

Consumption and Well-being in the Aging Society: Advancing Research on Older Consumers, DIJ

Prospective life course research designs and findings in studying older people

Naoko SHIMAZAKI

Waseda University, nshim@waseda.jp

Contents

1. Three approaches to research on older people from a life course theoretical framework
2. The design of prospective life course studies
3. The advantages and issues of the Follow-up Panel design

Life Course Theory and Research on Older People: Approach One

- To take into account the aging process.

(1) cross-sectional data

year	2000
age	41-50
	↕
	51-60
	↕
	61-70
	↕
	71-80

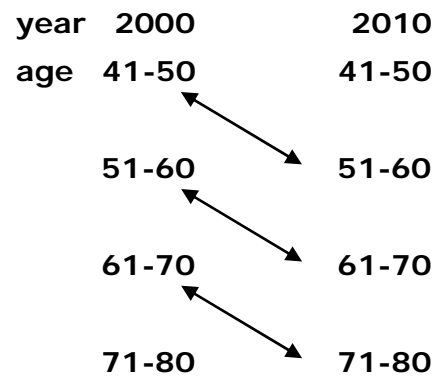
(1) longitudinal data (a) : cohort data

year	2000	2010
age	41-50	41-50
	↘	
	51-60	51-60
	↘	
	61-70	61-70
	↘	
	71-80	71-80

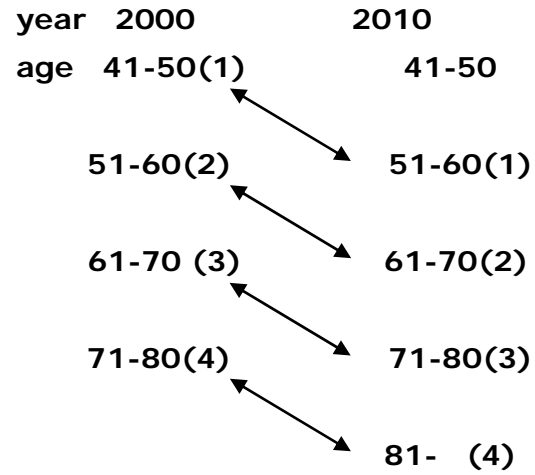
Life Course Theory and Research on Older People: Approach Two

- To take into account the diversity between individuals.
- To include psychological variables and not be limited to variables that simply present an objective account of life event experiences.

