Labor Market Participation, Informal Caregiving and Quality of Life of Elderly People in Bulgaria

Rumiana Jeleva

Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Sofia

Участие на пазара на труда, полагане на грижи за другите и качество на живот на възрастните хора в България

Румяна Желева

Институт по философия и социология, Българска академия на науките, София

Author Note

Rumiana Jeleva https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5949-6256

Rumiana Jeleva is an Associate Professor in Sociology at the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Sofia

The author has no known conflict of interest to disclose.

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Rumiana Jeleva, Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Sofia, 1000, 13A Moskovska Str., e-mail: rumiana.zheleva@outlook.com

Бележки за автора

Румяна Желева https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5949-6256

Румяна Желева, доцент, доктор в Институт по философия и социология, Българска академия на науките.

Авторът няма конфликт на интереси.

Кореспонденцията, свързана с тази статия, да бъде адресирана до Румяна Желева, Институт по философия и социология, Българска академия на науките, София, 1000, ул. Московска 13А, e-mail: rumiana.zheleva@outlook.com

Abstract

The report focuses on the quality of life of elderly people (age 55+), studying the characteristics of their labor market participation and informal caregiving. The analysis is based on a nationally representative sociological survey conducted in 2022 by a team from the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology at the Bulgarian Academy of Science. The survey covers all age groups - 55-59, 60-64, 65-69, 70-74, and 74+, as well as informal forms of work such as caretaking for children/grandchildren and/or another dependent adult. The results show a change, although not yet very significant, in the quality of life of the elderly in Bulgaria. It is characterised by the fact that a large proportion of elderly people (47%) do not want to work as they get older, which is more pronounced the higher their income. There is also a minor change in the proportion of people caring for other household members. This change brings Bulgaria closer to European levels, shifting the focus of family care towards care and social services professionals provide.

Keywords: elderly, aged 55+, labour market participation, caregiving

Резюме

Статията е посветена на качеството на живот на възрастните хора (над 55 години), като се изучават характеристиките на тяхното участие на пазара на труда и неформалната заетост като полагането на грижи за друг. Анализът се основава на резултатите от национално представително социологическо проучване, проведено през 2022 г. от екип на Института по философия и социология при БАН. Проучването обхваща всички възрастови групи - 55-59 г., 60-64 г., 65-69 г., 70-74 г. и 74+ г., както и неформалните форми на труд като грижи за деца/внуци и/или други зависими възрастни. Резултатите показват промяна, макар и все още не много значителна, в качеството на живот на възрастните хора в България. Тя се характеризира с това, че голяма част от възрастните хора (47%) нямат желание да продължават да работят с напредването на възрастта, като това е толкова по-силно изразено, колкото по-високи са доходите на възрастните хора. Незначителна промяна се наблюдава и в дела на хората, които се грижат за други членове на домакинството. Тази промяна доближава страната ни до европейските нива, като измества фокуса на семейните грижи, полагани от възрастните хора, към грижа и социалните услуги, предоставяни от професионалисти и професионални организации.

Ключови думи: възрастни хора, 55+ години, участие на пазара на труда, полагане на грижи

ARTICLE INFO:
Original Article
Received: 15, 12. 2022
Revised: 24, 01. 2023
Accepted: 08, 02.2023

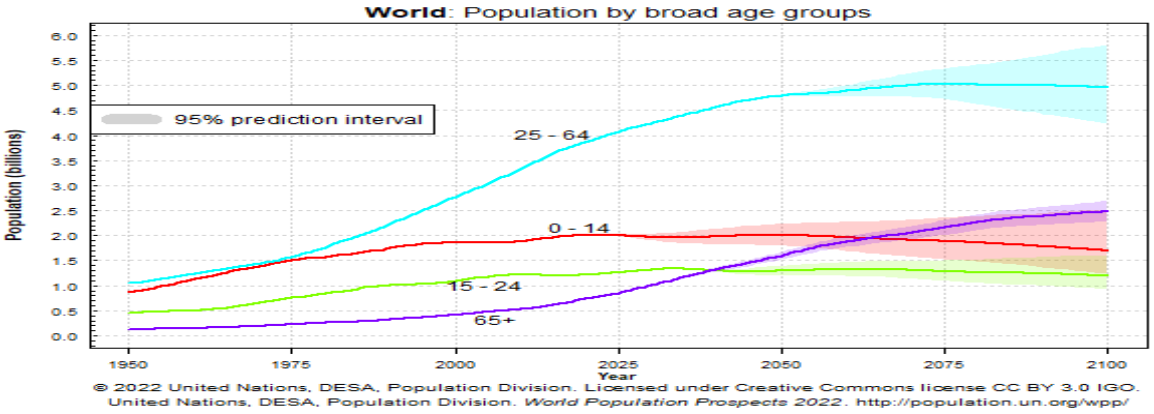
Labor market participation, informal caregiving and quality of life of elderly people in Bulgaria

