

Part-time work and work norms in the Netherlands

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Summary

The paper argues that due to the increased labour market participation of women in part-time jobs, work norms have changed. It has become less evident who should work how many hours, and this is a main cause why Dutch citizens show less support for the norm that work is a prime social obligation. We argue that the social mechanism for the norm change is to be located in adjustment processes in the households. We elaborate hypotheses on the basis of this argument, and test these hypotheses by applying multi-level regression analysis on the OSA Labour Supply Panel surveys for the period 1988-2002. The results of these tests show that in the traditional breadwinner-families both partners, the breadwinner and the housewife, show strong support for the norm that work is a social obligation. Working women and men with working partners show less support for the norm. Due to the increase of the share of working women, support for the norm has decreased. The results show that every new cohort shows less support for the norm. The general picture is that in the Netherlands, partly due to the growth of part-time work, the traditional work ethic is declining. For younger generations, with both partners participating in the labour market, work is increasingly becoming only an instrumental value. Nevertheless, because the instrumental value of work is high, there is only a slow and limited decline of labour supply.

1 Introduction

A prominent problem in Dutch public debate is the future labour supply. Labour market projections predict substantial labour shortages due to aging of the population. To increase labour supply, several options are discussed, such as the lengthening of the work week and increase of the retirement age. One way in which the total number of work hours can be increased, is by increasing of the number of hours worked by part-time workers.

During the last decades, labour market participation in the Netherlands has increased from a relatively low to a high level according to European standards. The labour market participation of men declined slowly since the 1960s, but the share of women in the labour market participation increased substantially (figure 1). Most women found access to the labour market through part-time jobs. In 2006 the share of women working in part-time jobs had increased to 75% (table 1). Mainly women with children work in part-time jobs (Van Gils, 2007), but the number of men and women without children in part-time jobs is also increasing. The Netherlands is the first '*part-time economy*' in the world (Freeman, 1998). This growth of part-time jobs was in the 1990s a recipe for a flexible labour market and a sustainable social security system (Visser & Hemerijck, 1997; Schmid, 1997), but it is now increasingly perceived as a barrier to further economic growth (Merens & Hermans, 2009; Portegijs & Keuzenkamp, 2008).

*****Figure 1*****

Recent analyses conclude that, despite the necessity felt by policy makers, Dutch workers are not willing to increase their number of work hours. In a comparative perspective, the Netherlands is considered a country of over-employment, that is the number of workers that, given their wage rate, prefers to increase their number of work hours is smaller than the number of workers that prefers to work less hours (Bielinski, Bosch & Wagner, 2002; Stier & Lewin-Epstein, 2003; Reynolds & Aletraris, 2006). Full-time employed workers want to decrease their number of work hours, while part-time workers appear to be satisfied with their number of work hours (Wielers & Raven, 2009). Only one in eight part-time working women with small children wants to work more hours when the partner reduces his number of work hours (Merens & Hermans, 2009). The low willingness of Dutch part-time workers to increase their number of work hours is surprising. Research on over- and under-employment in different countries shows that especially part-time workers have a preference to increase

their number of work hours (Sousa-Poza & Henneberger 2000; 2002; Stier & Lewin-Epstein, 2003). The share of part-time workers in the Dutch work force is relatively high, but this hardly affects the level of under-employment. In 2002 2.3 per cent of Dutch part-time workers indicated to work part-time involuntarily and to prefer a full-time contract, an extremely low share in comparison to the Belgian (15.8%), Danish (16.0%), German (12.3%), British (8.3%) and Swedish (22.4%) part-time workers (Corral & Isusi, 2003).

*****Table 1*****

This lack of willingness to increase the number of work hours demands an explanation. Table 1 shows that the number of work hours per worker in the Netherlands is low. Labour participation has increased and is high to western European standards, but there is a number of western countries where more women work more hours. Denmark, Great-Britain, the U.S. and Sweden show comparable or even higher levels of labour market participation, and lower shares of part-time working women.

We propose that it is necessary to focus on work norms to understand the low willingness of Dutch workers to increase their number of work hours. There are several reasons to focus on work norms. One reason is that the literature shows that financial incentives hardly appear to be effective anymore in increasing the supply of work hours of part-time workers (Merens & Hermans, 2009; Portegijs & Keuzekamp, 2008). This indicates the importance of cultural factors. In addition, as is shown by Stiglitz (2008), financial incentives can account for only a small part of the differences in labour supply between countries. However, a mechanism that specifies how part-time work and work norms affect labour supply is still lacking. The elaboration and test of such a mechanism is necessary to understand how norms affect the choice of the number of work hours. In the following we elaborate on such a mechanism.

