

# demOS

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Photo: Marco Derksen/Flickr

# Policy choices in an ageing society

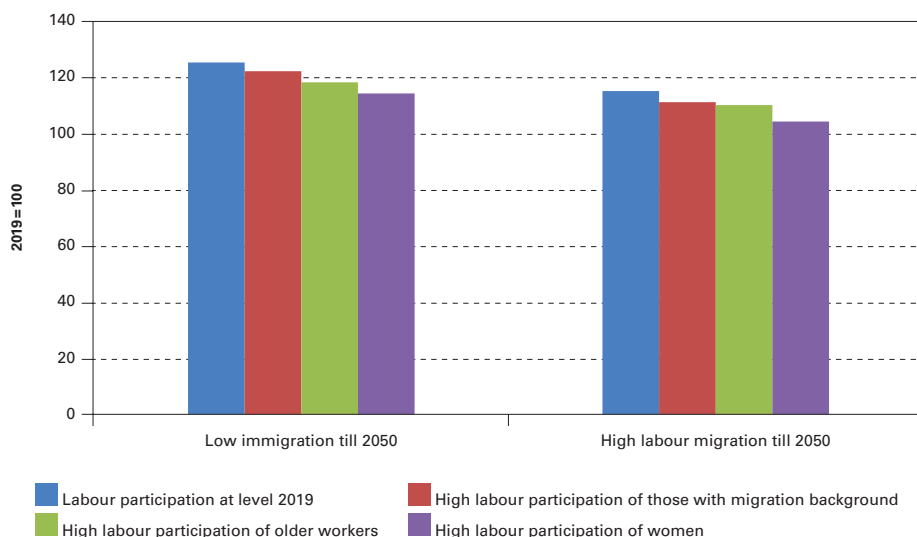
JOOP DE BEER

**Although 2050 is still a long way off, we already know that in the next thirty years the number of older people in the Netherlands will increase much faster than the working age population. A scenario analysis shows the possible effects of future policy choices concerning labour migration, labour force participation and a reduction in the growth of the demand for healthcare.**

The demand for care increases sharply with age. The healthcare costs of people 80 years and older are considerably higher than the costs of 65 year olds. Among seniors (65+) there will be a sharp increase in the number of people over 80, which will in turn lead to a similar increase in the demand for care. Because the population will grow more strongly during periods of high migration than during low migration, we can expect a simultaneous sharp increase in the demand for care. A high net immigration of around 90 thousand persons per year on average until 2050 will lead to a population growth over this period of 19 per cent, while under the conditions of a low net immigration of around 20 thousand persons per year the population in 2050 will be only one per cent larger than it is now. With a high net migration, the combination of population growth and ageing leads to a 28 per cent increase in the demand for care, and under conditions of a low net immigration to an increase of 17 per cent.

With a high net immigration including a high share of labour migrants, the labour force will increase by 11 per cent over the next thirty years. With a low net immigration, the labour force shrinks by seven per cent. In this projection, we have assumed that the labour force participation rates distinguished by age, gender, migration background and education level will be the same in 2050 as in 2019; in

Ratio of the demand for care<sup>(a)</sup> and the labour force<sup>(b)</sup> in 2050 (2019 = 100), three labour supply scenarios



Notes: (a) it is assumed that the demand of health care workers increases by the same percentage as the volume of health care expenditures; (b) in terms of full-time equivalents.

Source: NIDI/Statistics Netherlands.

participation of the children of migrants will then be just as high as the population without a migration background. For the elderly, we assume that older workers will continue to work for the same number of years as the increase in the statutory retirement age (which is linked to the increase in life expectancy at age 65). For women, we assume that the percentage of women in paid work in 2050 will be the same as the current percentage for men and that the difference in the proportion of women working part-time compared to men will decrease with 50 per cent by 2050.

The figure shows that the higher labour participation of women in particular has a major effect. With low net immigration, high female labour participation leads to an increase in the ratio between the level of care demanded and the size of the labour force by 14 per cent instead of 25 per cent. This is almost the same as with a high net immigration balance without a change in the labour participation rate. In terms of the size of the labour force, the effect of a higher labour force participation by women is therefore comparable to the effect of higher net immigration.