Introduction

According to observations registered over the last decade (2011-2021), the median age of the population of EU member states has increased by 2.5 years, reaching 44.1 years by January 1, 2021 (Gargano, 2022). This means that half of the EU's population was older than 44.1 years on that date. According to Eurostat data, the proportion of the population aged 65 years and over in EU-27 had increased from 14.4% in 2010 to 19.4% in 2020; this trend is projected to continue in the coming decades. Moreover, more than one-third of the EU population is projected to be aged 65+ by 2100 (Gargano, 2022). Although the current UN research data from 2022 show that, compared with Europe, the global tendency looks better, with a share of the global population aged 65 years or above projected to rise from 10% in 2022 to only 16% in 2050, some other trends cause concern. By 2050, the number of persons aged 65 years or over worldwide is projected to be more than twice the number of children aged under five and about the same as the number of children under the age of 12 (World Population Prospects 2022: Summary of Results, 2022)

Chart 1

World population by age groups



2022 United Nations. DESA. Population Division. World population prospects 2022.

There are several causes for this stable trend of an increasing proportion of older people in the European population and a decreasing proportion of younger people. Among these are declining fertility rates, increasing life expectancy, and the aging of the post-World War II baby boomer generation. This demographic shift has important implications for various social and economic issues, including healthcare, pensions, and labor markets.

The situation in Bulgaria does not diverge from this general European trend. On the contrary, Bulgaria has one of the oldest populations in the EU. According to Eurostat, in 2020, the

proportion of the population aged 65 years and over in Bulgaria was 21.8%, higher than the EU-27 average of 19.4%. In general, the current demographic situation in Bulgaria is characterized by aging and continuous population decline, low birth rates, and high overall mortality rates (Bulgarian national report, 2018-2022). The imbalance in the territorial distribution of the population is also growing. Despite these general tendencies, some positive trends in the overall demographic situation in Bulgaria have been reported in 2020, including a decrease in infant mortality, a total fertility rate close to the EU average of 1.48 children per woman, a reduction in the number of divorces, increased mechanical growth of the population, and an ongoing gradual, although not very rapid, improvement of the population's living conditions, standard and quality of life (Bulgarian national report, 2018-2022).

The aging trend and the overall decline in the size of Bulgaria's population have important implications for a range of policy areas, including healthcare, pensions, and the labor market. The economic consequences for the labor market and its functioning are multifaceted: the size of the workforce is decreasing, a trend that is expected to continue; consequently, the quality of labor is also expected to decrease, negatively impacting the educational level of the workers, their professional competencies and skill acquisition; this, in turn, will lead to deterioration of their adaptability to change under new and pressing challenges such as the green and digital transitions, etc. The group of unemployed persons over 50 years registered in the territorial divisions of the Employment Agency is relatively large, and so is their share among all those registered.

These data represent real challenges to the future because of the changing age structure of the Bulgarian labor market. As mentioned above, the diminishing number of workers will affect Bulgaria's social and healthcare systems. According to the United Nations World Population Prospects 2021 report (2021), Bulgaria's population aged 65 and over was estimated to be around 20.6% in 2020 and was projected to increase to about 30.1% by 2060. At the same time, the proportion of Bulgaria's population aged 15-64, generally considered the working-age category, was approximately 67.2% in 2020. However, it was projected to decrease to about 53.7% by 2060 (based on data from the United Nations World Population Prospects 2021 report). The COVID-19 pandemic has affected all societal systems in Bulgaria. The labor market, healthcare, pension system, social protection, and long-term care were additionally challenged and required national-level measures for stabilization and recovery. In developing and implementing such measures, special attention should be paid to vulnerable groups, including the elderly. In Bulgaria, institutions need to take additional integrated action to adapt

key sectors such as employment, health, education, social security, and social assistance to aging.

In recent years, the operational documents on aging in Bulgaria, such as the National Strategy for Demographic Development of the Population (2012-2030)[1] and National Ageing Strategy for Active Life of Elderly People in Bulgaria (2019-2030)[2] have outlined key measures, which, however, none of the institutions has recognized so far, and to which attention should be paid in the future:

a) Encouraging the supply of goods and services adapted to the needs of the elderly;

b) Improving the attitudes of society towards older people and communication against discrimination;

c) Strengthening the capacity of stakeholders with regard to policies for older people;

d) Creating a favorable environment for active aging in small and remote areas.

In order to investigate whether the policy on aging has been going in the right direction toward achieving these goals, a nationally representative survey was launched in 2022, aimed at collecting up-to-date information on labor market participation, informal caregiving, and the quality of life of elderly people in Bulgaria. The survey is part of a bigger national survey collecting data on the 22 leading indicators of the Active Ageing Index, which serves to monitor and evaluate the National Strategy for Active Ageing in Bulgaria (2019 - 2030).

Based on the results, how should we formulate the problem of the participation of the elderly in Bulgaria in active work? What is the current picture in 2022 regarding the employment of people aged 55 and over, and what are the prospects for their more active inclusion in the labor market?