We will argue that this mechanism has to be located in the household. A major change in the households has been the increased labour market participation of women. The labour market participation of women has put pressure on the organization of and the division of labour in the household, and this has subsequently changed the norms concerning labour supply. It has become less evident who should be working how many hours than it was in the past. In the past, the norms concerning division of labour in the household and labour supply in the labour market were based upon the model of the breadwinner household. The increased availability of women for the labour market put pressure on the expectations about the division of labour in the household. Men were expected to compensate for the declining

number of household work hours by increasing their share in the household work. Whereas the breadwinner household was organised around the man's work, in the dual-earner household work and family life had to be adjusted to each other. We expect that because of these adjustment processes in the household work norms were adjusted downward. Workers do not want the complete subordination of family life to work demands, and for that reason opt for less work hours.

An important condition was that in the Netherlands since the 1980s the opportunities to work part-time were relatively good, and since then have only further improved. Employers were willing or forced by trained unions and, later, by law, to offer employees part-time contracts, if the employee demanded such contracts. The wide acceptance of part-time contracts enabled women to adapt their number of work hours to the needs of their household. When the majority of young women followed this pattern, the norm spread that family life should not be dominated by work hours. The implication is that if opportunities to work part-time would have been less numerous and less attractive, work norms and work values would have resisted better: less women would have entered the labour market, working women would put greater emphasis on the importance of work given the sacrifices they make, and housewives, probably with feelings of dissatisfaction and guilt because they themselves did not have paid work, would organize the household around the work hours of their husband.

In this paper we elaborate this explanation into testable hypothesis, and we will subsequently submit these hypotheses to a test on the OSA Labour Supply Panel data.

2. Theory and hypotheses

2.1 *The work obligation norm*

In the following, we refer to the work obligation norm as the extent to which people perceive paid work as a social obligation to the members of their society. Following this definition, the norm applies not only to a particular person, but to all members of society. Cross-country research on the basis of the European Values Study data set shows that support for this norm is relatively low in the Netherlands in comparison to other European countries (Halman, Luijkx & Van Zundert, 2005).

The statistical relationship between support for the norm and the number of work hours is weak, as strong support does not imply long work hours. For example, disabled workers or unemployed workers may strongly support the work obligation norm, but be unable to supply

hours themselves. It is also possible that workers put in many hours, but do not have a strong obligation norm. An example is the high number of work hours of Asian peasants, who want to minimize risks to their survival (Scott, 1976). It is nevertheless safe to assume that especially in modern society, with its diversified norms, there is a relationship between the support for the norms and the availability for the labour market. Such a relationship is established for the Netherlands. People that indicated a strong adherence to the work obligation norm worked on average during the period 1988 and 1996 3.5 hours more per week than people with weak adherence to the norm (Wielers & Raven, 2009).

Research shows that the support for the work obligation norm is only to a small extent dependent on circumstances. The evident example is unemployment, which generally causes a large decline in well-being, despite possible unemployment benefits. Further indications that the support hardly depends on circumstances are the small differences in support between men and women, despite the usually large differences in labour market position (Furnham, 1990). Neither does the specific position in the labour process (that is the job or occupation) strongly relate to the work obligation norm (Cherrington, 1980).

Not circumstances, but socialization processes appear to determine support for the work obligation norm. Differences in support are dependent on variables that indicate such socialization processes, such as education, religion and family. Whereas higher educated workers usually work more hours, they support the norm less than lower educated workers. Church members show more support for the norm than non-members, although there are hardly differences between members of different churches (Furnham, 1990; Ter Voert, 1994). Ter Bogt, Raaijmakers & Van Wel (2005) have shown that there is intergenerational transmission of work norms in families.

The implication of this research is that work norms are internalized at a young age, and change only marginally during the life course. Work norms have the same characteristics as the religious value system, in which they often are embedded (e.g. Ter Voert, 1994): work norms are stable; they may change, but they do not change often and fundamentally. This implies that the greatest changes in support for the norm occur between the generations (cf. Inglehart, 1990). The intergenerational change will depend on broader developments in the economy and the culture. Therefore support for the norm may increase or decline within a relatively small margin. According to Jansen (2002) significant changes in the value system usually are the responses to major life events, such as the birth of a child. Accordingly, societal changes in the value system are gradual, and follow a slow pace. The direction of the

change depends on broader developments in economy and culture. We turn now to these broader developments.