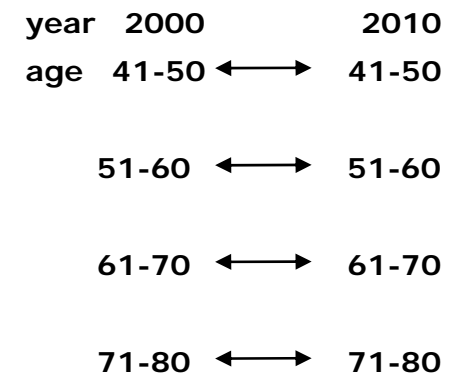
longitudinal data (a) : cohort data



longitudinal data (b) : panel data



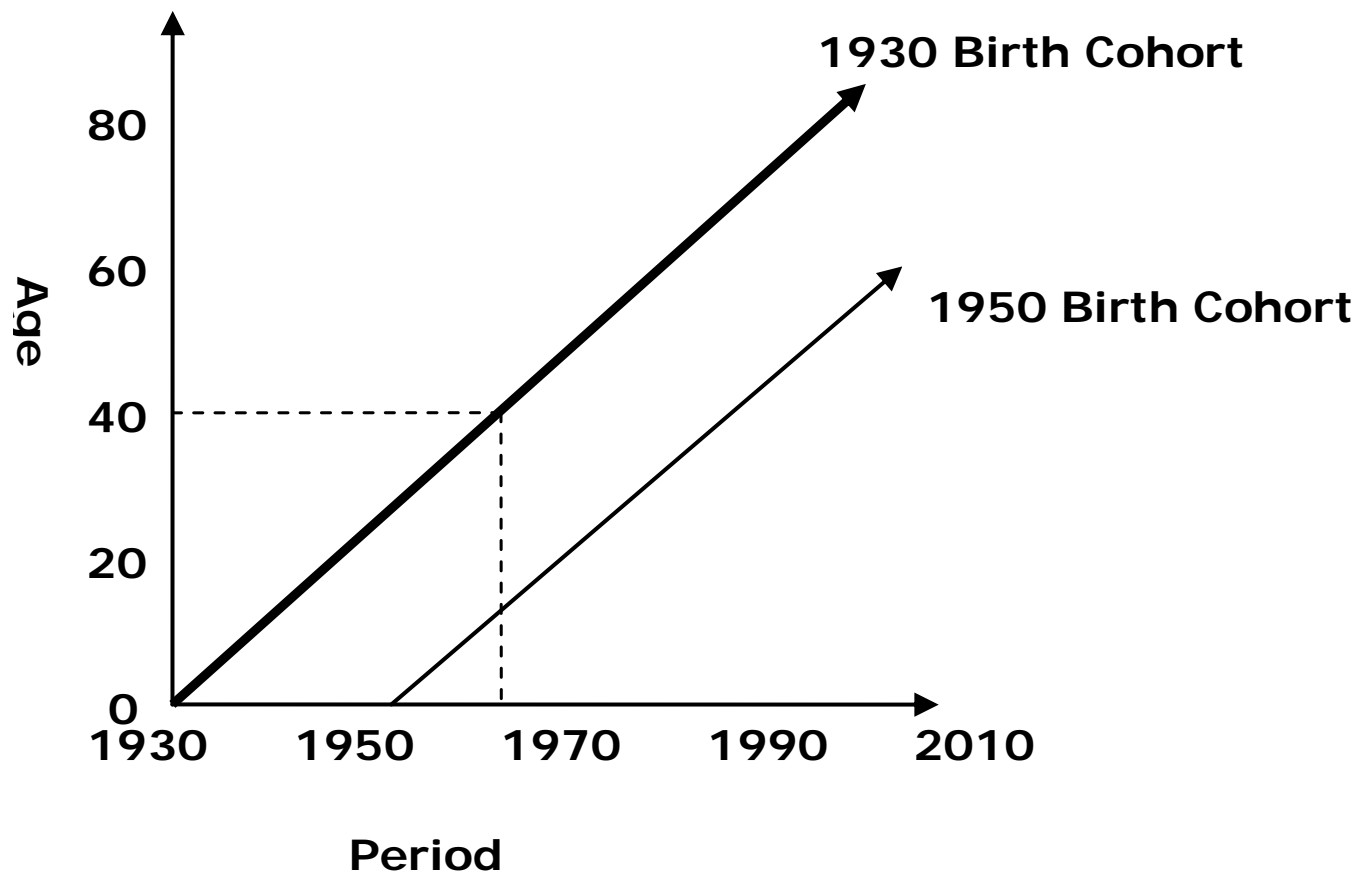
longitudinal data (c) : trend data



- As this indicates, in the research of older people the observation of developmental changes in individual levels increases the ability to explain current characteristics.
- Furthermore, it is also necessary to express interest in the progress of developmental changes that exist in older life stages.
- The commonly emphasized developmental changes are, respectively, childhood and the transition from adolescence to adulthood. However, simply put the changes in older life stages are even more rapid and more diversified. Moreover, taking into account the growing duration of older life stages it becomes clear how critical it is to focus solely on the older life stages and perform successive observations.

Life Course Theory and Research on Older People: Approach Three

- To include the effects of the social structure into the explanatory framework: It is necessary to make connections with societal conditions and societal changes. Specifically, this refers to changes on the macro level, changes such as population structure and policies for older people.



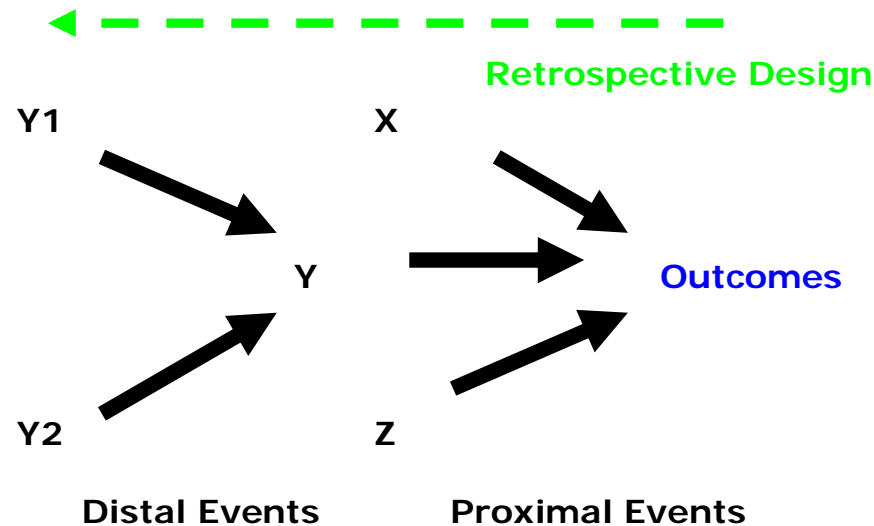
A-P-C model

Prospective Design: Follow-up Panel

- A longitudinal study design targeting the individual.

