

Age(ing) as Future – Future-related activities regarding age and aging in cross-cultural perspective

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Background and goals of the project

The “aging” of highly developed, post-industrial societies, which is going to take place in the decades to come, is a fact that is hardly disputed in social diagnostic research (Kocka & Staudinger, 2009; Öberg, Närvänen, Näsman & Olsson, 2004). However, the inevitable future impact of increased aging and longevity on individuals and society is still uncertain and not entirely understood scientifically. This uncertainty is due to the structural tension between individual and societal future perspectives, resulting from the difference of time horizons that are inherent to individual experiences of aging on the one hand, and the structure of societal aging processes on the other.

Even though it is obvious to each individual that he or she is or has to expect an extended phase of “old age”, this individual future of ag(e)ing seems not to be perceived unequivocally as a gain in personal action opportunities and action scopes, since age is also constructed as a time of impairment, hardship, and loss (Heckhausen, Dixon & Baltes, 1989; Kite, Stockdale, Whitley & Johnson, 2005). Therefore, old age is rather negated and postponed into the future: It cannot start late enough in one’s own life – but still it is inevitably part of the lifespan. This ambivalent individual construction of future aging is at that point always under the influence of both collective perceptions and public discourses about the *future of an aging or “old” society*. In the aforementioned, calculations of profits and gains – in the sense of a social mobilization of the growing potentials of old age – are at the same time frustrated by a number of prognoses about demographic crises – from obsolescence to shortages of care provision. Furthermore, on this level of future imagination of life in an aging or aged society, expectancies, ideas and images, dramatizations and euphemisms are in operation as well. However, at this point the *mechanisms, relationships, and the interplay* between the two levels of future oriented thinking and acting are hardly understood.

Our research project investigates *ag(e)ing as future project and projection of people in aging societies*. It starts on the level of subjective-individual constructions, plans, and strategies of future ag(e)ing, in order to fathom the influence of socio-structural, political-institutional and sociocultural framing factors on the one hand, and on the other hand to shed light on the societal implications of individual future-oriented activities regarding ag(e)ing. The project benefits from the systematic combination of sociological and psychological expertise, reintegrating the discourse of the two disciplines, which so far has been peculiarly detached from each other in the field of aging research.

Idea and conceptualization of the project have emerged from the direct and indirect cooperation of the three applicants in the context of two projects that have been funded by the VolkswagenStiftung within the funding initiative “Individual and societal perspectives of aging” at the universities of Jena and Erlangen. Integrating the different – and therefore complementary – subject-specific and methodological competencies and resources of the three workgroups, we want to address the question how people of different ages perceive their *personal future as aging persons in an aging society* – and investigate the socially relevant implications of those individual perceptions. The project combines a *multi-method-design* – comprising quantitative as well as qualitative methods, experimental, online and survey methodologies, and a special focus on longitudinal analyses – with a *cross-cultural focus* on three different, highly developed, post-industrial societies (Germany, USA, Hong Kong). The epistemological interest of the project is mainly focused on age-related future actions in the realm of *views on aging, time management, and provision making*. In the center of analyses are possible relationships and interactions between the societal level of changing age- and time-structures, and the individual level of action-related perceptions, interpretations, and orientations. The comparative focus on different institutional and cultural conditions of individual aging enables us to methodologically corroborate German data and results, as well as to contextualize them in the realm of the expectable range of future-oriented actions regarding age and aging in highly developed, postindustrial societies.

The structure of the project is therefore highly innovative and requires increased trans-disciplinary cooperation as well as project coordination. In addition to their scientific expertise and resulting from their most recent cooperation, the applicants have all the attributes to successfully accomplish such a demanding endeavor. In turn, for the same, the VolkswagenStiftung funding initiative “Key topics for science and society” represents the ideal framework.

Dimensions of analysis, current state of research, method

The project is framed by the guiding question of whether and in what way structural changes and developmental dynamics of aging societies have an impact on individual age-related expectations and action dispositions. On the backdrop of our own research, the constructs of subjective views on aging, personal time management, and individual provision making are constructs that seem to be relevant for the understanding of future-related actions regarding age. Present social transformation processes on the macro level illuminate the relevance of those three dimensions of analysis.

The substantial change of conditions for individual age-related actions which has taken place in the last three centuries is due not only to the changes of age structures in post-industrial societies, which were at first merely predicted, but are now visible in everyday life. Instead, other factors that are

relatively independent of social change, have contributed to a profound and multi-faceted societal renegotiation of the phase of old age. „Activating“ reformations of the institutions of the welfare state (Lessenich, 2008), did not stop at policies regarding provisions for old age (Ekerdt, 2009). This has led to a change in requirements in the sense of a – following a prolonged work phase – „productive age“ even after the phase of primary employment (Morrow-Howell, Hinterlong & Sherraden, 2001; Walker, 2002; Dyk & Lessenich, 2009). The economization and marketization of the social sector, that has been progressing at the same time (Nullmeier, 2004; Beckert, Ebbinghaus & Hassel, 2006; Mok & Tan, 2004), implies new political expectations regarding individual provision making, not only with respect to material provision, but also in particular with respect to health behavior and „lifelong learning“. Eventually, societal time structures have been changing in a way that is characterized by flexibilization (Sennet, 1998) and acceleration (Rosa, 2005), a tendency that has been debated in aging research as „Busy Ethic“ (Ekerdt, 1986) and „Busy Bodies“ (Katz, 2000).

