

# Rotterdam



# The **LIFE** **WORLDS** of Birth Cohorts



This book is part of the Wellcome Trust funded project 'The Biosocial Lives of Birth Cohorts' and the exhibition 'The Life Worlds of Birth Cohorts' which examines the everyday lived processes and practices that shape participants' lives across four cohorts in the global north and south. In 2024–2025 and using a method called 'photovoice' we invited a total of 21 intergenerational parent and adult child pairs of participants from the Avon Longitudinal Study of Parents and Children in Bristol, UK; the Generation R study in Rotterdam, the Netherlands; the Pelotas Cohort Study in Pelotas, Brazil; and the Generation 21 study in Porto, Portugal to take pictures of their lives, and then to discuss these in small focus groups.

This book focuses on the images and narratives of participants from the Generation R Study in Rotterdam, the Netherlands. The Generation R Study was created in 2001 recruiting 9778 expecting mothers, representative of both the ethnic and socio-economic diversity in the urban center of Rotterdam. Across eight themes identified by participants in our workshop this book provides a visual and narrative immersion into their life worlds. It explores how their lives are both shaped by their involvement in the cohort study but also often exceed it, revealing what is important to them and the details that inform their lives.

We invite you to explore more of the photographs, and the cohort studies on our website:

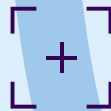
[www.birthcohortlifeworlds.com](http://www.birthcohortlifeworlds.com)



Images from the Photovoice workshops in Rotterdam.



This is the door of Generation R.  
- Mother participant



## Cohort Participation



My wife and I chose to participate together. We always decide beforehand, “you go, or I go” because sometimes I can and then my wife can’t. She preferred not to do the MRI, and so I went with our son and did that MRI instead of my wife. I like to participate because I’ve always seen it as a continuous free check-up and if there’s something I’m also the first to hear about it.

- Father participant



When I was five, during the Generation R tests, they found out that my bone density was low and because of that I started track and field.

- Participant



“ The inside of our beautiful mosque. The outside is currently decorated and there’s a tent up for Ramadan.

– Participant



“ I always listen to music no matter what I’m doing– learning, cleaning, or in the shower– it doesn’t matter.

– Participant

## Identity



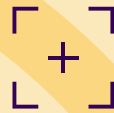
“ My door is decorated with pictures from various trips, and another wall is also totally covered. I love to travel! Most of the pictures shown here are from my trips with friends to Croatia last year, but also from my gap year in Spain, and I was in Costa Rica.

– Participant



“ I work as a kids daycare assistant, and I also study pedagogy. We do so many fun things with the kids and here we are doing a project about diversity.

*- Participant*



## Navigating Life Transitions

“ I work at an international school and that's the International Baccalaureate education. My workplace is the library.

*- Mother participant*





“ I thought that morning: I’m out of bed and today is the day– that one time I get up on time because the Rozen bridge is worth a picture. This was after a long stint of terrible weather, and I finally saw the sun coming through. Finally, there’s hope for the summer!

– Participant



“ It is striking how polluted the city is, partly because of its residents. The standards for putting things out on the street have clearly declined in my neighborhood. There’s a “I’ll just put it here and be done with it” mentality.

– Mother participant

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Environments

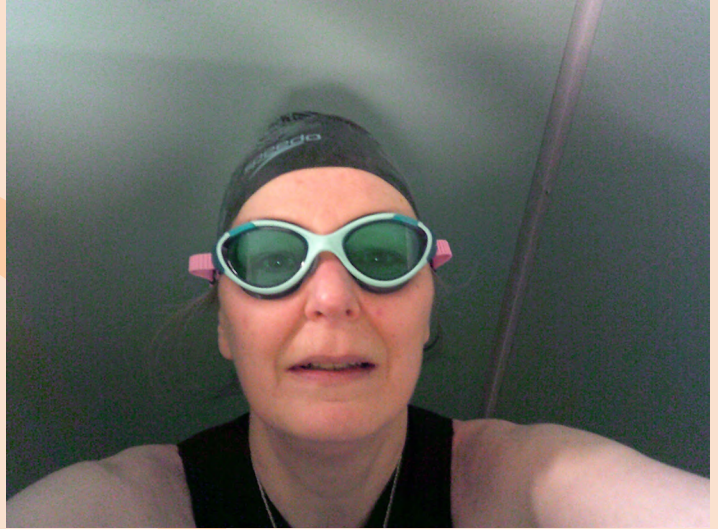


“ We live in Zevenkamp Rotterdam– north– northeast of Rotterdam. Here we went for a walk to visit friends, and we walked up a hill, which is an old rubbish dump they’ve turned into a nature reserve. When you’re up there, you get a great view of Rotterdam.

