ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This dissertation was part of the project “Personal Goals in Lifespan Development” (principal investigators: Dr. Alexandra M. Freund and Prof. Paul B. Baltes) at the Center for Lifespan Psychology of the Max Planck Institute for Human Development. While working on this dissertation, I participated in the graduate program “Psychology and Psychiatry of Aging,” which is a joint initiative of the Free University Berlin and the Max Planck Institute for Human Development. I was financially supported by a predoctoral stipend from the Max Planck Society.

I thank Prof. Paul B. Baltes for the opportunity to work in the excellent academic environment of the Center for Lifespan Psychology, and for generously sharing his scientific expertise with me in the mentoring of this dissertation. Many warm thanks go to my advisor Dr. Alexandra M. Freund. I deeply appreciate how much of her time she devoted to our discussions, to reading the many versions of proposals and this dissertation, and to being there whenever I presented this study. Her advice was always challenging, and improved this dissertation a lot. I also am grateful for the opportunity to participate in the doctoral training program “Psychiatry and Psychology of Aging,” and thank the Steering Committee and my fellow participants for their feedback and solidarity.

Conducting this study was a long and complex process. I am very grateful to the people who helped me with it. Very special thanks go to Monika Chojnowska and Wolfgang Gaissmaier for their invaluable assistance during all phases of the study. I enjoyed working with them very much. I thank Yvonne Bennett for her help during the first months of the data collection phase, and Wilhelm Hoffmann for his assistance in developing the goal-content coding scheme and for preparing the data input form. Many thanks go to Anita Günther for her help with data entry and telephone recruitment, and to Heidi Smith for her assistance with the backtranslation of the English scales.

I also am grateful to Dr. Paolo Ghisletta and Prof. John Nesselroade for their very helpful advice on statistical matters, and to Dipl.-Psych. Sonia Lippke for sharing her expertise in exercise-psychological issues with me. I thank all former and current members of the SOC-project for invaluable debates on my dissertation, and Dipl.-Psych. Natalie Ebner for reading and commenting on an almost final version of the manuscript.

I feel enormously grateful to Amy Michèle who proofread this manuscript and improved its English with an incredible patience and thoroughness.

Very warm thanks go to my parents for their interest in what I do and their always precious advice. And to Thom. For everything.