Avoiding Aging? Social Psychology's Treatment of Age

**Anne E. Barrett · Rebecca Redmond ·
Carmen von Rohr**

Abstract Population aging, in conjunction with social and cultural transformations of the life course, has profound implications for social systems—from large-scale structures to micro-level processes. However, much of sociology remains fairly quiet on issues of age and aging, including the subfield of social psychology that could illuminate the impact of these broader social forces on individual lives. This study examines the scope of research on age, aging, and the life course in the leading social psychological journal in sociology (*Social Psychology Quarterly*) and compares it with coverage in the primary social psychology journal in psychology (*Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*) and two sociology journals (*American Sociological Review* and *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*). An analysis of articles published between 1977 and 2006 shows that approximately 7 percent in *Social Psychology Quarterly* or *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* seriously considered age. In contrast, 11 % of articles in *American Sociological Review* and 25 % in *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* did so. Across the journals, examinations of age increased over time. However, studies reflect a limited range of methodological and theoretical approaches with few employing qualitative methods or a symbolic interactionist perspective. We discuss several under-explored sites for research on age, aging, and the life course that would enrich social psychological and sociological scholarship more broadly.

Keywords Aging · Life course · Elderly · Social psychology

Research in mainstream sociological outlets has been relatively quiet about one of the most striking demographic shifts in recent history—the aging of the population. Between 2000 and 2010, the U.S. population between 65 and 84 was predicted to increase by over 10 %; an even larger increase of 44 % was anticipated for those 85

A. E. Barrett (✉) · R. Redmond · C. von Rohr
Florida State University, Tallahassee, FL, USA
e-mail: abarrett@fsu.edu

and older (U.S. Census Bureau 2004). Population aging also is reflected in ASA membership. Over the past decade, the share of members between 60 and 69 years of age rose by over 25 %, while the proportion 70 or older almost doubled (Scelza et al. 2011). The aging of the population, and our discipline, is accompanied by social and cultural reconfigurations of the life course that are not limited to later life, but rather span from youth to old age, such as the delayed transition to adulthood and shifting boundaries and meanings of middle and old age (Blaikie 1999; Gilleard and Higgs 2000; Gullette 2011; Settersten and Ray 2010). These trends have consequences for the social world ranging from macro-level effects on health systems and distributions of socioeconomic resources across and within age strata to micro-level effects on family relationships and individuals' self-conceptions. Although these implications are the focus of research by gerontologists and life course scholars, the impacts of this "silent revolution" (Kalache et al. 2005) have not been extensively addressed within mainstream sociological outlets.

A sociological analysis of aging-related trends sparks questions centering on how these broad social forces play out in individual lives—questions that social psychologists are poised to address. Social psychology illuminates the interplay between macro-level social forces, such as social structures, institutions, and policies, and micro-level experiences, including self-conceptions, social relations, and subjective states. Describing the relationship between these levels of social reality, Berger (1963:121) explained that "the structures of society become the structures of our own consciousness. Society does not stop at the surface of our skins." Applied to aging, this perspective brings into focus how age-related social phenomena, such as age inequality and sociocultural constructions of age, come to bear on individual experiences and subjectivities.

Sociological analysis of age also highlights theoretical complexities deriving from its multiple metrics and meanings, including cohort membership, generational position, developmental stage, social age, and subjective age.[1] Introducing further intricacy, age is dynamic: Unlike our locations on other axes of inequality that remain relatively stable (e.g., race-ethnicity, gender, social class), our position in the system of age inequality shifts slowly but dramatically over our lives. Age's dynamism also is reflected in historical shifts in the cultural meanings attached to ages and life stages, which have implications for individuals' age consciousness (Chudacoff 1989). In short, the theoretical complexity embedded in age—and aging, broadly viewed as our movement through age-related structures and pathways over our lives—provides a unique vantage point for examining a range of issues of interest to social psychologically-oriented sociologists, such as self and identity processes and the (re)production of culture and social inequality.

Closer consideration of age and aging in mainstream social psychology also would address criticisms leveled at several streams of research focusing on age, including gerontology, life course sociology, and life-span developmental psychology. Gerontology has been criticized as being data-rich but theory-poor, giving inadequate attention to theory, and relying on narrow theories that describe only limited aspects

---

[1] This list is not exhaustive. We focus on the dimensions of age that are most relevant to sociology and social psychology. We note, however, that age also represents a rough proxy for other characteristics of the individual, including intellectual maturity, physical ability, and physiological status.

of aging (Alley et al. 2010; Bengtson et al. 1997; Birren 1999; Hendricks et al. 2010; Settersten and Dobransky 2000). Critiques of both life-span developmental and life course perspectives—which many scholars view as orienting frameworks rather than theories yielding specific predictions—also point to the usefulness of social psychological theories (Baltes et al. 1980; George 1996). Many gerontologists, life-span developmental psychologists, and life course sociologists have, of course, integrated social psychological theories into their work (e.g., for reviews, see Baltes et al. 1999; George 1990, 1996). However, we argue that the bulk of this research appears in journals focused on particular periods of life—either childhood and adolescence (e.g., *Child Development, Adolescence*) or later life (e.g., *Journals of Gerontology, Research on Aging*)—rather than key academic journals in social psychology, including sociologically-oriented journals (e.g., *Social Psychology Quarterly*).

Our paper has three goals. First, we develop a case for the relevance of age and aging (hereafter referred to as "age/aging") to social psychological theory and research by providing a brief overview of the literature, drawing on studies published in aging outlets and mainstream sociological and social psychological journals. Second, we analyze coverage of age/aging across 30 years of four academic journals—*Social Psychology Quarterly (SPQ), Journal of Personality and Social Psychology (JPSP), Journal of Health and Social Behavior (JHSB),* and *American Sociological Review (ASR)*—to argue that attention to age/aging is increasing but remains low. Our third goal is to point to several under-explored sites for sociological research that are found at the intersection of social psychology and age/aging.

The Relevance of Age/Aging to Social Psychology

The relative neglect of age/aging in mainstream social psychology is striking in light of discussions of temporality found in some of the foundational writings in the field, including the work of James, Mead, and Cooley. Alluding to temporal interdependencies as important components of social reality, James (1902:606) writes that "the knowledge of some other part of the stream, past or future, near or remote, is always mixed in with our knowledge of the present thing." Mead (1932) makes a similar point, arguing that the hypothetical past and hypothetical future are components of the present; however, he developed his ideas about temporality further than James. Mead's temporal theory involves multiple dimensions of the past and future—all of which shape self-conceptions and social relations in the present (Flaherty and Fine 2001; Maines et al. 1983). Cooley (1922) also mentions temporality; however, in contrast to the work of James and Mead, his references tend to focus on stages of life. As an illustration, he discusses early life stages as particularly important in the development of self-feeling, but also argues that maintaining positive feelings toward the self is "the mainspring of endeavor and a chief interest of the imagination throughout life" (Cooley 1922:208). Despite these early influences, much of social psychology lacks "an appreciation of temporality," including our experience of age (George 1996:253; also see Flaherty 1987; Hitlin and Elder 2007).