Methodology and demographic profile of people aged 55+ in Bulgaria

The study of the quality of life in Bulgaria for persons aged 55+ was conducted in the first half of 2022 by a team of researchers from the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology at BAS. It addresses different thematic areas such as employment, inclusion in public life, health, and well-being, based on various indicators. The research aims to establish (at national and regional levels) the extent to which older people live independently, participate in paid employment and social activities, and study their potential for active and healthy aging. The research is nationally representative and covers 1,030 persons aged 55+, selected through a two-stage quota sample

[1] National aging strategy for the active life of elderly people in Bulgaria (2019-2030) https://unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/pau/age/WG.12/Presentations/2_National-Strategy-Active-Ageing-Bulgaria.pdf

[2] See National Strategy for Demographic Development of the Population. 2012-2030. https://www.mlsp.government.bg/uploads/1/bg-mlsp-national-demographic-strategy-summary-en.pdf

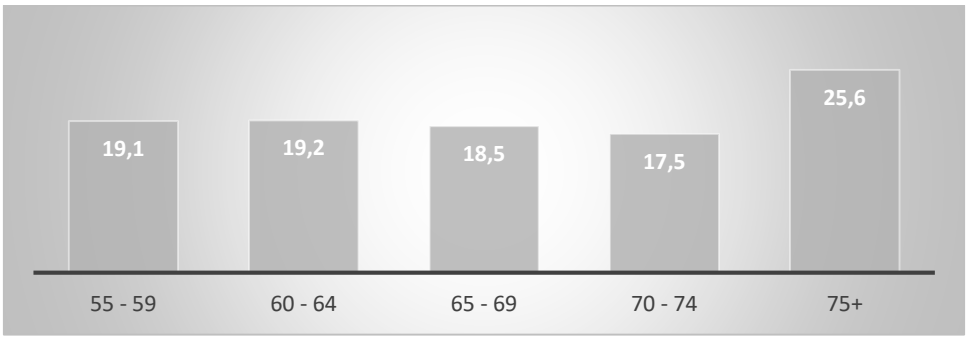
structured according to age and gender. The number of respondents was precisely specified for each administrative region and each settlement in the sample. Respondents were only people aged 55+, distributed in nests of 10 people in each settlement, with a pre-calculated exact number of nests for the respective settlement in the sample. The respondents were divided into five age groups: 55-59 years; 60-64 years; 65-69 years; 70-74 years; 75+ years.

All charts in the following sections were made by the author as a research participant and represent the results of this nationally representative survey on the quality of life of people aged 55+

The author makes all charts in the following sections as a research participant and represents the results of this nationally representative survey on the quality of life of people aged 55+

Chart 2

The age structure of persons aged 55+



The survey data confirm that the number of women exceeds that of men in the age group 55+, the values being 56.8% and 43%, respectively.

The educational structure of the population aged 55+ shows some exciting features. The relatively higher academic level of the older population in our country is noteworthy. Elderly people with secondary special and secondary vocational education have the largest share, 24.1%. The elderly with higher education at master's degree level are next (20.5%), and in third place are the elderly with secondary general education (17%). If we add to them the smaller percentage shares of people with higher education at professional bachelor's degree level (7.7%); higher education with a bachelor's degree (4.5%); higher education with a doctor's degree (1.9%) and vocational training for the acquisition of fourth-degree professional qualification (4.7%), the results show that at the time of the study, a total of 80.4% of people aged 55+ in Bulgaria had secondary or higher education. The result suggests expected good opportunities for active aging and fuller participation in public life. Due to their higher qualifications, people with a good education have better prospects for an active working and social life, even at a more advanced age.

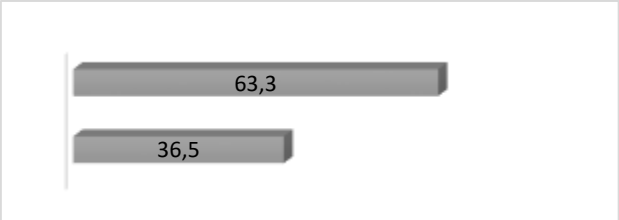
At the same time, the research shows that 19.6% of the elderly have less than secondary education, among whom the most significant share is of people with primary education and vocational training (14.7%). This result implies a severe challenge to the possibilities and implementation of lifelong learning for such people and, more generally, a challenge to active aging policies and concrete measures.

Participation in the labor market or informal caregiving for others

Regarding the economic activity/employment of the elderly, when asked whether, one week before the survey, they had been working, the share of economically inactive persons (retired) proved higher, amounting to 63.3%, while the percentage of the employed was almost twice smaller (36.5%), albeit constituting a higher share than that registered by the Labor Force Survey on the population of Bulgarian National Statistical Institute (NSI, 2021) as of 31.12.2021 (33.26%)[3].

