The late shift: How retirement affects civic participation and well-being
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1. Introduction and overview

*Old age begins where the world of work discharges people – no matter if they feel old or not.*

Ulrich Beck (1992, p. 139)
§ 1.1 – BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION OF RESEARCH

Like many developed countries, the Netherlands is confronted with an aging population. The proportion of people aged 65 or older has grown from 9 percent in 1960 to 17 percent in 2014, and is expected to rise to 26 percent in 2050 (Statistics Netherlands, 2015a). This development has extensive consequences for, among other things, the labor market, public revenue and expenses, and pension systems. One of the challenges that comes with this trend is to optimize successful aging, or aging in the best possible health while maintaining social activities, in order to sustain the public health and control public expenditure. It is therefore critical to gain knowledge and understanding of successful aging and the dynamics that surround it, in order to effectively design strategies that protect people and society from the damaging effects of aging (WHO, 2002).

An important transition in the life of older adults, and therefore a key dynamic in successful aging, is retirement. Like other life transitions, such as marriage or leaving school, it is a shift from one stage of life to another that involves considerable change and reorganization in terms of social networks, daily activities, and various other factors. However, with its inherent character of both losses and gains, it can be an ambiguous transition. The retired status is one that people may look forward to, but this ‘third age’ also remains an elusive and opaque phase of life to many. It is associated with freedom in terms of time, obligations and responsibilities, but also with redundancy, social withdrawal, a lack of daily structure, and an undefined position in society (Savishinsky, 2000; Weiss, 2005). Questions of how people adjust to retirement – how well are they doing, what do they do? – are therefore challenging to answer unequivocally. In the light of successful aging, this dissertation aims to improve our contemporary understanding of how the retirement transition affects the lives of people in the Netherlands.

This dissertation will focus on two distinct types of outcomes: the civic participation of retirees, and their well-being. The reason for this is that successful aging is about the ‘avoidance of disease and disability, the maintenance of high physical and cognitive function, and sustained engagement in social and productive activities’ (Rowe & Kahn, 1997, p. 433). In other words, successful aging is not only about maintaining physical and psychological well-being, but also about remaining socially active. When investigating the influence of retirement on successful aging, it is thus valuable to pay attention to both these aspects, a notion that has not yet been firmly established in research on retirement outcomes. The main research question of this thesis can be formulated as follows: To what extent does retirement affect the civic participation and well-being of people?

There are a number of reasons why insight into the consequential effects of retirement for civic participation and well-being is important. First, retirement is a relatively new stage of life from a historical point of view. While meager pension-like arrangements were available at the end of the 19th century, retirement in its current institutionalized form is a post-World War II phenomenon. Because of this comparatively adolescent state, there is still limited empirical insight into how people respond to retirement, the activities they pursue, and how it affects
their well-being (Ekerdt, 2010).

A second reason for studying effects of retirement is that it is in a constant state of flux, and remarkably so in the last decade. In the Netherlands, it was only in 1957 that a law was passed that entitled people to a pension benefit upon reaching the age of 65, a benefit that hardly covered the costs of living and was considered complementary to salary or other benefits (Smolenaars, 2000). In a few decades however, the institution of retirement developed and being retired became an aspirational status with few financial worries. Recently, demographic aging and economic difficulties, as in many other countries, have incited a variety of retrenchment policies that include cutbacks on early retirement arrangements and the raising of the pension eligibility age. The cohorts that are under study in this thesis were born in the period between 1933 and 1957, and became eligible for (early) retirement in a time when pension arrangements were most extensive and generous. Many people took advantage of such schemes to retire well before the age of 65 (OECD, 2014). This may mean that the results are partly specific for relatively early retirement. However, it is unlikely that effects of retirement will have changed dramatically over the course of several years. Further, even if contextual changes limit the generalizability of this dissertation’s outcomes, the results remain valuable because they can help understand possible changes that have taken place over time. Overall, the highly dynamic context or retirement makes it important to continually monitor its outcomes.

A third reason why it is important to study effects of retirement on civic activity and well-being is macro-economic in nature. Retirement is often considered as costly for society because, first, it means the loss of human capital from the labor force, and revenue from labor-related taxes. Second, in many countries pension benefits are (partly) financed via pay-as-you-go systems, meaning that those in the labor force pay for those in retirement. Every person moving from work to retirement thus moves from being a net contributor to a net beneficiary of the pension system. These considerations are unidimensional in the sense that they focus mainly on the economic costs of retirement, while the contributions of retirees, which may go beyond finances, are equally important. According to Freedman (1997), retirees form a legion of potential volunteers that could ‘save civil society’ by contributing to it with their unpaid work. Information on how retirement affects civic participation is therefore fundamental, as it relates to the contributions that retirees may provide to society through their productive activities.

Fourth, besides information on civic participation, insight into the consequences of retirement for health and well-being is important, because the cessation of work entails a significant reorganization of life (Atchley, 1976; Wang, Henkens, & van Solinge, 2011). For example, the daily structure, or perhaps the burden, of work is relinquished, the social network may change because of diminished contacts with (former) colleagues, and a retiree is faced with a new role in society. All these changes as a result of retirement can thus potentially lead to changes in well-being and health. This is important, because health service costs are partly borne by the general public, which is another way in which it is related to public expenditure and society at large.

