame you know or walking with a stick I mean you can make it that far from here*

(Female shopper, age 79)

*That's right yes and you know them (local shopkeepers) and you can ask for exactly what you want* (Female shopper, age 80)

The environment and issues of access clearly need attention if ageing in place is to be a satisfying experience.

Age-friendly environments have been recognised as a human rights issue (World Health Organization, 2007). But many of the environmental needs of older people remain poorly understood or inadequately considered by planning strategists (Landorf et al., 2008). In Australia, despite some age-friendly planning, and transport and housing strategies, 'there are no consistent national guidelines or standards specifically for age-friendly urban environments' (Judd et al., 2010:5). Living Longer. Living Better is clearly focused on keeping people in the community. In Australia, assisting a person to age in place does involve consideration for continuing participation in community life (Aged Care Branch Victoria Government Department of Health Australia, 2012). But it remains that the current approach to ageing in place has involved a focus on modifying the home environment (Landorf et al., 2008), and provision of in-home care services, rather than a focus on promoting public and commercial environments where older people can proactively socialise and also sustain their independence.

The current study has demonstrated empirically that ageing in place clearly involves much more than simply being able to remain in one's home (Wiles, Leibing,

Guberman, Reeve and Allen, 2011:4). It confirmed that the local environment was a source of experiential and emotional meaning (Agnew, 1993, Peace, 2005), and has revealed the implications “beyond internal “feel good” aspects which “operate far beyond the ‘home’ or housing” (Wiles et al., 2011:1). The current study demonstrated that knowing about the ‘little details’ (Wiles et al., 2011:91), of local shops and other services enabled the participants’ sense of security and attachment to place, and rather than being a ‘mere setting’ (:9), the local shop was a practical resource that was integral to choice. Attending local shops was associated with a sense of coherence or stability (Antonovsky, 1993b), a sense of community (Sarason, 1974) (McMillan and Chavis, 1986) (Colombo et al., 2001), and reassurance that others would look out for you.

The need to ensure ongoing access to local shops may seem obvious. It has been shown empirically that shopping for groceries is a fundamental activity of older people globally (Eriksson, Chung, Beng, Hartman-Maeir, Yoo, Orellano, van Nes, de Jonge and Baum, 2011). The current study has demonstrated that there are various potential levels of engagement in local shops and that the need for such engagement may fluctuate according to a person’s state of health, desire, or other opportunity for social interaction.

Clearly, continued engagement in a routine that involves shopping for food and services can be vital for maintaining autonomy (Haggbloom-Kronlof, Hultberg, Eriksson and Sonn, 2007), and well-being (Bowling, 2011 ). Furthermore, continuing to participate in everyday activities can satisfy a person’s sense of competency (Lawton, 1978). The current study has demonstrated that getting out of the house and presenting a favourable appearance can resist the old age stereotype and can help maintain a positive self-image (Mowl, Pain and Talbot, 2000), by displaying that ‘there is some degree of choice in getting old’(:194).

*Yeah well I think most of them do even .. some of them that are incapacitated (sic) you know they’ve got walkers and and they try and and keep up you know the the um (their appearance) what they’ve always done try and look reasonably all right when you’re shopping* (Female shopper, age 80)

Policy that aims to provide access to a range of services when and where older people want and need them (Commonwealth of Australia, 2012), must be translated into practice in the community. This will require attention to the way that service providers think and operate.

***Improving practice to ensure that ageing in place is a satisfying lifestyle choice***

Current associated practices directed towards ageing in place include rationalisation of support services and this is carried out through assessment. In Australia, such assessment aims to identify ‘the expectations and understandings of the person and their carer and sets up the initial pathway through the service system that best meet their needs’ (Aged Care Branch Victoria Government Department of Health Australia, 2012). Assessment principles include a holistic approach and part of the assessment ‘looks at opportunities for social participation and connectedness’ (Aged Care Branch Victoria Government Department of Health Australia, 2011:18), and involves ascertaining a person’s ability to shop and to interact in their community. Assessment guidelines do encourage assessors to ascertain their clients’ daily routines and identify who they interact with in their community. Assessors have been encouraged to gather information not just from the person in need of the service but also from other key sources such as family members, carers, neighbours, doctors, service providers, and teachers. Local shopkeepers could also be a valuable source of information. But social interactions associated with shop-going could be stated more explicitly. The current information that is provided about the assessment framework and approach does not make it clear as to whether shopping is regarded chiefly as an activity of daily living primarily for acquiring food, or whether the social aspect has been recognised fully (Aged Care Branch Victoria Government Department of Health Australia, 2011). Where supported shopping trips are part of a person’s care plan, community carers could benefit from knowing that being out and about in local shops may be a source of stimulation for their clients and thus they may need time to interact with preferred shopkeepers and other shoppers. Clients may be passionate about their local neighbourhood and despite being less able, may still wish to be so informed and to take action with local authorities.

An approach that is promoted as an independence model of care, but which focuses on delivery of support services alone, could inadvertently create dependence. Home delivery of goods or shopping services may result in social isolation. This has significance for older people's well-being and for government spending; social isolation and loneliness can be associated with poor health (Golden et al., 2009, Cacioppo, Hughes, Waite, Hawkley and Thisted, 2006).

Older people who live in an unsafe environment or areas with multiple physical barriers are less likely to get out and therefore more prone to isolation, depression, reduced fitness and increased mobility problems

(World Health Organisation, 2012:27)

Some of the proposals associated with The Aged Care reform Package may be valuable. But policy makers and planners would do well to heed the current study which has identified how an age-friendly existing resource, the local neighbourhood shop, can enable older people to look after themselves. At the study site, car parking was convenient, pathways were maintained and a range of shops were within easy access. Such features appear on the Checklist of Essential Features of Age-friendly Cities which was developed through consultation in 33 cities in 22 countries (World Health Organization, 2007).

Accessible services at the participants' local shopping strip, for instance, a service that would replace a clothing zipper or take up the hem of a dress, a chemist, and a hairdresser, in addition to food shops, meant there was greater choice about remaining independent. Older people who did have supportive family could be selective about the need to call upon them, and those without family could still satisfy many of their requirements, stave off the need to be supplied with care services, and remain independent.

The current study has highlighted that merely having local shops meant that the participants had an opportunity to engage socially. In this environment, older people could continue to participate as citizens and continue as 'an active consumer who is able to make informed and real decisions'(Higgs, 1995:547). Indeed, the study

findings have emphasised that as consumers, older people could possess the power to bring about significant change.

The findings also indicate how less advantaged neighbourhoods without such a local resource could result in older people being excluded from social and civic activities (Burchardt, Le Grand and Piachaud, 2002). Clearly there is a need to give urban issues high priority for the future well-being of all sectors and classes (Scharf, Phillipson and Smith, 2005).

In conclusion I emphasise that the current study has made a significant contribution to the knowledge-base about older people's social relationships and interactions, and about how older people connect with their community. The study findings clearly have implications for future research involving older people's relationships and for policy and social planning initiatives that are pertinent to older people.