Chart 3[4]

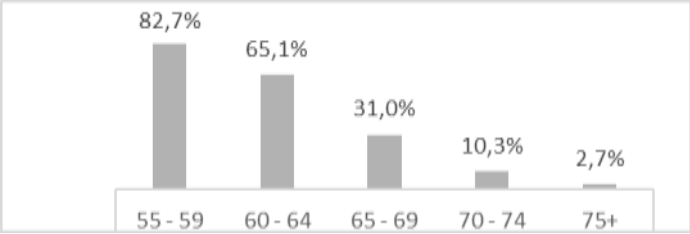
Employment



The employed aged 65-69 (retired) are 31%, and of all those aged 70+, 13% are also employed

Chart 4

Relationship between employment and age



In Chart 5, the result that makes the strongest impression is the high share of adults who no longer wish to work – 47.3%. Interestingly, the percentage remains high concerning not only

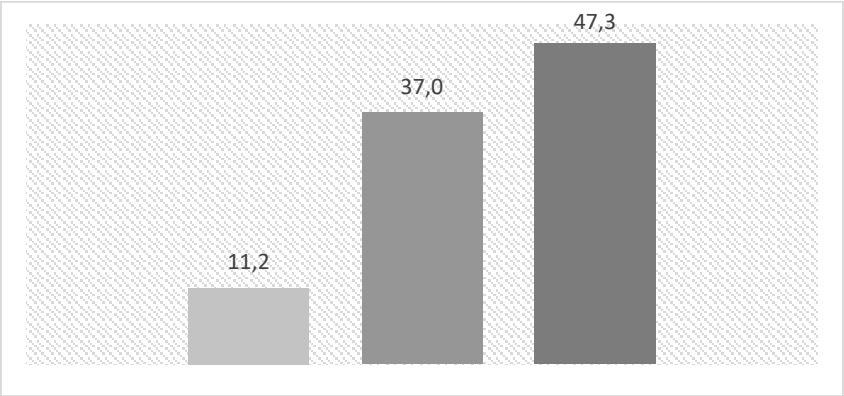
[3] See, National Statistical Institute (NSI). 2022 and preceding years. Labor force survey https://www.nsi.bg/bg/content/3990/%D0%BD%D0%B0%D0%B1%D0%BB%D1%8E%D0%B4%D0%B5%D0%BD%D0%B8%D0%B5-%D0%BD%D0%B0-%D1%80%D0%B0%D0%B1%D0%BE%D1%82%D0%BD%D0%B0%D1%82%D0%B0-%D1%81%D0%B8%D0%BB%D0%B0 .

[4] As stated above, all charts presented in this section are based on the nationally representative survey.

the form of employment but also working hours, the organization of the workplace, and the employment contract.

Chart 5

Form of employment

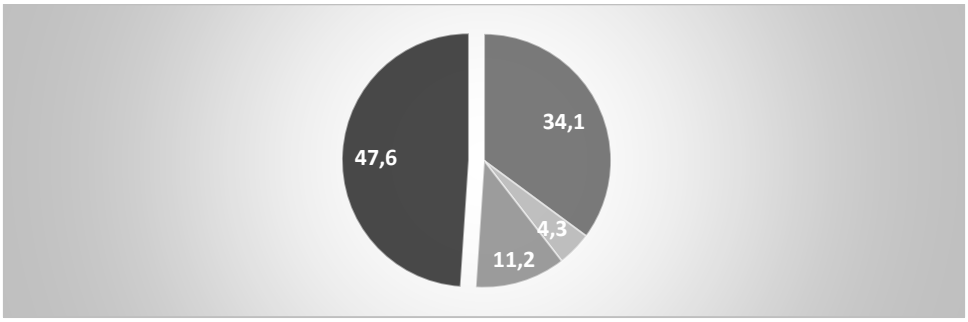


The reluctance to continue working expressed by people aged 55+ is understandable, as the post-retirement period should be a time for rest and non-work-related fulfillment. On the other hand, the result portends difficulties in realizing the full potential of active aging policies for the elderly. This result indicates the need to change the management of the active working life of the currently employed. The strong reluctance to continue working is possibly due to people's desire to avoid further high work intensity and stress. Suppose the state intends to motivate elderly people in Bulgaria to continue work or return to it. In that case, the categorically negative attitude expressed by such a high percentage of respondents is addressed with active concrete measures. Most respondents prefer working as employed persons (37%), while 11.2% prefer self-employment as entrepreneurs, freelancers, etc. (Chart 5).

On the other hand, most of the respondents choose full-time work. A possible interpretation of this preference of the elderly for a "classical" work organization can be found in the fact that some of the respondents are between the ages of 55 and 64 and are probably still working, but even for pensioners, the more familiar (and traditionally exercised) organization of work is the whole working day, which is why they would again choose such a form of employment. As the results in Chart 6 show, a similar traditionalism is observed both in terms of the choice of the workplace (the larger share of respondents, about 34%, prefer to be employed at a fixed workplace rather than in remote work or at a home office, which is the choice of only about 4%) and in terms of the type of employment contract (most prefer open-ended job contracts); for about 11%, the kind of employment is not very important. Again, over 47% do not want to participate further in the labor market.