Social psychology should be concerned with age: It shapes our self-conceptions, social relations, and subjective states. We briefly review literature examining the influence of age on each of these social psychological outcomes. Although the studies

tend to appear in outlets focusing on a particular life stage, often gerontology journals, our review incorporates illustrations of research on age/aging published in the four journals examined in our study.

Age and Self-Conceptions

Along with other ascribed social statuses, like gender and race, age is a component of our social identity (Rosenberg 1979). Age identity is typically neglected in discussions of self and identity in mainstream social psychology; however, it has been the focus of a stream of gerontological research. Studies of age identity find that beginning in middle-age, individuals hold identities younger than their chronological age—a pattern mirroring the cultural devaluation of older adults (Barak and Stern 1986; Barrett 2003, 2005; Hurd 1999; Montepare and Lachman 1989; Westerhof et al. 2003). Research also has identified social structural correlates of age identity, including socioeconomic status, health, gender, and role occupancy, as well as characteristics of intimate others, such as parents' or partners' health and age (Barak and Stern 1986; Barrett 2003, 2005; Logan et al. 1992). A few studies have examined social psychological consequences of age identity with most reporting that older identities predict lower subjective well-being (Demakakos et al. 2007; Westerhof and Barrett 2005). This pattern can be seen as reflecting dominant cultural constructions of not only later life but also "aging-past-youth" around a narrative of decline (Gullette 2011). Although research on age identity tends to be found in aging journals, there are exceptions. For example, an article in SPQ by Johnson and colleagues (2007) reports that young adults experiencing role transitions, such as marriage, and reporting greater independence and maturity are more likely to feel like adults. In addition to representing a source of identity, age influences the likelihood of occupying many roles on which identities may be hung, such as grandparent/grandchild and paid worker/retiree, as well as the meaning attached to these role-identities (Stryker and Serpe 1994).

Age also has social psychological relevance stemming from its effect on other dimensions of the self, including self-evaluations. Because few studies of the self-concept employ panel data spanning middle and later life, it is difficult to determine whether observed patterns represent cohort or age effects. Despite this limitation, the findings illustrate the role of age—whether as an indicator of cohort membership, life stage, or location in the life course—in shaping self-conceptions. Studies of self-efficacy suggest that adults feel relatively high levels of control until approximately age 50 when it declines at an increasing rate, as a result of health decrements as well as cohort differences in education (Mirowsky 1995; Schieman and Turner 1998; Wolinsky et al. 2003). A similar pattern is found for self-esteem (McMullin and Cairney 2004; Schieman and Campbell 2001), with a meta-analysis reporting declines following a peak in young adulthood (Trzesniewski et al. 2003). Panel studies examining change over relatively long spans of time tend to find moderate levels of stability in self-esteem, including research among young, middle-aged, and older adults (Giarrusso et al. 2001; Roberts and Bengtson 1996). Research also indicates that age interacts with other social structural locations to influence self-evaluations (McMullin and Cairney 2004; Ross and Mirowsky 2002). As an illustration, Ross and Mirowsky (2002) report (in one of the SPQ articles in our sample) that

women experience a steeper decline than do men in sense of control as they age as a result of their lower levels of education and income, worse physical functioning, and less stable employment histories.

Age and Social Relations

Declines in some dimensions of self-evaluation that appear to occur with age are consistent with a basic social psychological tenet: Our self-perceptions are determined, in part, by reflected appraisals—the way we imagine specific and generalized others perceive us (Mead 1934). These perceptions are shaped by others' attitudes toward and interactions with us. Social psychological studies using a variety of methods, including laboratory-based experiments, surveys, and qualitative methods, provide evidence of the devaluation of elders, with the strongest views targeting the oldest-old (Hummert 1993; Kite et al. 2005). A SPQ article in our sample provides an illustration: Using an experiment to assess attitudes toward hypothetical election candidates, Sigelman and Sigelman (1982) found that ageism exerted a stronger effect on voting patterns than either sexism or racism. Survey-based studies of perceived discrimination also document the prevalence of ageist encounters among older adults (Gee et al. 2007; Kessler et al. 2000). Providing an illustration, a JHSB article in our sample reports that approximately 30 % of adults 45 or older report experiences of age discrimination (Kessler et al. 2000).[2] Although these patterns— ageism and declines in self-evaluations—paint a rather gloomy picture of the aging self, the image is more complex than it first appears. Some research finds that rather than internalizing ageism older adults may view themselves as exceptions for their age group or use negative stereotypes of the elderly to make downward social comparisons that enhance self-perceptions (Luszcz and Fitzgerald 1986; Pinquart 2002).

Age also influences the quantity, nature, and quality of our social relationships. Contrary to images of later life as characterized by isolation, the association between age and social connectedness varies across dimensions of social ties. Older individuals have smaller social networks, fewer non-primary-group ties, and weaker perceived closeness to network members; however, they report more frequent interaction with neighbors, religious participation, and volunteering (Cornwell et al. 2008).

Age and Subjective States

Age also is of interest to social psychologically-oriented sociologists because it influences subjective states, including mental health and emotions. Mental health research finds that age patterns vary across measures examined. Clinical diagnostic approaches to the study of mental health reveal the best health among older adults,

---

[2] Interestingly, the reporting of age discrimination did not differ between adults 45–64 and those older than 65, which corresponds with the general finding of lower prevalence of all types of discrimination among older than younger adults. Although the authors do not directly address the age discrimination patterns, they argue that the observed age differences, which may be driven to some degree by actual differences as well as recall failure among older respondents, are likely to be the result of cohort differences in the definitions, perceptions, or sensitivities to unfair treatment.

while studies examining depressive symptoms or psychological distress report a curvilinear pattern, with the worst health observed among the young and the old (Blazer 2003; Newmann 1989). Studies examining positive dimensions of well-being also reveal age differences: Older adults report lower levels of purpose in life and personal growth but higher levels of environmental mastery and more positive relations with others (Ryff and Keyes 1995). Research exploring age patterns in emotions—a topic receiving more attention from psychologists than sociologists—indicates that although negative affect declines across adulthood, positive affect increases until old age when declines are observed (Mroczek 2001). The emotional character of our lives also varies by age and shifts in response to changing social investments over the life course. Compared with earlier life—a stage in which we make wider social investments—later life is characterized by a focus on fewer relationships from which we derive greater emotional significance (Carstensen et al. 2003).

Although studies indicate that age influences our self-conceptions, social relations, and subjective states, relatively little of this work is found in mainstream sociology outlets, including those focused on social psychology. Our study addresses this issue, following in the steps of two lines of work critiquing the coverage of topics in academic journals. One line of studies notes the absence of gender and race-ethnicity in social psychological research (Graham 1992; Hunt et al. 2000). A 2000 article in SPQ by Hunt and colleagues examining the coverage of race-ethnicity provides the model for our study design. A second stream of work to which our study connects underscores the neglect of the elderly in social science and behavioral research more generally (Buchanan et al. 2008; Northup et al. 1993; Wisocki and Mosher 1982). Rather than addressing the neglect of the *elderly* in social psychology, our approach is more similar to the analysis of social psychology's treatment of gender and race-ethnicity. We are concerned with the extent to which *age* is seriously considered in research, rather than limiting our critique to the omission of the elderly from samples. However, given the cultural devaluation of the elderly and tendency of sociological and social psychological research to give limited attention to issues facing older adults, we collected data allowing us to document the extent to which aging is addressed.