Views on aging, time management, and provision making are not only related to the aforementioned tendencies of societal change, but they are mutually dependent from and mediated by each other. The research project aims at a methodological and analytical integration to of those three dimensions of future-related actions regarding age. As outlined in the following, taking the perspective of one of those dimensions always also incorporates a view at the other two (see Fig. 1, p. 13).

Views on aging. Societal ag(e)ing structures exert their influence on thinking and acting of individuals – as well as on expectations regarding the same – through age norms, age stereotypes and subjective views on aging (Hess, 2006; Kotter-Grühn & Hess, in press; Rothermund & Wentura, 2007; Weiss & Lang, 2009, in press-a). Those age-related constructions first influence perceptions of one’s own age (personal future self-view), and in a second step, personal views on aging are internalized into the self-concept of older individuals (Levy, 2009; Rothermund, 2005, 2009; Rothermund & Brandtstädter, 2003a). In the interdisciplinary project „Zones of transition“, which was funded by the Volkswagen-Stiftung, we could demonstrate the existence of independent domain-specific views on aging that are independent and differ regarding valence and age thresholds (Kornadt & Rothermund, 2011a). Moreover, we found initial evidence for a domain-specific internalization of age stereotypes into the self (Kornadt & Rothermund, 2011a, in press).

In the new project, we want to analyze the domain-specific influence of views on aging on the self, age-related action, and personal experiences of age-related changes. We are especially interested in age-related change and cohort differences. We expect societal discourses on age as well as changing requirements and beliefs about old persons to have a different impact on persons of different ages. Personal concern, but also the possibilities for individual old age provision making, and related reaction patterns, are expected to diverge depending on subjective distance to old age as well as ex-

pected societal changes. While on the one hand the urgency and personal relevance of provision for old age is increasing with age, younger persons should expect an increase in changes regarding their financial situation in old age or regarding governmental retirement policies. This uncertainty could result in a boost of individual provision motives especially for younger persons.

To systematically investigate those questions, we want to longitudinally extend the existing cross-sectional data set with a second wave of data, and in the process also recruit additional novel participants to control for effects of time of measurement and drop-out. Such a cross-sequential design enables the differentiation of age, cohort, and time effects, and therefore the analysis of actual age-related change. This is true for the relationship of views on aging and age-related actions (views on aging as a positive/negative source of motivation for active provision making vs. as a result of sufficient/poor provision making) as well as for the relationship of views on aging on the aging self. By enabling the *prediction of change* from the initial values, a longitudinal design allows for the separation of internalization (views on aging – self) and projection (self – views on aging) effects, and also for the investigation of the direction of effects in the relation between views on aging and provision making.

The planned country comparison (see below) should also increase the culture-specific variance of views on aging and enables to consider them in the investigation of relationships in different life domains. In addition, it allows us to analyze the relations and interactions of views on aging (and their consequences) with different societal conditions of the aging process (age thresholds, provision in old age) and expectations of change thereof.

In addition, in the longitudinal study, we want to predict the retrospectively assessed incidence of age-related changes (critical life events, gains and losses) with personal views on aging and the future. Critical life events are not mere experiences; the likelihood of their occurrence is also contingent on personality factors and related behavioral habits and lifestyles (Saudino, Pedersen, Lichtenstein, McClearn & Plomin, 1997; Schmitz, Rothermund & Brandtstädter, 1999). In an extension of this research we want to follow up on the question in how far age stereotypes and individual perceptions of aging influence the behavior of aging persons, and thus the incidence and timing of age-related life events. In principle, we can distinguish between a self-fulfilling and a compensatory influence of age-related beliefs (Rothermund, 2005). The expectation of negative changes can on the one hand suggest a pessimistic and therefore de-motivating interpretation of personal experiences, and in turn foster the incidence of the expected losses. On the other hand, the expectation of possible losses can also lead to actions and behavior with the goal of preventing or postponing this negative development (Hess, Emery & Neupert, in press). Such compensatory activities are expected to occur espe-

cially if the expected age-related risks and problems are not perceived to be unavoidable but rather controllable, at least partly, through one's own behavior (Rothermund & Brandtstädter, 2003b).

