Late Dynamic perspective on couples: Relationship Analysis: Coding NORMS As Additional individual questionnaires 8 "Relationship Efficacy REPRESSION Dyadic dynamics & narration Subjective 5+ Year Longitudinal Mixed To Self Dyadic Dynamic Health Constrained Aging in the 21. Century I) Increased Life Expectancy • Late life more crucial part of life course: time for self-realization • New possibilities, tasks & decisions • Western emphasis on autonomy: Successful Aging II) Individualization • As societies, also aging has individualized: less intergenerational support → Importance of partner?! III) New Norms: Aging & Agency • Today: aging “field of agency and choice” (Gilleard 2010) and “question of individual effort or failure” (Graefe 2011) • Ambivalence: functional when healthy, but potentially dysfunctional

Demographic Aging Social Challenge Solutions depend (also) on micro-level dynamics and structures?!

Methods
Research Questions
- Present: Health changes & limitations?
- Future: Negotiating and deciding on aging, autonomy and death?
  → Individual & dyadic questions with demographic relevance.
  Care situation impact on social infrastructure & welfare state.

Data
- 5+ Year Longitudinal Mixed-Methods
- Subjective & dyadic perspective on Health – Autonomy – Death

2nd Dyadic Interview
- Dyadic dynamics & narration
- Open-ended & 2-3 hours
- Additional individual questionnaires
- Analysis: Coding (Saldana 2013)

Sample
- 8 German, urban, satisfied couples
- Age: 78-86 years, rather healthy
- 45 years first-time married

Temporality
Change of Perspective on Future:
- Modesty and awareness of finiteness
  Future as...
  a) Space beyond one’s agency
  b) Threat: pessimistic forecast
  “Happy that we are able to care for ourselves. [...] it won’t become better”

Contradictions
Aging vs Agency

Agency vs Repression
• Late & end-of-life decision-making: emotional burden or empowerment?
• "Death never possible in regard to ourselves" (Kübler-Ross 1969) vs „death in old age developmental task and ‘on-time’ event" (Chan 2010).

Social vs Individual
- Individualized discourses on aging, but: a) change for others; b) not solely individual experience or decision; c) care: stranger vs family
  → Importance of relationships for aging

Agency vs Aging

Dyadic Aging
The Old Couple – A New Dyadic Phase
• Aging together as privilege vs more time in negative health: joint frailty
• Late life & linked lives. Functioning self necessary? Dyadic re-orientation?!

Processes
1) Dyadic successful aging; “compensation through collaboration” (Dixon 2011) → protective factor
• Aging well = aging in relationship? (Gerstorf 2016); vs individualization?!

2) Health issues “almost normative event” (Freud 2003).
• Biology pacemaker vs dyadic balance

3) Ambivalence of autonomy.
Partner as burden vs solidarity?!
• To which extent do I want to be constrained by my partner’s constraints? To which extent do I give my self up to support my partner?

The Importance of Relationships
Functional Stronghold against Aging
1. Partner: co-trainer
2. Relationship: motivation
3. Constrained agency: partner’s agency → Dyad protection against Individual Dilemma! Dyadic Dilemma?!

The Self, the Dyad and the End of Life
Functional & Emotional Dyadic Unity
But: Freedom vs Support?
1) Self-orientated De-Coupling
2) Conscious De-Coupling
3) Strong Dyadic Focus
4) The Fragile Dyad

Intimate relationships as dynamic structural context of aging: adaptation & re-configuration vs disintegration

Quantitative Aging Research
• Ambivalence of Agency on a life course dimension (> disengagement)
• Importance of Relationship: functionality and structure
• Dynamic perspective on couples: intra-dyadic change (Gerstorf 2015)

Items
• Relationship Efficacy (Bodenmann 2008)
• Relationship Conflicts (Klingel 2015)
• Dyadic Dynamic Health (Klingel 2018)