

Milena Nikolova

Curriculum Vitae

University of Groningen
Faculty of Economics and Business
Nettelbosje 2, 9747AE Groningen, The Netherlands
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Last Updated: April 4, 2024

Personal Information

Citizenship Bulgarian and Dutch
Family status Married, one child

Research Fields

Main The Economics of Happiness
Secondary Labor and Development Economics, Economics of Transition

Current Employment and Management Positions

2023– present **Aletta Jacobs Professor in the Economics of Well-being**, *University of Groningen, Faculty of Economics and Business, Global Economics & Management*, The Netherlands.
2021–present **Co-Coordinator**, *FEB Honours Bachelor Program*, University of Groningen.
2018–present **Academic Coordinator**, *Double Degree Master Central-East European Economies with Corvinus University*, University of Groningen.

Current Leadership Positions

2024–present **Book Editor**, *Work Meaning and Motivation - Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Work Well-being*, Publisher: Springer.
2022–present **Editor**, *Journal of Population Economics*.
2019–present **Policy and Research Cluster Leader, Economics of Happiness**, *Global Labor Organization (GLO)*.
2019–present **Member**, *Young Academy Groningen*.

Research Affiliations

2020–present **Non-Resident Fellow**, *Bruegel*.
2018–present **Research Fellow**, *Institute of Labor Economics (IZA)*.
2018–present **Fellow**, *Global Labor Organization (GLO)*.
2018–present **Research Fellow**, *SOM Research Institute*, University of Groningen.
2016–present **Research Fellow**, *Central European Labour Studies Institute (CELSI)*.
2014–present **Non-resident Fellow**, *The Brookings Institution*.

Education

2014 **Ph.D. in Public Policy**, *University of Maryland*, College Park, MD, USA.
2011 **M.A. in Public Policy**, *The American University*, Washington, DC, USA.
2008 **B.A. in Economics**, *Gettysburg College*, Gettysburg, PA, USA, *summa cum laude*.

Selected Professional Training

- 2023 Academic Leadership II; Active Bystander Training
- 2022 Supervising PhD Students
- 2019 University Teaching Qualification (UTQ), University of Groningen

Past Employment

- Dec. 2020–Feb. 2023 **Rosalind Franklin Fellow/Associate Professor**, *University of Groningen, Faculty of Economics and Business, Global Economics & Management*, The Netherlands.
- Jan. 2018–Nov. 2020 **Rosalind Franklin Fellow/Assistant Professor**, *University of Groningen, Faculty of Economics and Business, Global Economics & Management*, The Netherlands.
- Sept. 2014–Dec. 2017 **Research Associate**, *Institute of Labor Economics (IZA)*, Bonn, Germany.
- Sept. 2012–May 2014 **Nonresident Researcher**, *Global Economy and Development Program, The Brookings Institution*, Washington, DC, USA.
- Jan. 2010–May 2011 **Emerging Scholar**, *Center on Nonprofits and Philanthropy, The Urban Institute*, Washington, DC, USA.
- Jun. 2008–May 2009 **Policy Analyst**, *Applied Public Policy Research Institute for Study and Evaluation*, Princeton, NJ, USA.

Past Editorial Service

- 2019–2023 **Section Editor**, *Welfare, Well-being and Happiness*, Springer Handbook of Labor, Human Resources and Population Economics, Editor: K.F. Zimmermann.
- 2019–2022 **Co-Editor**, *Journal of Happiness Studies (Economics)*.
- 2019–2022 **Associate Editor**, *Journal of Population Economics*.
- 2019–2022 **Associate Editor**, *International Review of Economics*.
- 2014–2016 **Managing Editor**, *Journal of Population Economics*.