For selected subsamples we also want to extend the standardized format of data collection. With the help of qualitative interviews, perceived age-related changes and their mastery can be assessed in detail. On this basis, we want to develop a typology of the perceived age-relatedness of change. In particular, we are interested in the domain-specificity of those perceptions as well as their relationship to domain-specific views on aging and the future, which are assessed in the questionnaire study.

In addition, the measurement of implicit views on aging with the help of reaction time-based measures (semantic priming, IAT) can shed light on the correspondence of automatic and reflected age-related beliefs. Drawing from our own research (Casper, Rothermund & Wentura, 2010, 2011; Gast & Rothermund, 2010) we want to develop new implicit measures to assess domain-specific age stereotypes. Here, we are interested in the relationship of those implicit associations with explicit views on aging, as well as in potentially domain-specific differences in the degree of correspondence of explicit and implicit evaluations. Especially in domains in which societal age stereotypes are highly salient and exert their influence on the perceptions of older persons (e.g. health, workplace), we expect larger discrepancies between implicit and explicit views on aging, since a reflected, critical distancing from those views should be visible especially in explicit measures. Furthermore, a comparison in predictive validity of implicit and explicit measures regarding relevant criterion variables (self-concept, beliefs on life in old age, provision making, time perception and management) seems to be of special interest. Such analyses might give indication whether age-related thinking and behavior in those domains is rather directed by reflected attitudes or implicit prejudice.

Time management. The question of time management emerged as a central dimension of age and aging-related „future acting“ in our former qualitative studies. Across all social milieus and life domains and up to the very high ages – before being in need of care – people report a relatively ageless self-concept (Graefe, Dyk, & Lessenich, 2011): Rather than the experience of a transition into a phase of „old age“, the experience of a continuity of adulthood is dominating, which makes people describe themselves as „adults who are older (Harper, 2004). For this „ageless“ – at least when it comes to the much cited „third age“ – self-conception (Kaufman, 1986) of the interviewees, the *experience of time sovereignty* that comes with the transition into the post-employment phase plays an important role: What changes with the exit from the workforce – and usually in a positive way – is the mostly novel experience of a great extent of autonomy in the use of time. Liberated from the restrictions of work-related (and often also familial) time allowances, daily and weekly routines, and even the year cycle become the subjects of (alleged) personal organization and planning. Furthermore, age-related changes and losses are being offset against this gain of time autonomy; the dimension of time man-

agement as an experience of „late freedom“ (Rosenmayr, 1983) therefore becomes the cornerstone of an ageless self-view. However, as our research also shows, this self-view has a clear-cut prospective barrier: The transition into „actual“, i.e. highest, dependent old age, where one is in need of care, is framed prospectively as a massive turning point, as the end of malleable adulthood, if not the end of life itself.

The planned project follows up on this double-finding and investigates time perception and current as well as prospective time-related actions of older and old persons. The epistemological question thereby aims at the structural tension between time and temporality, which is to be assessed in two dimensions.

In the first dimension, the relationship between time richness and time competence of older and old persons is investigated, because only their interaction enables sovereign time management: Spare time has to be framed and planned, and it has to be assigned objective structure and subjective meaning. But how do participants cope with their freedom of time, how do they develop competencies of time management and thus the (perceived) time sovereignty that keeps „age“ at distance subjectively and projects it into a future that is more or less far away? How do those practices of (perceived) time change in the transition to high and highest age? Is the experience of care necessarily also linked to the experience of loss of time autonomy – or do participants adapt their forms and concepts of autonomous time management to their actual living conditions? In how far are age-related changes in time regimes (especially through care arrangements, but also through limitations in moving speed and radius) perceived as problematic and directed by others or on the contrary as being under one’s own control – and what factors (socio-structural, material-organizational, biographical, familial) benefit such perceptions?

The second dimension centers on the relationship between the wealth and poverty of time of older individuals, which results from the (potential) experience of increased time sovereignty on the one hand and the (inevitable) decrease in time left to live on the other. The relative time autonomy of the post-employment phase thus stands in sharp contrast to the absolute heteronomy of time left to live that finds its expression in the inescapability of death (e.g. Lang, in press). How do people cope with their limitations of time? And also with an eye toward the impending end of life, how and under which circumstances do they develop forms of time-related actions, such as a timely down-sizing of material possessions (Smith & Ekerdt, 2011)? Starting from that question, the project is especially interested in whether and how both dimensions of the tension between time and timeliness are related and interact with each other: Are there positive (and/or negative) relationships between lived and experienced time sovereignty and the perception of one’s own finitude, i.e. older persons’ more or less autonomous disposition of time in their daily routines and specific forms of (constructed and

practical) handling of the limitations and unavailability of one's own lifetime? How are both forms of time management intertwined – and what are the implications for the self-perception and life satisfaction of participants?

