

# Interdisciplinary perspectives on retirement and inequality in old-age: short- and long-term effects

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University of Geneva, Centre Médical Universitaire (CMU), Rue Michel-Servet 1, Genève,  
Salle B02.2226.a (Auditoire Paul Boymond)

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## Short description

Current demographic and economic developments in Western societies fuel a trend of raising the statutory retirement age and of inciting employment beyond statutory retirement age. Yet, the public and academic debates about working life extension give little attention to how this trend affects different social groups. This workshop aims at discussing how current changes in retirement transition are related to inequality in old age, for instance in terms of health outcomes. We explore three main questions: First, what are the short- and long-term spillover and crossover effects of different types of retirement transitions on potential inequalities? Second, what can we learn from different disciplinary perspectives? Third, which methodological advances allow us to disentangle the complex, reciprocal relationships between retirement transitions and factors such as health outcomes? Three keynote speakers from the fields of sociology, psychology and economics will provide insights about the mechanisms that underpin potential inequalities in the extension of working life.

## Program

Time	Event
9:30	Keynote 1: Hanna van Solinge <i>How (un)fair is raising the retirement age?</i>
11:00	Coffee break
11:30	Keynote 2: Stefanie König and Linn Zulka <i>Cognitive health in the retirement transition</i>
13:00	Lunch
14:15	Keynote 3: Axel Börsch-Supan <i>Increasing the retirement age: helpful and unhelpful solutions</i>
15:45	Goodbye coffee

## Abstracts

### Keynote 1: How (un)fair is raising the retirement age?

Hanna van Solinge (Netherlands Interdisciplinary Demographic Institute, The Hague, The Netherlands)

*All over Europe pension reforms have been implemented across the board but older adults differ in time horizon (life expectancy), their capability to extend their working lives and their agency to design their retirement in the light of existing constraints. In this presentation, I will focus on the differential impact of the retirement reforms on socio-economic groups. Using data from the NIDI\* Pension Panel Survey (2015-2018) from older workers (age 60-65) in the Netherlands (N = 5,300) I will examine the social gradient in perceived feasibility of work life extension, and in retirement preferences and actual retirement behavior. Results suggest that the extent to which older workers are able to control the course of their late career may be limited, and that this agency is structured along lines of social disadvantage markers, such social class. Vulnerable groups of older workers and, in particular, less educated, less healthy older workers with lower social status are less likely to realize their preferences for early retirement than higher status groups.*

\* Netherlands Interdisciplinary Demographic Institute (NIDI)

### Keynote 2: Cognitive health in the retirement transition

Stefanie König and Linn Zulka (Department of Psychology, University of Gothenburg, Sweden)

*From an aging research and life-course perspective, the transition to retirement marks a significant life-event and provides a unique opportunity to study different health aspects during a period of substantial change in everyday life. In this presentation, we will mainly focus on cognitive health and how it is affected by retirement. Results of a recent systematic literature review by our group as well as empirical work using data from the Swedish population-based longitudinal HEARTS (HEalth, Ageing and Retirement Transitions in Sweden) study will be presented. Furthermore, methodological challenges when studying cognition and retirement will be discussed.*

### **Keynote 3: Increasing the retirement age: helpful and unhelpful solutions**

Axel Börsch-Supan (Max Planck Institute for Social Law and Social Policy

Munich Center for the Economics of Aging, Munich, Germany)

*As individuals live longer, one needs to allocate the added life time between work and retirement. We first present the outcomes of this allocation in twelve countries from the 1980s until now and present econometric evidence for the likely reasons behind the observed changes. We then look at current policy proposals, including backlashes to earlier policies, and assess their likely results. Finally, we study why "flexibility reforms" are often less of a solution than advertised.*

We strive to make this event as ecological as possible. We would like to encourage the participants to support us in this goal.