Our study also examines variation in coverage of age/aging issues across the three major domains, or "faces," of social psychology: psychological sociology (or social structure and personality), symbolic interactionism, and psychological social psychology (House 1977). The first two faces represent the sociological variants. Psychological sociology focuses on the relationship of macrosocial structures and processes to individual psychology and behavior, primarily using quantitative surveys. In contrast, symbolic interactionism centers on face-to-face interaction, often using naturalistic observations. We anticipate more extensive use of psychological sociology than symbolic interactionism in studies published in sociology journals, a prediction derived from observations of gerontological research. Finding that only 1 in 10 articles published in three major aging outlets employed qualitative methods, Schoenberg and colleagues (2007) posit that this pattern stems from two factors—the time-intensive nature of these methods and the privileging of quantitative research by gerontological journals and funding agencies. We also anticipate finding in sociology journals limited use of psychological social psychology—the domain focusing on

individual psychological processes, often using laboratory experiments. This perspective will be more common in our comparison journal in psychology; however, the frequent use of college-aged samples in this branch of social psychology suggests a limited focus on either age patterns or aging experiences.

Methods

Data

Paralleling the study design employed by Hunt and colleagues (2000), we analyzed articles published over a 30-year period (1977–2006) in four academic journals. We examined all articles published over this period in *Social Psychology Quarterly*,[3] the primary outlet for social psychological research conducted by sociologists (*n*=957). For the three other journals we examined, we focus on the first and last five years of the period (1977–1982 and 2001–2006). We compare the coverage of age/aging in SPQ with other publication outlets for sociological research in order to assess whether treatment is more limited in social psychology relative to either the broader field or other subfields. We chose two journals sponsored by the American Sociological Association: *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* (*n*=321) and *American Sociological Review* (*n*=475). JHSB was selected because it was assumed to represent the high end of representation of age/aging in sociology journals, given the close relationship between aging and health. ASR was selected because it is one of the most highly ranked and widely cited journals in sociology.[4] We also compared SPQ with the primary outlet for psychological research in social psychology, *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* (*n*=1,541).

To supplement our analysis of journals, we examined the coverage of age/aging in edited texts published during this period that represent the state of the field of social psychology. We examined two texts selected by Hunt and associates: Rosenberg and Turner's (1981) *Social Psychology: Sociological Perspectives* and Cook et al.'s (1995) *Sociological Perspectives on Social Psychology*. We also analyzed a more recent text: Delamater's (2006) *Handbook of Social Psychology*. Unlike the analysis of journal articles that employs quantitative methods, our examination of the edited texts uses a more qualitative approach to make observations about the extent and nature of references to age/aging.

In our examination of journals and edited texts, we were less motivated by an interest in the exclusion of elderly persons from samples or a neglect of issues faced in later life than an interest in age as a multi-faceted component of social structure with social psychological consequences across the entire life course. Given this orientation, we cast our net widely in our search for attention to "age or aging." We considered substantive references to age, aging, life stages, psychological development, or the life course as evidence of giving attention to this dimension of social structure.

---

[3] The name of the journal changed twice during the observation period. Its title since its inception in 1937, *Sociometry,* was changed to *Social Psychology* in 1978 and to *Social Psychology Quarterly* in 1979.
[4] Other ASA-sponsored journals were excluded from consideration because it was anticipated that very few articles would contain focused treatment of age/aging (e.g., *Sociology of Education* and *City and Community*).

Measures

In our analysis of journal articles, we coded several dichotomous variables that employed increasingly stringent criteria regarding treatment of age/aging: mentions, analyzes, and seriously considers. *Mentions age/aging* was coded 1 if references were made in the title, abstract or introduction to age, aging, the life course, or related terms (e.g., life stages or developmental processes over time). *Analyzes age/aging* was coded 1 if age was analyzed in the case of empirical studies or substantively discussed in the theoretical pieces. Articles that were coded 1 on this variable include those that analyze age extensively (e.g., comparisons of age groups), as well as studies giving less focused attention to age (e.g., age as a control variable). Our coding of the third variable, *seriously considers age/aging* employed a broad and generous definition, in order to err on the side of over- rather than under-stating the extent to which age/aging has been considered. This variable was coded 1 if any of the following four conditions were met: (1) such a focus was evident from the title, (2) age (or life stage, cohort, generation, development, or the life course) was a key variable, (3) an age- or aging-related variable was an outcome of interest (e.g., ageism), or (4) later life was a central concern.

The subset of articles determined to seriously consider age/aging was coded on several additional variables. *Methodology* was coded as quantitative, qualitative, both quantitative and qualitative, or a theoretical piece. *Face of social psychology*, as defined by House (1977), distinguished between studies employing psychological sociology (or social structure and personality), symbolic interactionism, or psychological social psychology. Although some studies drew on more than one social psychological approach, we coded for the primary perspective employed. Because our broad definition of "seriously considers age/aging" resulted in the inclusion of studies that focused on any age or life stage, we also coded for the *age group(s) studied or considered*, which distinguished between articles that examined children or adolescents exclusively, included a consideration of adulthood but did not consider later life, or included a consideration of later life.[5] Each article also was coded for up to three substantive topics examined. A list of 15 topics was generated using a qualitative analysis of a subset of articles that seriously considered age/aging (see Table 4 for the topics).

Each article was coded by two raters. Cases of inconsistent ratings were adjudicated by a third rater. Inter-rater reliability, indicated by Kappa statistics, averaged .90 across all the variables coded.

Results

How Much Do Social Psychology Journals Say About Age/Aging?

Even employing a broad conceptualization of attention to "age or aging," relatively few studies in SPQ give focused attention to age as a social status or cultural

---

[5] For the vast majority of studies, this variable refers to the age range of the study sample. Exceptions include, for example, studies of college students' attitudes toward elderly persons which were coded as considering later life.

construction with social psychological consequences. Averaging across the three decades, approximately 20 % of articles mentioned age/aging, but only 14 % analyzed age and even fewer—only 7 %—seriously considered age (Table 1). However, trends improve with these percentages quadrupling over the 30 year span. Much of the increase is attributable to greater application of the life course perspective—a pattern consistent with an analysis of the use of theories or perspectives in gerontology from 1990 to 2004 (Alley et al. 2010).

Compared with the sociologically-oriented SPQ, fewer articles in the psychologically-oriented JPSP mention age/aging, but the journals do not differ significantly in their likelihood of analyzing or seriously considering age (Table 2). Like SPQ, JPSP gives increasing attention to age/aging over time; however, in JPSP this pattern applies to mentioning or analyzing—but not focusing on it.

How Much Do Other Sociology Journals Say About Age/Aging?