Research Performance Metrics

- International Rankings Ranked 326 out of 18054 female economists & top 5 % among all economists in the world (publications in the last 10 years) on IDEAS/RePEc
- Google Scholar 1838 citations, H-index: 22

Publications

Refereed Journal Articles: 24

- 2024 Robots, Meaning, and Self-Determination, *Research Policy*, 53(5), 104987, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.respol.2024.104987>
- 2023 The relationship between inequality and potential emigration: Evidence from the Gallup World Poll, *International Migration Review*, DOI: 10.1177/01979183231202991
Double-Edged Sword: Persistent Effects of Communism on Life Satisfaction and Preferences in Eastern Europe, *Journal of Population Economics*, (with Olga Popova and Vladimir Otrachshenko), DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00148-022-00930-0>
- 2022 Stalin and the origins of mistrust, *Journal of Public Economics*, (with Olga Popova and Vladimir Otrachshenko)
COVID-19 and entrepreneurship entry and exit in Russia: Opportunity amidst adversity, *Technology in Society*, (with Olga Popova, Vladimir Otrachshenko, and Elena Tyurina)

- Being your boss and bossing others: The moderating effect of supervising others on meaning and autonomy for self-employed and employed people, *Small Business Economics*, (with Boris Nikolaev and Chris Boudreaux)
- 2021 Family Matters: Involuntary Parental Unemployment During Childhood and Subjective Well-being Later in Life. *Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization*, 18, 312-331 (with Boris Nikolaev)
- Communist Party Membership and Entrepreneurship. *Small Business Economics* 57(4), 1783-1800 (with Artjoms Ivlevs and Olga Popova)
- Sometimes Your Best Just Ain't Good Enough: The Worldwide Evidence on Subjective Well-being Efficiency. *The B.E. Journal of Economic Analysis & Policy* 21(1), 83-114 (with Olga Popova)
- 2020 What Makes Work Meaningful And Why Economists Should Care About It. *Labour Economics* DOI:10.1016/j.labeco.2020.101847 (w. Femke Cnossen)
- The Perceived Well-being and Health Costs of Exiting Self-Employment. *Small Business Economics* 57(5), 1819-1836 (with Boris Nikolaev and Olga Popova)
- 2019 Switching to Self-employment Can Be Good for Your Health. *Journal of Business Venturing*, 34(4), 664-691
- Emigration, Remittances, and the Subjective Well-being of Those Staying Behind. *Journal of Population Economics*, 32(1), 113-151 (with A. Ivlevs and Carol Graham)
- Your Spouse Is Fired! How Much Do You Care? *Journal of Population Economics*, 32(3), 799-844, (with S. Ayhan)
- 2017 Suffrage, Labour Markets and Coalitions in Colonial Virginia. *European Journal of Political Economy*, 49, 108-122 (with Elena Nikolova)
- Left Behind but Doing Good? Civic Engagement in Two Post-socialist Countries. *Journal of Comparative Economics*, 45(3), 658-684 (with Monica Roman and Klaus F. Zimmermann)
- Does Joining the EU Make You Happy? Evidence from Central and Eastern Europe. *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 18(6), 1593-1623 (with Boris Nikolaev)
- 2016 Minding the Happiness Gap: Political Institutions and Perceived Quality of Life in Transition. *European Journal of Political Economy*, 45, 129-148
- 2015 In transit: The Well-being of Migrants from Transition and Post-transition Countries. *Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization*, 112, 164-186 (with Carol Graham)
- Bentham or Aristotle in the Development Process? An Empirical Investigation of Capabilities and Subjective Well-being. *World Development*, 68, 163-179 (with Carol Graham)
- Government Funding of Private Voluntary Organizations: Is There a Crowding-Out Effect? *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, 44(3), 487-509
- 2014 Employment, Late-Life Work, Retirement, and Well-being in Europe and the United States. *IZA Journal of European Labor Studies*, 3(5), 1-30 (with Carol Graham)
- Principals and Agents: An Investigation of Executive Compensation in Human Service Nonprofits. *VOLUNTAS: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations*, 25(3), 679-706
- 2013 Does Access to Information Technology Make People Happier? Insights from Well-Being Surveys from around the World. *The Journal of Socio-Economics*, 44, 126-139 (with Carol Graham)