Chart 6

Organization of work: type of workplace



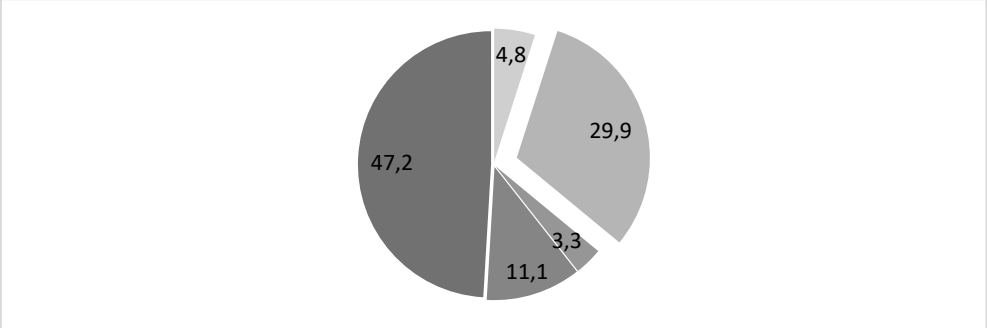
The following survey results show that work organization is very important, especially for older workers. There is a significant and moderately strong correlation between the working time preferences and the age of the respondents. Respondents in the "youngest" group (55-59) strongly prefer full-time work. In the 60-64 and 65-69 groups, this preference shifts slightly in favor of part-time/hourly work, and in the group of respondents over 70, it can determine no clear choice. These results reveal the work potential of people aged between 65 and 69 years and the motivation to continue working if the opportunity for part-time work is available. A moderate interdependence is evident between respondents' preferred employment and their total net monthly income measured at the "household" level. The preference for working as an employed person is prevalent, being observed most often among respondents with a total household income of BGN 1,601 (with the reference exchange rate of BGN to the Euro of 1.95583) to BGN 1,800 (69.8%) and those with an income between BGN 2,501 and BGN 3,000 (79.1 %). A distinct increase in the preference for self-employment is observed in the groups with the highest income (from BGN 1,801 and above). It is very impressive that the preference for self-employment to being employed occurs in the highest income range (over BGN 3,000). A possible explanation may be that this preference is related to respondents' current and accumulated work experience. The survey results justify the assumption that working as an employed person is perceived as more secure and more suitable by most Bulgarians over 55, even when the income is lower. At the same time, those who prefer self-employment are a smaller but economically more prosperous group.

Regarding the type of employment contract, the preference for open-ended employment contracts prevails – at 29.9% (Chart 7). The perception of civil and fixed-term employment contracts as an alternative increases moderately in the age groups 60-64 and 65-69. Similar to the observations regarding working hours, here too it can be said that people's preferences are predetermined by their previous experience. In this case, the results confirm the widespread

practice of employers hiring pensioners mainly under civil and fixed-term employment contracts. On the other hand, when retirement has already occurred, i.e., a certain income is guaranteed through the pension, it is typical for people seeking employment to show greater flexibility in terms of the type of employment.

Chart 7

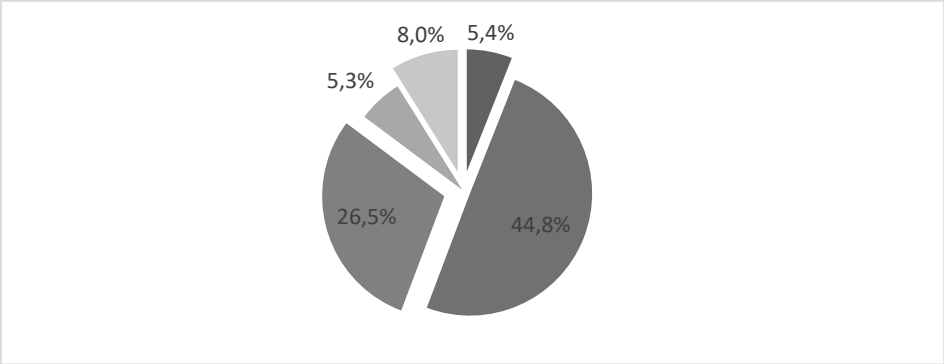
Organization of work: Working contract type



The survey respondents who were still working used a variety of job search channels (Chart 8). The primary way of job search used by the respondents (except for the self-employed or employed on a competitive basis) is direct contact with an employer (44.8%), followed by assistance from relatives and friends (26.5%). Job search through job advertisements (on the Internet and in other media) and search through the Labor Offices are the least used (respectively 5.4% and 5.3% in Chart 8). This raises the question of how effective the Labor Offices are for people over 55 years; this may be the subject of another study.