Compared with SPQ, we find that JHSB and ASR articles are significantly more likely to mention, analyze, or seriously consider age/aging. Attention is particularly striking for JHSB, though not unexpected given the journal's focus on health and illness. Averaging across 30 years, a quarter of JHSB articles seriously consider age/aging compared with 11 % for ASR. However, both JHSB and ASR trend toward greater attention to age/aging over the three decades, with most percentages nearly doubling. Of the most recent articles in JHSB, 83 % mention, 69 % analyze, and 32 % seriously consider age/aging. Comparable figures for ASR are 41 % mentioning, 28 % analyzing, and 16 % seriously considering.

What Perspectives and Methods Are Used in Studying Age/Aging?

Using the subset of articles seriously considering age/aging, we compare the four journals on methods, social psychological perspectives, and age groups studied (Table 3). The methodological approaches do not differ significantly across the four journals: Over 90 % of studies use quantitative techniques. Given the close relationship between methodology and social psychological perspective, we are not surprised

Table 1 Number and percentage of articles in *Social Psychology Quarterly/Sociometry/Social Psychology* that mention age/aging

	Total number of articles	Articles that mention age/aging	Articles that include age/aging in the analysis	Articles that seriously consider age/aging
1977–1981	225	16 (7.1 %)	14 (6.2 %)	6 (2.7 %)
1982–1986	187	33 (17.7 %)*	19 (10.2 %)	10 (5.4 %)
1987–1991	154	37 (24.0 %)*	17 (11.0 %)	12 (7.8 %)
1992–1996	137	25 (18.3 %)*	17 (12.4 %)	14 (10.2 %)*
1997–2001	128	39 (30.5 %)*	27 (21.1 %)*	11 (8.6 %)*
2002–2006	126	39 (31.0 %)*	38 (30.2 %)*	13 (10.3 %)*
Total	957	189 (19.8 %)	132 (13.8 %)	66 (6.9 %)

*Significantly different from 1977 to 1981, $p<.05$

Table 2 Number and percentage of articles in *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, and *American Sociological Review* that mention age/aging, 1977–1981 and 2002–2006

	Years	Total number of articles	Articles that mention age/aging	Articles that include age/aging in the analysis	Articles that seriously consider age/aging
Journal of Personality and Social Psychology	1977–1981	815	91 (11.2 %)	78 (9.6 %)	59 (7.2 %)
	2002–2006	726	154 (21.2 %)[c]	161 (22.2 %)[c]	55 (7.6 %)
	Total	1541	245 (15.9 %)[b]	239 (15.5 %)	114 (7.4 %)
Journal of Health and Social Behavior	1977–1981	178	80 (44.9 %)	66 (37.1 %)	33 (18.5 %)
	2002–2006	143	119 (83.2 %)[c]	99 (69.2 %)[c]	46 (32.2 %)[c]
	Total	321	199 (62.0 %)[a]	165 (51.4 %)[a]	79 (24.6 %)[a]
American Sociological Review	1977–1981	280	68 (24.3 %)	67 (23.9 %)	23 (8.2 %)
	2002–2006	195	79 (40.5 %)[c]	55 (28.2 %)	31 (15.9 %)[c]
	Total	475	147 (31.0 %)[a]	122 (25.7 %)[a]	54 (11.4 %)[a]

[a] Significantly higher percentage than found in *Social Psychology Quarterly* (reported in Table 1), $p < .05$

[b] Significantly lower percentage than found in *Social Psychology Quarterly* (reported in Table 1), $p < .05$

[c] Significantly different from 1977 to 1981, $p < .05$

that over three-quarters employ either a psychological social psychology or social structure and personality perspective. Fewer than 2 % use a symbolic interactionist framework. The remaining 18 % do not employ a social psychological perspective. Social psychological perspectives vary significantly, and in expected ways, across the journals. While the bulk of research in JPSP illustrates psychological social psychology, the majority of studies in SPQ and JHSB employ a social structure and personality approach. Most of the articles in ASR do not employ a social psychological perspective; however, among those that do, we find an exclusive use of the social structure and personality approach.

Table 3 also reports the age groups examined in the subset of articles seriously considering age/aging. We find that fewer than half the articles in either SPQ or JPSP include older adults in their sample. This finding casts a slightly different hue on the overall patterns we have reported: While age/aging—very broadly conceived—is receiving increasing attention in key social psychology outlets, nearly 30 % of these studies only examine developmental changes in children or adolescents, and another one-third consider adulthood but not later life. Compared with SPQ, a significantly greater proportion of studies in JHSB include a focus on later life. We find only a couple dozen studies published in SPQ between 1977 and 2006 that include a consideration of later life; the number is fewer than was found in each of the three comparison journals (i.e., 48 in JPSP, 65 in JHSB, and 28 in ASR)—even though we examined in these journals only the first and last 5 years of the period.

What Substantive Topics in Age/Aging Are Explored?

Table 4 reports our examination of the substantive topics explored in studies attending to age/aging. The topic receiving the most attention across journals is mental

Table 3 Methods, age group, and social psychological perspective employed in articles that seriously consider age/aging (n=313)

	Method				Social psychological perspective				Age group studied		
	Quantitative	Qualitative	Mixed methods	Theoretical	Psychological social psychology	Social structure and personality	Symbolic interactionism	Not social psychological	Children or adolescents	Adulthood, but not later life	Adulthood, later life included
SPQ (n=63)	60 (90.9 %)	2 (3.0 %)	1 (1.5 %)	3 (4.6 %)	7 (10.6 %)	56 (84.9 %)	3 (4.6 %)	0	18 (27.3 %)	24 (36.4 %)	24 (36.4 %)
JPSP (n=116)	111 (97.4 %)	1 (.9 %)	2 (1.8 %)	0	99 (86.8 %)*	15 (13.2 %)	0	0	32 (28.1 %)	34 (29.8 %)	48 (42.1 %)
JHSB (n=80)	76 (96.2 %)	0	0	3 (3.8 %)	1 (1.3 %)*	62 (78.5 %)	1 (1.3 %)	15 (19.0 %)	13 (16.5 %)*	1 (1.3 %)	65 (82.3 %)
ASR (n=54)	49 (90.7 %)	1 (1.9 %)	4 (7.4 %)	0	0*	12 (22.2 %)	0	42 (77.8 %)	11 (20.4 %)	15 (27.8 %)	28 (51.9 %)
TOTAL	296 (94.6 %)	4 (1.3 %)	7 (2.2 %)	6 (1.9 %)	107 (34.2 %)	145 (46.3 %)	4 (1.3 %)	57 (18.2 %)	74 (23.6 %)	74 (23.6 %)	165 (52.7 %)

SPQ Social Psychology Quarterly; *JPSP* Journal of Personality and Social Psychology; *JHSB* Journal of Health and Social Behavior; *ASR* American Sociological Review

*Significantly different from *Social Psychology Quarterly*, p<.05

Table 4 Topics examined in articles that seriously consider age/aging (*n*=313)