## Chapter 7

### STUDY EVALUATION AND CLOSING COMMENTS

This chapter is largely devoted to an evaluation of the current research which has contributed significantly to the knowledge-base about the social relationships of older people. The study has developed a new conceptual theory that has defined the nature and the purpose of older people's social interactions with shopkeepers in their local neighbourhood shops. It has demonstrated that older people are not reliant wholly on their family and friends for social interaction. Further, the study has demonstrated that social interactions in and around local neighbourhood shops may be associated with strengthening older people's community standing, sustaining the milieu of their local shops, and thus increasing the opportunity for older people's ongoing independence. Dissemination of this new information has, at the time of finalising this thesis, informed and influenced policy makers and planners who are involved in initiatives directed at making local neighbourhood shops more age-friendly and accessible (Appendices I, J, K, L, M).

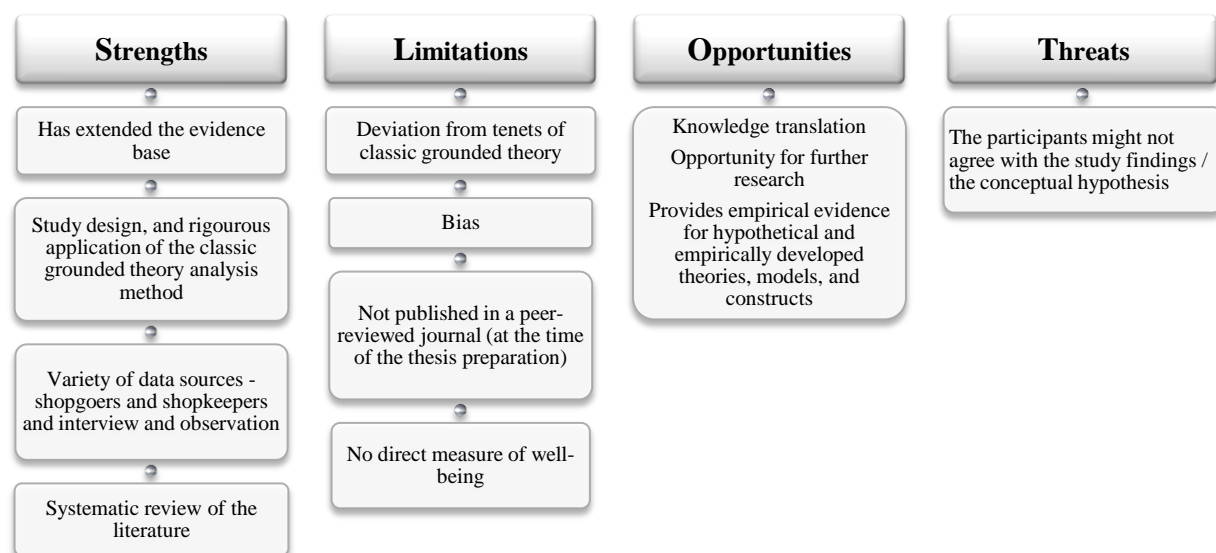
Evaluation of a study can be crucial for determining the soundness and accuracy of the findings and to ensure that the findings are safe to apply (Long and Johnson, 2000). For the current study such an evaluation has involved consideration for the *credibility* (Glaser, 2001, Guba and Lincoln, 1989), and the *coherence* (Hall and Stevens, 1991), of the findings. A sound method applied rigorously is integral to these and I elaborate upon this in the section about the study's strengths.

Accordingly, this chapter of the thesis provides an evaluation of the current study, using the SWOT framework. SWOT<sup>11</sup> is an acronym formed from the first letters of the words Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats. The technique is credited to the organisational management specialist Albert Humphrey (1926-2005). It involves identifying and examining the internal factors (strengths and weaknesses) and external factors (opportunities and threats) that can influence the achievement of an objective. An overview of the SWOT analysis of the current study is represented in Figure 7.1.

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<sup>11</sup> In some circles Weaknesses has been replaced by Challenges, and in research, Limitations is commonly used.

The current study objectives were ‘to better understand the nature and purpose of older people’s social interactions in their local neighbourhood shops and how the interactions may be associated with their well-being’.



**Figure 7.1 SWOT analysis overview**

## Strengths

### *Extension of the evidence base*

As presented in Chapter 6 the current research approach and study have enabled the development of a new conceptual theory (*Civic Socialising*) and in so doing, has extended the extant knowledge-base about older people’s social relationships. Such extension of the knowledge-base was due in part to the research approach.

### *Appropriate study design and methodology, and method*

The methodology, classic grounded theory, is interpretive, rather than positivist and is an apt methodology for exploratory enquiry, particularly in areas about which little is known. Why and how the approach extended the knowledge-base was discussed in Chapter 6.

Inherent in the classic grounded theory approach is a rigorous method of data collection and analysis that involves theoretical sampling and constant comparison of



data, concepts, and conceptual hypotheses (which I demonstrated adherence to in Chapter 5).

I presented a clear audit trail (Sandelowski, 1986), that accounted for the recruitment of the participants, how their data were collected and treated, and how the concepts, theoretical hypotheses, and the conceptual theory were derived and were verified as being grounded in the data.

There was a consistent approach to data collection and data treatment. I conducted the interviews and observations, and analysed (in consultation with my research supervisors) all the data. This resulted in consistency, and the chance of perpetuating an error of judgement or misinterpretation was reduced by classic grounded theory method of constant comparison and theoretical sampling.

#### *Theoretical sensitivity*

I believe I maintained theoretical sensitivity. That is, I developed my awareness of a broad body of theoretical work and integrated it, while also maintaining an open mind (Glaser, 1978). This is epitomised in the current study which integrated many theoretical perspectives but also developed a new conceptual theory.

#### ***A variety of data sources***

Accessing the data from a variety of sources (interview and observation; and shop-goers and shopkeepers) helped corroborate (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995:232) the developing concepts and hypotheses.

#### ***A systematic approach to searching for and selecting materials for the literature review***

A systematic approach to searching for and selecting relevant materials was employed in the current study. Such an approach aims to increase the likelihood of producing materials of high quality in an unbiased and transparent way (Higgins and Green, 2008). The framework for the systematic review for the current study is represented in Figure 2.1 Flow diagram of the literature search (pg.26).

## **Limitations**

### ***Deviations from the classic grounded theory tenets***

A tenet of classic grounded theory has been to forgo a literature review ‘in the substantive area and related areas where the research is to be done’ (Glaser, 1998:67). I discussed my rationale for conducting a literature review in Chapter 2, and Chapter 3. Monash University’s regulations required the conduct of a systematic review. Glaser (1998) has acknowledged that such protocols may apply, and his recommendation in such an instance was compliance (Glaser, 1998). He advised that any preconceptions formed through conducting the literature review ‘will be constantly corrected, put in perspective and proportioned in relevance by the constant comparative method’ (Glaser, 1998:72).

Glaser (1998) also advised against the use of a tape-recorder while interviewing participants (Glaser, 1998:107). Glaser (1998) maintained that tape-recording interviews (and subsequent transcription) ‘delays theoretical sampling’ (:108) sampling that ‘is necessary to both extend the theory as it delimits it’ (:108). I discussed my decision to tape-record the interviews and to transcribe them in Chapter 4 (pg.90). I cannot know whether or how these deviations from the classic grounded theory tenets have affected the progress or outcome of the current study.

