

**ICS PhD Project 9:
Women without a paid job and social benefits: a life course perspective**

Aim

To examine the characteristics of women without a paid job and social benefits and to explain why these women do not have a paid job and social benefits using a life course perspective.

Theoretical background

In the Netherlands there are more than a million women without a job and without social benefits. This is likely a diverse group: in addition to women with a partner with a sufficient income, there are women who (still) live at home with their parents, women who do want to work but are not looking for a job in the short term, or women who do not work in the regulated labor market. They might participate in the family business such as a farm business or a shop, or are busy with informal care or volunteer work. Furthermore, women without a job and without social benefits are often less educated and with a migration background. So far, our knowledge about who these women are and why they do not have a paid job and social benefits is limited and fragmented. Yet, it is important to gain such knowledge in light of shortages on the labor market and the likely vulnerable economic position of women without a paid job and social benefits. This project therefore focuses on this group of women and applies a life course perspective.

Our first question is what the group of women without a job and social benefits looks like, and which subgroups can be distinguished. The second research question addresses how their situation varies over the life course and which events in their life lead women out of the labor market or without social benefits. We aim to examine the number and duration of spells without employment and social benefits and their relation to events in the family, educational and work domain. A period of not working and without benefits can for example be due to the arrival of the children, but also because of school dropout. The third and final question is to understand why these women do not work and do not have social benefits compared to women who have paid jobs or social benefits using the Motivation, Opportunity and Ability framework (MOA framework, Rothschild, 1999). Motivation is influenced by one's own attitudes and social norms about working women of other people in women's environment. Opportunities include child care facilities, employer prejudices, and a supportive social network, and abilities comprise the skills and knowledge to find and get a paid job (Kitterød & Rønsen, 2013). An example of a hypothesis derived from the MOA framework is that the more traditional the social norms of people in women's social network, the more likely that they don't have a paid job.

Research design

(1) Statistics Netherlands (CBS) register data about women without a job and social benefits in 2022 will be used to analyze subgroups, using cluster analysis; (2) A cohort of women between 15 and 45 years old in 2000 will be followed until 2022 to analyze spells without a job and benefits and their relation to events related to paid work, education, getting children etc using event history analysis; and (3) A new survey will be done under women with and without paid jobs to analyze the MOA framework. This data collection is part of a larger program within the National Research Agenda for strengthening the economic resilience of women. Researchers from sociology, psychology, public governance and other disciplines will work together with civic organizations to improve women's economic resilience in the Netherlands.

Literature

- Kitterød, R. H., & Rønsen, M. (2013). Opting out? Who are the housewives in contemporary Norway? *European Sociological Review*, 29(6), 1266-1279.
- Rothschild, M. L. (1999). Carrots, sticks, and promises: A conceptual framework for the management of public health and social issue behaviors. *Journal of Marketing*, 63(4), 24-37.

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Location

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