

Different Shades of Labor

Motives of Older Adults to Produce Value to Others

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Demographic shifts change the view on later adult life globally. Worldwide, people are living longer and by 2050 the world's population aged 60 years and older is expected to total 2 billion, up from 900 million in 2015 (<http://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/ageing-and-health>). This is also the case for the Netherlands where the number of people over 65 years is growing gradually. In 2017, the population aged 65 and older accounted to 3.2 million, which represents an increase of more than 1 million over two decades (the share of over-65s in the Dutch population was 18 percent in 2017). This increase is predominantly related to the baby boomer generation, which comprises individuals born between 1946 and 1964 and of whom the majority is now older than 65 years. Moreover, in the Netherlands, this group of over-65s is relatively healthy and also lives longer than earlier generations (CBS, Trends in the Netherlands, 2017).

Parallel to this demographic trend a debate in society endures, namely that getting older is often seen as corresponding to a withdrawal from the labor market (e.g., Dosman et al., 2006) and consequently being categorized as 'unproductive' if one does not participate in activities performed for paid work. Older adults are often seen as an economic burden on society, consuming pension and healthcare services. Yet, living longer offers older adults flexibility and opportunities to pursue various productive activities. As a matter of fact, in older adulthood and extending even beyond individuals' retirement period, numerous productive activities can be performed and does not resemble the end of a productive life. These activities can be categorized as (1) commercial, such as starting one's own business (self-employed) (e.g. Damman and Solinge, 2018; Kautonen et al., 2017), participating in the sharing economy, such as car sharing (Zipcar), accommodation sharing (Airbnb), meal sharing (Thuisafgehaald) or as (2) non-commercial such as performing volunteer work or taking care of grandchildren. Moreover, older adults might look for combining these commercial and non-commercial productive activities in their lives (Damman and Solinge, 2017). This clearly stands in sharp contrast to the 'unproductive', economic inactive older adult, who is perceived mainly as being engaged with filling his or her free time with leisure activities (e.g., travelling or reading a book) and coping with health issues (e.g., Kanfer et al., 2013).

Theories of positive ageing focus on the importance of the concepts of productive ageing among older adults (Herzog et al. 1998; Morrow-Howell et al. 2001). Productive ageing focuses on the positive contributions made by older adults, to society or communities for instance, and is seen as a vital part of successful ageing (Morrow-Howell et al. 2001). Therefore, in this paper our first objective

is to explore the various productive activities (commercial and non-commercial) that older adults can possibly engage in. Specifically, by building on work in the field of organizational and developmental psychology we are making a first attempt to understand older adults' underlying motives for engaging in these productive activities. For instance, a prominent way of categorizing motives has been the distinction between intrinsically and extrinsically driven motives (Ryan and Deci, 2000). Damman and Solinge (2018) for example investigated individuals' motivations behind senior self-employment and found that for both groups of seniors, continuers (individuals that were self-employed and perform their activities past the endorsed pension age), and starters (salary-receiving workers that return to the labor market after being retired as self-employed) extended employment was primarily motivated by opportunity, so intrinsic motivation. Additionally, we build on work related to the 'meaning of work' addressed in the area of human development. For instance, Mor-Barak (1995) explored factors of work-meaning among older adults and identified financial, social (to interact with other and obtain positive regards from others), personal (to obtain intrinsic and self-rewarding), and generativity (to provide and pass on information to others) as key underlying motives to seek employment. In an explorative study design we investigate the various productive activities (commercial and non-commercial) that older adults in the Netherlands between the ages of 55 and 80 engage in as well as their underlying motives for participating.

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