Fifth, studying both aspects of successful aging – civic participation and well-being – is
important because they are theoretically and empirically intertwined. Good physical and mental health are related to civic participation. Research has provided evidence that older people who come to face health problems or depression are more likely to (partially) withdraw from volunteering (Li & Ferraro, 2005, 2006). Reversely, civic activity has been shown to be beneficial to physical and mental well-being in later life (Morrow-Howell, Hinterlong, Rozario, & Tang, 2003; Musick & Wilson, 2003; Piliavin, 2003). It is thus valuable to study these different types of outcomes in order to achieve a broad and inclusive picture of how retirement affects the lives of older adults.

Societally, understanding these relationships is important to policy-makers dealing with retirement, specifically those developing strategies to optimize the successful aging of retirees. For example, if phasing out of work and into retirement is found to support engagement in civic participation, more so than a prompt termination of work, then this could be an argument to facilitate gradual retirement. On a more individual level, insight into the possible consequences of retirement is interesting for those who face the transition themselves, or those close to a friend of family member who does. People may structure their lives so as to optimally deal with the changes ahead of them. On all levels, governmental, organizational, and personal, a thorough understanding of the consequences of retirement is pivotal to anticipate possible changes in the future, and respond to them in an effective way in order to achieve optimal quality of postretirement life.

Before describing the chapters and the corresponding research questions of this thesis in more detail, this research needs to be placed in its historical, societal, and scientific background. The following section will therefore first deal with the important contemporary context (section 1.2). After that, section 1.3 will discuss the specific research questions, how they fit into the body of current research, and how they contribute to the literature. Section 1.4 will provide an overview of the data and methods that are used.

§ 1.2 – SOCIETAL CONTEXT

The Netherlands, as any other country, has walked its own unique historical path that has resulted in the current state of affairs regarding retirement, civic activity, and well-being. It is important to provide insight into these matters, since they make up the societal context in which this thesis must be placed.

§ 1.2.1 – Retirement in the Netherlands

Presently, retirement refers to a substantial reduction in paid work after a lengthy period of employment, accompanied by some form of retirement income, like state or occupational pensions or personal savings, that allows people to maintain their financial autonomy. Up until the 20th century no social security schemes that were aimed at the elderly existed in the Netherlands. The prevailing principle was to work until death, or at least until infirmity prevented
further gainful employment (van Leeuwen, 1994). There was general poor relief, often provided by the church or benevolent individuals, but this was not aimed at the elderly per se. In the late 19th century, there was increasing debate about the role of the state in social security, and the first legislation that ensured a collectively funded scheme for disabled employees was introduced in 1913 (Smolenaars, 1999, 2000). The maximum benefit that people were entitled to, when disability occurred after 50 years of employment, amounted to only about 10 percent of the typical income of an industrial worker at the time (van der Spek, 1976; van Solinge, 2006).

The first true Dutch pension arrangement, the AOW scheme, was adopted in 1957, and ensured all people residing in the Netherlands of a fixed pension benefit when reaching the age of 65. This benefit lasted until death and was financed via a pay-as-you-go system. Since the benefit was below sustenance level, many people (up to 20 percent in 1960) remained in employment after 65 if their health permitted it. This was a minority however, since many people retired involuntarily due to personal or organizational circumstances such as health problems or company bankruptcy. In 1965 the scheme was adjusted so that the benefit matched the costs of living (Smolenaars, 2000). Further, two new ‘pillars’ were added to the pension system. First, earnings-related occupational pension plans were developed, based on capital funding. Although these are not obligatory, currently over 90 percent of employers offer their staff a type of occupational pension. This pillar currently represents the largest part of the Dutch pension system. The third pillar consists of optional, personal pension savings, which need to be privately organized (Ministerie van Sociale Zaken en Werkgelegenheid, 2015).

Over time, the perception of retirement changed from a difficult life phase to a more or less desirable, relatively worry-free phase. Besides the advances in health knowledge and the accompanying rise in (healthy) life expectancy, this had to do with rising benefits, and, driven by economic hardship and high unemployment rates among younger workers in the 1970s and 1980s, the expansion and institutionalization of opportunities for early retirement. Generous early retirement arrangements were popular and proved difficult to reverse, and early retirement quickly became widespread throughout all sectors of the economy (Huizinga, 1977; van Koningsveld & van Ginneken, 1988). Because of the rising popularity of (early) retirement as an aspired social status and the pay-as-you-go financing, the retirement system was under increasing pressure in the 1990’s (Kohli, Rein, Guillemard, & Van Gunsteren, 1991). As a reaction to this, and to safeguard an adequate supply of labor in the future, measures were taken. Retrenchment policies mirrored those in several other European countries, and included the tightening of the eligibility conditions for early retirement, and a shift towards more private financial responsibility for employees (Arza & Kohli, 2007).

The trend towards more austerity has gained momentum in recent years. This was mainly fueled by both the economic hardship that followed from the global financial crisis of 2007-2010, and the post-war baby boom generation starting to reach the pension eligibility age, which is part of a larger demographic aging process that is expected to continue well into the 21st century. This ‘greying’ of society puts pressure on the Dutch pension system, as the
number of people eligible for pension benefits is growing rapidly, while the size of the labor force, which partly finances these benefits, is expected to remain equal or even reduce in size somewhat. Further pressure is put on the system because of the rising longevity, which means that on average, the period of pension eligibility after retirement is extended. The Netherlands is not alone in these developments, and it has been argued that a critical assessment of the cultural notions and institutions that surround the life course is necessary to maintain the sustainability of the system (Kohli, 2007). In order to counter the growing imbalance in the proportion of pensioners versus workers and the periods before and after retirement, in 2014 the Dutch government has raised the pension eligibility age, although this is being implemented in a stepwise manner so that it will be 67 in 2023. Another development, which concerns the second pillar of occupational pensions, is the growing popularity of defined contribution schemes at the cost of defined benefit schemes. In defined benefit schemes the benefit that will be received is fixed, but because the returns on investments may vary, contributions may change. In defined contribution schemes the contribution is fixed, but the benefit is dependent on investment returns and interest rates. Overall, this means a shift toward more risk for the (future) retiree, because in defined contribution schemes, employers carry a smaller risk. Their expenses are stable, while the (future) retiree carries more risk because his or her benefit may turn out to be lower than expected.