### Health improvements

The tension between the level of the demand for care and the size of the working age population can also be reduced by curbing the growth of the demand for care. The demand for care by people with lower levels of education is higher than that of people with a higher level of education. We have calculated a 'what-if' scenario, in which we assume that the health of the lower educated will improve to such an extent that the differences in the demand for care according to education levels will disappear by 2050. In this scenario, the demand for healthcare would be ten per cent lower in 2050 than if the health inequalities were not reduced. In terms of size, this is comparable to the effect of higher female labour participation.

### Policy choices

Population ageing means that the tension between the demand for care and the size of the working population is increasing, but the tension can be reduced by a mix of higher labour immigration, higher labour force participation and a reduction in health inequalities. Migration is a hot topic in Dutch public debate. If policy-makers want to admit fewer migrants, they must realize that labour force participation must increase in order to maintain the working population. To achieve this, investments are needed in education and the promotion of healthy lifestyles. This may also contribute to slowing down the growth in the demand for care.

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which case, the growth of the working population will be lagging behind the growth of the demand for care. The figure above shows that with low immigration, the ratio between the level of demand for care and the size of the labour force will increase by 25 per cent in the next thirty years, whereas with high migration, by 15 per cent. A high level of immigration therefore reduces the tension between the demand for care and the working population, but does not prevent the growth of the working population from lagging behind the growth in the demand for care.

### Higher labour force participation

The growth of the labour force depends not only on the level of migration, but also on changes in employment rates. We have calculated three 'what-if' scenarios that show the effects of higher employment rates for people with a migrant background, the elderly and women. For migrants, we assume that the difference in their labour participation compared to the population without a migration background will decrease by 50 per cent by 2050 and that the

Photo: Bas Bogers/Flickr



# Fifty years of demographic change

PETER EKAMPER

**NIDI was founded in 1970 and celebrated its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2020. In these fifty years the demographic landscape in the Netherlands has changed significantly and shown a trend towards a more crowded, aged and diverse society.**

In 1970 the Netherlands had 13 million inhabitants and Statistics Netherlands back then forecasted 21 million inhabitants around the year 2000. However, the population increased to ‘only’ 17.4 million in 2020. In that period, 9.4 million people were born, 6.1 million immigrated, 4.6 million emigrated, and 6.5 million people died. Population density increased from 384 to 517 per square kilometer.

The age structure of the population of the Netherlands transformed from a young population to a relatively old population. This was mainly due to a strong decline in the birth rate in the mid-1970s, and therefore lower numbers of births on the one hand, and decreasing mortality rates and therefore increased life expectancy on the other. Although the total population was considerably smaller in 1970, there were more children and youngsters than in 2020. Almost 45 per cent of the population in 1970 was younger than 25 years of age, compared to 28 per cent in 2020. The average number of children per woman decreased from 2.6 in 1970 to 1.6 nowadays. The population aged 65 years and over increased from 1.3 to 3.4 million. The number of persons aged 80 years and over nearly quadrupled from 222 thousand to 822 thousand. Life expectancy at birth increased from 71 to 80 years for men and from 76 to 83 years for women. Life expectancy has risen substantially at higher ages: life expectancy at both age 65 and age 80 is now about 30 to 40 per cent higher than in 1970.

In 1970, unmarried cohabitation and divorce were relatively uncommon. At the time, almost 73 per cent of all households were married couples; in 2020 this had dropped to 41 per cent. Today, 13 per cent of households are unmarried couples. One-parent families were also less common back then (4%) than now (7%). But especially the number of one-person households has increased enormously, from 680 thousand (17%) back then to more than 3 million (39%) now.

In 1970 less than 5 per cent of the population was born outside the Netherlands, the largest groups of these first-generation migrants originating from the (former) Dutch colonies (especially Dutch East Indies/Indonesia), the neighbouring countries (especially Germany), and the Mediterranean (mainly labour migrants). In 2020, by contrast, 13 per cent of Dutch citizens were born outside the Netherlands. The composition of this group has also changed significantly, with the largest groups now originating from Turkey, Morocco, Surinam, the (former)

Netherlands Antilles, and Eastern Europe. The second-generation migrant population increased from 5 to 11 per cent.