Chart 8

Assistance in finding a job



Advanced age stands out among the reasons why older people do not look for work/do not want to work – this answer is always presented with a share of about 47% and above. It is the main

reason for not wanting to work, as indicated by more than a third of the respondents (34.7%). The second most common reason is poor health (6.2%), and in third place, employers' reluctance to hire older people (3.2%). These results show that the main barriers to employment of people over 55 are personal reasons and not employers' reluctance. Respondents perceive their advanced age as the main obstacle. The reasons for this may vary; these may include difficulties in movement and lack of suitable means of transport, a high degree of stress, and other objective circumstances, but they could also be subjective, such as the possible (self) stigmatization as an "old" person or the perception of such a stereotype as prevailing in the community. In this context, targeting the over-55s to reframe age as a barrier to economic activity and working to change age stereotypes in Bulgarian society are necessary and still untapped opportunities. Among working and job-seeking respondents, 16.8% indicated that their age had a negative impact on their ability to start work, and 3.4% reported negative attitudes towards them based on their age. Although not exceptionally high, these figures reflect a confident attitude towards older people who wish to continue participating in the labor market. As can be seen from the results, there is still work to be done in Bulgarian society to counter the negative attitude towards age in order to make fuller use of the work potential of people aged 55+ and especially those in the higher age groups.

Regarding caring for others (children, grandchildren, adults under and over the age of 75 years), the survey in question showed that the categories in the option of caring for "at least a few days a week" were as follows: caring for children (7.9%); caring for grandchildren (12.7%); caring for dependent relatives under the age of 75 (5%); care for dependent relatives over the age of 75 (10.9%). Caring for grandchildren remains a significant activity area for all respondents, regardless of age. Nevertheless, a considerable reduction of caregiving for grandchildren is evident compared to the results of the European Quality of Life Survey in 2016, which were much higher for Bulgaria than for other European countries – still, 34% of the population aged 50-64 indicated that they were engaged "at least a few days a week" in caring for grandchildren. The downward trend registered in 2016 for the share of people aged 65+ who reported being involved in care for grandchildren "at least a few days a week" (albeit remaining around the European average) was confirmed by the current national sociological survey, which indicates a further decrease and values closer to those in the Central European countries.

The correlation between the age of the respondents and their commitment to caregiving is insignificant. Still, it points to interesting conclusions, especially regarding the results of the last wave of the European Quality of Life Survey (2016). According to its data, informal and unpaid caretaking is a significant commitment for people aged between 50 and 64 in Bulgaria,

while this is not the case for people aged 65 and over. The same tendency was observed in Greece, for instance. The European Quality of Life Survey results clearly show that the "southern" culture of Bulgaria and Greece, which is mostly focused on the family and the immediate circle of relatives, affects the levels of civic engagement of adults. This is particularly evident when the results for these two countries are compared to those obtained in an established social democracy like Sweden (European Quality of Life Survey, 2016). However, as outlined by recent studies on informal caregiving, gender, and socioeconomic inequalities exist among elderly caregivers, even in a strong welfare state such as Sweden (von Saenger, Dahlberg, Augustsson, et al., 2023, p.11). Evidence-based information about levels and patterns of intergenerational care has important implications for understanding informal caregiving within families and households and further organizing and managing professional care services and active aging.

The results of the two surveys do not match each other; a comparison between them is not the purpose of the present analysis and would, in fact, not be possible for at least the following reasons. The European Quality of Life Survey is based on data for the 50-64 age range population. The national representative social survey was designed to cover the 55-64 age range plus older age groups, including 74 and over. The second reason is that the European Quality of Life Survey contains data from the 2016 wave, whereas the national survey presents the most up-to-date data, those from 2022. Due to their timeliness, the national survey data show some significant changes which, although differing from the last wave of the European Quality of Life Survey, deserve to be considered as they point to new tendencies in the quality of life of elderly in Bulgaria. Other tendencies remain in the same range: for instance, more people in the age group 55-64 are caregivers for dependents than are those in the 65+ group. The largest share of caregivers is those who care for their grandchildren, followed by those caring for dependent adults aged over 75. In some cases, for example, in the category relevant to grandchildren, respondents caring 1-2 times a week were almost as many as those caring at least a few times a week.

In terms of the frequency with which respondents in the 50-64-year age group care for frail family members, neighbors, and friends or disabled persons aged over 75, the European Quality of Live Survey confirms that 3% of people care for ailing family members, neighbors, and friends or disabled persons over the age of 75 "at least a few days a week ."This is the lowest score of all collected for comparison. On the one hand, it is a good thing that the overall burden of caring for various persons in the 65+ age group has been reduced. However, this result is also evidence of Bulgarians' poor health state. Its poor quality is evident in life expectancy at