Currently, the retrenchment policies appear to push the average retirement age upward, although the culture of early withdrawal from the labor force appears to be persistent. People from younger cohorts remain in paid employment longer, and the average age at which people start receiving benefits has risen from under 61 in 2006 to over 64 by the end of 2014 (Statistics Netherlands, 2015b), see figures 1.1 and 1.2. This trend is expected to persist in years to come (de Grip, Fouarge, & Montizaan, 2013). The data used in this thesis were gathered among people born between 1933 and 1957, and collected in the period between 2001 and 2007. This means that they limitedly reflect the most recent rapid changes that were described above. What this may mean for the outcomes of this thesis is discussed in chapter six.
While early retirement is becoming less prevalent, the institution of retirement is still broadly supported in society. Older people are regarded with high levels of ‘deservingness’ (van Oorschot, 2006), and retirement is generally viewed as a reward for a lengthy and productive career. It suits the wish of many people to adopt a slower pace in later life, spent relatively free from obligations and responsibilities (Atchley, 1982). This is reflected in the popularized notion of the ‘pensionado’: the spirited, financially secure, hedonistic elder (Braam, 1999; van Nimwegen & van Praag, 2012). Moneywise, Dutch retirees experience a decline in income, although this does not seriously jeopardize their financial situation since income needs also tend to drop (Soede, 2012). In general, the elderly in the Netherlands are in an advantageous financial position compared to other age groups, and this position is not expected to weaken in the near future (Ministerie van Financiën, 2013). Still, retirement remains a transition surrounded by some level of uncertainty. In general, people wonder how and what they will do in retirement.
(van Solinge & Henkens, 2008; Weiss, 2005). When it comes to worrying about their impending retirement, research shows that Dutch older workers do not deviate substantially from their European peers, although they seem to worry a little less than in many other European countries (Hershey, Henkens, & Van Dalen, 2010).

Overall, it is clear that the institution of retirement is subject to change. It is intertwined with the economic situation in society, the demographics of the labor market, and the prevailing social ideology with regard to older workers and retirement. Both the economic and demographic situation have put the pension system under pressure, leading to significant social debate and changes with regard to retirement rules and regulations. Retirement policies have been characterized by retrenchment, resulting in a shift away from the culture of early retirement. However, despite the fact that pension arrangements are under revision, there is also continuity. The basic functions of retirement, to manage the succession within social groups and to fulfil individuals’ preference to retreat from work and responsibility, remain (Ekerdt, 2010).

§ 1.2.2 – Well-being in the Netherlands
Well-being is a broad concept that has multiple dimensions. In this thesis, well-being is approached in two ways: from a perspective of self-rated general health and from a psychological perspective of general satisfaction with life. With regard to the former, among the group of community dwelling Dutch people aged 55 to 75, around 65 percent rate their health as (very) good (den Draak, 2006). The life expectancy in the Netherlands has been steadily rising throughout the 20th and 21st century, and figures 1.3 and 1.4 show the development in the number of years that men and women are expected to live from the age of 65. The same figures show the evolution in the number of years that they are expected to live healthily, that is, without moderate to severe limitations, from the age of 65. These numbers have risen and show that in general, people who retire (at age 65) can expect to live a significant number of years (22 and 18 for women and men, respectively), of which at least half will be spent in fairly good health.
IntroductIon and overvIew

As this thesis is aimed at investigating how departure from work affects well-being, it is relevant to shortly discuss the Dutch situation with regard to occupational health and safety, which is favorable compared to other European countries (Bakhuys Roozeboom, Gouw, Hooftman, Houtman, & Klein Hesselink, 2008; Hulshof & Frings-Dresen, 2010). Psychologically, work pressure does tend to be experienced as fairly high, although it is difficult to accurately determine to what extent work is the cause of psychological complaints. Estimates of the amount of people who suffer from work-related burnout range from 4 to 10 percent (Bakhuys Roozeboom, et al., 2008; Henkens & Leenders, 2010; RIVM, 2007; Schaufeli & Houtman, 2000). There is evidence that among older workers, this percentage is generally higher (Statistics Netherlands, 2015c). Overall, older workers are sick less often, but their absenteeism spells last longer than those of younger workers because of more serious, long-term physical health problems (Nauta, De Bruin, & Cremer, 2004; Versantvoort & van Echtelt, 2012).