### ***Bias***

Researcher preconception, reactive affects, the study sample, and the study setting, are sources of bias which could have affected the study findings and their interpretation.

### **Researcher preconception**

It is accepted that no researcher ‘enters the field without a set of preconceived ideas about the problem to be studied’ and that it is ‘human nature to hypothesize and give meaning to the world’ (Becker, 2009:256). The qualitative researcher is not an objective, politically neutral observer who stands outside and above the study of the social world (Denzin, 2001) and ‘a gendered, historical self is brought to this process’ (:3). I was an older shopper. That could not be changed. I had also read

widely throughout the study. On balance, I would argue that these factors operated as strengths rather than weaknesses of the research.

#### *The explanatory statement*

Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee required the use of an Explanatory Statement that explained the study aim (Appendices C and E). The document could have prompted a Rosenthal effect (Rosenthal and Jacobson, 1968). Participant older shoppers could have responded with an expectation in mind. Shopkeepers being observed could have acted in a way that was indicated in the Explanatory Statement. One of the participants did indicate that she had given the information in the document some thought prior to her interview being conducted.

*It was really interesting thinking on it* (Female shopper, age 67)

#### *The sample*

Older shoppers who were invited to take part in the study declined. Ten women were approached and five men; two women and two men declined. Whether new or different data would have been elicited from these individuals remains unknown. Ultimately, the conceptual theory *Civic Socialising* represents a substantive conceptual theory that applied to the study sample.

#### *The site*

The study ultimately focused on a middle-class south-eastern suburb of Melbourne, Australia. The rationale for containing the study to this site was discussed in Chapter 4. Thus the findings are not transferable to other populations (the findings lack external validity). However, the conceptual theory is a hypothesis that can be applied to other populations and situation as I discuss further in the following section.

#### ***The study has not been published in a peer-reviewed journal***

An effective study should produce findings that have relevance and further the cause of what is under investigation (Hammersley, 1992) (Hall and Stevens, 1991). At the time of writing this thesis the study had not been published in a peer-reviewed journal, although preparation for such publication is in progress. Nevertheless, the

study has informed policy and practice through being disseminated widely and I discuss this at a later point in this chapter in conjunction with the opportunities arising from the current study findings.

### ***No direct measure of well-being***

Part of the study aim was to ascertain whether older people's social interactions in their local shops was associated with their well-being. *Civic Socialising* is underpinned by data that conceptualised self-esteem, empowerment, and autonomy, concepts that have been associated with well-being (Cowen, 1991). These data and the study findings also indicated that the participants' well-being was in part, due to their proactive approach which aimed to mitigate forces or factors that compromised, or that could potentially compromise, their current circumstances. It was outside the scope of the current research to pursue this hypothesis further, but future research could build on this work to empirically test the relationship.

## **Opportunities**

### ***Knowledge translation***

The current study has extended the knowledge-base about the social relationships of older people, and the findings have potential to change or augment ongoing research, and policy and planning initiatives.

### **Research implications**

In Chapter 6 I proposed that the current study indicated that research that is underpinned by an ethos that older people are proactive and resilient, rather than passive and despondent, can produce valuable information. Clearly the current study encourages the implementation of further research that aligns with such a view. Publication in a peer-reviewed journal will be crucial for informing and guiding future research.

### **Informing empirically, extant theory**

The study has provided empirical evidence for a number of largely hypothetical theories that are associated with positive psychology, particularly, selective optimisation with compensation theory, (Baltes, 1997), the sense of coherence

construct (Antonovsky, 1993b), self-determination theory (Ryan and Deci, 2000b), and sense of community (Sarason, 1974) (McMillan and Chavis, 1986) (Colombo et al., 2001).

The conceptual theory *Civic Socialising* is a great catalyst for further enquiry. As a theory, it can be applied, tested, challenged and modified. For example, integral to the construct, *a sense of coherence* is the notion that resources such as wealth, cultural stability, and social support can make it easier for people to achieve control and mastery. It could be surmised that the middle-class participants in the current study were advantaged from a socioeconomic point of view. Commonly, people from higher socioeconomic circumstances may reside in areas where there are more facilities and a more pleasant environment. Such people tend to be better educated and may be more experienced at asserting their preferences. Neighbourhood shopping strips are more common to similar middle-class suburbs. Whether older people from other socioeconomic circumstances take a similar approach is a question that provokes further research.

Thus the following questions which were raised during the current study, and which illustrate an opportunity provided by the current research include:

- Does the conceptual theory *Civic Socialising* involve different nuances in other neighbourhoods?
- Does the conceptual theory *Civic Socialising* apply to younger people in the community?
- Are overt or sub-conscious motivational factors at play in the approach conceptualised as *Civic Socialising*?
- How may socioeconomic circumstances affect older people's opportunity to engage in the approach conceptualised by *Civic Socialising*?
- Could a similar beneficial effect be gained if local shops were introduced where there had been none previously?

#### Informing policy and planning

Translation of the current study findings into policies and practices is considered crucial. Consequently, the findings have been promoted and disseminated. As the

conceptual hypothesis developed, the research was presented at international and national conferences, and disseminated via the print and the broadcasting media. Journal publication was in preparation at the time of thesis submission. I posted an opinion piece (Appendix K), a media release (Appendix J) and a newspaper article (Appendix I) on the Monash University Website. Such dissemination has prompted interest from government departments, lobby groups, and older people, and I have been invited to inform their planning initiatives and seminars. The study findings has informed the 2013 Victorian Seniors Card program which aimed to make shopping precincts more age-friendly (Appendix M).

As discussed in Chapter 6, there is also an opportunity to consider the new conceptual theory when assessing a person's social integration in their community and implementing services, or developing or modifying associated assessment tools.

### **Threats**

#### ***The participants may not agree with the study findings or the conceptual hypothesis***

Sometimes when a researcher is conducting a qualitative enquiry they may present the research findings back to the participants to ascertain that they agree with them. It is argued that this practice may be of little value for a classic grounded theory (Glaser, 2001:11) and I concur. Participants may not be aware of the theory which describes their behaviour 'conceptually, if at all' (:11). Hammersley and Atkinson (1995) have warned similarly; 'we cannot assume that anyone is a privileged commentator on his or her own actions, in the sense that the truth of their account is guaranteed' (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995:229). Indeed Hammersley and Atkinson (1995) have argued that 'whether respondents are enthusiastic, indifferent, or hostile, their reactions cannot be taken as direct validation or refutation of the observer's inferences' (Hammersley, 1992).

### **In conclusion**

It has been said that a grounded theory can make the strange familiar and the familiar strange (Spindler and Spindler, 1982). At the outset of the current study it was not conceived that older people through their social interactions in their local neighbourhood shops, were safeguarding an opportunity for their ongoing autonomy.

The conceptual theory *Civic Socialising* is a novel theory that must change and enhance the way we view older people's social relationships. The new conceptual theory has ramifications for policy and planning pertinent to older people. It also emphasises that a neighbourhood can be a dynamic microcosm of our larger society in which older people can actively engage if the environment fosters natural social interactions. In such an environment, through their approach conceptualised as *Civic Socialising*, older people can continue to be active and productive members of society.