	Social Psychology Quarterly	Journal of Personality and Social Psychology	Journal of Health and Social Behavior	American Sociological Review	Total
Mental health/emotions	22 (33.3 %)	42 (36.8 %)	33 (41.8 %)	6 (11.1 %)*	103 (32.9 %)
Child/adolescent development	18 (27.3 %)	42 (36.8 %)	10 (12.7 %)*	12 (22.2 %)	82 (26.2 %)
Physical health	3 (4.6 %)	8 (7.0 %)	54 (68.4 %)*	3 (5.6 %)	68 (21.7 %)
Gender differences	9 (13.6 %)	20 (17.5 %)	24 (30.4 %)*	14 (25.9 %)	67 (21.4 %)
Family relationships	20 (30.3 %)	19 (16.7 %)*	8 (10.1 %)*	13 (24.1 %)	60 (19.2 %)
Age differences	18 (27.3 %)	28 (24.6 %)	5 (6.3 %)*	7 (13.0 %)*	58 (18.5 %)
Intergenerational or cohort differences	5 (7.6 %)	5 (4.4 %)	14 (17.7 %)	26 (48.2 %)*	50 (16.0 %)
Daily life in old age	6 (9.1 %)	15 (13.2 %)	22 (27.9 %)*	5 (9.3 %)	48 (15.3 %)
Social roles/role loss	16 (24.2 %)	9 (7.9 %)*	9 (11.4 %)*	12 (22.2 %)	46 (14.7 %)
Attitudes toward older adults	3 (4.6 %)	9 (7.9 %)	3 (3.8 %)	1 (1.9 %)	16 (5.1 %)
Personality and aging	5 (7.6 %)	40 (35.1 %)*	0	0	45 (14.4 %)
Methodological development	8 (12.1 %)	17 (14.9 %)	6 (7.6 %)	2 (3.7 %)	33 (10.5 %)
Friendship/social networks	11 (16.7 %)	6 (5.3 %)*	10 (12.7 %)	9 (16.7 %)	36 (11.5 %)
Race-ethnic differences	4 (6.1 %)	4 (3.5 %)	14 (17.7 %)*	16 (29.6 %)*	38 (11.5 %)
Employment/retirement	5 (7.6 %)	6 (5.3 %)	5 (6.3 %)	10 (18.5 %)*	26 (8.3 %)
Attitudes held by older adults	5 (7.6 %)	4 (3.5 %)	0 (0 %)*	1 (1.9 %)	10 (3.2 %)

Up to 3 topics were coded for each article; *Significantly different from *Social Psychology Quarterly*, *p*<.05

health or emotions—with nearly one-third of studies examining it. The second most widely examined topic was child or adolescent development; approximately a quarter of the studies examined this topic—a finding that corresponds with our observations regarding age groups studied. Other topics receiving considerable attention include physical health, gender differences, and family relationships. Less widely examined topics include work and retirement and attitudes held by or toward older adults. Focusing on the sociologically-oriented social psychological journal (SPQ), we find limited attention given to physical health—a surprising observation given the close connection between health and aging. We also find unexpectedly few studies examining race-ethnic differences or attitudes toward older adults.

What Do Social Psychology Texts Say About Age/Aging?

A similar paucity of attention to age/aging is revealed in our analysis of edited texts on social psychology published over the past 30 years. In Rosenberg and Turner's (1981) book, we find no index entries for "age," "elderly," or "ageism"; however, there are entries for "age differences," "age roles," "life course perspective," and "life-stage developmental theories." The most focused attention is found in Bush and Simmons' chapter entitled "Socialization Processes over the Life Course," which provides discussions of life-stage, life-span, and life-course perspectives. The other references to age are more limited, including a brief mention of age roles in Gecas' chapter on contexts of socialization, which describes children's learning of "age

roles." Similarly, in Gordon's chapter on the sociology of sentiments and emotion we find a brief mention of variation in vocabularies for expressing emotional experience, with "age cohorts" listed as a source of variation. A more extended treatment is found in Smelser and Smelser's chapter entitled "Group Movements, Sociocultural Change and Personality"—a two paragraph discussion of age and receptivity to change in attitudes.

To represent a standard-bearer of the 1990s, we examined Cook et al.'s (1995) *Sociological Perspectives on Social Psychology*. Given the increase in social psychological journals' attention to age and aging over the period we examined, we anticipated finding a more extensive integration of these issues in the Cook et al. text. However, we observe that most of the references are contained in a single chapter by Elder and O'Rand entitled "Adult Lives in a Changing Society." This chapter discusses the life course perspective and its intersection with social psychological concerns, such as selection processes shaping pathways through adulthood and mechanisms linking historical change with adult development. A related issue— life span developmental theories—is discussed in three paragraphs in a chapter by Corsaro and Eder on the development and socialization of children and adolescents. Other references to age/aging include a single entry for age (cross-indexed under "cohort") that refers to a discussion of cohort and age patterns in work orientations. Like the earlier text we examined, no index entries are found for "elderly" or "ageism."

Similar observations are made of the Delamater (2006) text. The index contains no entries for "elderly," "aging," or "ageism," and both references under the entry for "age" (i.e., sense of control; psychological distress) are contained in a single chapter—"Social Structure and Psychological Functioning: Distress, Perceived Control, and Trust" by Ross and Mirowsky. Compared with the text's treatment of aging or later life, discussions of the life course perspective are more widespread, with references found in three chapters. In "Social Structure and Personality," McLeod and Lively discuss the life course perspective's conceptualization of agency. The life course framework also receives attention in two chapters examining socialization—Eder and Nenga's chapter on "Socialization in Adolescence" and Lutfey and Mortimer's chapter on "Development and Socialization through the Adult Life Course."

Discussion

The "graying" of the population, and our discipline, has increased the salience of aging-related issues in both public discourse and private lives, raising social psychological questions about the impact of broad social forces on individual experiences and subjectivities. However, these questions have received limited attention in mainstream sociology outlets, including those in the subfield of social psychology. We argue that greater attention to age, as a dynamic, culturally-shaped dimension of social structure, would illuminate core issues of interest to sociologists, including processes underlying the reproduction of inequality and its consequences for self-conceptions, social relations, and subjective states.

To address the lack of attention to age/aging in sociology, and particularly the subfield of social psychology, we conducted an empirical analysis of its coverage in

SPQ and three comparison journals over a 30 year period. Our findings confirmed the suspicion that led us to this project: A minority of articles published in the major outlet for social psychological research conducted by sociologists seriously considers age/aging—averaging approximately 7 % over the years we examined. This level of coverage resembles that of the leading psychologically-oriented social psychology journal more closely than it does our two comparison sociology journals. Compared with SPQ, JHSB and ASR give more attention to age/aging, though only a minority of articles in these outlets seriously considers it (25 % and 11 %, respectively). This observation is consistent with patterns in the treatment of race-ethnicity reported by Hunt and colleagues (2000), suggesting that some dimensions of inequality receive less attention in social psychology than either the broader field of sociology or other subfields within it.