Book Chapters: 5

- 2022 The Economics of Happiness. In K.F. Zimmermann (Ed.), *Springer Handbook of Labor, Human Resources and Population Economics*. Cham: Springer International Publishing, (with Carol Graham), DOI : https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-57365-6_177-1
- 2018 Happiness and International Migration in Latin America. In J. F. Helliwell, R. Layard, & J. Sachs (Eds.), *World Happiness Report 2018* (pp. 88-113). New York, NY: Sustainable Development Solutions Network (with Carol Graham)
- 2018 Happiness: Using Subjective Well-being Metrics to Gauge Development. In *Routledge Handbook of Development Ethics*, (Drydyk, J. and Keleher, L., Eds.), (pp. 84-92). New York, NY: Routledge, Available as a working paper as: IZA DP 10088.
- 2014 Nonprofit Advocacy in the Nation's Capital. In *Nonprofits and Advocacy*, (In Pekkanen, R., Smith, S. R., & Tsujinaka, Y., Eds.), (pp. 66-84). Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press (with Carol DeVita and Katie L. Roeger)
- 2014 Shaping the Government-Nonprofit Partnership: Direct and Indirect Advocacy. In *Nonprofits and Advocacy*, (In Pekkanen, R., Smith, S. R., & Tsujinaka, Y., Eds.), (pp. 66-84). Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press (with Elizabeth T. Boris and Matthew Marronick)

Contract Work, Research Reports & Policy Papers: 6

- 2022 Deliverable D5.1. Migration intentions and inequality, report for the European Commission, part of the GI-NI H2020 Project Consortium
- 2017 Chapter 1.2 Migration. What Will Move Talent? in Randstad Report "People to Jobs, Jobs to People"
- 2015 Migrant Well-being after Leaving Transition Economies. *IZA World of Labor*: 195, DOI:10.15185/izawol.195
- 2010 Human Service Nonprofits and Government Collaboration: Findings from the 2010 National Survey of Nonprofit Government Contracting and Grants. Washington, DC: The Urban Institute Press (with Elizabeth T. Boris, Erwin Leon, and Katie L. Roeger)
- 2010 National Study of Nonprofit-Government Contracting: State Profiles. Washington, DC: The Urban Institute Press (with Elizabeth T. Boris, Erwin Leon, and Katie L. Roeger)
- 2010 Contracts and Grants between Human Service Nonprofits and Governments. Washington, DC: The Urban Institute Press (with Elizabeth T. Boris, Erwin Leon, and Katie L. Roeger)

Work in Progress

- Loud or quiet quitting? The influence of work orientations on effort and turnover
- Gini who? The relationship between inequality perceptions and life satisfaction (with Daniele Marchesi and Viola Angelini)
- Just another cog in the machine? A worker-level view of robotization and tasks (with Anthony Lepinteur and Femke Cnossen)
- The societal costs of inflation and unemployment (with Sarah Grace See, Olga Popova, Vladimir Otrachshenko)
- Past political repression, communism, and free speech values (with Olga Popova)
- Beyond labor as disutility: A model of meaning and effort (with Femke Cnossen)

Ph.D. Student Supervision & Committees

- 2017-2022 (completed) Femke Cnossen, University of Groningen, co-supervised with Robert Inklaar & Steven Brakman

- 2019-2024 (exp.) Robin Konietzny, University of Groningen, co-supervised with Bart Los, PhD Scholarship Student (4-year trajectory)
- 2020-2024 (exp.) Stefan Sliwa, University of Groningen, co-supervised with Lukas Linsi & Viola Angelini, PhD Scholarship Student (4-year trajectory)
- 2021-2025 (exp.) Daniele Marchesi, University of Groningen, co-supervised with Viola Angelini, PhD Scholarship Student (4-year trajectory)
- 2023-2027 (exp.) Viliانا Milanova, University of Groningen, co-supervised with Feicheng Wang (4-year trajectory)
- 2023-2027 (exp.) Pawani Dasgupta, University of Groningen, co-supervised with Juliette de Wit and Maite Lameris (4-year trajectory)
- member of the Ph.D. examination committee Johannes Kleinhempel (2019), Aobo Jiang (2020), Juliette de Wit (2021), Nikolaos Terzidis (2021), Slavek Roller (2023), Jasmira Wiersma (2023), Eda Aral (2024), Titissari Rumbogo (2024), Arlinde Vrooman (2024), Tobias Grohmann (2024), Thanasis Ziogas (2024), University of Groningen
- external examiner/opponent Ujjwal Das, University of Leeds, Defence Date: October 11, 2019; Nasir Rajah, University of Leeds, Defence Date: January 23, 2020, Henrik Schwabe, University of Oslo, Defence Date: December 18, 2020