## Appendix A: Overview of the studies involving determination of social networks 1997-2011

3 pages

Title	Author(s)	Origin / population	Effect	Data source-all treated statistically with *one exception	Main network identified in study and social network measure reference if cited
Natural neighborhood networks- Important social networks in the lives of older adults aging in place	Gardner 2011	Canada	Well being	Purpose collected data software coded and researcher analysed	Activity - engagement in the neighbourhood
Attachment, Social Network Size, and Patterns of Social Exchange in Later Life	Fiori, Consedine and Merz 2011	United States of America	Patterns of social exchange	Dataset	Family / Friends Network Analysis Profile (NAP)- Cohen & Sokolovsky (1979) A clinical tool for psychiatric and aged populations developed in Manhattan single room occupancy hotels
Social Network Type and Subjective Well-being in a National Sample of Older Americans	Litwin and Shiovitz-Ezra 2010	United States of America	Well being	Dataset -first wave of longitudinal study	Kin and non-kin LSN-6 - Lubben (2006) and Berkman & Syme (1979) Family, friends, relatives, church membership, informal and formal group associations and typed according to Wenger (1991)
Social networks and well-being: A comparison of older people in Mediterranean and non-Mediterranean countries	Litwin 2010	Europe - Mediterranean and non-Mediterranean	Well being	Previous dataset -first wave of longitudinal	The family structure and interaction-partner, children Social exchange - provision or receipt of practical and financial assistance from within or outside the household Social engagement –work, activities, voluntary work, social club attendance
Loneliness, social support networks, mood and wellbeing in community-dwelling elderly	Golden <i>et al.</i> 2009	Ireland	Loneliness, depression, anxiety, quality of life	Dataset	One of five types comprised of configuration of family, close friends, relatives, church membership, informal and formal group associations Practitioner Assessment of Network Type schedule Wenger (1991); Wenger and Tucker (2002). The schedule classifies social network into one of five types
Ethnic differences in patterns of social exchange among older adults: the role of resource context	Fiori, Consedine and Magai 2008	United States of America born, and immigrants	Ethnic differences	Dataset	Family / Friends Network Analysis Profile (NAP)- Cohen & Sokolovsky (1979)



<b>Title</b>	<b>Author(s)</b>	<b>Origin / population</b>	<b>Effect</b>	<b>Data source-all treated statistically with *one exception</b>	<b>Main network identified in study and social network measure reference if cited</b>
Social Network Typologies and Mental Health Among Older Adults	Fiori, Antonucci and Cortina 2006	United States of America	Mortality	Dataset -first wave of longitudinal	Family, friends, neighbours, attendance at religious services, organised group meetings Clustered 5 types - Non family, Restricted, Non friends, Family, Diverse, Friends
Effect of social networks on 10 year survival in very old Australians: the Australian longitudinal study of aging	Giles <i>et al.</i> 2005	Australia	Survival	Dataset	Children, relatives, friends, confidant
Social Networks Among Blacks and Whites: The Interaction Between Race and Age	Ajrouch, Antonucci and Janevic 2001	United States of America	Interaction between race and age	Dataset	Family - three levels of closeness (closest /close/somewhat close. Hierarchical mapping Antonucci (1986)
Social Network Type and Morale in Old Age	(Litwin 2001)	Israel	Morale	Dataset	Practitioner Assessment of Network Type schedule Wenger (1991); Wenger and Tucker (2002)
Influence of social network on occurrence of dementia: a community-based longitudinal study	Fratiglioni <i>et al.</i> 2000	Sweden	Dementia	Follow-up Dataset - longitudinal study	Family, friends -availability and contact with network resources
Population based study of social and productive activities as predictors of survival among elderly Americans	Glass <i>et al.</i> 1999	United States of America	Survival	Follow-up Dataset - longitudinal study	Social, fitness, productive data
Social ties and health among the very old in Sweden	Lennartsson 1999	Sweden	Health	Dataset -Wave of longitudinal study	Family, friends, relatives
Relation of Social Network Characteristics to 5-Year Mortality among Young-Old versus Old-Old White Women in an Urban Community	Yasuda <i>et al.</i> 1997	United States of America	Mortality	Dataset - longitudinal study	Family, close friends, organisational ties, friendly merchants
Informal support for older people in postunification East Germany: Stability and change	Scharf 1997	East Germany	Support	Dataset	Practitioner Assessment of Network Type schedule Wenger (1991); Wenger and Tucker (2002)

<b>Title</b>	<b>Author(s)</b>	<b>Origin / population</b>	<b>Effect</b>	<b>Data source-all treated statistically with *one exception</b>	<b>Main network identified in study and social network measure reference if cited</b>
A prospective study of social networks in relation to total mortality and cardiovascular disease in men in the USA	Kawachi <i>et al.</i> 1996	United States of America	Mortality and heart disease	Dataset - longitudinal study	Family, friends, relatives, church membership, informal and formal group associations Berkman & Syme (1979)
Social support and depressive symptoms in the elderly	Oxman <i>et al.</i> 1992	United States of America	Depressive symptoms	Dataset	Kinship, confidant
Social networks and longevity. A 14 year follow-up study among elderly in Denmark	Olsen <i>et al.</i> 1991	Denmark	Longevity	Dataset	Family, friends, relatives
Reciprocity of social exchange and social satisfaction among older women	Rook 1987	United States of America	Reciprocity of social exchange and social satisfaction	Purpose collected data	Family, friends Social exchange: companionship, emotional support, and instrumental support, companionship, best friend
Social network ties and mortality among the elderly in the Alameda County Study	Seeman <i>et al.</i> 1987	United States of America	Mortality	Dataset -first wave of longitudinal	Family, friends, relatives, church membership, informal and formal group associations Berkman & Syme (1979)
Social networks and coronary heart disease among Japanese men in Hawaii	Reed <i>et al.</i> 1983	United States of America	Heart disease	Dataset	Family, friends, relatives, church membership, informal and formal group associations 'Chosen because they were similar to those used in other studies'
Social networks, host resistance, and mortality: a nine-year follow up study of Alameda County Residents	Berkman and Syme 1979	United States of America	Mortality	Dataset -longitudinal study	Family, friends, relatives, church membership, informal and formal group associations

## Appendix B: Monash University human ethics approval



MONASH University

Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee (MUHREC)  
Research Office

### Human Ethics Certificate of Approval

Date: 10 September 2009  
Project Number: CF09/2271 - 2009001305  
Project Title: Social networks of older people  
Chief Investigator: Prof Colette Browning  
Approved: From: 10 September 2009 To: 10 September 2014

#### Terms of approval

1. The Chief investigator is responsible for ensuring that permission letters are obtained, if relevant, and a copy forwarded to MUHREC before any data collection can occur at the specified organisation. Failure to provide permission letters to MUHREC before data collection commences is in breach of the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research and the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research.
2. Approval is only valid whilst you hold a position at Monash University.
3. It is the responsibility of the Chief Investigator to ensure that all investigators are aware of the terms of approval and to ensure the project is conducted as approved by MUHREC.
4. You should notify MUHREC immediately of any serious or unexpected adverse effects on participants or unforeseen events affecting the ethical acceptability of the project.
5. The Explanatory Statement must be on Monash University letterhead and the Monash University complaints clause must contain your project number.
6. **Amendments to the approved project (including changes in personnel):** Requires the submission of a Request for Amendment form to MUHREC and must not begin without written approval from MUHREC. Substantial variations may require a new application.
7. **Future correspondence:** Please quote the project number and project title above in any further correspondence.
8. **Annual reports:** Continued approval of this project is dependent on the submission of an Annual Report. This is determined by the date of your letter of approval.
9. **Final report:** A Final Report should be provided at the conclusion of the project. MUHREC should be notified if the project is discontinued before the expected date of completion.
10. **Monitoring:** Projects may be subject to an audit or any other form of monitoring by MUHREC at any time.
11. **Retention and storage of data:** The Chief Investigator is responsible for the storage and retention of original data pertaining to a project for a minimum period of five years.