Population growth mainly concentrated in planned new towns, like Almere and Zoetermeer, and suburbs around the large cities. However, the population size within the largest cities hardly increased (Amsterdam) or even declined (The Hague and Rotterdam): until the mid-1980s population in the major cities decreased by around 20 per cent and it was not until after 2000 that population size started to recover again. Population decline regions are found in the peripheral far northeast, southeast, and southwest of the country.

In the past fifty years, the demographic landscape of the Netherlands has changed considerably. Although the demographic future is of course uncertain, the projected trends of a recent scenario study for 2050 (see page 1-2) seamlessly fit with the changes over the past fifty years towards an even more crowded, aged and diverse society.

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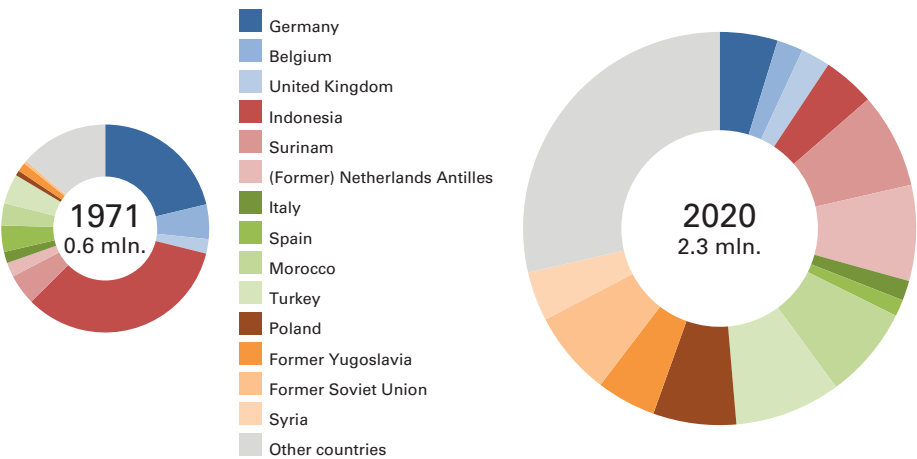
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Key demographic indicators Netherlands		
	1970	2020
Population (x mln.)	13.0	17.4
Density (per km <sup>2</sup> )	384	517
Age groups (%)		
0-24 years	44.9	28.0
25-64 years	45.0	52.5
65+ years	10.1	19.5
Total fertility rate	2.57	1.55
Infant mortality rate (‰)	12.7	3.8
Life expectancy at birth		
Men	70.8	79.7
Women	76.5	83.1
Crude marriage rate (‰)	9.5	2.9
Crude divorce rate (‰)	0.8	1.7
Households (x mln.)	4.0	8.0
Household composition (%)		
Married couples	72.6	40.6
One-parent families	4.2	7.4
Single households	16.8	38.5
Other	6.4	13.5
Migrant population (%)		
First generation	4.3	13.0
Second generation	5.0	11.3

Source: Statistics Netherlands.

Population of the Netherlands born abroad, by country of origin in 1971 and 2020



Source: Statistics Netherlands.

# Young adults question normative roles of men and women in society

LIN ROUVROYE, OLGA GRÜNWALD & ANNE GAUTHIER

**Gender is a hot topic among young adults. Characteristics, behaviours and roles that have traditionally been ascribed to either men or women are scrutinised on social media. Based on data of a diverse set of countries young adults appear to be questioning whether gender is still a relevant factor for assigning appropriate societal roles.**