Satisfaction with life, a more psychological form of well-being, is relatively high among the Dutch (Inglehart, 2002; Kaptelyn, Smith, & Van Soest, 2010; Veenhoven, 1993), although the international comparability of this variable is a subject of discussion (Oishi, 2010). Several causes for this high level of life satisfaction have been suggested, namely economic wealth, a culture of self-enhancement, a favorable situation with regard to human rights, and high social equality (Diener, Diener, & Diener, 1995; Diener, Oishi, & Lucas, 2003). There is some debate about the variability of this measure within persons over their life course. It is a variable that shows great stability over time within individuals, but there is also evidence that major life changes have the potential to affect satisfaction with life (Diener, 2000; Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985; Dingemans & Henkens, 2014; Hershey & Henkens, 2014). There is evidence of a u-shaped development with the low point in midlife and high point around 65 (Blanchflower & Oswald, 2008; Inglehart, 2002), but others find no effect of age after controlling for important sources of satisfaction that tend to decline with age, such as health and income (Diener & Suh, 1998). In general, how life satisfaction is connected to aging and its sensitivity it is to the dynamics of the life course remains the subject of debate.
§ 1.2.3 – Civic participation in the Netherlands
With regard to civic participation, or activities that support the common good or people other than the individual that undertakes them (Adler & Goggin, 2005), the Netherlands is a remarkable case. Compared to other European countries, it is characterized by high rates of organizational membership, meaning many people are associated with one or more organizations on some level (Erlinghagen & Hank, 2006). Causes that have been suggested for this include the relatively strong support of the government for voluntary organizations (Pichler & Wallace, 2007), and the ‘pillarization’ of Dutch society. This term is used for the strong segregation of the population along religious and political lines, most prevalent from the second half of the 19th century until well into the 20th century. This segregation resulted in the different groups (e.g., Catholics, Protestants, etc.) fostering their own newspapers, schools, and associations, which boosted the total amount of nonprofit activities. While the pillars have ceased to exist, it is argued that organizational structures and norms regarding civic participation have persisted (Burger, Dekker, Toepler, Anheier, & Salamon, 1999).

One study found that 85 percent of the population aged 18 and over was a member of some type of organization, making the Dutch rank number one on a list of twelve European countries (de Hart & Dekker, 1999). It must be noted that membership does not automatically mean civic participation however, and this percentage includes, for example, ubiquitous sport club memberships which comprise little civically productive behavior. When people do perform volunteer work for such organizations, which is often labelled as ‘formal’ volunteering, they tend to invest relatively large amounts of time (de Hart & Dekker, 1999; Hank & Erlinghagen, 2009; Pichler & Wallace, 2007). For example, Erlinghagen & Hank (2006) found that of all Dutch volunteers over 50, 17 percent performs volunteer work daily and 59 percent almost every week. The average time that people invest in volunteering appears to be have been notably constant over the course of several decades (van Ingen & Dekker, 2011). Also for more informal civic participation, the Netherlands is consistently among the top ranking countries in Europe and the world (de Hart & Dekker, 1999; Erlinghagen & Hank, 2006; Pichler & Wallace, 2007). Such participation includes, for example, the provision of help or assistance to neighbors, friends, and family, and takes place outside of an organizational context.

In line with international trends (Wilson, 2000), there is a substantive educational gradient when it comes to civic participation, with the higher educated participating more (Bekkers, 2013). What sets the Netherlands apart is a distinctively high rate of civic participation among people aged 50 to 70, when retirement generally takes place (Erlinghagen & Hank, 2006; Hank & Erlinghagen, 2009). Although there has been an extensive academic debate about the potentially declining social activity and social capital of younger cohorts (Bekkers & De Graaf, 2002; Fukuyama, 1999; Putnam, 2000), studies focused on the social participation of the Dutch ‘young old’ show that younger cohorts are more active than older generations (Bekkers, 2013; Broese van Groenou, 2006; Broese van Groenou & Deeg, 2010; Broese van Groenou & Van Tilburg, 2012). This is mostly attributable to higher levels of education for these younger cohorts. Lastly, paid work seems to increase the odds of volunteering, with Dutch people in
paid employment more engaged in volunteering than those involuntarily unemployed (de Beer, 2001).

Overall then, the Netherlands is characterized by high levels of civic activity, measured in different ways. This is especially true for the age groups that are relevant to the current study. Altogether, this may imply that there is a social norm of expected civic engagement, particularly of those who are perceived to have the time and opportunities, like retirees. The Dutch relationship between retirement and civic activity, which is one of the main focal points of this thesis, may thus be relatively unique and difficult to transpose to other countries without taking these distinctive features into account.

§ 1.3 – RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND SCIENTIFIC CONTEXT

§ 1.3.1 – General research context
Research that examines how retirement affects successful aging, as the current contribution, can be embedded in a broad field that is concerned with retirement adjustment. This can be defined as the extent to which people have integrated retirement into their lives, or how they adapt to the changes in life circumstances that retirement brings with it (Schlossberg, Water, & Goodman, 2005). Retirement adjustment may further be categorized in several types of outcomes that mirror the aspects of successful aging: adjustment in the civic participation of people, and adjustment in their well-being, both physically and psychologically.

For both types of outcomes, two major questions have guided research. The first question is how people generally adjust to the transition of retirement. The second question concerns heterogeneity in retirement adjustment: why do some people adjust differently to retirement than others (Wang, et al., 2011)? When the two major outcomes are coupled with the two major questions in retirement adjustment research, the field can be separated into four different themes, see table 1.1 for a schematic overview. This dissertation fits within the retirement adjustment literature by dealing with each theme, that is, both questions for both types of outcomes, measured in multiple ways.