Teaching

- Economics & Business Course Coordinator/Lecturer, Global Political Economy, The University of Groningen (2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023)
- Course Coordinator/Lecturer, Honours Professionalization Seminar, The University of Groningen (2023)
- Lecturer/Instructor, and Course Coordinator since 2021, Globalization Debates (Master-level), The University of Groningen (2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023)
- Instructor, Research Paper for Economics and Business Economics, The University of Groningen (Semester 2a, 2018-2019)
- Instructor, Honours College Research Seminar II, The University of Groningen (2019, 2020, 2022, 2023)
- Guest Lecturer, University College Winter School, The University of Groningen (2020)
- Teaching Assistant (Instructor), Economics Department, Gettysburg College (Fall 2006; Fall 2007)
- Statistics Lecturer, Online Master of Public Administration and Policy, American University, Washington, DC (Spring 2017)
- Development Economics Lecturer, Introduction to Development Economics, University of Bonn Summer School in Development Policy (August 3, 2017)
- Lecturer, The Business Environment in Transition Countries, Summer Course, European Business School, Wiesbaden (June 30, 2016)
- Teaching Assistant (Instructor), Development Challenges, University of Maryland, College Park (Spring 2014)
- Philanthropy Teaching Assistant (Instructor), Center for Philanthropy and Nonprofit Leadership, University of Maryland, College Park (Fall 2011, Spring 2012)
- Mathematics Grader for Multivariate Calculus, Mathematics Department, Gettysburg College (Fall 2006)
- Teaching Assistant (Instructor), Mathematics Department, Gettysburg College (Fall 2005)

Supervision of (Research) Master and Bachelor Theses

- 2018-2021 Main Supervisor, 13 Master students, Economic Development & Globalization, 2 Research Master Students, University of Groningen
- 2018-2021 Main Supervisor, 62 Bachelor students, International Business, University of Groningen

Grants and Funding

- 2024 Grant for the project "in AI We Trust?" Institute for Humane Studies (IHS), 35,000 USD, Role: PI
- 2023 Grant for the project "The Great Resignation, Quiet Quitting, and Work Orientations," Dutch Research Council (NWO), 50,000 EUR, Role: PI
- 2023 Grant for the project "Just another cog in the machine? A worker-level view of robotization and tasks," Institute for Humane Studies (IHS), 2,300 USD, Role: PI
- 2022-2023 Grant IHS016683 for the project "Do Communism and Past Political Repression Durably Shape Free Speech Opinions?", Institute for Humane Studies, 21,300 USD + additional grant 750 USD (IHS017683) Role: PI
- 2022 Incentive Fund for Interdisciplinary Projects Grant with Femke Cnossen and R. Rijnks for the project "The well-being consequences of automation and AI", University of Groningen, 4,000 EUR, Role: PI
- 2022 Aletta Health Grant from the Aletta Jacobs School of Public Health with R. Rijnks, University of Groningen, 2,500 EUR, Role: Co-PI
- 2022 Teaching Innovation Grant with P. Milionis for the design of a new Honours Bachelor course "Connecting Research with Practice," University of Groningen, Faculty of Economics and Business, Role: Co-Applicant
- 2021 Teaching Innovation Grant for the redesign of the course "Global Political Economy," University of Groningen, Faculty of Economics and Business, Role: Main Applicant
- 2020 Participant in H2020 Project "Growing Inequality: a Novel Integration of technological, globalization and migration transformations research (GI-NI)", 2021-2024, Role: Wrote Task 5.1 description, executed Deliverable 5.1
- 2020-2024 Funding from the Young Academy Groningen for an Interdisciplinary Ph.D. student position (joint with Lukas Linsi), 2020-2024, Role: Co-Applicant, Approx. 212,000 EUR
- 2019 Erasmus+ Staff Mobility Grant, approx. 500 EUR, Role: Main Applicant
- 2018 Visiting Fellowship, IOS Regensburg, 1,500 EUR + accommodation, Role: Main Applicant
- 2012 The Hayek Fund for Scholars Award, Institute for Humane Studies, 250 USD, Role: Main Applicant
- 2012 Emerging Scholar Award, Association for Research on Nonprofit Organizations and Voluntary Action, 1,400 USD, Role: Main Applicant
- 2011-2013 Dean's Fellowship, School of Public Policy, University of Maryland, Full tuition remission + 40,000 USD living stipend (20,000 USD for 2 years), Role: Main Applicant
- 2009-2011 Merit Honor Award, School of Public Affairs, American University, Full tuition remission + 20,000 USD living stipend (10,000 USD for 2 years), Role: Main Applicant
- 2004-2008 Full Academic Scholarship, Gettysburg College, Full tuition remission + all living expenses covered