2.2 *The work obligation norm in the Netherlands*

Historians describe the development of the norm in western societies as a process of the strengthening since the end of the Middle Ages. Work ethics have increased in western societies since the end of the Middle Ages under the influence of the Reformation (Weber, 1905; Taylor, 1989), and reached their zenith in the 19th century (Anthony, 1977; Achterhuis, 1984). Since the 1960s, however, several sociologists have argued that under the influence of increased affluence (Bell, 1976; Lasch, 1978) and flexibilization of the labour market (Bauman, 2005, Sennett, 2006; Sennett, 2008) work ethics are declining. This thesis of the decline of work norms is contested (e.g. Schor, 1991; Wuthnow, 1996; Stiglitz, 2008), but empirical research is hardly available. The pattern of a strong work ethics in the 19th and first decades of the 20th century is the general picture for all western countries (Anthony, 1977), including the Netherlands (e.g. Van der Ploeg & Zinkstok, 1986). In the first decades of the 20th century there was broad consensus between the political elites of the ‘pillarized’ Dutch society about the importance of work norms. Just as for other countries, it is an unanswered question how the norm has developed since then.

In the first part of the 20th century, the work obligation norm was embedded in a value system that emphasized differences between the roles of men and women. The work obligation norm concerned primarily and pre-eminently men, not women. Women were exempt from heavy physical labour in manufacturing, and were in charge of the upbringing of the children. The organisation of the household was directed towards the provision of an income from paid labour. The male breadwinner was often absent, but his authority was uncontested (Clason, 1977). Women had a paid job until they got married or bore children, and, from then on, focussed exclusively on the household (Kalmijn & Luijckx, 2006). Men had their work outside the household; they had standard full-time hours, only to be deviated from in case of overtime. Only a very small share of the men did not have a paid job. In short, biographies were standard, and were hardly dependent on choice (Beck, 1986).

Several authors have emphasised the efficiency of breadwinner families. In the well-known model of Becker (1981), household production is maximized under the condition of a strict division of labour between paid work and household work. Other authors argue that, because men were exempt from household work, employers could demand more effort from

their workers (e.g. Cuyvers, 2008). It is, with hindsight, clear that the breadwinner economy also produced considerable efficiency losses. Women that had born children were excluded from the rewards of paid work, both the material and the immaterial rewards, and, as a consequence, the share of workers in the total population was low. From a societal perspective, breadwinner families are not efficient, because available talent is not utilized. Since the 1960s, therefore, the trend in western countries has been the increase of the labour market participation rate of women. This trend is supported by government policies that aim to increase the financial independence of women and the financial support of the social security system.

The Netherlands have an exceptional position in this trend, because of the high number of part-time workers. In all countries women work more often in part-time jobs than men do, but in most countries the majority of working women has a full-time job. This is not so in the Netherlands. There is no consensus in the literature about the causes of this growth of part-time jobs in the Netherlands. The international literature often refers to Atkinson's flexibilization model (Atkinson, 1987), according to which part-time jobs are peripheral jobs, created by employers to economize on labour costs. Cost considerations of employers hardly seem to account for the growth of part-time jobs in the Netherlands (Euwals, Hogerbrugge & Den Ouden, 2005). Employers started to perceive the cost advantages of part-time jobs only after the fast increase of unemployment in the beginning of the 1980s, when opportunities to increase part-time work had already been agreed upon by trade unions and employers' organisations. A better explanation is that the number of part-time jobs has grown because women, after having born their first child, wanted to work part-time. Housewives were dissatisfied with their exclusion from the material and especially the immaterial benefits of paid work, such as being involved in socially useful activities, the social contacts with fellow-workers and clients, and the opportunity to develop the own talents (Kool-Smit, 1967), but wanted to keep on working only in part-time, not in full-time jobs. The second wave of feminism, which started in the 1960s, put a strong emphasis on and created high expectations about the rewards of paid work (Muirhead, 2004; Friedan, 1963). However, Dutch feminists did not advocate the full-time workday, but a 5-hour work day for both men and women (Kool-Smit, 1978). Tijdens (1989) has shown how the part-time work norm for women became accepted. In the tight labour market of the 1960s and 1970s banks had to accept women in part-time jobs, because the women were not willing to combine motherhood with full-time jobs. This attitude forced the banks to create part-time jobs. In the loose labour market of the 1980s, Dutch women succeeded in gaining the support of the trade unions in

their aim of increasing the opportunities for part-time work in the collective labour agreements that were negotiated between the unions and the employers' organisations. It was only when better opportunities for part-time labour had already been incorporated into these agreements, that employers started to see benefits in the use of part-time labour contracts (Tijdens, 2002). The development and growth of part-time labour in the Netherlands has long been stimulated and supported by government policies, because it, almost miraculously (Hemerijck and Visser, 1997), increased the number of jobs and thus the carrying capacity of the social security system of the financially vulnerable Dutch welfare state.