Professor Ben Canny  
Chair, MUHREC

cc: Dr Jane Sims, Ms Joan Stewart

Postal – Monash University, Vic 3800, Australia  
Building 3E, Room 111, Clayton Campus, Wellington Road, Clayton  
Telephone +61 3 9905 5490 Facsimile +61 3 9905 3831  
Email [muhrec@adm.monash.edu.au](mailto:muhrec@adm.monash.edu.au) [www.monash.edu/research/ethics/human/index/html](http://www.monash.edu/research/ethics/human/index/html)  
ABN 12 377 614 012 CRICOS Provider #00008C

*(Monash University letterhead)*

October 2009

**Explanatory Statement for Shoppers**

Research Study Title:

**Social Networks of People Aged 60+**

This information sheet (3 pages) is for you to keep.

My name is **Joan Stewart** and I am conducting research in the Healthy Ageing Research Unit Monash University with Professor Colette Browning (Director Healthy Ageing Research Unit), and Dr Jane Sims (Senior Research Fellow Healthy Ageing Research Unit) towards a PhD at Monash University. This means that I will be writing a thesis which is the equivalent of a short book and several journal articles.

**The aim/purpose of the research**

My study is concerned with people aged 60+ and maintaining their well-being.

I have an idea that older people 'get more' out of their visits to shops than just purchase of goods. I think that while they are there they also meet people, exchange information, and have a yarn and it all helps lift their spirits.

I also think that some shop keepers play a special part in this.

To find out if my hunch is right (or wrong) I need to talk to shop keepers and shop goers - I hope you will agree to take part and talk about it with me.

**Why did I choose you as a participant?**

I have selected you to participate because I observed that you are a shop goer here, where I will be conducting part of my research.

I will also be talking to shop goers in other Melbourne suburbs and with shop keepers there.

There will be about 30 shop goers and 12 shop keepers interviewed for this study.

*Possible benefits*

If this study reveals that older peoples' visits to shops does help maintain their well being, the findings may be used to help inform urban planners to consider ensuring that shopping strips or local shops continue to be built where people can access them easily.

And I have found that people enjoy the chance to be involved and to share their experiences.

**What does the research involve?**

If you want to be involved, I will organise a time for you to tell me about your conversations with shop keepers. The process will take one half to one hour. The discussion needs to be recorded because when I have recordings from all the participants, I will analyse it to see if there are any common themes supporting my original idea. I will also take some notes.

### *Inconvenience/discomfort*

As mentioned previously under Possible Benefits, the approach has a positive focus - to identify benefits for all participants. However, I am well experienced in interviewing and I'm aware there is always a possibility when conducting interviews that you may change your mind about being involved or you may feel uncomfortable talking with a researcher or being recorded. If this happens, you can ask me to stop the interview and I will stop and cease recording immediately. If you wish we can discuss your concerns.

Nevertheless, it is a requirement of our University Ethics Committee that unforeseen events must be reported immediately to the Ethics Committee(s) and to the researcher's chief investigator.

If do experience any distress that is related to participating - that is during the interview, or even some time later – I recommend that you contact your GP (or another GP) who can advise you or even refer you for further support.

### **Can I withdraw from the research?**

Yes. You may withdraw from the study at any time.

You may access your recording, and when the transcript is complete, if you wish, I will contact you and invite you to read it.

You can request that all of the material, or part of it, be deleted / not included.

However, I trust that the experience of being involved in the project is likely to be a positive experience for you.

### **Payment**

There is no payment to you for taking part in this project.

### *Confidentiality*

Monash University has very strict guidelines that all researchers must adhere to. Researchers must go through a rigorous process before ethics approval is given for any project.

With regard to protection of your privacy:

- Your identity, and that of the shop keepers you visit, or any aspect of their business or its location will not be identified to anyone in any way or at any time before or during the research being conducted, or at any time after the research is completed, ever.
- The audio recordings from the interview will be transcribed, possibly by someone outside the University, however, any transcriber will sign a confidentiality statement.
- To enable you to withdraw from the study up until analysis begins, and / or to enable you to access your transcript if you wish the recordings and transcripts will be assigned a code that corresponds to you. The record of which name the code is linked to will be stored apart from recordings and transcripts and will be password protected.
- Once analysis has begun, all data will be de-identified – no data will be able to be linked to a person or place.
- Only the researcher will have access to your data.

### *Storage of data*

While the research is being conducted, all recordings, or transcripts or computer files of same, and signed consent forms will be stored in a locked cabinet provided for the researcher's private use, in the University. All computers used by the researcher, at Monash University or at the researcher's home, are password protected. The researcher's home is secure as required to satisfy home insurance purposes.

Once the research is completed, de-identified data collected will be stored in accordance with Monash University records legislation, which is for a minimum of 5 years post-publication.

A report of the study may be submitted for publication, but individual participants will not be identifiable at all.

### Use of data for other purposes

It is unlikely that your anonymous data will be used for other purposes, but in the event that it is, nobody will be named or identified in any way.

### Results

If you would like to be informed of the aggregate research findings, please contact the researcher, Joan Stewart, on [REDACTED] or email [REDACTED] and arrangement will be made for you to receive them.

<p>If you would like to contact the <b>researchers</b> about any aspect of this study, please contact the Chief Investigator:</p>	<p>If you have a <b>complaint</b> concerning the manner in which this research (<b>CF09/2271 – 2009001305</b>) is being conducted, please contact:</p>
<p>Professor Colette Browning Monash University Director Healthy Ageing Research Unit Phone: +[REDACTED] Email: [REDACTED]</p>	<p>Executive Officer Standing Committee on Ethics in Research Involving Humans (SCERH) Building 3e Room 111 Research Office Monash University VIC 3800  Tel: +61 3 9905 2052 Fax: +61 3 9905 1420 Email: <a href="mailto:scerh@adm.monash.edu.au">scerh@adm.monash.edu.au</a></p>

Thank you.