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<thead>
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<th>Major question</th>
<th>Type of outcome</th>
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<td>General: how does retirement affect civic participation and well-being?</td>
<td>Civic participation</td>
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<td>Heterogeneity: what shapes differences in outcomes?</td>
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Table 1.1. Schematic overview of themes of this dissertation by major questions and types of outcomes in broader retirement adjustment research
While research on outcomes of retirement has led to valuable insights (Wang, et al., 2011), two major issues deserve more attention. First, the focus has primarily been on effects of retirement on well-being (theme C). The influence of retirement on different types of civic participation (theme A) has been largely neglected. This is an important shortcoming of the literature, because participation in civic activities is important for the successful aging of retirees, and can be a valuable resource for society as a whole. A second issue that warrants more attention concerns the follow-up question of heterogeneity, or differences in retirement outcomes and its causes. This matter has only been explored to a limited extent, for outcomes of well-being as well as participation (themes B and D). This is a deficiency, because insight into the ways retirement affects different people differently provides valuable understanding of the mechanisms that shape the possible outcomes of this transition. This dissertation is structured so as to address these shortcomings in the literature. It investigates how retirement affects both civic participation and well-being, and looks into various factors that may cause heterogeneity in these relationships.

§ 1.3.2 – Theoretical considerations
Theoretically, there are a number of perspectives from which retirement has been approached (van Solinge, 2013). This thesis utilizes several key notions that overarch the various perspectives and that have proven to be helpful tools when theorizing about outcomes of retirement. First, that retirement entails the departure from an important and often lifelong role, namely that of a worker. While this evidently differs from person to person, a job commonly provides people with a sense of individual and social identity, and formal and informal expectations about behavior and attitude (Biddle, 1986; Biddle & Thomas, 1966). This substantive role is relinquished upon retirement, when a new phase of life begins which is often characterized by less obligations and responsibilities and more freely allocatable leisure time. Altogether, this makes it a transition of considerable magnitude that requires at least some level of reorganization of life.

Another recurrent theoretical theme is the importance of the resources that are available to a retiring person and that change as a result of retirement (Wang, et al., 2011). Because the change in resources is different from person to person, and because people differ in the resources that are at their disposal to deal with the transition, effects of retirement may vary (van Solinge, 2013). For example, when a person’s social network comprises of many colleagues, then retirement may entail the loss of substantial social resources. The availability of financial resources may make the transition easier by facilitating regular trips to former co-workers. This notion of personal resources is also applied in this thesis.

§ 1.3.3 – Research themes and main hypotheses
The first theme that is addressed in this dissertation concerns the general effect of retirement on civic participation (theme A). On the one hand, retirement means that benefits which are associated with paid work, such as a daily structure of meaningful activities, an identifiable place in society, and relationships with colleagues, are lost (Atchley, 1976). On the other hand,
retirement means a substantial increase in freely allocatable leisure time. To counter the loss of different work-related benefits and effectively fill their newly gained free time, it can be expected that retirees engage in activities that offer resources which are comparable to those that are lost, like various civic activities. Such civic participation often provides some form of structure, challenges, feelings of usefulness, and social connectedness (Wilson, 2000). As such, they are an important aspect of successful aging (Rowe & Kahn, 1998). However, only a select number of contemporary studies has focused on this proposed effect of retirement on civic participation. Those that do generally find that retirement is associated with increased civic participation (Hank, 2011; Hank & Erlinghagen, 2009; Mutchler, Burr, & Caro, 2003), but the focus of these studies is often exclusively on formal volunteering, while there are other types of valuable civic activity in which people may engage after retirement. No previous studies, for example, have coupled retirement to the instrumental nature of relationships with family and friends (i.e., providing help). Such civic participation may be of a more informal nature, but is comparable to formal participation in the sense that it too offers benefits for the benefactor as well as the broader social environment (Piliavin, 2003). Further, an approach that goes beyond merely formal volunteering is insightful because different types of civic participation may complement or compete with one another, or be more or less susceptible to changes as a result of retirement. For example, through relationships with colleagues, work is a source of ‘weak ties’ (Podolny & Baron, 1997), relationships that form a bridge to other networks and open doors to information and resources not present in a person’s core social network (Granovetter, 1973, 1983). Volunteering or being a member of an organization may be more appropriate to replace such ties compared to helping family and friends, which involves strong ties.

Specifically, this thesis addresses theme A by investigating how retirement affects a range of types of civic participation, namely the provision of help to children, parents and friends, caring for ill or disabled non-family, volunteering, and organizational membership. It is further explored whether retirees are more inclined to invest in civic participation that provides weak ties, such as volunteering, rather than invest in strong-tie participation, such as helping family. The general hypotheses are that

A1) retirement leads to more civic participation, but
A2) this effect is stronger for weak-tie participation, such as volunteering, compared to strong tie participation, such as providing help to family or friends

Hypothesis A1 is addressed in chapters two and three, hypothesis A2 in chapter two.

After concentrating on theme A, the main effect of retirement on civic participation, this dissertation addresses theme B, the heterogeneity in this relationship. It does so by coupling research on volunteering outcomes with the classic sociological topic of social stratification along educational and occupational lines. Research has shown that education (McPherson & Rotolo, 1996; Wilson, 2000) and other stratification variables such as class and job status (Brady, Verba, & Schlozman, 1995; Gerstel & Gallagher, 1994; Smith, 1994; Wilson & Musick, 1997b)
are important predictors for volunteering, and there is an ongoing, more general, debate about whether it is mainly cultural resources like cognitive skill and knowledge or rather traditional class hierarchies that shape differences between people (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990; Evans, 1993; Goldthorpe & Marshall, 1992; Kalmijn & Kraaykamp, 2007). It can be expected that the outcomes of a life transition such as retirement, which entails a significant restructuring of life and choices to be made about which activities to undertake, are contingent on both these major stratifying factors. These moderating roles of educational and occupational background, however, have not been previously investigated with regard to post-retirement civic participation.