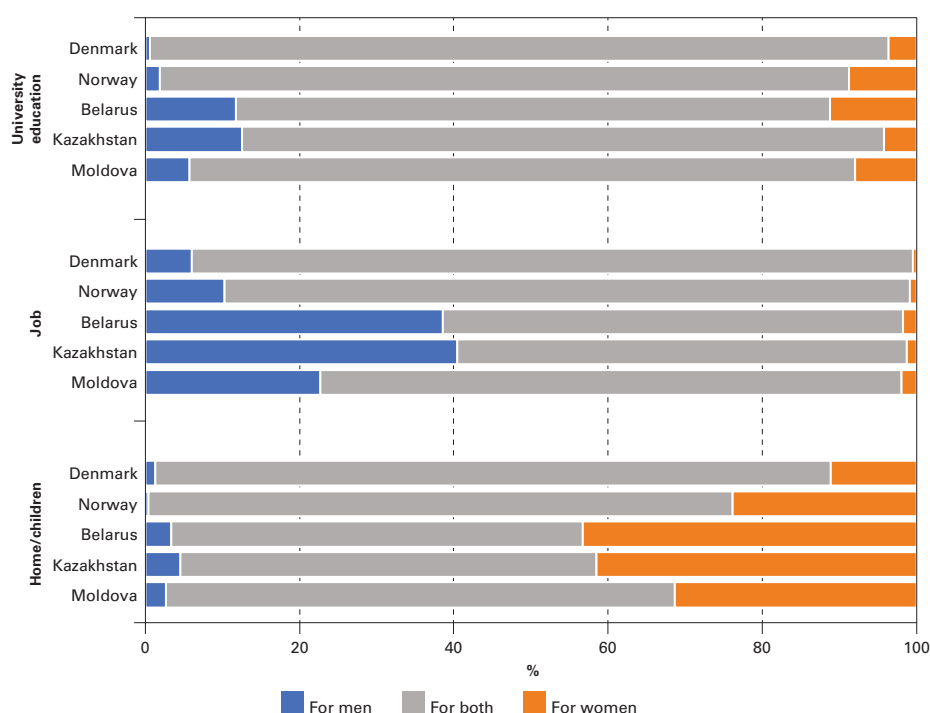
Between the ages of 18 and 35 people are expected to gradually take on more responsibilities and adopt new adult roles. Since it has become more common to pursue higher education, young people often take on the role of 'student' as part of this transition to adulthood. When young people enter the labour market, they are assigned the role of 'worker'. The decision to start a family introduces young people to responsibilities that can be summarised as the role of 'homemaker'. Traditionally, societal norms have determined which of these roles are essential for young men and women. The combined trends of higher educational attainment and higher labour market participation among women are said to stimulate the spread of more egalitarian ideas about the division of labour within the household. But does this assumption hold true for all young adults across countries? What about the views of young people that grow up in countries where norms about life aspirations are structured strongly on the basis of gender?

The Generations and Gender Survey (GGS) is a valuable resource for the study of gender equality from a cross-national perspective. To find out how young adults in different countries think

about the importance of various societal roles in the lives of men and women, we used data from GGS round 2 collected in Belarus, Kazakhstan, Moldova, Norway and Denmark during the period 2017-2021 and selected respondents aged 18-35. The three post-Soviet countries represent societal contexts with a gender-based division of household labour, whereas the two Nordic countries represent societies characterised by a more egalitarian approach.

The figure below shows the distributions of young adults' answers to three questions about the relative importance of 'university education', 'having a job' and 'looking after the home and children' for men or women. Only a small minority of young adults in Belarus, Kazakhstan and Moldova reported that a university education is more important for either men or women. Regarding the worker role, between roughly 20 percent (Moldova) and 40 percent (Belarus and Kazakhstan) of young adults believe this to be more important for men. The role of homemaker is seen as more important for women by about one-third of young adults in Moldova and 40 percent of young adults in Belarus and Kazakhstan. Nevertheless, the figure mainly shows that across all countries, the majority of young adults expressed the belief that these roles were equally important for men and women. Even in countries in which traditionally a gender-based division of household labour is strongly emphasised, young adults express egalitarian ideas about the roles of men and women in society.

Distribution of young adults' views<sup>(a)</sup> on societal roles for men and women



Data collection for GGS round 2 is ongoing. In due time, inclusion of a larger variety of countries can extend this research. Check GGP's website (<https://www.ggp-i.org/>) for more information on forthcoming data releases.

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Source: Generations and Gender Survey – Round II 2017-2021. Results based on weighted data.

Note: (a) Based on the question: "For whom is (1) university education, (2) having a job, (3) looking after the home/ children more important?".