**Joan Stewart**

## Appendix D: Consent form for shopper

(Monash University letterhead)

### Consent Form for: Shopper

**Title:** Social Networks of People Aged 60+

**NOTE: This consent form will remain with the Monash University researcher for their records**

I agree to take part in the Monash University research project specified above. I have had the project explained to me, and I have read the Explanatory Statement, which I keep for my records. I understand that agreeing to take part means that:

**I agree to be interviewed by the researcher** ☐ Yes ☐ No

**I agree to allow the interview to be audio-taped and notes to be taken** ☐ Yes ☐ No

**I agree to make myself available for a further interview if required** ☐ Yes ☐ No

**and/or**

I understand that my participation is voluntary, that I can choose not to participate in part or all of the project, and that I can withdraw at any stage of the project without being penalised or disadvantaged in any way.

**and/or**

I understand that any data that the researcher extracts from the interview / focus group / questionnaire / survey for use in reports or published findings will not, under any circumstances, contain names or identifying characteristics.

**and/or**

I understand that if I wish, I will be given a transcript of data concerning me for my approval before it is included in the write up of the research.

**and/or**

I understand that any information I provide is confidential, and that no information that could lead to the identification of any individual will be disclosed in any reports on the project, or to any other party.

**and/or**

I understand that data from the interview, transcript/audio-tape, field notes, will be stored in accordance with Monash University records legislation, a minimum of 5 years post-publication. Research data will be disposed of according to University retention and disposal guidelines.

**Participant's name**

**Signature**

**Date**

**Interviewer's name**

**Interviewer's telephone no.**

## Appendix E: Explanatory statement for shopkeepers

3 pages

*(Monash University letterhead)*

January 2010

### Explanatory Statement for Shop Keepers

Research Study Title:

#### Social Networks of People Aged 60+

This information sheet (3 pages) is for you to keep.

My name is **Joan Stewart** and I am conducting research in the Healthy Ageing Research Unit Monash University with Professor Colette Browning (Director Healthy Ageing Research Unit), and Dr Jane Sims (Senior Research Fellow Healthy Ageing Research Unit) towards a PhD at Monash University. This means that I will be writing a thesis which is the equivalent of a short book and several journal articles.

#### The aim/purpose of the research

My study is concerned with people aged 60+ and maintaining their well-being.

I have an idea that older people 'get more' out of their visits to shops than just purchase of goods. I think that while they are there they also meet people, exchange information, and have a yarn and it all helps lift their spirits.

I also think that you, the shop keeper, are probably aware of this special role you play and I hope you will agree to talk about it with me.

#### Why did I choose you as a participant?

I have selected you to participate because I observed that you are a shop keeper where I will be conducting part of my research.

I will also be talking to shop keepers in other Melbourne suburbs or observing them interacting and with older people who visit these shops.

There will be about 30 shop goers and 12 shop keepers interviewed for this study.

#### Possible benefits

If this study reveals that older peoples' visits to shops does help maintain their well being, the findings may be used to help inform urban planners to consider ensuring that shopping strips or local shops continue to be built where people can access them easily.

And I have found that people enjoy the chance to be involved and to share their experiences.

#### What does the research involve?

If you agree to be involved, I will either ask you to tell me about your conversations with your customers or observe, from an inconspicuous place of your choice.

Interviews take one half to one hour. The discussion needs to be recorded because when I have recordings from all the participants, I will analyse it to see if there are any common themes supporting my original idea. I will also take some notes.

Observation will be for enough time to observe interaction with several customers and I will take notes.

I will not initiate interaction with your customers at any time or with you while you are working.



### *Inconvenience/discomfort*

As mentioned previously under Possible Benefits, the approach has a positive focus - to identify benefits for all participants.

However, I am well experienced in interviewing and I'm aware there is always a possibility when conducting interviews or observing that you may change your mind about being involved or you may feel uncomfortable talking with a researcher or being recorded or watched. If this happens, you can ask me to stop the interview or observation and I will stop and cease recording or note taking immediately. If you wish we can discuss your concerns.

Nevertheless, it is a requirement of our University Ethics Committee, that unforeseen events must be reported immediately to the Ethics Committee(s) and to the researcher's chief investigator.

If do experience any distress that is related to participating - that is during the interview or observation process, or even some time later – I recommend that you contact your GP (or another GP) who can advise you or even refer you for further support.

### **Can I withdraw from the research?**

Yes. You may withdraw from the study at any time.

You may access your recording, and when the transcript is complete, if you wish, I will contact you and invite you to read it.

You can request that all of the material, or part of it, be deleted / not included

You may access the observation notes and we can destroy them.

However, I trust that the experience of being involved in the project is likely to be a positive experience for you, and will affirm the important role you play in the community.

### **Payment**

There is no payment to you for taking part in this project.

### *Confidentiality*

Monash University has very strict guidelines that all researchers must adhere to. Researchers must go through a rigorous process before ethics approval is given for any project.

With regard to protection of your privacy:

- Your identity, and that of the shoppers, or any aspect of your business or its location will not be identified to anyone in any way or at any time before or during the research being conducted, or at any time after the research is completed, ever.
- Audio recordings from the interview will be transcribed, possibly by someone outside the University, however, any transcriber will sign a confidentiality statement.
- To enable you to withdraw from the study up until analysis begins, and / or to enable you to access your transcript or the notes if you wish the recordings, transcripts or notes will be assigned a code that corresponds to you. The record of which name the code is linked to will be stored apart from recordings, transcripts or notes and will be password protected.
- Once analysis has begun, all data will be de-identified – no data will be able to be linked to a person or place.
- Only the researcher will have access to your data.

### *Storage of data*

While the research is being conducted, all recordings, or transcripts or computer files of same, notes, and signed consent forms will be stored in a locked cabinet provided for the researcher's private use, in the University. All computers used by the researcher, at Monash University or at the researcher's home, are password protected. The researcher's home is secure as required to satisfy home insurance purposes.

Once the research is completed, de-identified data collected will be stored in accordance with Monash University records legislation, which is for a minimum of 5 years post-publication.

**Use of data for other purposes**

It is unlikely that your anonymous data will be used for other purposes, but in the event that it is, nobody will be named or identified in any way.

If you would like to be informed of the aggregate research findings, please contact the researcher, Joan Stewart, on [REDACTED] or email [REDACTED] and arrangement will be made for you to receive them.

If you would like to contact the <b>researchers</b> about any aspect of this study, please contact the Chief Investigator:	If you have a <b>complaint</b> concerning the manner in which this research ( <b>CF09/2271 – 2009001305</b> ) is being conducted, please contact:
Professor Colette Browning Monash University Director Healthy Ageing Research Unit Phone: [REDACTED] Email: [REDACTED]	Executive Officer Standing Committee on Ethics in Research Involving Humans (SCERH) Building 3e Room 111 Research Office Monash University VIC 3800  Tel: +61 3 9905 2052 Fax: +61 3 9905 1420 Email: <a href="mailto:scerh@adm.monash.edu.au">scerh@adm.monash.edu.au</a>

Thank you.