The epistemological interest therefore centers on the triangle that develops from the interaction of the wealth of daily time, biographical time poverty, and individual competencies of time management of aging persons in aging societies. Besides the open-ended, qualitative approach on this analytical construct, in the empirical analysis we expect milieu (income, education, provenance), as well as gender effects. However, we want to set a special focus on the effects of culture (e.g. regarding the societal meaning of autonomy values or the societal handling of death), which we try to capture with the cross-cultural design of the project (see below).

Apart from that, we especially want to assess age and cohort effects (Ekerdt, 2007), and therefore want to interview novel participants from two age groups (aged 60-70 and 75-85). Furthermore, we want to interview a selected subsample (from both age groups, but especially the older ones) of the former project for a second time.

This dimension of analysis will be investigated mainly through problem-centered interviews with biographical-narrative parts. The manual will be partly adopted from the project „Zones of transition“, but the central questions will also be extended systematically with regard to aspects of individual (current and prospective) time-related actions. We want to complement the qualitative interview data with standardized questionnaires assessing time perspective (Brandtstädter, Wentura & Schmitz, 1997) and the subjective perception of time left to live (Rothermund & Brandtstädter, 1998), as well as scales assessing attitudes towards life in old age (Kornadt & Rothermund, 2011b), which have also been assessed at the first measurement occasion for the longitudinal sample. The combination of qualitative interviews and standardized instruments in the same sample allows us to compare the dimensionality and interaction of the time-related constructs as assessed with different methods. We also hope to extend and differentiate the standardized instruments with newly identified facets of time perception and time management.

In an additional step, we want to investigate the psychological perception of time and daily time use with the „Day Reconstruction“-method (DRM, Kahneman, Krueger, Schkade, Schwarz, & Stone, 2004). An adapted version of the DRM especially designed for the assessment of daily time perception is available for online assessment (see <http://www.gerotest.geronto.uni-erlangen.de/studien/gestern/index.php>). This is not only a methodologically obvious but also theoretically relevant point of intersection with the issue of provision making of older persons (John, Matthes & Lang, 2012; Lang, in press).

Provision making. Societies of longevity increasingly demand that individuals prepare for old age at an early stage. Provision for one's own age thereby encompasses all domains of life planning, provision for health and care, as well as financial provision. So far, it is not well-understood how motivational and cognitive developmental processes across adulthood effect future-related decision making and behavior. However, it is well-established that individual representations of the future have a strong impact on directing individual behavior and setting personal goals in life (e.g., Carstensen, Isaacovitz, & Charles, 1999; Carstensen & Lang, 2007; Kornadt & Rothermund, 2012; Lang, Rohr, & Williger, 2011). With age-related decrease of (healthy and active) life time, individuals perceive provision making and provision making activities as increasingly urgent. They do not only become more and more aware of life time's limitation and finitude, but also recognize the accordant risks of potential functional impairments, health problems, and social losses for autonomy and self-determination in old age. However, so far, it is unknown what mechanisms and processes impact one's thinking about future and consequential planning and behavior.

Previous work that was conducted in the VW-project "Ageing as future enterprise" differentiated two general types of developmental influences on provision planning and provision making (Lang, Baltes, & Wagner, 2007): On the one hand, personal (= idiosyncratic) experiences and individual peculiarities which are rooted in one's biography affect self-related future thinking. For instance, people who have given care to an impaired and demented family member in the past are characterized by increased provision making orientation (e.g., Lang & Wagner, 2007). On the other hand, thinking about future-related risks, demands, and opportunities is influenced by societal, cultural and scientific discourses about age and ageing (e.g., norms and images of ag(e)ing) in media and educational settings (e.g. Denninger, Dyk, Lessenich & Richter, 2012; Kornadt & Rothermund, 2012; Lang, in press; Rager, Lang & Wagner, in press; Weiss & Lang, 2009, in press-a, in press-b).

However, provision making is not solely the product of developmental change processes across adulthood, it rather also shapes individual future perspectives by increasing one's perceived control of future opportunities and risks. Here it seems crucial to differentiate preventive provision making that focuses either on one's future self (e.g., self-related provision making such as instrumental saving motives) or on one's social environment in the future (e.g., provisions that serve future generations such as generative saving motives, cf., Rager et al., in press). Therefore we differentiate between self-related provision making (e.g., retirement planning) and generative provision making that targets on future generations (e.g., last will, term life assurance; Lang, 2008, in press; Rager et al., in press). Both types of provision making reflect specific developmental tasks in middle and older adulthood. Managing and mastering these developmental tasks seems especially crucial for the perception, evaluation, and experience of one's future in old age.