# The Lifelines Cohort Study: A rich data source for demographers

LLUÍS MANGOT-SALA & KATHARINA RUNGE

**Population-based cohort studies are important for causal analyses between demographic events and health-related outcomes. The University of Groningen has been building the Lifelines Cohort Study, which offers rich possibilities for cross-fertilization between demographers and biomedical researchers. A primer for the uninitiated.**

The Lifelines Cohort Study is a large, prospective population-based cohort study and biobank, examining the biomedical, socio-demographic, behavioural, physical and psychological factors contributing to the health and disease of 167,729 individuals living in the three Northern provinces of the Netherlands. Between 2006 and 2013, eligible participants between 25 and 50 years of age were recruited through their general practitioner. They were also asked to indicate whether their family members (parents, partner, children, parents-in-law) would be willing to participate. Additionally, other interested individuals could self-register. This resulted in a three-generation cohort of 15,000 children (0-18 years), 140,000 adults (18-65 years), and 12,000 older adults (65+ years).

Lifelines offers numerous possibilities for demographic research: it contains rich socio-demographic information (e.g., partner status, employment status, educational attainment), as well as life-course events, such as moving house, starting (or ending) a relationship, having a child, or finding (or losing) a job. Furthermore, Lifelines is particularly strong in the assessment of health behaviours and outcomes: from alcohol consumption, dietary patterns, total- and domain-specific physical activity to biological markers, chronic diseases and even genetic information. Thus, a wide range of research questions on the association between life transitions and health (behaviours) can be answered using the Lifelines study.

Furthermore, Lifelines offers a very large sample, which contains almost 10% of the population of the three northern provinces of the Netherlands and has been shown to be broadly representative of the whole population. Moreover, it is an ongoing cohort study containing already five waves of observations - and a sixth one being gathered-, which allows a wide range of longitudinal analyses. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the “Lifelines COVID-19” sub-cohort (n=76,795) was developed, in order to assess the attitudes towards the lockdown regulations, and health (behaviours) of the observed population, with a total of 24 waves of data gathered between March 2020 and July 2021. Numerous studies focussing on the association between life events and health (behaviours) using Lifelines have been published recently. For instance, the association between unemployment trajectories

and alcohol consumption patterns was studied. Further, it was investigated whether metabolic syndrome development - a risk factor for subsequent onset of type two diabetes mellitus and cardiovascular disease - differs by occupational groups or changes in employment status among older workers. In turn, the COVID sub-cohort was used to analyse the impact of the lockdown measures on alcohol consumption patterns. Last but not least, Lifelines data can be linked to external data sources, such as register data from Statistics Netherlands.

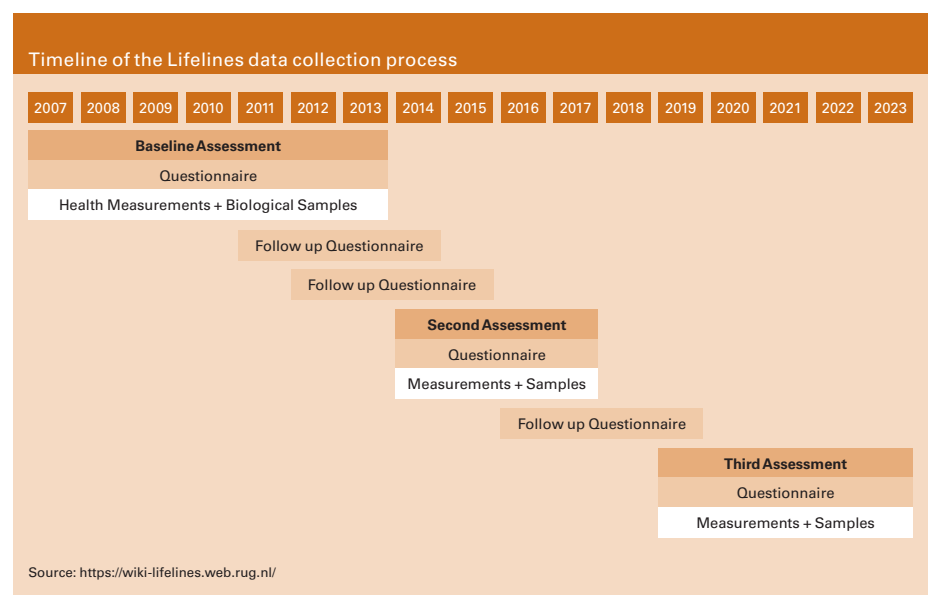
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# Who marries whom? Partner choice among the children of immigrants