**Joan Stewart**

## Appendix F: Consent form for shopkeeper

(Monash University letterhead)

### Consent Form for: Shop Keepers

**Title:** Social Networks of People Aged 60+

NOTE: This consent form will remain with the Monash University researcher for their records

I agree to take part in the Monash University research project specified above. I have had the project explained to me, and I have read the Explanatory Statement, which I keep for my records. I understand that agreeing to take part means that:

- |  |                              |                             |
|--|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| I agree to be interviewed by the researcher                            | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| I agree to allow the interview to be audio-taped and notes to be taken | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| I agree to make myself available for a further interview if required   | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| I agree to allow the researcher to observe me working                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| I agree to allow the researcher to take notes                          | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |

**and/or**

I understand that my participation is voluntary, that I can choose not to participate in part or all of the project, and that I can withdraw at any stage of the project without being penalised or disadvantaged in any way.

**and/or**

I understand that any data that the researcher extracts from the interview / focus group / questionnaire / survey / notes for use in reports or published findings will not, under any circumstances, contain names or identifying characteristics.

**and/or**

I understand that if I wish, I will be given a transcript of data concerning me for my approval before it is included in the write up of the research.

**and/or**

I understand that any information I provide is confidential, and that no information that could lead to the identification of any individual will be disclosed in any reports on the project, or to any other party.

**and/or**

I understand that data from the interview, transcript/audio-tape, field notes, will be stored in accordance with Monash University records legislation, a minimum of 5 years post-publication. Research data will be disposed of according to University retention and disposal guidelines.

**Participant's name**

**Signature**

**Date**

**Interviewer's name**

**Interviewer's telephone no.**

## Appendix G: Interview guide for shoppers

August 2009

### SAMPLE INTERVIEW GUIDE - SHOPPERS

In keeping with the inductive process, the interview guide or aide memoir will develop as the proposed phenomenon is explored via participant interview. Initially, the researcher will ask a general question and try to avoid 'leading' the participants.

eg

*As you will have read in the Explanatory Statement, I have an idea that older people get more out of their visits to shops than just purchase of goods. I think that meeting people, exchanging information, and having a yarn, might help lift their spirits. What do you think about that?*

However, the researcher may prompt with questions such as:

- *How often do you shop?*
- *Do you have preferred shops? Why?*
- *Do shop keepers ask how you are?*
- *Do they ask after your family etc?*
- *Do they compliment you on your clothes or appearance?*
- *Or say you are looking tired or sad?*
- *Do you share a joke or do you banter about who will win the football etc?*
- *Do you confide in them?*
- *How do they address you? Mr, Mrs, First name?*
- *Do they ask you what you did before retirement?*
- *Do you like it when they treat you as more than 'just an older shopper'? Someone special?*
- *Does interacting / mingling help you to 'feel part of life' still?*
- *Do you like to be seen to be 'out and about'?*
- *Are some shop keepers are good at 'lending an ear'?*
- *Do you enjoy talking with younger shop attendants?*
- *Does the interaction give you a sense of being 'your own person'?*
- *Do some shop keepers play a special role in 'looking out' for people in the community?*
- *Do you think the visits are important for older people without family or friends?*
- *Are the smaller shops better for interacting than the big centres?*
- *Would you miss going to the shops if they were not here or you were unable?*
- *How can you tell which shop keepers care beyond just their business? What do they do / say?*
- *Do you think that planners need to preserve the smaller shops? Or plan for more?*
- *How does our society view older people?*
- *How do our policy makers view older people?*

August 2009

### SAMPLE INTERVIEW GUIDE – SHOP KEEPERS

In keeping with the inductive process, the interview guide or aide memoir will develop as the proposed phenomenon is explored via participant interview. Initially, the researcher will ask a general question and try to avoid 'leading' the participants.

eg

*As you will have read in the Explanatory Statement, I have an idea that older people get more out of their visits to shops than just purchase of goods. I think that meeting people, exchanging information, and having a yarn, might help lift their spirits.*

- *What do you think about that?*

However, the researcher may prompt with questions such as:

- *Do people have preferred shops? Why?*
- *Are shop keepers good at 'lending an ear'?*
- *Do they confide in you?*
- *Do people tell you much about themselves?*
- *How can you tell which shoppers are 'up for a chat'?*
- *Do you ask shoppers how they are?*
- *Do you ask after their family etc?*
- *Do you compliment them on their clothes or appearance?*
- *Or say they are looking tired or sad?*
- *Do you share a joke or do you banter about who will win the football etc?*
- *How do you address them? Mr, Mrs, First name?*
- *Do you ask what they did before retirement?*
- *Do you think they like to be treated as more than 'just an older shopper'? Someone special?*
- *Do shop keepers play a special role in 'looking out' for people in the community?*
- *Do you think the visits are important for older people without family or friends?*
- *Are the smaller shops better for interacting than the big centres?*
- *Do you think that planners need to preserve the smaller shops? Or plan for more?*
- *How does our society view older people?*
- *How do our policy makers view older people?*

Please note that the shopping precincts highlighted in this article were not connected with the study



**STRIP SEARCH**

**NORTH STATION ST, FAIRFIELD**  
People have always flocked here to sample some of the best Greek and Indian restaurants and bakeries. Add an Italian supermarket, eco-shop, organic supermarket, butchers on first name terms with everyone and a fairy shop and you can see why it's the liveliest place in the inner-north at the weekends.

**SOUTH SEAVIEW SHOPS, BALCOMBE RD, BEAUMARIS**  
A hidden gem, locals from surrounding suburbs gravitate here. The offerings range from a funky gourmet food store to a quaint woolcraft shop that doubles as the post office. Kicko cafe is busy all day.

**WEST VERNON ST, SOUTH KINGSVILLE**  
Blink and you will miss this great row of cafes, restaurants and green grocers just one minute off the West Gate Freeway. Food by Motorinos, is renowned for its pizza and wine list. There is also an Indian restaurant, organic fruit and vegetable shop, German bakery and funky cafe.

**EAST EATON MALL, OAKLEIGH**  
Hundreds of shoppers regularly populate Oakleigh's Eaton Mall which is synonymous with some of Melbourne's tastiest Greek food. With a variety of cafes, clothing stores and access to Oakleigh Centro, there's plenty to like about it.

Local flavour: Fruiterer Sam Apostolopoulos chats to Maureen Keogh at Maling Classic Fruits, Canterbury.  
Picture: NICOLE GARMSTON

# Good buy, old friend

## Small shopping strips have key community role for elderly

**SMALL** shopping strips fill a crucial role for the elderly, Melbourne research has claimed.

A Monash University study confirms small strip shopping centres play a vital role in the social life of older people.

Joan Stewart, from the university's healthy ageing research unit, investigated the social interactions of shoppers aged 67 to 88.

Ms Stewart's research contradicted the notion older people were exclusively reliant on family,

**John Masanauskas**  
city reporter

friends or neighbours for socialising.

"When older people shop locally they establish important relationships with their shopkeepers," she said.

"Both are aware they need each other; for the shopkeeper to stay in business and for the older shopper to have the service."

Canterbury greengrocer Sam Apostolopoulos

knows most of his customers by name.

"We've built relationships with people, especially the elderly. They come in and get what they need for the day and we get to know them well," Mr Apostolopoulos said.

"We find out about their families and they see our families grow as well."

City of Boroonda resident Maureen Keogh said she tried to give big supermarkets a wide berth.