Honors and Awards

- 2023 USERN Prize Runner-up (top 5)
- 2021 Research Fellow Award, International Society for Quality of Life Studies
- 2020 Runner-up for the Outstanding Junior Researcher Award, SOM, RUG
- 2019 Runner-up for the Outstanding Junior Researcher Award, SOM, RUG
- 2019 Runner-up for the Ruut Veenhoven Award
- 2018 Rosalind Franklin Fellowship, University of Groningen
- 2015 Runner-up for the Ruut Veenhoven Award
- 2014 Certificate in Excellence in Reviewing, *Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization*
- 2008 Economics Department Graduation Banner Carrier, Gettysburg College
- 2008 Outstanding Honors Thesis Award, Gettysburg College
- 2008 Eisenhower Society/R.M. Hoffman Family Memorial Prize in Economics, Gettysburg College
- 2007 Outstanding Student Award, Financial Executives International, PA Chapter
- 2007 Phi Beta Kappa
- 2007 Railing Fellow, Department of Economics, Gettysburg College
- 2006 James Boyd Hartzell Memorial Award in Economics, Gettysburg College

Selected Professional & Academic Service

- University of Groningen Member of the Steering Committee Centre for Public Health in Economics and Business (2021-2022); Member of the Honours Bachelor Programme Committee (2019-2021); Hiring Committee, Tenure Track Assistant Professorship, Global Economics and Management (Fall 2019)
- over 100 peer reviews since 2013 including, *The Economic Journal*, *Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization*; *Journal of Population Economics*; *Journal of Regional Science*; *Nonprofit & Voluntary Sector Quarterly*; *IZA Journal of Migration*; *IZA World Of Labor*; *International Review of Economics*; *Journal of Economic Psychology*; *PLOS One*; *Review of Income and Wealth*; *Labour Economics*; *Journal of Business Venturing*; *Journal of the Economics of the Ageing*; *Journal of Economic and Social Geography*; *Journal of Happiness Studies*; *International Migration*; *Applied Economics*; *Nonprofit Management & Leadership*; *Psychology of Well-Being: Theory, Research, and Practice*; *Social Policy & Society*; *Oxford Economic Papers*; *Journal of Economics Psychology*
- other referee activities Palgrave Macmillan; Springer Books; National Science Centre, Poland; National Science Foundation, Israel; Dutch Research Council (NWO, Veni selection committee member 2022-2023)

Conference/Workshop Organization

- Workshop Co-Organizer Automation and Well-being, University of Groningen, April 14, 2023 (w. Richard Rijnks and Femke Cnossen)
- Workshop Co-Organizer New Directions in The Economics and Economic Geography of Happiness, University of Groningen, April 13, 2023 (w. Richard Rijnks)
- Seminar Organizer IZA Internal Seminar (Sept. 2016-Dec. 2017)
- Conference Session Organization GLO/EHERO Special Sessions on Well-being, ISQOLS Annual Conference (2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023)
- Committee Member ISQOLS Annual Conference, 2020