GUSTA WACHTER & HELGA DE VALK

**Although marriages within the same origin group (intra-ethnic) remain popular, the Turkish, Moroccan and Surinamese second generation in the Netherlands increasingly often marry outside of their origin group (interethnic). This is in large part due to an increase in marriage partners with a migrant background that is different than their own (i.e., a non-co-ethnic migrant background). But who are these partners with a different migration background?**



Photo: Jasmine Carter/Pexels

We listed the top five most common non-co-ethnic migration backgrounds of first marriage partners for the abovementioned origin groups born between 1980 and 1999 (see table). For the Turkish second generation, six percent of all first marriage partners had a non-co-ethnic migrant background. For the Moroccan and Surinamese second generation this was respectively 8 and 18 percent. As can be seen, there are clear differences in the migration background of these partners. For example, non-co-ethnic marriage partners of the Turkish second generation most often have a German background (19%), while partners of the Surinamese second generation are relatively often Antillean (14%).

Despite these differences, we can detect some general patterns. First, non-co-ethnic migrant partners are often part of the other four larg-

est non-European migrant groups in the Netherlands, reflecting the importance of group size and meeting opportunities. Second, what appear to be interethnic partners may in fact be intra-ethnic partners, depending on the criteria used to determine what an intra-ethnic marriage is. Certain marriage partners share cultural and religious similarities as reflected in the countries of origin, such as Iraqi partners for the Turkish second generation and Indian partners for the Surinamese second generation. Third, partners relatively often come from neighbouring European countries. European immigrants make up a large share of the total migrant population and, moreover, it is relatively easy for partners to move to the Netherlands. However, the way migrant generations are defined in the Netherlands and many other European countries seems to disguise a particular type of intra-ethnic marriage: some first-generation European partners may in fact be part of the second-generation in their own country of birth.

Overall, these findings show that there is a range of origin groups hidden behind the overarching category of non-co-ethnic migrant partners. What does this mean for our thinking about interethnic marriages? Although the possible significance of interethnic marriages for integration and social cohesion is often mentioned, it proves difficult to define what an interethnic marriage actually is, especially for the second generation growing up in diverse societies, like the Netherlands. Is a marriage between partners of the Turkish and Surinamese second generation, for example, *more interethnic* than a marriage between a partner of the Turkish second generation born in the Netherlands and one of the Turkish second generation born in Belgium?

What becomes evident, however, is that partners with 'non-co-ethnic' migration backgrounds are not a homogeneous group, there is substantial diversity within this category. It is important to look beyond simple distinctions and dichotomies when it comes to partner choice, especially if we want to know more about the extent to which intra-ethnic relationships remain important for generations to come.

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Top five migrant backgrounds (including first- and second-generation) of non-co-ethnic first marriage partners of the second generation (%), the Netherlands						
Turkish second generation		Moroccan second generation		Surinamese second generation		
Migrant background	(%)	Migrant background	(%)	Migrant background	(%)	
1 German	19	Turkish	19	Antillean	14	
2 Moroccan	18	Surinamese	10	Moroccan	13	
3 Belgian	6	Algerian	8	Indonesian	12	
4 Iraqi	6	Indonesian	6	Indian	7	
5 Former Yugoslavian	5	Belgian	6	Turkish	6	
N=	2,258	2,070		1,888		

Note: N = all first marriages with a non-co-ethnic migrant partner entered before 2018. Source: Statistics Netherlands/Social Statistical Database.

# Post-retirement work limits participation in volunteer work

OLGA GRÜNWARD, MARLEEN DAMMAN & KÈNE HENKENS

**Will the drive towards working longer at ages beyond the public pension age crowd out volunteer work among retirees? NIDI panel data among older workers in the Netherlands suggest it does.**

In the last decades, radical changes have occurred in the domains of work and retirement in the Netherlands. Besides dissolving early retirement schemes and increasing retirement ages, policymakers have also been stimulating employment beyond retirement. It has now become more common to work for pay beyond the public pension age, as national statistics show: the employment of people over 70 constituted 3 per cent of the potential labor force in 2003, but increased to 8 per cent by 2020.