2.3 *Women and part-time work*

Many Dutch women have a preference to work part-time, because part-time work offers them good opportunities to combine paid work with the upbringing of their children. Recent literature gives clear indications that the combination of care and paid work increases or may increase the well-being of the provider (Booth & Van Ours, 2006; Van Steenberghe, Ellemers & Mooijaart, 2007). This combination, however, demands time, and for that reason life has to be organized in such a way that the agenda is not dictated by time pressure. We argue that this combination of paid work and care activities has its effect upon work norms, and that in that respect part-time working women are different from full-time working men and housewives. Our first hypotheses focus upon these differences.¹

Whereas the traditional breadwinner can focus exclusively on his paid work, part-time working women are also primarily responsible for the household and the upbringing of the children. The combination of these different activities demands the balancing of time. Literature gives many indications that the traditional differences in household role patterns still have their effect. Despite the many changes in roles of women and men, women still feel primarily responsible for the household. This is a substantial difference with full-time working men, who maybe no longer exclusively, but still primarily focus upon their paid job. Support for this point comes from research that shows that time pressure for men mainly originates in their job, that of women in family life (Van der Lippe, 2007). It is therefore

¹ In our hypotheses, we do not focus upon the comparison of part-time working with full-time working women, because conditions in the Netherlands are such, that differences between these categories can hardly be expected. The reason is that full-time and part-time women workers mainly differ in phase in the life cycle; women work full-time, at last until they bear children, and then start working part-time (Van Gils, 2007). There are hardly any full-time working women with children in the Netherlands. The implication is that the career perspective of full-time working women hardly differs from part-time working women, and for that reason no significant differences between these categories are to be expected.

probable that women put the importance of work in broader perspective to reduce tensions in the time budget. By putting work in the perspective of the desired combination of activities, time is reserved for the household. There are many indications that Dutch women put the importance of work and career in this perspective. Surveys indicate that women value high wages and good career opportunities considerably less than men (Beckers, Hermans & Portegijs, 2009, p106). They are more focussed upon the non-material benefits of work, such as feeling socially useful and having good social contacts with colleagues and clients. Tap, Glebbeek & Brouns (2002) have shown that part-time working women often are satisfied with routine jobs, mainly because routine jobs make them replaceable. Routine and replaceability are the best guarantees that they can finish their work in time, and can stay at home when one of their children falls ill. We therefore expect that part-time working women, because of their primary focus upon their household, will not support the work obligation norm to the extent that full-time working men do. Our first hypothesis reads: *Part-time working women support the work obligation norm less than full-time working men (H1).*

In comparison to housewives, working women experience greater pressure to spend their time efficiently. The probably somewhat surprising implication is that therefore housewives are more prone to support the work obligation norm. In the traditional division of labour between women and men, women had their hands free for household work and the upbringing of the children, and these activities were not disturbed by time binds. Furthermore, the support of the work obligation norm provided an important guideline for the organisation of the household. The norm implied that their main task was to attune the household to the work schedule of their husbands. Part-time working women experience much more complex difficulties and have to make more difficult decisions as the consequence of their adherence to the work obligation norm. These decisions concern not only the household, but also their careers. On the one hand, even in the part-time economy of the Netherlands, employers signal that their main interest is in the careers of full-time workers (Roman & Fourarge, 2004; Epstein et al., 1999). Part-time workers receive lower wages and have worse career opportunities than full-time workers. A full-time job, on the other hand, implies the subordination of the family to the career. Working mothers fear the feelings of being guilty of spending not enough time with their children (e.g. Bolwijn, 2009; Cloin, 2008). The tension created by this dilemma is released by relieving the adherence to the work obligation norm. Part-time working women show less support for the norm than housewives, because housewives are less confronted with the dilemmas and practical implications of the norm. We

therefore expect that *part-time working women support the work obligation norm less than (non-working) housewives* (H2).