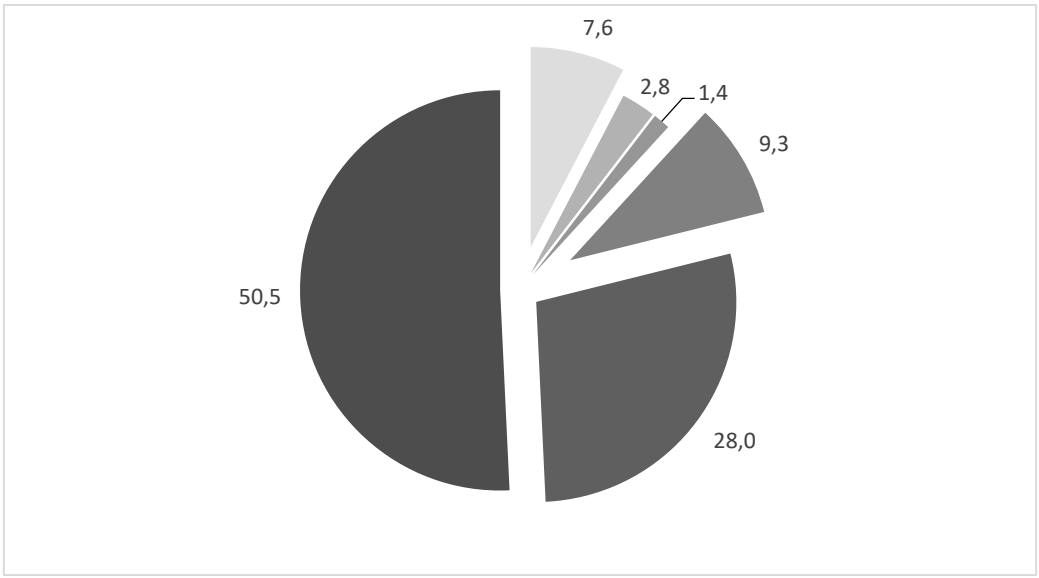
birth (the lowest in the European Union in 2020, according to Eurostat) and life expectancy at 65 (again the lowest in the European Union in 2020, according to Eurostat). A small proportion of people over 65 in Bulgaria care for relatives over 75 because comparatively few people live beyond that age.

When observing the age groups 55-59, 60-64, etc., the nationally representative survey results show that the most actively engaged in caring are those in the 55-59 age range. They are the largest caring group in three of the four care categories. The only exception is the 65-69 group, which cares for the most significant proportion of dependent adults aged under 75 at least once a week (10.33%).

When asked which household member they had taken care of in the last 12 months, most respondents indicated they cared for a sick husband or wife.

Chart 9

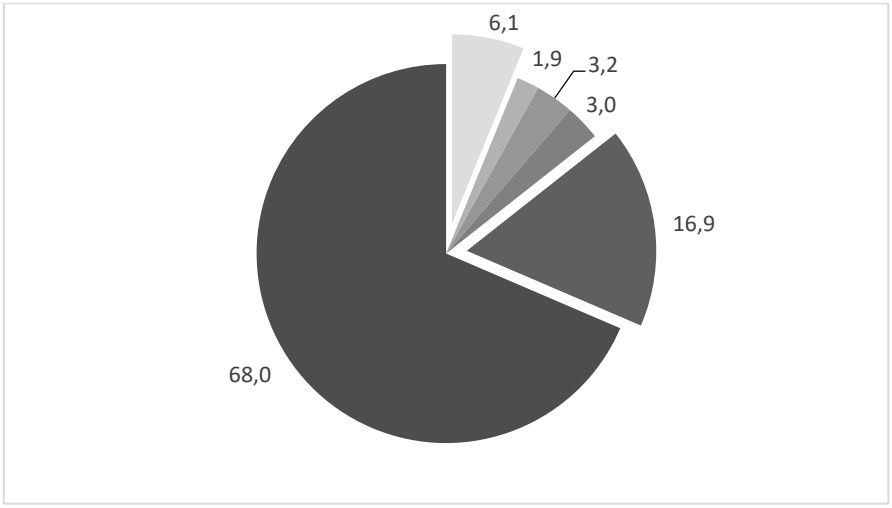
Caretaking for sick/disabled family member



The percentage of those engaged in such every day is 7.6%, while those who take such care less often than once or twice a week are 9.3%. A high proportion of respondents, 28%, have never taken such care, and for about 50%, the question is not applicable (Chart 9). Next, respondents indicated taking care of one of their elderly parents – 6% of respondents stated that they did so daily. Three percent of those interviewed reported doing this "once or twice a week" or "less often." Almost 17% of respondents had never had to care for an elderly parent alone, and for 68% of respondents, the question was "not applicable"; this also shows that respondents have not faced the need to care for an elderly parent. The results are similar as regards caring for another household member (Chart 10)