The extension of working lives is, however, raising concerns about older adults' alternative engagements in society. Working after retirement age will ostensibly limit one's time and opportunities to engage in other activities. How will these developments affect participation in unpaid activities such as volunteering? Retirement is generally associated with an increase in volunteering. Retirees have more time at their disposal, and volunteering offers the opportunity to use this time in a meaningful and socially active way. The international literature on unpaid productive activities in later life does, however, not distinguish between people who have completely stopped working and people who continue to work partially after retirement. Yet, it can be expected that working retirees might engage in volunteer work to a different extent than full retirees because working retirees generally have less free time than full retirees and remain integrated in the labour market.

Using data from the NIDI Pension Panel, we examined the relationship between retirement and volunteering (at least once a week) for a group of employees aged 60-65 years at baseline. We distinguish those who fully retired between 2015 and 2018 from those who work in post-retirement jobs, and compare these two groups of retirees to older workers who remain in career employment. A considerable proportion of retirees in the study (around 15%) kept working – mostly part-time – after retiring from career employment.

Our results clearly show increased participation in volunteer work after full retirement (see figure on the right). Among those who stopped paid work entirely during the study period, the percentage of volunteers increased from 19 per cent before retirement to 35 per cent after retirement. In comparison, in the group of 60-plus employ-

ees who were not yet entitled to a pension, the percentage of volunteers hardly changed during the study period. Yet, our research shows that among post-retirement workers, participation in volunteer work hardly increased (from 19% before retirement to 22% after retirement). This result suggests that remaining partially active in paid work after retirement is a disincentive to participate in volunteer work.

For full retirees, volunteering can compensate for the loss of the role as a worker since it can provide social contacts, structure, and the feeling of fulfilling a meaningful role. However, for those who continue paid work after retirement, the post-retirement job already fulfills many of these functions. Consequently, the increasing emergence of post-retirement jobs can reduce the interest in and availability for volunteer work among recent retirees.

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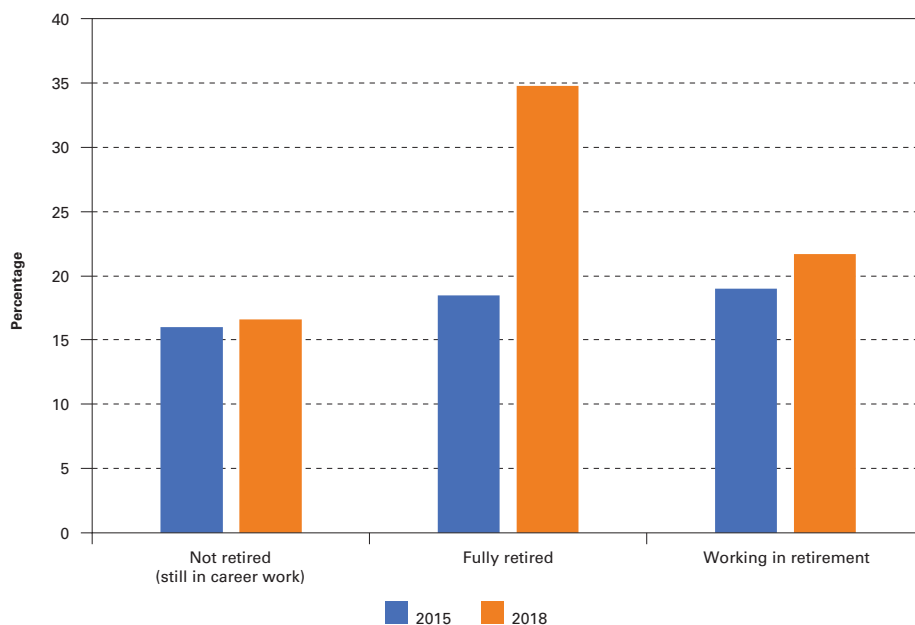
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Share of respondents that volunteer at least once a week by employment/retirement status in 2018



Source: NIDI Pension Panel Study (NPPS), 2015/2018.