2.4 *The effect on men*

We assume that the growth and institutionalisation of part-time work also have had their effects, directly and indirectly, on the appreciation of the work obligation norm by men. Household relationships have changed because women have entered the labour market. Households are no longer organized exclusively around the work schedule of the man, but the work schedule of the wife, and the school and day care hours of the children have also to be taken into account. A further change is that the highly gender-differentiated norms that had governed the traditional division of labour in the household have lost their validity, and are replaced by much more egalitarian norms (Cloïn & Hermans, 2006, p.135). Men are now expected to contribute to the household as much as women, which is a much higher share than they actually realize. The process of redefinition of roles in the household proceeds slowly, but it is nevertheless clear that the number of ‘*task combiners*’, that is people who combine at least 12 hours of paid work with at least 12 hours of unpaid work has increased substantially, not only amongst women, but also among men (Merens & Hermans, 2009). The implication is that men with working partners more often have to trade-off time spent on their job and time spent on their family. This redefinition of roles is stimulated by government policies, that aim to increase the labour market participation of women. Signals are not only immaterial, but also material, taking the form of tax regulations and, for employees in the public services, parental leave programmes. This leads to the expectation that *partners of part-time working women support the work obligation norm less than partners of housewives* (H3).

A further way in which part-time work can affect the work obligation norm, is that its growth may incite men to reduce their work hours. When part-time jobs are available and the number of work hours has become reflexive, it becomes a choice also for men how many hours they want to spend on paid work. In most western countries the share of part-time working men is slowly increasing, and, again, the Netherlands shows the highest share. Delsen (1998) has shown that, at first, it were mostly men in the beginning or at the end of their careers who were working part-time. Male part-time workers were students, combining their studies with a small job to provide in their incomes, and older workers, often in an early retirement programme. The common characteristic of these men is that they, as yet or not any longer, had to provide an income for a family with children. A further, important development

that makes the full-time job less of a standard for men is that in most western countries the labour market participation of men is slowly decreasing. This development took place in the Netherlands mainly as the consequence of the growth of the number of disabled workers. The growth of the number of men who did not participate in paid work for good reasons, increased the social acceptance of non-employment and part-time work for men, and contributed to decisions of men to work part-time or, more radical, to focus exclusively on household work as ‘housemen’. We expect that *part-time working men and ‘housemen’ support the work obligation norm less than full-time working men* (H4).

2.5 *Decline of the work obligation norm*

So far, we have focussed upon the support for the work obligation norm among different categories in the Dutch population. Our explanation, however, with its core of norm adjustments in the household, implies a dynamic in which societal support for the work obligation norm slowly declines. Norms are not only socially shared, but also transmitted and sanctioned. The extent to which norms rule behaviour depends on the costs of following the norm, and on the extent to which the norm is followed by others (e.g. Reno, Cialdini & Kallgren, 1993). If, as our argument implies, the work obligation norm receives strong support in the breadwinner family, and much less in the one-and-half earner family, the implication is that the adherence to the norm decreases when the share of one-and-half earner families increases. This causes a decline in the support for the work obligation norm among the Dutch population. We expect that *the growth of part-time work leads to a gradual decline in the adherence to the work obligation norm among the Dutch population* (H5).

Given that attitudes towards work are the product of youth socialization processes, these developments work out differently for different generations. Especially the younger generations will be affected by the new problems of time scarcity and combination pressures in the household, and for that reason more willing to accept that trade-offs have to be made. We expect *that with each new generation adherence to the work obligation further declines* (H6).

The logical end point of this development is when the adherence to the work obligation norm has completely disappeared. This is the situation in which people work for instrumental reasons, for the income that it generates, but also to be involved in socially useful activities, to meet other people, and to develop the own capabilities. This instrumental value of work is high, as is shown in research about differences in well-being of employed and unemployed

people (e.g. Clark & Oswald, 1994; De Beer, 1999; Layard, 2005). It should be noted, however, that it is not the work itself that leads to greater well-being. Housewives and pensioners also attain high levels of well-being. The implication is that the extent to which the employment relationship is attractive depends on its relative attractiveness in comparison to other meaningful relationships. This relative attractiveness does not only, and will probably increasingly less depend on the income that can be gained in the work, and will probably increasingly be evaluated to its contribution to a meaningful life (cf. Van Hoof et al., 2002).

