ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This dissertation was conducted at the psychology unit of the Max Planck Institute for Human Development (headed by Dr. P. B. Baltes) and was part of the project "Self-Regulation and Social Relations" (Principal Investigators: Todd D. Little and Lothar Krappmann). The Max Planck Society financed the work on this research through a predoctoral stipend.

Above all, I want to express my gratitude to Dr. Paul B. Baltes for providing the opportunity and support to conduct this research at the Max Planck Institute. In fact, he definitely had strong impact on my thinking in the academic realm. My special thanks go both of my advisors, Dr. Todd D. Little and Dr. Lothar Krappmann for their unending support, extremely constructive feedback, excellent supervision, and all their encouragement during all stages of this work. Even after Todd Little's relocation to the Yale University his support always was accessible. Lothar Krappmann did an excellent job as primary supervisor on-site. I am also deeply indepted to Dr. Jacqui Smith for sharing her scientific expertise with me and most generously providing lots of both instrumental and emotional support during the sometimes hard phases of this dissertation.

I experienced the Max Planck Institute as a highly stimulating environment for learning about the various aspects of developmental psychology and the acquisition of scientific skills. I would like to thank all my colleagues at the Center for Lifespan Psychology for the many stimulating, and enjoyable discussions. I want to give special mention to Dr. Judith Glück, Dipl. Psych. Susanne Ehrhorn, Dr. Alexandra M. Freund, Dr. Jutta Kray, Dr. Ute Kunzmann, Dr. Shu-Chen Li, Dr. Heiner Maier, Dr. Tania Singer, Dr. Michaela Riediger, Dr. Bettina Wiese, and Dr. Carsten Wrosch. I also want to thank Dipl. Psych. Daniela Jopp and Dipl. Psych. Ilka Lißmann for sharing ups and downs during writing a dissertation. I am also grateful to Werner Scholtysik and Wolfgang Assmann for always being available when the computer systems didn't work.

Especially, I would like to thank my family for reliably providing all kinds of support during all of my academic education. Finally, I am very grateful to my friends, in particular, Peter Schoppa and Sabine Dobsch. Indeed, friendships are most beneficial resources.