



## Demographic challenges for the 21st century

A state of the art in Demography

Ron Lesthaeghe earned his license degree and his PhD in the Social Sciences at the Ghent University, and obtained his MA in Sociology from Brown University. He has been a research associate at the Office of Population Research at Princeton University, and worked for the Population Council as regional representative for West Africa. From 1971 he was lecturer and then professor of Demography and Social Science Methodology at the Vrije Universiteit Brussel.

His research has been in various sub-fields of demography, mainly covering populations of Europe and of sub-Saharan Africa. Most recently he has focussed largely on the 'second demographic transition', a concept he introduced in collaboration with Dick Van de Kaa.

Ron Lesthaeghe has received national and international recognition, including visiting professorships, the 2003 Irene Tauber Award of the Population Association of America, and the 2005 Ernest-Solvay Prize of the Belgian National Science Foundation. His international colleagues ranked him 10th among the most influential demographers in the period 1950-2000.

In 2005 he retired as professor at the VUB but he is still continuing his research, extending it to the analyses of the US and Asia at the Departments of Sociology/ Population Studies Centers of the Universities of Michigan (Ann Arbor) and California (Irvine).

**Date** February 15-16, 2007  
**Location** Vrije Universiteit Brussel  
Auditorium Van Geen / Auditorium QD  
Pleinlaan 2, 1050 Brussels, Belgium  
**Registration fee** € 60 (lunch and conference book included)  
€ 15 (students, lunch included)  
Academic session on Thursday: free  
**Conference book** Included for participants  
Scheduled July 2007  
Can be ordered separately via mail (€ 20)  
**Registration Information** [www.vub.ac.be/soco/demo/intro.htm](http://www.vub.ac.be/soco/demo/intro.htm)  
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Brussels, February 15 - 16, 2007

Colloquium organised as a tribute to the continuing endeavours of Prof. Dr. Em. Ron Lesthaeghe in the field of demography

Demography has travelled a long way since it was defined by A.B. Wolfe in the Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences of 1930 as "a kind of bio-social book-keeping, a continuous inventory and analysis of the human population and its vital processes, collectively considered."

Other disciplines, most stringently perhaps econometrics, have adopted key elements of demographic methodology. But as new types of data (longitudinal datasets, panels and pseudo-panels) have become available in many fields of social research, demographic methods for analysing them are still on the march. Demography itself, on the other hand, has integrated topics, methods and frameworks from other branches of science: epidemiology, genetics, sociology, history, economy and anthropology to name just a few. Throughout his career, Ron Lesthaeghe always stressed the importance of embedding demographic research in the broad knowledge stream of the human sciences.

Today we wonder whether our discipline has faded, becoming part of the general toolkit of social science, or rather, has enriched and redefined itself as a new social science in which population change (structural as well as cultural) interacts with its social environment.

At any rate, demography has become, at the beginning of the 21st century a discipline dealing with the main challenges of humanity, broad in scope and multidisciplinary in its own approach.

The aim of the current colloquium is to stimulate reflection on both the new challenges we are confronted with and the state of the art of research in demography. The topics that will be addressed are population dynamics, health and mortality, fertility, and international migration and how these affect our societies and our very values.

## THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 2007

- 17.00 – 18.00 Welcome and registration  
18.00 – 18.30 Opening  
Drs. Johan Surkyn, Vrije Universiteit Brussel  
Prof. dr. Benjamin Van Camp, Rector Vrije Universiteit Brussel
- 18.30 – 19.00 Laudatio for Prof. dr. Ron Lesthaeghe  
Prof. dr. Frans Willekens (Netherlands Interdisciplinary Demographic Institute and University Groningen)
- 19.00 – 19.45 Demographic Innovations and the Geography of Willingness  
Prof. dr. Ron Lesthaeghe
- 19.45 – 20.45 Drink and Press meeting

## FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 16, 2007

- 08.30 – 09.00 Coffee  
09.00 Session opening
- SESSION I
- 09.10 – 09.50 Keynote I – Inequality in health and mortality  
Prof. dr. Alberto Palloni (University of Wisconsin)
- 09.50 – 10.10 Discussion panel I  
Dr. Vladimir Shkolnikov (Max Planck Institute of Demography, Rostock)  
Prof. dr. Guillaume Wunsch (Université Catholique de Louvain)
- 10.10 – 10.30 Coffee break
- SESSION II
- 10.30 – 11.10 Keynote II – Long term fertility trends  
Dr. Tomas Sobotka (Vienna Institute of Demography)
- 11.10 – 11.30 Discussion panel II  
Prof. dr. Dick Van de Kaa (Netherlands Interdisciplinary Demographic Institute)  
Prof. dr. Jan Van Bavel (Vrije Universiteit Brussel)

- SESSION III
- 11.30 – 12.10 Keynote III – International migration: trends and perspectives  
Dr. Jean-Pierre Garson (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development)
- 12.10 – 12.30 Discussion panel III  
Dr. Alphonse MacDonald (formerly United Nations Population Fund)  
Prof. dr. Michel Poulain (Université Catholique de Louvain)
- 12.30 – 14.00 Lunch break
- SESSION IV
- 14.00 – 14.40 Keynote IV – Ideational change and demography in the 21st century  
Prof. dr. Aart Liefbroer (Netherlands Interdisciplinary Demography Institute and Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam)
- 14.40 – 15.00 Discussion Panel IV  
Prof. dr. Francesco Billari (Bocconi University, Milano)  
Prof. dr. Bruno Schoumaker (Université Catholique de Louvain)
- 15.00 – 15.20 Coffee
- SESSION V
- 15.20 – 16.00 Keynote V – Ageing Europe: 21st century implications  
Prof. dr. Emily Grundy (London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine)
- 16.00 – 16.20 Discussion panel V  
Prof. dr. Harry P. van Dalen (Netherlands Interdisciplinary Demographic Institute)  
Dr. Ronald Schoenmaeckers (Studiedienst van de Vlaamse Regering)
- 16.20 – 16.45 Final conclusions  
Prof. dr. John Hobcraft (University of York)
- 17.00 Drink