3. Method

3.1 Data

To test the hypotheses, we use the OSA Labour Supply Panel (Fouarge et al., 2006), of which data are collected bi-annually. The data set contains information about the labour market and labour supply of the Dutch population. Representativeness of the sample is secured by selecting households through a stratified sampling procedure. Selection criteria are region and size of the household, and gender and age of the main earner. We use the data from the waves from 1988 until 1996 and those of 2002. The statements about the work obligation norm were not included in the questionnaires of 1998 and 2000.

To estimate partner-effects, only the households of which both (heterosexual) partners at least once simultaneously participated in one of the waves were selected. The sample was subsequently divided by gender. Respondents with missing information concerning themselves or their partner, were excluded from the analyses. In the analyses 4,603 households were included, together providing 19,161 observations. The subsample of men contains data about 4,510 respondents together providing 9,513 observations. The subsample of women has data about 4,547 respondents together providing 9,648 observations. The subsamples of men and women differ somewhat in size, because of partners only the labour market position needed to be available.

3.2 Measurement instruments

The dependent variable in our analyses is the extent to which respondents adhere to the work obligation norm. The norm is measured with a scale, that was developed in research about the centrality of work in the value system and work as a social obligation (Wippler,

1968; Zanders et al., 1977; Ten Have & Jehoel-Gijsbers, 1985; MOW, 1987). Comparable scales, with partially overlapping items, are included in the World Values Survey (Inglehart, 2004) and the Netherlands Kinship Panel Study (Dykstra et al., 2007). The scale consists of four items. Respondents indicate their approval to these items on a 5-points range. The items are: ‘*Work is an obligation towards society*’, ‘*You can do what you like after having fulfilled your obligation*’, ‘*Work always comes in the first place, even when this implies less leisure time*’ and ‘*If someone wants to enjoy life, he (or she) must be willing to work hard*’. We use as the dependent variable the mean score on these items. The highest possible score of 5 indicates strong approval with the norm. All items load on one factor, that explains 50.4% of the total variance. Factor loadings vary between 0.67 and 0.75. Cronbach’s alpha is 0,68.

To test the hypotheses, three specific labour market positions are distinguished. These are: full-time worker, part-time worker and housewife/-man. The category of full-time workers consists of workers who have a contract for 32 or more hours per week. Part-time workers are workers who have a contract for less than 32 hours. Respondents that indicated not to work for family reasons (such as lack of child care or other family needs) were categorized as housewife/-man. We created dummy variables for the categories of full-time workers and housewife/-man. Part-time workers are the reference category. Self-employed, unemployed, early retired and disabled workers make up a residual category, represented by a third dummy variable.

To establish norm change, we distinguish between cohort-, period- and age effects (e.g. Mason & Fienberg, 1985). *Age effects* are operationalized by a centered age measure. We distinguish five birth cohorts: 1923-1939; 1940-1949; 1950-1959; 1960-1969; 1970-1982. The cohort 1950-1959 is the reference category. The development of *period effects* is measured with a continuous variable, indicating the sample wave. The variable was centered on 1994, and varies between -3 (1988) and 4 (2002).

A problem in these analyses is that observations extend over a period of 14 years (1988-2002). The usual career is considerably longer, and this restricts the opportunities to disentangle age- and cohort-effects, especially for the youngest and the oldest respondents Van Hoof (2006) has shown that items concerning the *centrality of work* tend to get more affirmative answers at the beginning and at the end of the career. The graphical relationship between age and centrality of work is curvilinear, reaching its lowest point when there are small children at home. Van Hoof’s analyses show that the curve has shifted to a lower level between 1985 and 1996, indicating that age effects were relatively stable and cohort effects

were substantial. We use Van Hoof's approach to disentangle age and cohort effects in the development of the work obligation norm.

Furthermore, dummy variables for *church membership*, *marital status* and the presence *in the household of children under the age of 12* are included. Two dummy variables are used to indicate *educational level*.

3.3 Analytical strategy

In the statistical analyses we use multi-level regression analysis (Snijders & Bosker, 1999). Multi-level models are adequate to handle the structure of our data, in which observations are nested within individuals, who are in turn nested in households. The first three models draw on the household data, and have three levels, that of households, individuals and observations. In model 1, time and gender are included as the independent variables. In model 2 the main effects of labour market position and the interaction terms with gender are included. In model 3 the control variables are added. We then estimate separate two-level models for men (models 4-5) and women (models 6-7). The first of these models have only the respondent's characteristics as independent variables, to the second model the partner effects are added.