First analyses supporting this assumption show that a stronger engagement in (self-related) provision making is associated with a more positive evaluation of one's age and an enhanced generative future perspective (Lang, Rohr & Wagner, in prep. ; Rager et al., in press; Weiss & Lang, in press-b). Moreover, existing studies demonstrate that a generative future perspective is accompanied by benefits for well-being in old age (Carstensen & Lang, 2007; Lang & Carstensen, 2002). However, knowledge about the causal direction of these associations is still unclear. Therefore longitudinal analyses are necessary to clarify if changes in provision making are antecedents or consequences of changes in subjective future thinking and planning. Thus, it is essential to disentangle the interplay of self- and other-related (generative) future perspective and provision making orientations. Previous research suggests that acceptance of one's finitude fosters other-related resp. generative future thinking. But it is also possible that the development of responsibility for future generations is accompanied by self-related provision making which also represents taking over one's own responsibility (Lang & Baltes, 1997) as well as protecting one's personal self-determination in old age (e.g., as a reason to compile advanced directives). It is expected that a higher investment in provisions for one's own aging contributes to a more general positive and generative view on future. However, (positive or negative) future thinking may in turn also foster or hinder (self-related / generative) provision making. Accordingly, a longitudinal approach is necessary to shed light on the issue of causality.

This part of the project examines the general question if and to which degree individual time and future cognitions, daily time management, and images of age effect self- and other-related provision making and planning. The project will explore if changes in provision making (e.g., preventive savings, last will, advanced directives, health prevention) are linked to alterations in future time perspective, personal images of ag(e)ing, and time management. It is hypothesized that generative future perspectives lead to self- and other-related (generative) provision making. Moreover, we assume that personal life circumstances and daily time experience (e.g., such as subjective reductions in daily life time) result in a heightened readiness and orientation for provision making. In order to explore this interplay between future perspectives and individual provision making an extension of the previous cross-sectional online-study is planned by adding a second measurement point.

The methodological approach is based on a web-based investigation which draws on an existing participant pool. In an online-study, participants reply to established measurement instruments on self- and other-related (generative) provision making, subjective future thinking and future time perspective, and report on their individual time management in daily episodes. To document and guarantee data quality, the web-based study is complemented by personal assessments at the institute that are supervised by a trained interviewer. Measurements that were used in the previous project are complemented by well-known instruments assessing time perspective (Brandtstädter, Wentura, &

Schmitz, 1997), future time perspective (Lang & Carstensen, 2002), as well as attitudes toward life management in old age (Kornadt & Rothermund, 2011b). Additionally, it is planned to select randomized subsamples and conduct experimental manipulations by using vignettes. Different future and provision making scenarios (e.g., future threat of self-determination, future care needs) will be presented to participants examining the consequences of these manipulations on provision making and future thinking. It seems especially important how manipulations of future thinking effect self- and other-related (generative) provision making with regard to potential functional losses, care risks, as well as dealing with one's finitude and death. Moreover, based on the cross-cultural comparison with South-Asian (Hong Kong) and North-American context (USA), it is possible to analyze the effect of different, culture-specific constructions of self (e.g., interdependent vs. independent self, cf., Fung, Yeung, Li & Lang, 2009; Yeung, Fung & Lang, 2008).

Comparative contextualization of findings

The cross-cultural contextualization and validation of findings at which the planned project aims, are supposed to sensitize for the expected variability in future-related ag(e)ing behavior in modern highly-developed, post-industrial societies. With the help of the cross-cultural comparison we want to overcome the common self-restriction in ageing research with its' still-dominating focus on examining the "own". By incorporating institutional and cultural contexts that are in contrast to each other, the project aims at a more thorough understanding of the peculiarities of these contexts and their elements. The primary goal of cross-cultural comparisons consists in the notable augmentation of our understanding about existing variance and variety of societal images of ag(e)ing, established provision making strategies, and representations about time management in old age. By contrasting different countries we are able to analyze potential associations between societal differences and their individual consequences. This comparison is not possible within a single society characterized by restricted variance due to relative homogenous age images and accordant attitudes. Thus, by complementing the German data, the assessments in the US and Hong Kong enable a systematically enriched view on the occurrence, characteristics, and associations between individual views on aging, time and life management in old age, and individual provision making (cf., Keith et al., 1994 regarding intercultural comparison of views on aging in the US and Hong Kong).

The cross-cultural comparison of views on aging, time management, and provision making is highly relevant for ageing research. The selection of countries combines three highly developed (post-)industrial societies that, on a structural level, are similarly affected by demographic change, but reveal significant differences regarding socialization of (older) age, cultural pattern of age-specific life