– Father participant



## Physical and Mental Well-being

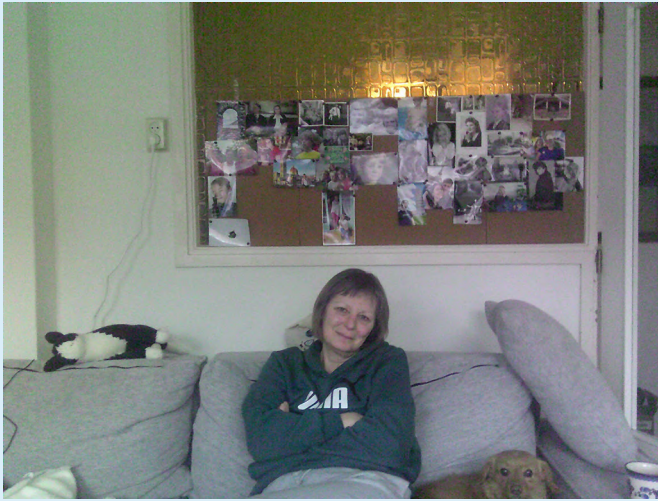


“ I swim every week for my relaxation. I keep this time free, otherwise it wouldn't happen.  
- Mother participant

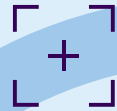


“ I can be found a lot at Basic-Fit. I work out quite a bit, although inconsistently. Sometimes I go three- or four-times a week and other times I go maybe once every fortnight.

- Participant



“ This is my mom with a whole bunch of family photos in the background.  
- Participant



## Intergenerational Connections



“ This is a holiday photo in the village where my family is from in Turkey. We go every summer for the sunshine. The kids love sitting on the back of the tractor, but I don't like that so much. In that village, my father inherited the land and the tractor from my grandfather. He plants things and we can then pick and eat them.  
- Mother participant



“

Albert Heijn, our grocery store. I walk in every day all dazed, like, what should we eat? And then I think: There is so much choice, and what a privileged country we actually live in. That strikes me more. The abundance.

– Mother participant



My son and I eating breakfast together. This is a homely situation – and that's how it should be.

– Father participant

[ + ] Food



“

This lasagna I made for the two of us because all three children have left the house.

– Mother participant



“

Tasty cheeses! I'm a really big cheese fan [kaaskop] and I preferably eat foreign cheese. The worse they stink, the tastier they are! Not everyone in the family likes those in the fridge.

– Mother participant



“

My little British short hair, which is now 9 months old. Especially the cats are part of the family and they even go with us on holiday because I think it's sad to leave them behind. My British shorthair is a home cat, and the other one is an outdoor cat, but on holiday I don't dare to let him go outside.

– Mother participant



## (Re)Imagining Family

“

This is my father and mother, my sister and my uncle. Since I'm working out at anytime fitness, my uncle is also my personal trainer.

– Participant



“

I went to Eindhoven with some friends of mine for a fun weekend. We went on a pubcrawl, and you go in and then you have to drink in as few gulps as possible. We had rented a really nice apartment from Airbnb, so that was really nice.

– Participant



We are very grateful to our funders the Wellcome Trust, and for the support of our host institution UCL. We also extend our thanks to all the participating cohorts, including the Avon Longitudinal Study of Parents and Children (ALSPAC) in Bristol, Generation 21 in Porto, Generation R in Rotterdam, and the Pelotas Cohort Study in Pelotas. Our appreciation also extends to all the participants who took part in our interviews and photovoice activities and generously shared their lives and experiences with us.

Further information about the project, visit [birthcohortlifeworlds.com](https://birthcohortlifeworlds.com)