Educational background is expected to moderate the effect of retirement on volunteering because the highly educated are more likely to have internalized values that encourage civic engagement (Wilson, 2000), and volunteering offers the opportunity to put their knowledge and skills to good use (Clary & Snyder, 1999). Further, since the higher educated are more likely to already be involved in volunteering or know people that are (McPherson & Rotolo, 1996), the barrier to start or increase their volunteering is smaller than for lower educated people. The expectation is thus that, as retirement bereaves people of their job and bestows them with time, the higher educated will be more inclined to spend this time volunteering.

Occupational status is also expected to moderate the effect of retirement on volunteering. High status occupations differ from lower status occupations in several aspects. They often feature more complexity, autonomy, and variety, involve higher cognitive demands, but also provide more resources such as social connections and stimulating challenges. In general, such occupations promote an active orientation in life (Kalleberg, 1977; Kohn & Schooler, 1983; Loher, Noe, Moeller, & Fitzgerald, 1985; Ross & Reskin, 1992; Wilson & Musick, 1997a, 1997b). Losing such an occupation through retirement thus implies losing more in terms of challenges, experiences, social connections, and means to put human capital to work. It is expected that this difference in the type of loss that retirement represents, will lead to differences in the way people shape their retirement in terms of their civic participation. People who retire from higher status occupations have a stronger need to find activities that are challenging, gratifying and that offer channels to outlet their human capital. Volunteering suits this need, since it requires human capital and offers rewarding experiences. Further, committing to such activities also provides a certain social honor and prestige (Kaskie, Imhof, Cavanaugh, & Culp, 2008; Morrow-Howell, 2010), which may compensate for the possible loss of social status that was connected to the occupation. The hypotheses for theme B, which are addressed in chapter three, are

B1) The effect of retirement on volunteering is stronger for people with higher educational levels

B2) The effect of retirement on volunteering is stronger for people with higher (former) occupational status

After examining themes A and B by looking into retirement outcomes in terms of civic participation and how these are influenced by educational and occupational background, this
thesis moves to theme C, or the general effect of retirement on well-being. The specific focus is on self-rated health and satisfaction with life.

A number of studies that looks into the relationship between retirement and health focuses on the opposite effect of that under study in this thesis, namely the effect that ill health may have on retirement plans and the realization of those plans. Indeed, bad health is found to increase the odds of early retirement (Dwyer & Mitchell, 1999; McGarry, 2004), and it is important to take this reversed causal mechanism into account when looking into possible effects of retirement on health. Other studies focus on the losses that retirement brings, such as a daily structure, and generally report negative effects for health (Behncke, 2012; Dave, Rashad, & Spasojevic, 2008; Mein, Martikainen, Hemingway, Stansfeld, & Marmot, 2003; Moon, Glymour, Subramanian, Avendaño, & Kawachi, 2012; Westerlund et al., 2010). However, some of these studies seem unable to effectively distinguish between effects of retirement and the general deleterious effect of aging, which may have led to spurious negative effects of retirement. This dissertation lays emphasis on the underexposed notion that retirement also involves changes that may be beneficial to health. Upon retirement, a significant amount of time becomes available to engage in pleasurable activities such as hobbies or spending quality time with family and friends. Such activities can promote happiness and well-being in a general sense, which in turn improves health (Lin & Ensel, 1989; Uchino, Cacioppo, & Kiecolt-Glaser, 1996). Further, people may be more inclined to engage in more specific health behavior, such as sports, regular exercise or seeking medical care and advice (Chung, Domino, Stearns, & Popkin, 2009; Rabina Cozijnsen, Stevens, & Van Tilburg, 2013), because the value of good health and the willingness to invest in it increase after retirement (Thoits, 2006). The hypothesis, addressed in chapter four, is

C1  Retirement leads to better self-rated health

After the focus on self-rated health, the more psychological dimension of well-being is explored. This aspect of well-being has perhaps received most scrutiny in previous research, with studies looking at outcomes such as emotional well-being (Richardson & Kilty, 1991) and depression (Kim & Moen, 2002; Midanik, Soghikian, Ransom, & Tekawa, 1995). The current contribution applies satisfaction with life as an outcome measure (Diener, et al., 1985), which is a widely established, strong measure for overall subjective well-being (Pavot & Diener, 1993) that has been frequently used in research on well-being outcomes of retirement (Dingemans & Henkens, 2014; Wang, et al., 2011). This thesis investigates how retirement generally affects satisfaction with life (theme C) in chapter five.