We present compound symmetry models, that include one component of variance for every level specified. An important assumption of these models is that all variances are equal and all covariances are equal. Longitudinal panel data often do not satisfy this assumption, because correlations tend to decrease as the interval between observations increases. The consequence is that standard errors are underestimated. We estimated several other models with less restrictive covariance structures to explore the effects of this assumption. These models showed a better fit to the data. However, differences in the fixed effects were minimal compared to the models we present, and substantive conclusions were identical. When the added precision of more complex models is not indispensable, as is the case here, Hox (2002) suggests it is acceptable to present simpler models that are easier to interpret.

4. Results

Table 2 presents the results of the multi-level models used for testing the hypotheses. The table shows that models 1-3 explain a relatively high amount of variance at the household level, and a relatively low amount at the level of individual respondents. This indicates

relatively large differences between households, and relatively small differences between partners.

The models show mostly effects well-known from the literature. Men adhere more to the norm than women, and older cohorts more than younger cohorts. The erratic curve for the youngest cohort is exceptional, and deserves further attention, and we will return to this effect later. Higher educated people support the work obligation norm less than lower educated people. Church members show more support than non-church members and married couples affirm the norm more than cohabitants. Parents with children at home support the norm less. The strong effects of the residual category in the labour market position dummy variables can be explained from its composition. The residual category, in particular pensioners and disabled workers, strongly support the work obligation norm.

*****Table 2*****

Hypothesis 1 predicts that part-time working women support the work obligation norm less than full-time working men. Model 1 shows that men show a somewhat greater support for the work obligation norm than women; models 2 and 3 show that the specific position in the labour market position accounts for a large part of this difference. In models 2 and 3 interaction terms between gender and labour market position are included, with part-time working women as the reference category. The interaction term for men working full-time is significant and positive. Figure 2 illustrates the effects. Full-time working men support the work obligation norm considerably more than part-time and full-time working women. We conclude that working women support the work obligation norm less than full-time working men. Hypothesis 1 is supported by the data.

*****Figure 2*****

Hypothesis 2 predicts that part-time working women support the work obligation norm less than housewives. Figure 2 shows a high level of support for the norm from housewives. The support among housewives surpasses that of full-time working men. Models 2 and 3 show that these differences between working women and housewives are significant. Housewives adhere more to the work obligation norm than part-time and full-time working women. The data thus also support hypothesis 2.

Hypothesis 3 predicts that partners of part-time working women adhere less to the work obligation norm than partners of housewives. Model 5 shows that partners of housewives support the norm significantly more than partners of women working part-time. There are no differences in effects between full-time and part-time working women upon their partner. These results show that the extent to which a husband affirms the norm depends on the labour market position of his partner. The data support hypothesis 3. A further partner-effect, not predicted by our hypotheses, is that full-time working men have an affirmative effect on women (model 7). The strong effect of the residual category is evidence that the partner effects depend more on congruence and transmission of norms, than upon the actual number of work hours.

Hypothesis 4 predicts that part-time working men and housemen show less support for the work obligation norm than full-time working men. Figure 2 shows less support from part-time working men than from full-time working men. Models 4 and 5 in show that this difference is significant. Housemen were not included in Figure 2, due to their small numbers. Models 4 and 5 indicate that support for the norm amongst housemen is lower than amongst part-time working men, but the difference is not significant, probably due to the small number of housemen (see also table 3). We conclude that empirical evidence shows support for hypothesis 4. Part-time working men support the norm less than full-time working men.

Hypotheses 5 and 6 concern the development of the norm in time. Hypothesis 5 predicts that the support for the norm amongst the Dutch population gradually declines. Figure 2 gives indications for declining support. All categories tend to withdraw support for the work obligation norm. The decline is more prominent after 1994. The decline is, however, not only caused by less support from different categories, but also by a change in composition of the population. Table 3 shows that the share of housewives in the population has considerably decreased, whereas the shares of part-time working men and, especially, part-time working women have substantially increased. In all models the time variable shows a significant negative effect, showing that work tends to become less a social obligation. Hypothesis 5 is supported by the data.