Model A

Linking outcomes to events



Model B

Linking outcomes to events

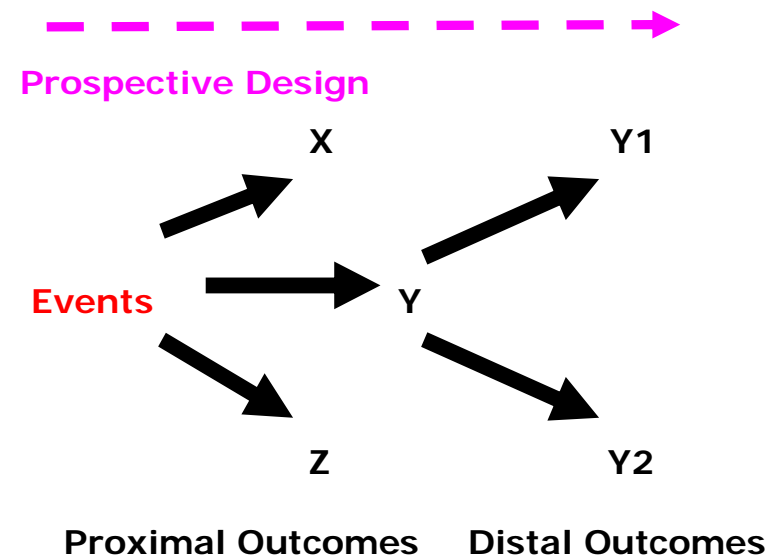


Figure 1: Studying Social Change in the Life Course: Two Models

(Giele & Elder, 1998, p.270)

Prospective designs:

(a) Follow-up Panel Design:

Aging Process



T1 T2 T3 T4 . . . Tn

Follow-up Survey



(b) Catch-up Panel Design

Aging Process



T0

Survey A (completed)

T1

Catch-up Survey



(c) Follow-back Panel Design

Aging Process



T1

Follow-back survey

“Follow-up Panel” Studies

	Career and Transition Research	Repeated Research on Recurring Topics
National Random Sampling Panel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •National Child Development Study (NCDS) •German Life History Study (GLHS) •Berlin Aging Study(BASE) •Longitudinal Survey of Babies in the 21st Century •Longitudinal Survey of Adults in 21st Century •Longitudinal Survey of Middle and Elderly Persons •Long-term Study on Retirement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Panel Study of Income Dynamics (PSID) •Sweden Standard of Living Study •Longitudinal Survey on Middle-aged and Elderly Persons •Study of Assets and Health Dynamics Among the Oldest Old (AHEAD)
Contextual Panel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Berkeley Guidance Study •Oakland Growth Study •Canada Class of '73 Study 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •British Household Panel Survey (BHPS) •New York Longitudinal Study (NYLS)

Specific Cases and Findings in Studying Older People

“From Thirty to Seventy,” H. S. Maas & J. A. Kuypers, 1974.

Analysis showed that

- For males and females alike, emotional happiness in the early stage of marriage was a significant predictor of life satisfaction when subjects reached the age of seventy.
- However, females’ levels of life satisfaction are more difficult to predict than males, due to the effects of a readily apparent and significant historical discontinuity in the roles and functions of females in post-WWII American society.
- It is also quite interesting that the aging process over forty years shows different changes for each lifestyle subgroup that was established when participants were age thirty.

Advantages and Issues of the Follow-up Panel Design

Advantages:

1. The ability of the design to examine a causal relationship between variables.
2. The ability to examine a wide variation within the population makes it possible to achieve a more precise assessment of conditions: Gross change (not net change).
3. The ability to incorporate psychological variables into life course explanatory variables.

Issues:

1. Studies mandate enormous expenses, costs, and time invested .
2. The target learns and the meaning of question items changes.
3. The problem of attrition: as age increases it becomes impossible to avoid the fact that observation tends invariably to target the life courses of the “winners.”

Thank you for your kind attention.