For satisfaction with life, research into effects of retirement has provided somewhat mixed results. Some studies find that retirees are likely to report lower life satisfaction (Calvo, Sarkisian, & Tamborini, 2013; Richardson & Kilty, 1991) while others mostly report opposite findings (e.g., Calvo, Haeverstick, & Sass, 2009). Hershey and Henkens (2014) show that the voluntariness of the transition is a crucial aspect to take into account: involuntary retirement leads to lower life satisfaction, while a voluntary transition leads to a small increase in satisfaction with life.
Pinquart and Schindler (2007), using German data, showed that people tend to vary significantly in how retirement affects their life satisfaction: up to 10 percent experiences significant negative changes, a majority of up to 75 percent experiences minimal positive changes, and about 15 percent underwent a significant improvement in life satisfaction. In line with these findings and with the theoretical mechanisms outlined for hypothesis C1, the following hypothesis is addressed in chapter five:

C2  
*Retirement leads to higher satisfaction with life*

The effect of retirement on well-being is further explored in the context of theme D, the possible heterogeneity that exists in this relationship, a theme which is unsatisfactorily explored in current research. This is striking, because for many life transitions, such as divorce, it has been recognized that the outcomes of such events are largely dependent on the pre-transitional circumstances (Wheaton, 1990). For example, when people divorce from a dissatisfactory marriage, there are smaller increases in depression than when they divorce from more satisfying marriages (Kalmijn & Monden, 2006). For retirement, it seems evident that outcomes of health are dependent on pre-retirement job aspects that relate to health. Research has provided ample evidence that physically strenuous work, such as moving heavy objects, rapid or repetitive work, can directly cause bodily harm such as arthritis and lower back pain (e.g., Felson et al., 1991; Waddell & Burton, 2001). Retirement from a job with such demands can be viewed a relief or escape from the causes of health strains, which is beneficial to health.

Psychological stress has also been attested to be damaging to health (Chandola, Brunner, & Marmot, 2006; Marmot, Bosma, Hemingway, Brunner, & Stansfeld, 1997; Marmot & Wilkinson, 2005; Vrijkotte, Van Doornen, & De Geus, 1999, 2000). In short, while stress is not inherently bad per se, high levels of stress for enduring periods of time leads to sustained elevated levels of hormones such as cortisol and adrenaline (McEwen, 1998). This physiological mechanism causes people who experience their job as psychologically stressful to be relatively prone to physical disorders. Retirement relieves work stress, allowing the body to function more healthily. The expectations, addressed in chapter four, are that

D1  
*The effect of retirement on self-rated health is stronger for those who experience more physical demand on the job*

D2  
*The effect of retirement on self-rated health is stronger for those who experience more psychological stress on the job*

While there are several studies on how retirement influences health, and also on how stress affects health, there is only a handful that brings these fields together, and these analyze data that lack a comparison group of continuous workers (van Solinge, 2007; Westerlund et al., 2009). This is an important limitation, because the potential health benefits of retirement may be relative to those who remain in employment. That is, people who keep working
may experience a decline in health while this process is stopped or impeded for retirees. This dissertation uses panel data that alleviates this problem. It further expands on current research by giving particular attention to pre-retirement health. Research has shown that retirement is mostly beneficial for those with pre-retirement health problems (Westerlund, et al., 2009). This thesis is the first to address the question whether this is only because retirement relieves job stress, or if other mechanisms are also at play.

As mentioned in regard to hypothesis C2, research shows that people vary considerably in how retirement affects their satisfaction with life. This heterogeneity (theme D) has not been investigated satisfactorily, however. One aspect of the transition has remained almost completely unexplored, namely the ceremony that surrounds the moment of the transition itself, the retirement ritual (Atchley, 1976; Ekerdt, 2010). Such rituals often involve a get-together with colleagues, supervisors, and perhaps family, the presentation of a gift, an exchange of anecdotes, and some evaluative words. This study is the first to offer quantitative information on retirement rituals, and investigate how they may affect post-retirement satisfaction with life.

A retirement ritual can help a retiree to deal with the changes and uncertainties that retirement brings. A ritual may offer closure at work, convey admiration and confirmation with regard to a person’s career contributions, it may provide social support, and information about a person’s new social status and how to act (van Gennep, 1960). Such interactions can be expected to empower the retiree in effectively retiring, leading to higher levels of satisfaction with life. A retirement ritual may further be more important for some than for others. It can be expected that when people perceive themselves as highly competent in their work, they anticipate a proper farewell which confirms their abilities and achievements. They are left relatively unsatisfied if their retirement ritual is beneath their expectations. For people who are anxious about their impending retirement, a retirement ritual may also have added value. Such a ritual may impart information and confidence for the future, leading to higher life satisfaction compared to people with retirement anxiety who experience less extensive rituals. These possible differences in the effect of retirement rituals are also investigated. The hypotheses, addressed in chapter five, are

D3 The experience of more extensive retirement rituals leads to higher post-retirement satisfaction with life
D4 The effect of retirement rituals on satisfaction with life is stronger for retirees with high self-perceived competence
D5 The effect of retirement rituals on satisfaction with life is stronger for retirees with more anxiety about retirement
§ 1.4 – DATA AND METHODS

Effects of a life transition such as retirement are mostly investigated using non-experimental data, with which a number of designs is possible (Cook & Campbell, 1979). This thesis employs three: a design with measurements of retirees and people in employment at a single point in time; a design with pre- and post-transition measurements and a reference group of people who remained in employment over time; and a design with pre- and post-transition measurements of only retirees. The data stem from three separate large sets of quantitative data, all of which were collected in the Netherlands. The use of multiple datasets can be considered a strength, as no single dataset could contain all various parts of the retirement adjustment puzzle. While the current assembly of datasets may not be exhaustive, the datasets do complement and reinforce each other, and were chosen for their suitability to answer the research questions posed in the various chapters. The use of multiple datasets further facilitates a certain degree of internal replication, which is also present in this dissertation. Finally, it allows for different operational perspectives on the same theoretical concept.