Although we found little evidence that age/aging is a central focus of articles published in the journals examined, we did observe increases between 1977 and 2006. Serious consideration of age/aging increased more than threefold in SPQ (from 3 to 10 %). This observation is consistent with our comparison journals in sociology: Serious consideration of age/aging almost doubled in both JHSB (from 19 to 32 %) and ASR (from 8 to 16 %). A significant increase was not observed for JPSP, but we do find an increase in articles mentioning or analyzing age that is similar to those observed for other journals. The proportion of articles mentioning or analyzing age approximately doubled in JHSB and JPSP, while more than quadrupling in SPQ. We suggest that a portion of this increase is due to the increasing application of the life course perspective in sociology and life-span developmental perspective in psychology, as well as the availability of multi-wave datasets lending themselves to age-related research (e.g., Health and Retirement Study, Add Health).

The increased attention to age is similar to the patterns that Hunt and colleagues (2000) observed for social psychological examinations of race-ethnicity and gender in SPQ from 1970 to 1999. They find that the percentage of articles seriously considering race-ethnicity increased from 6 to 10 %; corresponding figures for gender are 11 and 41 %. Paralleling the greater prevalence of attention to gender than race-ethnicity, we find in our subsample of articles that seriously examine age/aging a higher percentage of studies considering gender than race-ethnicity (i.e., 14 compared with 6 % in SPQ). These findings point to intersections of age with other systems of inequality as an area for further research by sociologists.

Other avenues for future work are suggested by our observations regarding methods and perspectives employed in social psychological studies that seriously consider age/aging. The range of methodological approaches was relatively narrow—primarily experimental designs in JPSP and large-scale surveys in SPQ and JHSB. We found only a handful of studies using qualitative or mixed methods, as well as few theoretical pieces—observations consistent with examinations of gerontological research (Alley et al. 2010; Bengtson et al. 1997; Hendricks et al. 2010; Schoenberg et al. 2007). Corresponding with the patterns in methods, we find very few studies employing a symbolic interactionist framework. Such studies would enrich our understanding of the interactional processes through which meanings of age and aging are negotiated, including the ways that they reproduce or challenge social structures and cultural constructions.

Another observation from our analysis of the subset of articles seriously considering age/aging deserves note. Our broad conceptualization of age or aging led us to include studies focusing on a narrow span of development, for example, childhood or adolescence. Limiting our attention to research that would typically be viewed as examining "aging" reveals a much smaller number of studies. Only about a third of the articles in SPQ that seriously considered age/aging addressed later life—a smaller proportion than was found in each of the three comparison journals. Consistent with our observations of the journals, we find little attention to issues of later life in the three edited texts that we examined. The importance of sociological research on later life is underscored by rapid growth in the oldest segment of the population (U.S. Census Bureau 2004)—a trend raising social psychological questions about not only the experience of growing (really) old but also living in an aging society and age-conscious culture.

The limited focus on age/aging in sociology, in particular the subfield of social psychology, is likely to be explained by a combination of factors shaping research and publication processes. Our analysis of edited texts, though not extensive, raises the possibility that many graduate students have little exposure to age/aging issues, which hinders the development of interest in these topics. Other relevant issues are course curriculum and degree of faculty support for age/aging projects. Graduate programs tend to not only offer few courses on age, aging, or the life course, particularly compared with gender and race/ethnicity, but also have few faculty advisors to direct projects in these areas. Student interest in a subset of these topics—namely those related to aging and the elderly—may be further hampered by the broader sociocultural devaluation of later life. This argument is supported by studies finding that, compared with middle-aged or older adults, the young hold less complex views of the elderly, are less knowledgeable about aging, and have more anxiety about their own aging (Abramson and Silverstein 2006; Kite et al. 2005; Lasher and Faulkender 1993). The degree of attention to age/aging in sociology also is influenced by decisions made by scholars of age/aging. They may find the numerous publication outlets focusing on specific periods of life, particularly early and later stages, more appealing—perhaps perceiving their reviewers, editors, and audiences as more receptive to their research. However, these explanations are speculative; our understanding would be clarified by examination of other data, such as journal submissions and interviews with students, authors, reviewers, and editors.

Clearer than the explanations for the patterns we identify are their potential consequences. They point to missed opportunities for social psychological theory and research within sociology to capitalize on age as a dynamic, multi-faceted, culturally-shaped element of social structure that influences our self-conceptions, social relationships, and subjective states. Our location in the age structure changes with the advance of time, with additional years of age representing multiple social structural or social psychological relocations—within the succession of cohorts; up the generational ladder; along trajectories that chronicle our movement in and out of social roles; through developmental stages; and within the age-structure, which contains ages and life stages differing in the cultural values ascribed to them. Although they are explored to varying degrees in prior research, each of these structural and cultural bases of age represents a rich theoretical vantage point from which numerous social psychologically-oriented questions can be addressed. We

highlight a few of the many fruitful avenues for integrating age or aging into social psychological research within sociology.

Ageism has received less attention in mainstream sociology than other forms of discrimination, such as sexism and racism. However, age as a dimension of inequality raises theoretical issues stemming from both the ubiquitous nature of aging and individuals' continually changing location in the age system over their lives. Unlike other disadvantaged structural locations (e.g., those linked to gender and race) and marginalized statuses that affect small proportions of the population (e.g., physically disabled, mentally ill, criminal), most people eventually face the social devaluation that occurs with age. The persistence of ageism despite the universality of aging suggests an intriguing puzzle for social psychologists. Although research points to several processes that may be involved, including the maintenance of youthful identities and the postponement of perceived markers of the onset of life stages as we grow older (Barrett 2003; Montepare and Lachman 1989; Seccombe and Ishii-Kuntz 1991), our understanding is far from complete. Through what mechanisms is ageism reproduced, and in what forms does it manifest (and vary across segments of the population)? How do the processes contributing to the maintenance of ageism compare with those underlying racism, sexism, or other forms of discrimination? How do the construction, application, internalization, and management of various labels tied to age (e.g., "middle-aged", "old") compare with those of other differentially valued statuses and social locations? And what are the individual and collective responses to ageism? Addressing these questions will yield more general insight into social inequality, including the processes reproducing and challenging it and its consequences for self-conceptions and psychological well-being.

Age as an institutionalized and culturally-shaped structure through which lives flow raises a host of other unanswered questions. The extension of life expectancy has produced a cultural transformation in how people think about age, aging, and the life course. However, as many scholars of aging and the life course have noted (e.g., Elder 1975; Elder and Johnson 2002; George 1996; Han and Moen 1999; Hitlin and Elder 2007; Settersten 1999), we know little about the subjective dimension of the life course, including individuals' perceptions of the structure and timing of the life course and their gradually advancing location in it. We mention a few of the social psychological questions that sociologists could address centering on the cultural construction and subjective experience of aging. How do individuals perceive constraints on their life course transitions (i.e., whether and when to make them), and how do these perceptions influence the construction of their lives? How does social change, such as population aging and postponement of disability, shape cultural meanings, including those of institutions (e.g., family, marriage, paid work), transitions (e.g., widowhood, retirement), and life stages and ages (e.g., "later life")? And what are the implications—for social relations, self-conceptions, and subjective states—of the macro-level processes noted by life course sociologists, such as the de-standardization and de-institutionalization of the life course that are making lives more flexible and individualized?