management, as well as individual time behavior and societal time structures. For instance, Levine (1997) demonstrated that societal pace of time varies in dependence on socio-structural and socio-cultural conditions and is subject to particular patterns of change. In turn, stability and change of societal time experiences and social time horizons themselves affect individual strategies of handling time and temporality. In several studies Helene Fung and her research group demonstrated that Chinese respondents differ from Americans and Europeans in their pattern of time experiences (e.g., Fung, Stoeber, Yeung, & Lang, 2008). For instance, in the study of Cheng, Fung and Chan (2009) negative future expectations were associated with enhanced well-being of older Chinese participants. At the same time, social changes such as the handover of Hong Kong or the SARS-epidemic also affected one's own time experience and the shaping of one's development (Fung & Carstensen, 2006; Yeung & Fung, 2007). We assume that these structurally diverging age norms, age transitions, and age stereotypes also influence representations of age and ageing, self perceptions, and their consequences for personal age-related action orientations (Westerhof, Whitbourne, & Freeman, 2011). For instance, in their study Levy and Langer (1994) showed that Chinese do not hold age stereotypes about deficits in cognitive functioning. Accordingly, an experimental activation of the category "old" does not elicit self-stereotyping and consequently worse memory performance of older Chinese participants. These disparities are often the result of deeply rooted differences in cultural attitudes such as individualism resp. collectivism (or familism), the idea of self-determined life style, or the normative significance of short- or long-term nature of action orientations (e.g., Cross, Hardin & Gercek-Swing, 2011; Hannover & Kühnen, 2002; Levy, 1999; Markus & Kitayama, 1991).

With Prof. David Ekerdt (University of Kansas), Prof. Helene Fung (Chinese University of Hong Kong) and Prof. Thomas Hess (North Carolina State University) we found three international cooperation partners who are experts in the area of psychological, sociological, and gerontological research, and contributed to the field with highly ranked and internationally visible project-relevant publications (cf., attached CVs which document expertise for the project). The cooperation is grounded on an intensive longtime exchange on project-relevant issues and guarantees a perfect match of research topics and methods. This match will ensure smooth organization and realization of assessments in Hong Kong and the US.

In January, a multi-day workshop that was funded by the VolkswagenStiftung was conducted in Jena to discuss content and methodological details of the planned project. A paper encompassing an English translation of all relevant parts of the proposal was given to the international partners and served as a base for discussion. In addition to the exchange on project contents and theoretical foundations, a comprehensive time and work plan was compiled which defines the coordination of German and international assessments across the entire project period (cf., project structure and

design, as well as attachment “time plan”). The results of the workshop were documented in a detailed protocol (cf., attachment „Protocol Workshop”). On basis of the workshop the cooperation partners compiled a thorough plan which contains costs calculation on personnel and material expenses. These plans are incorporate in the cost-calculation of the sub-projects (studies conducted by David Ekerdt are financed by subproject Stephan Lessenich, studies by Helene Fung are financed by subproject Frieder Lang, and studies conducted by Thomas Hess are financed by subproject Klaus Rothermund). Moreover, all international cooperation partners obtained official and mandatory letters of approval from their home universities (see attachment “Letters of approval”). The current state of scheduling guarantees a highly competent and smooth organization and realization of assessments in the US and in Hong Kong. It is planned to collect data that are coordinated and matched regarding instruments and underlying sample characteristics. These data will enable conclusions about country- and culture specific peculiarities and differences in age-related representations, in time experience, and provision making, as well as clarify interdependencies between these variables. Through active participation of first rate cooperation partners the project gains immense international visibility and ensures the possibility that the project findings will have substantial influence on international research. Furthermore, this international and interdisciplinary frame offers great opportunities for the career development of the young scientists employed in the project (e.g., international networking, opportunity for highlyranked and influential publications on a unique longitudinal data basis).

Project structure and design

The intended interdisciplinary cooperation and the multi-methodological design allow to systematically analyze the interdependencies between views on aging (self, society), time management (individual, societal), and self-related as well as generative provision making. Figure 1 gives an overview of the project structure and its basic principles. Subjective views on aging are analyzed as (nomotypic) sources of influence on future constructions, and are in turn dependent on individual (ideotypic) views on future and previous experiences themselves. Views on aging, time management, and provision making composite a triad that serves as basis for identifying individual and societal constructed aging processes. Furthermore, the cross-cultural comparison enables a systematic analysis of societal conditions (age stereotypes and norms, provision with care and health services) and their consequences on individual thinking about age and aging, developmental actions and motivational strivings (provision making, attitudes toward life in old age, and time experience).