For example, retirement as a status is notable for its elusiveness in terms of operationalization. Standards by which a person may be assigned the retired status may vary from a reduction of work hours at a later age to self-perceived status (Denton & Spencer, 2009; Ekerdt, 2010). However, all definitions tend to tap into the same notion: that retirement relates to a structural withdrawal from paid labor at a later age. This dissertation will employ different operational measures, namely a significant reduction in paid working hours (chapter two), self-perceived status (chapter three), and the use of an (early) retirement scheme (chapters four and five).

§ 1.4.1 – The Netherlands Kinship Panel Study

Chapter two analyzes two waves of panel data from the Netherlands Kinship Panel Study (NKPS), a nationally representative dataset focused on family ties that was selected for several reasons (Dykstra et al., 2004, 2007). First, the dataset fits the research question, how retirement affects civic participation, very well. It contains data on a broad range of civic activities and has an edge over other datasets because of its rare information on the amount of help that is provided within a number of dyads. Further, the strong design of the data ensures valuable pre- and post-retirement measures. Such longitudinal information is a significant strength, because it makes it possible to monitor a change within individuals rather than only differences between them. The dataset further includes valuable information on those who remained employed over time, who serve as a reference to those who retired. This leads to a full design with pre- and post-transition measures and a reference group.

To compare changes over time between retirees and those who remained in paid employment, several conditional change models are applied to a sample of 654 people aged 50 to 65 at wave one, of whom 22 percent was fully retired at wave two. A conditional change model includes the initial value of the dependent variable, measured at wave one, as a predictor. This controls for differences in initial levels of the dependent variable between retirees and those...
who remained in the workforce, reducing problems of causality. In line with the breadth of the research question, this is done for six different dependent variables: support given to parents; children; and friends; volunteering; caring for non-family; and number of memberships.

§ 1.4.2 – The Additional Facility-use Inquiry
Chapter three investigates the moderating role of education and occupational status for the effect of retirement on men’s volunteering. It analyzes a sample of 2665 men aged 50 to 70 of whom 842 were retired, taken from the 2003 and 2007 editions of the Additional Facility-use Inquiry (Aanvullend Voorzieningengebruik Onderzoek, or AVO). This is a nationally representative survey conducted for the Netherlands Institute for Social Research (SCP) every four years from 1979 to 2007, aimed at the use of social and cultural facilities by households and their members (Buis, 2007). Only men are analyzed since the AVO does not allow for a satisfactory delineation of retirement for women. Despite this, the dataset was chosen because compared to many other datasets, it includes a very informative and precise measure for formal volunteering, namely the number of hours per week. It further includes detailed information on the jobs of respondents, which is necessary to establish a person’s occupational status in various ways. Finally, this chapter looks into interactions between retirement, education and occupational background. While the data used in this chapter may not be longitudinal, the stacking of two separate waves generates the statistical power needed to effectively investigate interactions. Testing for interactions with panel data often leads to the problem that, across waves, there are too few transitions into retirement to adequately do so. With regard to the method applied, tobit regression is performed on the data to optimally deal with the fact that the dependent variable of volunteering hours is strongly truncated towards zero (i.e., a majority of 73 percent does not volunteer). The tobit model was specially developed for censored or truncated data and essentially combines logit and standard OLS regression techniques. The coefficients that it produces provide additional information over standard OLS coefficients, because they break down into two components: one that relates to those at the censoring limit (i.e., non-volunteers), and one for those above it (i.e., volunteers).

§ 1.4.3 – The NIDI Work and Retirement Panel
Chapters four and five use the same two waves of the NIDI Work and Retirement Panel (NWRP). The first wave of these panel data was collected in 2001 on behalf of the Stichting Management Studies in The Hague (Henkens & van Solinge, 2003). Data were collected among older employees (aged fifty and over) and their partners of several large multinational organizations (VendexKBB NV; IBM Nederland NV; and Unilever Nederland BV) and the central Dutch government. In 2006-2007, a follow-up study was completed by the Netherlands Interdisciplinary Demographic Institute (NIDI) among 1678 people that could be traced and were willing to cooperate. By this time, more than half of these respondents indicated that they had made use of an (early) retirement arrangement.

In the field of retirement adjustment research, the panel nature and relatively large sample
provide this dataset with a noteworthy edge over many other datasets, which are often cross-sectional or based on small convenience samples. Further, such samples are often exclusively focused on retirees, and provide no information on those who remained in employment. The NWRP includes a large portion of people who continued to work across waves, providing an important comparison group. The most important reason why the NWRP is excellently suited to investigate some of the research questions that are posed in this dissertation, is that the survey was geared towards the final years at work, retirement, and the years after. This focus ensures that much attention was paid to assessing the covariates that are of importance for this thesis, such as stress at work (chapter four) and retirement rituals (chapter five).

Chapter four focuses on self-rated health at wave two as a dependent variable, and includes pre-retirement self-rated health as a predictor, leading to a conditional change model. It also includes data on people who remained in employment, leading to a full design with measurements at two points in time and a reference group. Further, to account for the skewed distribution of the dependent variable while optimally exploiting its substantive information, an ordered logistic regression approach is applied, leading to a conditional change ordered logistic regression model.

Chapter five examines the change in satisfaction with life and how this is related to retirement rituals. Again, the baseline level of the dependent variable is included as a predictor in the model. This is a ‘standard’ conditional change model compared to chapter four, since satisfaction with life is a scale variable with no discrete categories, making this an effective approach. Only those who experienced the transition to retirement are analyzed, since those who remained in employment did not experience any farewell ceremony or retirement ritual. This leads to a longitudinal design, sans a reference group.