# Demographers' views on family and child policies

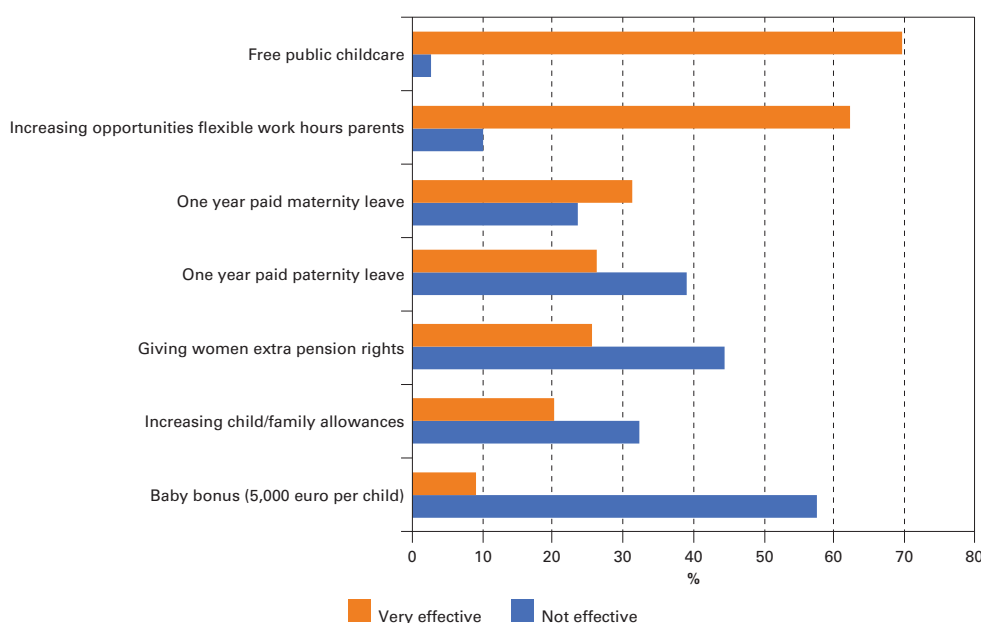
**Concerns about low fertility rate regularly lead conservative politicians to call for higher birth rates by offering incentives, like baby bonuses. Will such alternative policy efforts effect a change? A survey among European demographers suggests that baby bonuses are perceived as highly ineffective.**

It is a regularly recurring theme among politicians worrying about low fertility rates: which set of social programmes and laws can help parents attain their desired family size? Men, but in particular women, face conflicts and trade-offs when it comes to combining making a living with taking care of their family. Research often shows that women in developed countries do not attain their desired number of children, in which case money, housing and working arrangements are named as barriers. At regular intervals one can also hear the calls from politicians to increase the fertility rate and to lower the barriers that young parents face. In the Netherlands, a conservative Christian party promised voters to increase family allowances and to give families an bonus of 1,000 euros with the arrival of a fourth child. In other countries as well, the baby bonus idea is seen as silver bullet solution – from Russia and Hungary to Australia, Italy and Spain. But how effective are these financial incentives and other family policy measures?

Two years ago, we asked members of the European Association for Population Studies (EAPS) how they viewed the effectiveness of

family policy measures in the event that they were implemented in their country to increase the fertility rate. The figure below shows what demographers perceive as very effective – and in particular ineffective – measures. ‘Baby bonuses’ are by and large seen as highly ineffective. And to be frank, all measures that change the financial incentives of having a child or give allowances to soften the budget constraints of parents are met with skepticism. ‘Rewarding’ childbearing by giving women extra pension rights, something that was/is quite common in Eastern European countries, is seen as effective only by a small minority. Likewise, one-year paid maternal leave is not seen as a policy that will entice parents to have more children. However, two policy measures are seen as effective: free day-care and more flexible work arrangements to combine work and family responsibilities. The demand for flexible work arrangements is not surprising, as young parents are facing a tougher job market where full-time work is the norm to succeed and flexible contracts are the rule. Raising a child can then be an expensive or stressful responsibility. The observation that bonuses are not perceived to be effective

Ranking of perceived effectiveness of policy measures to increase birth rates, as stated by European demographers (percentages), 2020



Answers based on the question: "How effective do you expect the following policy measures to be in stimulating the number of births in your country?"

Source: NIDI survey among EAPS members February-April 2020, N = 205.

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## colofon

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tive is in line with research that shows no lasting effects of such measures. It could, of course, be the case that our proposed financial bonus (5,000 euros per child) is far too low to convince our respondents – but it may be far simpler: perhaps demographers think that you cannot put a price on having a child. Children are literally priceless, hence, every effort to change the minds of potential parents by using a ‘big carrot’ is going to be of no avail.

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