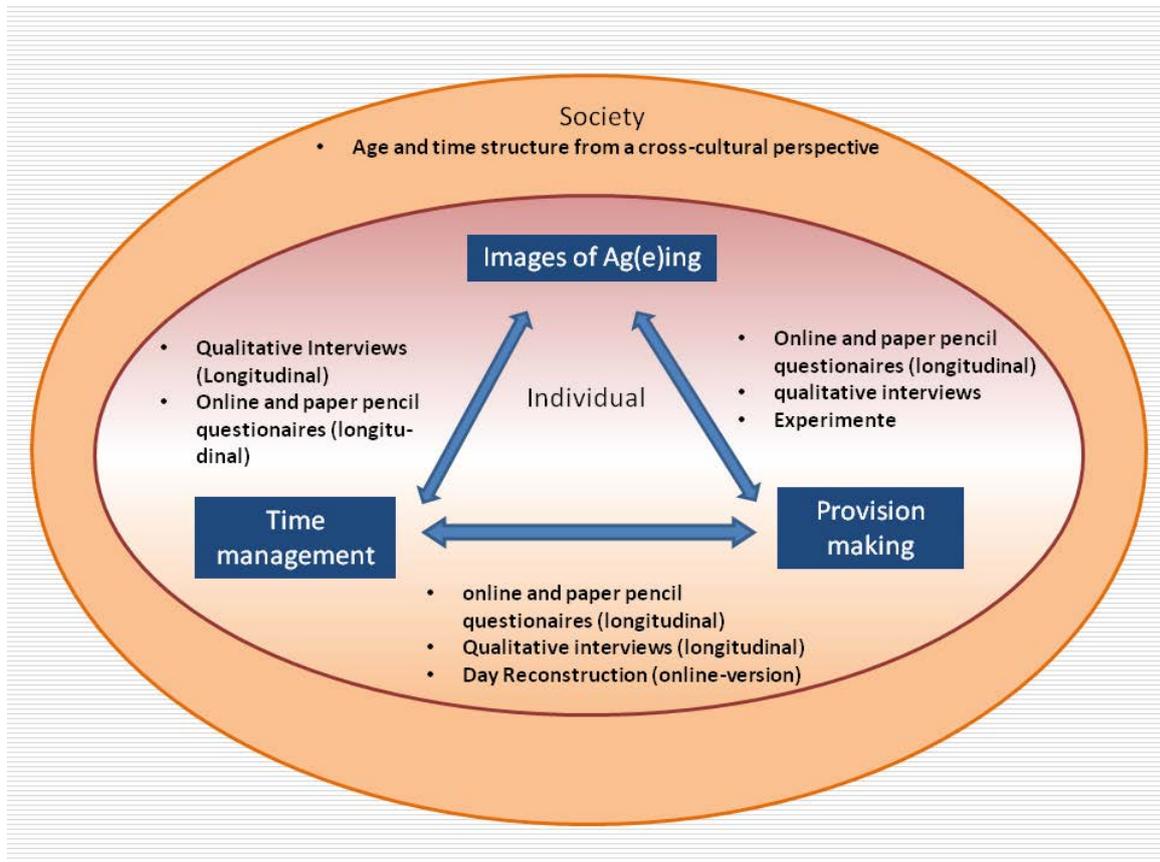


Figure 1. Overview of the project and its theoretical and methodological foundations.

Figure 2 gives an overview of the planned research design and contains all essential information regarding measurement points and intervals as well as sample sizes. The project is based on data (t1) which were gathered in previous projects that were founded by the VolkswagenStiftung. This data set reflects topic-focused information, and combines qualitative and quantitative methodological approaches. It is planned to enhance this dataset on a theoretical-conceptual as well as on a methodological level.

Of main interest are:

- a) Longitudinal extension of the dataset by adding another measurement point (t2; analyses of age-related changes across a 4-year-interval, differentiation of age and cohort effects, identification of univocal causal relationships between variables),

- b) Cross-cultural comparison (analysis of societal conditions and their consequences on individual aspects of age experience in multi-method-design: interviews, surveys, online-assessments),
- c) Extension by further methodological approaches (implicit / reaction-time based measurement; experimental manipulation of gain / loss scenarios),
- d) Focus on and extension of further relevant constructs and reference variables (time sovereignty, retrospective assessment of changes and critical life events),
- e) Systematic matching of existing data sets by combination /merging of samples regarding different assessment methods (triangulation of methods).

