Ageing, Later Life and Social Change in Germany

Andreas Motel-Klingebiel
Linköping University (LiU)
National Institute for the Study of Ageing and Later Life (NISAL)
German Centre of Gerontology (DZA), Berlin
Outline

• Grand challenges to European societies
• Demographic change
• Social change
• Changing life-courses
• Changing later life
• Threats to quality of life and well-being
• Conclusions
Grand challenges to European societies

- The European Union defines several grand challenges
- Grand challenges involve a combination of major public and private interests
  - are seen as key for realising future economic growth
  - are concerned with important social and/or environmental problems
- Overall strategy: Investing in research and innovation to meet the grand challenges
Grand challenges to European societies

- Grand challenges to the European societies according to the European Commission
  - Health, demographic change and well-being
  - Food security, sustainable agriculture, marine and maritime research, and the bio-economy
  - Secure, clean and efficient energy
  - Smart, green and integrated transport
  - Inclusive, innovative and secure societies
  - Climate action, resource efficiency and raw materials
- Demographic change and well-being are in an exposed position
Demographic change

- Demographic change in Europe
  - Overall trend: shrinking fertility, expanding longevity, increasing migration
  - But heterogeneous developments in EU-societies in all three facets
- The European JPI MYBL defines four major areas of concern where research is needed
  - Quality of life, health and welfare
  - Economic and social production
  - Sustainable welfare
  - Governance and institutions
Demographic change

- The development in Germany
  - Shrinking population: declines in population size by about 20% by 2060
  - Ageing population: increases in number and share of (very) old people
  - Increasing heterogeneity: growing cultural and ethnic diversity as well as social inequality

- Birth rates and the German baby boom
Social change

- Ageing and later life in their contemporary meaning are products of the 'short 20th century'.
- Grand challenges to European societies
- Demographic change
- Social change
- Changing life-courses
- Changing later life
- Threats to quality of life and well-being
- Conclusions

Ageing society and productivity in global competition

Distributions and social structure

New individual/collective risks and their consequences
Changing life-courses

- Working life
  - Expansion of education
  - Increasingly difficult entries into paid labour
  - Increasing risks of unemployment
  - Changes in female employment
  - Increase of fixed-term- and self-employment
  - Changing pathways into retirement

- Family life
  - Postponement of first birth
  - Declines in number of children
  - Increases in childlessness
  - Increasing instability of partnerships
  - Loss of importance of life-long marriage

- Plurality and instability

- Grand challenges to European societies

- Demographic change

- Social change

- Changing life-courses

- Changing later life

- Threats to quality of life and well-being

- Conclusions
Changing later life?

- Cohort change caused by long-term changes in living conditions in a historical perspective
  - Historical settings from the late German Empire to the unified Federal Republic
  - Development of social security systems
  - Changing cultural and normative settings

- Change due to short-term effects as a result of institutional development and period effects
  - Financial crises
  - German unification
  - Cutbacks of social security
Threats to quality of life and well-being

- How can modern societies sustain individual and social welfare in the context of current and enduring changes?
- Many of the issues that need to be discussed cumulate in the analysis of life-courses and their outcomes
- Are changes threatening quality of life and well-being in later life?
Threats to quality of life and well-being

Insecurity and declines in future prospects in standard of living

- Grand challenges to European societies
- Demographic change
- Social change
- Changing life-courses
- Changing later life
- Threats to quality of life and well-being
- Conclusions

Source: DEAS 2002-08.
Threats to quality of life and well-being

Declines in pension rights at age 67 (est.)

- Grand challenges to European societies
- Demographic change
- Social change
- Changing life-courses
- Changing later life
- Threats to quality of life and well-being
- Conclusions

Source: LAW 2012.
Conclusions

- Demographic change in Germany as well as in Europe is a grand challenge
- It is intertwined with general social change and appears jointly with other challenges
- Individuals face increasing risks over the life course
- Material resources for well-being in later life are shrinking due to reforms in social security systems while others (health, social networks, education) seem to remain stable
- Increasing risks reflect on future prospects and will most likely affect behaviour and well-being in later life