Chart 10

Caretaking for sick/disabled parents

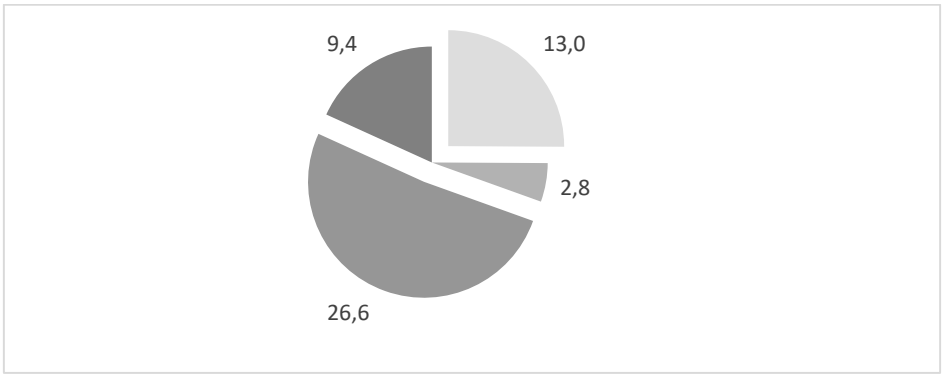


A share of 6.4% of respondents indicated that they had taken care of another dependent household member "every day". Another 3% gave such care "several times a week," and about 5% gave it less often than once or twice weekly. For a large share of respondents, about 30%, taking care of another household member had never been necessary. For almost 60%, the question was not applicable; thus, these respondents had not taken such care due to objective causes.

Regarding whether a person needed care in the respondent's household, the respondent would agree to have someone else perform such maintenance professionally, and the answers were very diverse. For example, 26.6% would not agree under any circumstances that other people, even professionals, provide such care, and only 2.8% would agree under certain conditions. Only 13% of all interviewees answered affirmatively and unconditionally, and 9.4% could not decide (Chart 11).

Chart 11

Readiness to replace informal personal caretaking for a dependent household member with care provided by professionals



The results indicate deficient trust in professional social care in Bulgaria. This is probably partly due to people's general skepticism regarding the quality of care for sick and needy relatives provided outside the family/household. The mistrust is connected with family culture and strong family ties in Bulgaria. The survey result could also be a sign of a shallow level of knowledge about the social care system due to a lack of information; hence, people cannot build trust in it. It could also express frustration or negative experience with professional care provided by a person or institution outside the family/household, such as the municipality, the state, etc.

Conclusion

People aged 55+ are an essential source of labor force growth. Still, they are also users of services (such as training, upskilling, the teaching of new skills, etc.), including services related to employment or to care for other families/household members (such as care for children, dependents and needy adults aged under or over 75 years). The research shows that respondents make little use of these care services in terms of care from others and remain personally highly engaged in such activities. On the other hand, based on the data from the national social survey, we could hypothesize that in a future wave of the European Quality of Life Survey, we will see changes in the results for Bulgaria, especially regarding the age group 65+. The data from the present study show a kind of change in the care Bulgarians provide for dependent people, bringing the figures closer to the average European levels.

The research for Bulgaria also shows a change in elderly people's needs regarding quality of life and that their claims and expectations, including employment and inclusion in the labor market, are understandably increasing. According to the survey results, these expectations and needs cannot be adequately met, which is why almost half of the respondents (47%) do not want to work as they grow older. Although these problems have been brought to public attention by the academic community for years (Zareva, 2011), the management of the process of active aging and the participation of older people in the labor market in Bulgaria remains a severe challenge. On the other hand, the results indicate the need for a change in the management of the active working life of current workers at an older age (55+ years). Much more needs to be done to improve the conditions related to work, such as working time, working contracts, and organization of the working place.

References

Mipaa20-report-Bulgaria (2021). Bulgarian national report on the fourth cycle of review and appraisal of the implementation of the Madrid international plan of action on aging and its regional implementation strategy (MIPAA/RIS). 2018-2022. https://unece.org/statistics/documents/2021/12/reports/mipaa20-report-bulgaria

https://unece.org/sites/default/files/2021-12/mipaa20-report-bulgaria.pdf

Evropeyski prouchvania na kachestvoto na zhivot (EQLS) [European quality of life survey]. (2016). https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/bg/surveys/european-quality-of-life-surveys/european-quality-of-life-survey-2016 https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/bg/surveys/european-quality-of-life-surveys

Gargano, M. (2022, December 13). Fit for 65: Why the EU needs to be ready to meet the challenges and opportunities of its aging population. *Commentaries*. EU economic affairs, EU institutional affairs, European Affairs. https://www.egmontinstitute.be/fit-for-65-why-the-eu-needs-to-be-ready-to-meet-the-challenges-and-opportunities-of-its-aging-population/.

Population Division. World Population Prospects 2022. *Summary of results*. (2022). https://population.un.org/wpp/

Population projections. (2023). Eurostat https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/population-demography/population-projections

von Saenger, I., Dahlberg, L., Augustsson, E. (2023). Will your child take care of you in your old age? Unequal caregiving received by older parents from adult children in Sweden. *European Journal Ageing*, *20*(8). https://DOI.org/10.1007/s10433-023-00755-0

Zareva, I. (2011). Vazrastnite hora na pazara na truda v Balgaria. Nasoki za nasarchavane na aktivnoto stareene [Elderly people on the labor market in Bulgaria. Directions for promoting active aging]. *Ikonomicheski izsledvania* [*Economic studies]*, *1*, 41-65.