"I like supporting local businesses, the food is

much fresher and the shopkeepers are like family friends," Ms Keogh said.

Ms Stewart said a new term, civic socialising, had been coined to describe the social network, and it had implications for urban policy and planning.

"It involves a complex interplay of factors associated with concepts such as trust, identity, surveillance, status, censorship and choice," she said.

"Governments should be working to support local shops, as elderly people

often find larger centres alienating, impersonal and not conducive to their shopping needs."

Mr Apostolopoulos, who runs Maling Classic Fruits with brother Roy, said his shopping strip had become quieter as major shopping malls expanded.

"For the elderly to go into a large complex like that would be quite daunting," he said.

"At least here they get a park close — it's local faces and customer service that brings them here."

## Appendix J: Monash University media release

### Local shops vital for age-friendly communities

19 November 2012



New research from Monash University shows local shops form an important part of age-friendly communities. Image source: iStock

Local shops play an important role in older people's daily lives and, for many, are an integral part of their social network, new research shows.

Joan Stewart, a PhD student in the Monash University Healthy Ageing Research Unit, investigated the nature and purpose of older people's social interactions with shopkeepers and other shoppers in their neighbourhood.

"We know very little about this form of social interaction, especially about the reciprocity involved," Ms Stewart said.

"We studied older shoppers, aged between 67 and 88 years old, and developed a theory from the study, which we've called 'Civic Socialising'."

Civic Socialising brings a new perspective to current understandings of older people's social networks. It contradicts the notion that older people are exclusively reliant on family, friends or neighbours for their social interaction.

"When older people shop locally, they establish important relationships with their shopkeepers. Both are aware they need each other, for the shopkeeper to stay in business, and for the older shopper to have local services," Ms Stewart said.

The study found smaller shopping strips provided an opportunity for the older people to remain involved in their community and for residents to become more active in local issues. The relationship enabled the older shoppers to demonstrate their competence and having local shops helped them to take control and remain independent.

Ms Stewart said shopkeepers also looked out for some of the more vulnerable older people and saw it as part of their service to the community.

Civil Socialising has significant implications for research, and for policy and planning. It involves a complex interplay of factors associated with concepts such as trust, identity, surveillance, status, censorship and choice.

"Governments should be working to support local shops, as elderly people often find larger centres alienating, impersonal and not conducive to their shopping needs," Ms Stewart said.

Ensuring that local neighbourhood shopping centres remain open will enable older people to look after themselves longer, to continue their normal everyday life, and benefit from the social interaction. This could be a vital component of initiatives associated with ageing.

"Such an approach could save money and ensure that older people remain independent, and age actively within their communities," Ms Stewart said.

## **Appendix K: The Conversation Media Group media release**

The Conversation Media Group © 2010-2013

19 November 2012, 2.45pm AEST

Local shops assist elderly living

### Source

### Monash University

Local shops serve an integral role in the lives of older people as a key part of their social network.

Researchers studied shoppers aged between 67 and 88 years old. They found that smaller shopping strips provided an opportunity for older people to remain involved in their community. The capacity to shop locally also allowed them to take control and remain independent.

Shopkeepers also played a valuable role in looking out for the more vulnerable older people and saw it as part of their service to the community.

This research should inform future policy approaches that could save money and ensure that older people remain independent.



## **Appendix L: Invitation to address the Victorian Department of Health Seniors Program staff**

On 22 November 2012 14:06, <[name@health.vic.gov.au](mailto:name@health.vic.gov.au)> wrote:  
Hi Susan,

I recently read an article about Joan Stewart's research for HARU on the role of local shopping precincts in the social lives/inclusion of older people. Her findings are highly aligned with some work we are proposing to do with local shopping precincts through the Victorian Seniors Card program to increase the 'age-friendliness of local shopping areas. I wonder if Joan would be interested in and available to come and present on the findings of her recent research to a group of interested staff in the Ageing and Aged Care Branch, DH?

Looking forward to hearing from you.  
Thanks,

**Name**  
Manager, Policy and Programs | Seniors Programs and Participation | Ageing and Aged Care Branch  
Department of Health | 50 Lonsdale Street, Melbourne, Victoria, 3000  
p. 03 9096 1052 | f. 03 9096 9162 | e. [name@health.vic.gov.au](mailto:name@health.vic.gov.au)

## Appendix M: Agenda Municipal State-Wide Positive Ageing Forum



### MAV STATE-WIDE POSITIVE AGEING FORUM

#### DATE

Thursday 14 March, 2012

#### TIME

9.00AM – 4.30 PM(8.50AM registration)

#### LOCATION

Rendezvous Hotel, 328 Flinders Street, Melbourne

#### AGENDA

- 9.00 **Registration** – Coffee and tea on arrival
- 9.10 **Welcome and Forum Open** – MAV President
- 9.15 **Creating Local Age Friendly Outcomes** - Christine Young – City of Melville, WA
- 10.00 **Age Friendly Approaches - Older People Driving Change in their communities** - Dr Kathleen Brasher – COTAVic
- 10.30 **Civic Socialising – the role of local shopping in the lives of older people** – Joan Stewart - Monash University - Healthy Ageing Research Unit Monash University
- 11.00 **Morning Tea & Networking**
- 11.30 **Toward an Age Friendly Melbourne**  
Tess Tsindos – City of Melbourne
- 11.50 **Panel - Questions, Responses and Discussion**
- 12.20 **Positive Ageing Ambassadors - Leading Local Communities** - Lisa Jarvis & Greg Fletcher – Colac Otway Shire
- 12.40 **Speaking with Older Australians** – Kaye Fallick (IFA Director) & Debbie McTaggart - Your Life Choices
- 1.00 **Lunch**
- 1.40 **New Ideas – short presentations, questions and panel discussion**  
The Art of Ageing – Sue O'Brien – Pyrenees Shire  
Wise and Wild Ideas – Lauren Hargreaves – Surf Coast  
Household Energy Advisors Program – Peter Reefman – Glenelg  
The Long Paddock Protocol – Mandy Hutchinson – Gannawarra  
Tech Tasters – Tania Ryan – South Gippsland
- Panel - Questions, Responses and Discussion**
- 2.50 **Rapidly Going Grey – Learnings for Local Communities** - Rachel Winterton – Latrobe University Wodonga Campus
- 3.10 **Government Response to the Parliamentary Inquiry into Participation of Senior Victorians**  
Barbara Mountjouris – Seniors Programs & Participation, Department of Health
- 3.30 **“Old Fogey – Past the Use by Date”** – Sue Hendy Executive Officer COTAVic
- 3.45 **Seniors centres and clubs - Results of the MAV survey – A taster** - Jan Bruce – MAV Positive Ageing Policy Adviser
- 4.05 **Reflections and questions**
- 4.15 – **Forum Close**

MUNICIPAL ASSOCIATION OF VICTORIA GPO BOX 4326, MELBOURNE, VICTORIA, 3001.  
PHONE 9667 5555 FAX 9667 5550 EMAIL [reception@mav.asn.au](mailto:reception@mav.asn.au) WEBSITE: [www.mav.asn.au](http://www.mav.asn.au)

# AGENDA

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