Other areas of sociology that also would be enriched by greater attention to age/aging (to name but a few) include identity, bodies, and emotions. Sociologists' understanding of the structural bases and interactional processes underlying identities and self-conceptions more generally would be enhanced by closer consideration of

age identities, including their links with other sources of identity and shifts in these relationships as we grow older (Burke 2003; Stryker 2002; Tajfel 1982). An integration of age/aging also could benefit sociological work on bodies, an area that has tended to neglect "deep old age" despite the salience of bodies in this life stage (Twigg 2004). Another area ripe for research incorporating age and aging is emotions. In contrast with other dimensions of social structure, age has received limited attention in research on the sociology of emotions. We know little about how emotional experience changes as we age, such as how norms regarding feeling or expressing emotions may vary by age or across cohorts. Although we highlight only a handful of the many relatively unexplored areas, our hope is that such integrations would bring age into the mainstream of sociological research in social psychology—reflecting an embrace rather than avoidance of aging.

References

Abramson, A., & Silverstein, M. (2006). *Images of Aging in America 2004: A Summary of Selected Findings.* Retrieved August 10, 2010, from http://assets.aarp.org/rgcenter/general/images_aging.pdf.

Alley, D. E., Putney, N. M., Rice, M., & Bengtson, V. L. (2010). The increasing use of theory in social gerontology: 1990–2004. *Journal of Gerontology: Social Sciences, 65B*, 583–590.

Baltes, P. B., Reese, H. W., & Lipsitt, L. P. (1980). Life-span developmental psychology. *Annual Review of Psychology, 31*, 65–110.

Baltes, P. B., Staudinger, U. M., & Lindenberger, U. (1999). Lifespan psychology: theory and application to intellectual functioning. *Annual Review of Psychology, 50*, 471–507.

Barak, B., & Stern, B. (1986). Subjective age correlates: a research note. *The Gerontologist, 26*, 571–577.

Barrett, A. E. (2003). Socioeconomic status and age identity: the role of dimensions of health in the subjective construction of age. *Journal of Gerontology: Social Sciences, 52B*, S101–S109.

Barrett, A. E. (2005). Gendered experiences in midlife: implications for age identity. *Journal of Aging Studies, 19*, 163–183.

Bengtson, V. L., Burgess, E. O., & Parrott, T. M. (1997). Theory, explanation, and a third generation of theoretical development in social gerontology. *Journal of Gerontology: Social Sciences, 52B*, S72–S88.

Berger, P. L. (1963). *Invitation to sociology: A humanistic perspective.* Garden City: Anchor Books.

Birren, J. E. (1999). Theories of aging: A personal perspective. In V. L. Bengtson & K. W. Schaie (Eds.), *Handbook of theories of aging* (pp. 459–471). New York: Springer.

Blaikie, A. (1999). *Ageing and popular culture.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Blazer, D. G. (2003). Depression in late life: review and commentary. *Journal of Gerontology: Biological Sciences and Medical Sciences, 58A*, M249–M265.

Buchanan, J., Husfeldt, J., Berg, T., & Houlihan, D. (2008). Publication trends in behavioral gerontology in the past 25 years: are the elderly still an understudied population in behavioral research? *Behavioral Interventions, 23*, 65–74.

Burke, P. J. (2003). *Advances in identity theory and research.* New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers.

Carstensen, L. L., Fung, H. H., & Charles, S. T. (2003). Socioemotional selectivity theory and the regulation of emotion in the second half of life. *Motivation and Emotion, 27*, 103–123.

Chudacoff, H. P. (1989). *How old are you? Age consciousness in American Culture.* Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Cook, K. S., Fine, G. A., & House, J. S. (1995). *Sociological perspectives on social psychology.* Needham Heights: Allyn and Bacon.

Cooley, C. H. (1922). *Human nature and the social order*. New York: Scribner's.

Cornwell, B., Laumann, E. O., & Philip Schumm, L. (2008). The social connectedness of older adults: a national profile. *American Sociological Review, 7*, 185–203.

Delamater, J. (Ed.). (2006). *Handbook of social psychology*. New York: Springer.

Demakakos, P., Gjonca, E., & Nazroo, J. (2007). Age identity, age perceptions, and health: evidence from the English longitudinal study of aging. *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences, 1114*, 279–287.

Elder, G. H., Jr. (1975). Age differentiation and the life course. *Annual Review of Sociology, 1*, 165–190.

Elder, G. H., Jr., & Johnson, M. K. (2002). The life course and aging: challenges, lessons, and new directions. In R. A. Settersten (Ed.), *Invitation to the life course: Toward new understandings of later life* (pp. 49–81). Amityville: Baywood.

Flaherty, M. (1987). The neglected dimension of temporality in social psychology. *Studies in Symbolic Interaction, 8*, 143–155.

Flaherty, M. G., & Fine, G. A. (2001). Present, past, and future: conjugating george herbert mead's perspective on time. *Time & Society, 10*, 147–161.

Gee, G., Pavalko, E. K., & Scott Long, J. (2007). Age cohort, and perceived age discrimination: using the life course to assess self-reported age discrimination. *Social Forces, 86*, 265–290.

George, L. K. (1990). Social structure, social processes, and social psychological states. In R. H. Binstock & L. K. George (Eds.), *Handbook of aging and the social sciences* (3rd ed., pp. 186–204). San Diego: Academic.

George, L. K. (1996). Missing links: the case for a social psychology of the life course. *The Gerontologist, 36*, 248–255.

Giarrusso, R., Mabry, J. B., & Bengtson, V. L. (2001). The aging self in social contexts. In R. H. Binstock & L. K. George (Eds.), *Handbook of aging and the social sciences* (5th ed., pp. 295–312). San Diego: Academic.

Gilleard, C., & Higgs, P. (2000). *Cultures of ageing: Self, citizen, and the body*. Essex: Pearson Education Ltd.

Graham, P. (1992). Most of the subjects were white and middle class: trends in published research on African Americans in selected APA Journals, 1970–1989. *American Psychologist, 47*, 529–539.

Gullette, M. M. (2011). *Agewise: Fighting the new ageism in America*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Han, S.-K., & Moen, P. (1999). Clocking out: temporal patterning of retirement. *American Journal of Sociology, 105*, 191–236.

Hendricks, J., Applebaum, R., & Kunkel, S. (2010). A world apart? bridging the gap between theory and applied social gerontology. *The Gerontologist, 50*, 284–293.

Hitlin, S., & Elder, G. H., Jr. (2007). Time, self, and the curiously abstract concept of agency. *Sociological Theory, 25*, 170–191.

House, J. S. (1977). The three faces of social psychology. *Sociometry, 40*, 161–177.

Hummert, M. L. (1993). Age and typicality judgments of stereotypes of the elderly: perceptions of elderly vs. young adults. *International Journal of Aging and Human Development, 37*, 217–226.