Blogs & Media Attention

Blogs

- 2022 Can working solo be good for entrepreneurs?, Bruegel Blog
Inequality and Emigration Intentions, GI-NI Research Blog
Past political repression creates long-lasting mistrust. The Brookings Institution's UP FRONT blog (with Olga Popova & Vladimir Otrachshenko)
Testing times. University of Groningen Faculty of Economics and Business, Lecturer's Blog
- 2021 Self-employment, COVID-19, and the future of work for knowledge workers. Bruegel Blog
- 2020 Losing your own business is worse than losing a salaried job. The Brookings Institution's UP FRONT blog (with Boris Nikolaev & Olga Popova)
What makes a job meaningful? The Brookings Institution's UP FRONT blog (with Femke Cnossen)
Former Communist Party membership and present-day entrepreneurship. VOXEU (with A. Ivlevs & Olga Popova)
- 2019 Self-employment Can Be Good for Your Health. The Brookings Institution's UP FRONT blog
- 2018 International Migration: What Happens to Those Left Behind? The Brookings Institution's Future Development blog (with Carol Graham & A. Ivlevs)
How Having Unemployed Parents Affects Children's Future Well-being. The Brookings Institution's UP FRONT blog (with Boris Nikolaev)
How Much Will Your Spouse Suffer If You Become Unemployed? The Brookings Institution's Future Development blog (with S. Ayhan)
- 2016 Can European Integration Increase People's Life Satisfaction? The Brookings Institution's UP FRONT blog (with Boris Nikolaev)
Two Solutions to the Challenges of Population Aging. The Brookings Institution's UP FRONT blog and IZA Newsroom
Migration May Benefit Those at Home in Bulgaria, Romania. The Gallup blog (with M. Roman and K.F. Zimmermann)
- 2014 Can Migration Boost Incomes, Happiness, and Freedom Satisfaction? The Brookings Institution's UP FRONT blog and IZA Newsroom (with Carol Graham)
Why Aging and Working Makes us Happy in 4 Charts. The Brookings Institution's UP FRONT blog and IZA Newsroom (with Carol Graham)

Selected Media Coverage

- 2024 ESB Berichten (February 13)
- 2023 UN Habitat Interview (August 22)
- 2021 France 24, People and Profit TV Interview (April 8)
- 2018 Econ050 Podcast (December 6), Forbes Magazine (September 30)
- 2016 MarketWatch (5 August)
- 2015 IZA Newsroom (9 December)
- 2014 The Washington Post (December 7), The Atlantic (December 2014) Secret to Retiree Happiness: Part-time Work by M. Heimer, MarketWatch (April 11); The Data Are In: Life under Putin Is a Continuous Downward Spiral into Despair by C. Ingraham, The Washington Post Wonkblog (April 1)

- 2013 Pursuing Happiness: Social Mobility and Well-Being by Carol Graham, Brookings Social Mobility Memos (October 24); A New Social Contract to Protect against Shocks by K. Derviş, World Economic Forum (July 22); The Next Social Contract by K. Derviş, Project Syndicate (July 18); Jobs Lost Hit 5 Million With Rigged Currencies: Cutting Research by S. Kennedy, Bloomberg (January 4)

Selected Research Visits

- 2024 University of Oslo, April, 2024
2021 Visiting Professorship, University of Johannesburg, February-March, 2021, remotely due to COVID
2020 The Brookings Institution, March, 2020, Cancelled due to COVID-19
2020 IZA Bonn, March, 2020, Cancelled due to COVID-19
2019 Visiting Fellowship, IOS Regensburg, July 2019

Conference and Workshop Presentations

- 2008-2024 35+ workshop and conference presentations, 20+ invited talks, 1 keynote

Skills

Languages

Bulgarian (native), English (fluent), German (Level C1 but rusty, Goethe Institute Certificate), Russian (basic), Dutch (B2/C1)

Software

Stata, \LaTeX , SPSS (basic)