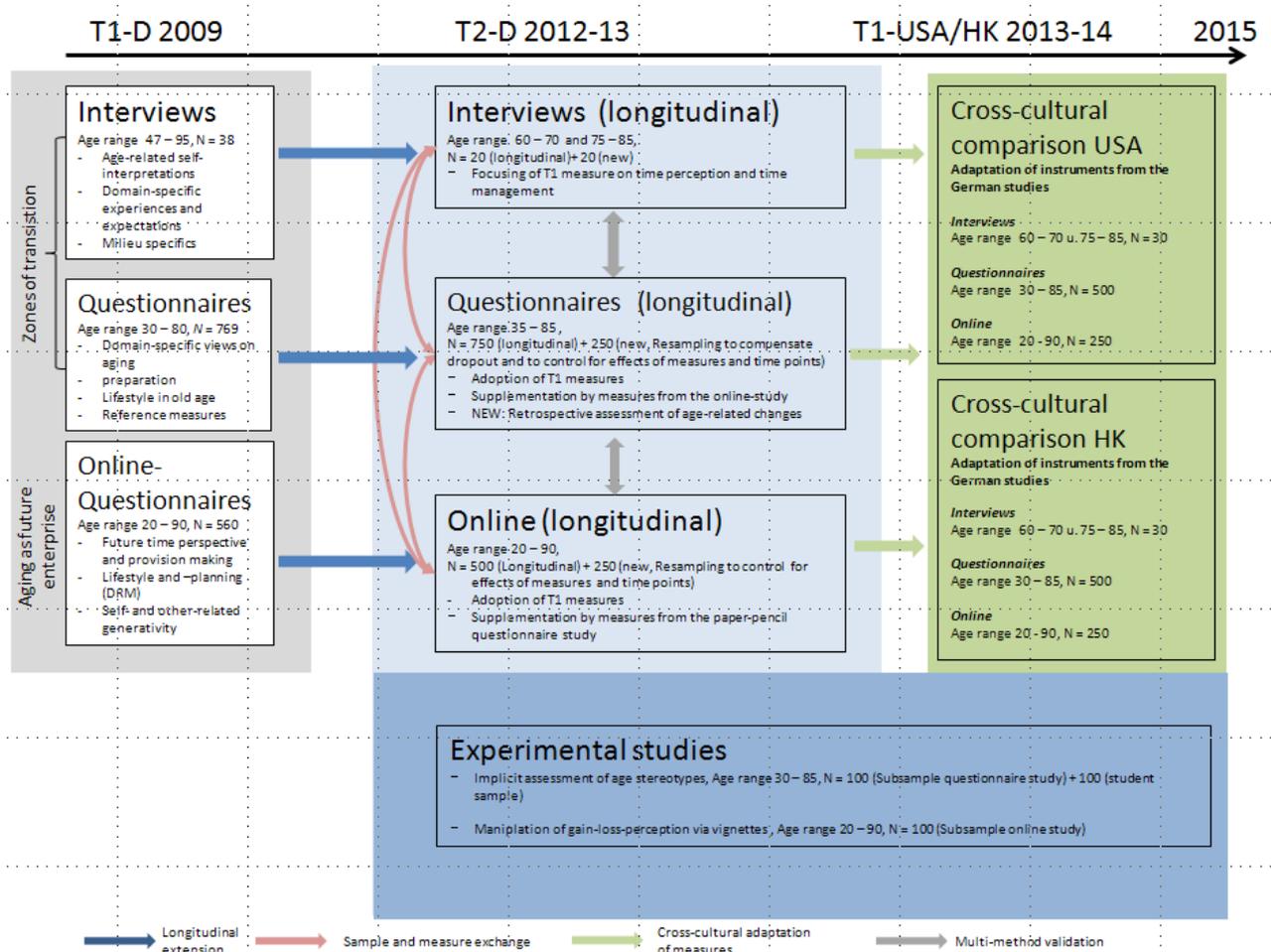


Figure 2. Overview of the project design.

Expected results

Scientific relevance. The project aims at composing a data set that is nationally and internationally unique in the research on aging experiences and age-related behavior. It is characterized by tremendous broadness (age range and sample size, cross-cultural comparison, spectrum of methods, 4-year-longitudinal assessment, interdisciplinary approach) and depth (domain-specific assessment of views on aging, provision making, time experience). Moreover, the research questions that are addressed are highly relevant. Consequences of societal conditions of aging (views on aging, demographic change, softening and renegotiating of age thresholds and provision structures) on individual aging-related behavior and experiences are analyzed. At the same time, processes and mechanisms are clarified with which societal conceptions of age and ageing are translated (or ward off) into individual expectations and behavior dispositions. As a whole these mechanisms and processes constitute new social realities, and thus retroact correctively or stabilizing on existing age and ageing stereotypes.

Sociopolitical relevancy. In addition to the issues' apparent socio-political relevance, the project does not only extend and deepen scientific discussion on questions of future-related aging behavior and its determinants, but also contributes to the mediation of research findings to the non-scientific community. Besides presentations and publications of findings on national and international conferences and in relevant scientific journals, a volume is planned that presents the findings on the interplay between views on aging, time management, and provision making to a broader audience in elder work and care. We are furthermore planning a handbook for decision-makers in political institutions and the corporate sector that summarizes the implications of views on aging and change in time management for future planning and provision making in older age, and that will also address topics such as societal participation of older adults and age discrimination. Furthermore, we plan to open a dialogue with protagonists of public institutions and private organizations (e.g. counselors or service providers who deal with future-related aging behavior such as communal public authorities, company HR departments, insurance companies, etc.) via workshops and / or public forums.

Promotion of young scientists. The project essentially contributes to the promotion of young scientists. It is planned to employ young researchers who already worked and qualified within the previous projects. The project provides them with an optimal opportunity to deepen their knowledge and extend their qualifications in order to prepare them for a (junior) professorship. Furthermore, the planned longitudinal and cross-sectional data sets provide an excellent base for high-ranked international publications. Moreover, through the collaboration with the cooperation partners from the US and Hong Kong the young researches will be integrated into an international network which will serve as an excellent foundation for the successful scientific careers of the young researchers.