Hunt, M. O., Jackson, P. B., Powell, B., & Steelman, L. C. (2000). Color-blind: the treatment of race and ethnicity in social psychology. *Social Psychology Quarterly, 63*, 352–364.

Hurd, L. C. (1999). 'We're not old!': older women's negotiation of aging and oldness. *Journal of Aging Studies, 13*, 419–439.

James, W. (1902). *The principles of psychology*. New York: Henry Holt.

Johnson, M. K., Berg, J. A., & Sirotzki, T. (2007). Differentiation in Self-perceived adulthood: extending the confluence model of subjective age identity. *Social Psychology Quarterly, 70*, 243–261.

Kalache, A., Barreto, S. M., & Keller, I. (2005). Global ageing: the demographic revolution in all cultures and societies. In M. L. Johnson (Ed.), *The Cambridge handbook of age and ageing* (pp. 30–46). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Kessler, R. C., Mickelson, K. D., & Williams, D. R. (2000). The prevalence, distribution, and mental health correlates of perceived discrimination in the United States. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior, 40*, 208–230.

Kite, M. E., Stockdale, G. D., Whitley, B. E., Jr., & Johnson, B. T. (2005). Attitudes toward younger and older adults: an updated meta-analysis review. *Journal of Social Issues, 61*, 241–266.

Lasher, K. P., & Faulkender, P. J. (1993). Measurement of aging anxiety: development of the anxiety about aging scale. *International Journal of Aging and Human Development, 37*, 247–259.

Logan, J. R., Ward, R., & Spitze, G. D. (1992). As old as you feel: age identity in middle and later life. *Social Forces, 71*, 451–467.

Luszcz, M. A., & Fitzgerald, K. M. (1986). Understanding cohort differences in cross-generational, self, and peer perceptions. *Journal of Gerontology, 41*, 234–240.

Maines, D. R., Sugrue, N. M., & Katovich, M. A. (1983). The sociological import of G.H. Mead's theory of the past. *American Sociological Review, 48*, 161–173.

McMullin, J. A., & Cairney, J. (2004). Self-esteem and the intersection of age, class, and gender. *Journal of Aging Studies, 18*, 75–90.

Mead, G. H. (1932). *The philosophy of the present*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Mead, G. H. (1934). In C. W. Morris (Ed.), *Mind, self, and society*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Mirowsky, J. (1995). Age and the sense of control. *Social Psychology Quarterly, 58*, 31–43.

Montepare, J. M., & Lachman, M. E. (1989). "You're only as old as you feel": self-perceptions of age, fears of aging, and life satisfaction from adolescence to old age. *Psychology and Aging, 4*, 73–78.

Mroczek, D. K. (2001). Age and emotion in adulthood. *Current Directions in Psychological Science, 10*, 87–90.

Newmann, J. P. (1989). Aging and depression. *Psychology and Aging, 4*, 150–165.

Northup, J., Vollmer, T. R., & Serrett, K. (1993). Publication trends in 25 years of the journal of applied behavior analysis. *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis, 26*, 527–537.

Pinquart, M. (2002). Good news about the effects of bad old-age stereotypes. *Experimental Aging Research, 28*, 317–336.

Roberts, R. E. L., & Bengtson, V. L. (1996). Affective ties to parents in early adulthood and self-esteem across 20 years. *Social Psychology Quarterly, 59*, 96–106.

Rosenberg, M. (1979). *Conceiving the self*. New York: Basic Books.

Rosenberg, M., & Turner, R. (1981). *Social psychology: Sociological perspectives*. New York: Basic Books.

Ross, C., & Mirowsky, J. (2002). Age and the gender gap in the sense of personal control. *Social Psychology Quarterly, 65*, 125–145.

Ryff, C. D., & Keyes, C. L. M. (1995). The structure of psychological well being revisited. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 69*, 719–727.

Scelza, J., Spalter-Roth, R., & Mayorova, O. (2011). A decade of change: ASA membership from 2000–2010. Retrieved April 25, 2011 from http://asanet.org/images/research/docs/pdf/2010_asa_membership_brief.pdf.

Schieman, S., & Campbell, J. E. (2001). Age variations in personal agency and self-esteem: the context of physical disability. *Journal of Aging and Health, 13*, 155–185.

Schieman, S., & Turner, H. A. (1998). Age, disability, and the sense of mastery. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior, 39*, 169–186.

Schoenberg, N. E., Shenk, D., & Kart, C. S. (2007). Food for thought: nourishing the publication of qualitative research. *Journal of Applied Gerontology, 26*, 4–16.

Seccombe, K., & Ishii-Kuntz, M. (1991). Perceptions of problems associated with aging: comparisons among four older age cohorts. *The Gerontologist, 31*, 527–533.

Settersten, R. A., Jr. (1999). *Lives in time and place: The problems and promises of developmental science*. Amityville: Baywood.

Settersten, R., & Ray, B. E. (2010). *Not quite adults: Why 20-somethings are choosing a slower path to adulthood, and why it's good for everyone*. New York: Bantam Books.

Settersten, R. A., Jr., & Dobransky, L. M. (2000). On the unbearable lightness of theory in gerontology. *The Gerontologist, 40*, 367–373.

Sigelman, L., & Sigelman, C. K. (1982). Sexism, racism, and ageism in voting behavior: an experimental analysis. *Social Psychology Quarterly, 45*, 263–269.

Stryker, S. (2002). *Symbolic interactionism: A social structural version*. Caldwell: Blackburn.

Stryker, S., & Serpe, R. T. (1994). Identity salience and psychological centrality: equivalent, overlapping, or complementary concepts? *Social Psychology Quarterly, 57*, 16–35.

Tajfel, H. (1982). Social psychology of intergroup relations. *Annual Review of Psychology, 33*, 1–39.

Trzesniewski, K. H., Brent Donnellan, M., & Robins, R. W. (2003). Stability of self-esteem across the life span. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 84*, 205–220.

Twigg, J. (2004). The body, gender, and age: feminist insights in social gerontology. *Journal of Aging Studies, 18*, 59–73.

U.S. Census Bureau. (2004). Table 2b. Projected population change in the United States, by age and sex: 2000 to 2050. Retrieved May 1, 2011 from http://census.gov/ipc/www/usinterimproj/.

Westerhof, G. J., & Barrett, A. E. (2005). Age identity and subjective well-being: a comparison of the United States and Germany. *Journal of Gerontology: Social Sciences, 60B*, S129–S136.

Westerhof, G. J., Barrett, A. E., & Steverink, N. (2003). Forever young? A comparison of age identities in the United States and Germany. *Research on Aging, 25*, 366–383.

Wisocki, P. A., & Mosher, P. A. (1982). The elderly: an under-studied population in behavioral research. *International Journal of Behavioural Geriatrics, 1*, 5–14.

Wolinsky, F. D., Wyrwich, K. W., Babu, A. N., Kroenke, K., & Tierney, W. M. (2003). Age, aging and the sense of control among older adults: a longitudinal reconsideration. *Journal of Gerontology: Social Sciences, 58B*, S212–S220.