*****Table 3*****

Hypothesis 6 predicts that support for the work obligation norm decreases with every new cohort. The results presented in model 3 tend to support the hypothesis. Among older cohorts, support is greater than among younger cohorts. The exception is the previously mentioned

cohort 1970-1982. Close inspection of this result reveals that the sample of the cohort 1970-1982 between 1990 and 1996 consisted for almost 93% of workers who left school with a diploma of lower or intermediate levels. The exceptional pattern must therefore be ascribed to the specific composition of the sample, and not to a change in the normative pattern among the youngest cohort. To get a clearer picture of cohort and age effects, we elaborated on the analyses of Van Hoof (2006). These analyses report a curvilinear relationship between centrality of work and age: at the beginning and at the end of the career work has a more central position in the value system than in the intermediate period. Figure 3 shows the stable pattern that affirmation with the work obligation norm increases after the age of 35. There is hardly a difference in support for the younger age categories, with the exception of the 1996 measurements for the younger age categories. Figure 3 shows declining work values for the older age categories. We conclude that hypothesis 6 is supported by the data.²

*****Figure 3*****

5. Conclusion and discussion

Our analyses have shown that the growth of part-time work has contributed to the decline of support for the work obligation norm. Both women and men as part-time workers or as partners of part-time workers show less support for the work obligation norm than they do in their traditional roles as housewives and breadwinners. The increase in the number of part-time working women has caused the new problem of adjusting work and household activities. In the Netherlands this process has developed at the cost of support for the work obligation norm. Not only women have withdrawn support, but also married men, from whom a greater contribution to household work is expected. The redefinition of roles has put the value of paid work in a new perspective.

Our research has focussed on the effects of the growth of part-time work, but we do not want to argue that the growth of part-time work is the sole explanation for the decline of support for the work obligation norm. There were other developments in Dutch society that

² In a strict sense, the curvilinear effect described by Van Hoof is only established for the 1996 data. The curves for 1988 and 2002 do not show the expected decrease in the beginning of the career. The lack of this effect may be caused by the use of different scales. Being focused upon work centrality, Van Hoof used only the items in which time spent on work was traded off against time spent on other activities. These are the items in the scale that probably are more sensitive to situational conditions, such as the needs of the family, and relatively less sensitive to norm internalization. It is probable that the effect of the beginning of the career lacks, because our results show a greater reflection of the decline of work values among the younger generations.

have contributed to the decline of support, such as the growth in educational attainment, the decrease in the number of church members, and, not elaborated upon in this paper, the increasing number of singles. All these developments have contributed to the decline in the support for the work obligation norm.

There is, nevertheless, a good reason to emphasize especially the importance of the growth of part-time work for the development of the norm in the Netherlands. This reason is that norm adjustment in the household has a deep and long lasting impact. In the processes of production and transmission of norms, households play a crucial role in two different ways. On the one hand, families have a key role in the sustenance and transmission of values and norms. Marriages are based upon congruence of value patterns between the partners: partner selection is guided by this search for congruence (Jansen, 2002), within the marriage relationship partners affirm each other's values, and partners transmit these values to their children (Ter Bogt, Raaijmakers & Van Wel, 2005). It is therefore not surprising that, despite large differences in labour market position, we do not find great differences in the support for the work obligation norm between partners. On the other hand, however, developments in the household may put the shared norms under pressure and lead to norm change, with an impact on future generations. The desire of Dutch women to participate themselves in the labour market has led to such a norm change. The women themselves had to put into perspective the work obligation norm to relieve the tensions produced by their increased labour market participation, such as increased time pressure and the feeling that the children were deprived of maternal attention. Their partners were assigned a greater share in household work and became '*task combiners*'; to be a good husband and father, they also had to put the work obligation norm into perspective. Both partners have an interest in the adjustment of the work obligation norm, and the adjustment process has not harmed the outcome of value congruence in the marriage relationship. Both parents transmit the same norm to their children, although this is a different norm than their parents had transmitted to them.

An important implication of our results is that, at least in the short term, there will not be much support among the Dutch population for policies that aim to increase the number of work hours of Dutch workers. This lack of support is motivated by normative considerations, that have greater significance than only the wage rate. An important input in this debate is that, despite the declining support for the work obligation norm, the instrumental value of work is still large. Work is an important contributor to well-being and happiness (Clark & Oswald, 1994; Layard, 2005), not only, and not even in the first place, by extrinsic rewards such as money and status (Winkelmann & Winkelmann, 1995; De Beer, 1999), but especially

because of its intrinsic rewards. To a greater or smaller extent, but more than other activities, work enables people to engage in socially useful activities, to contact other people, and to develop themselves. This specific combination of rewards is for most people much harder to realize outside the context of the employment relationship.

The major shortcoming of our research are the problems we had in disentangling the effects of part-time and full-time labour market participation of women. Despite our emphasis in the theoretical part on the importance of part-time work, we did not find substantial differences in the effects of participation in full-time and part-time work of women on own norm affirmation and on partner's norm affirmation of the norm. The good reason is that in the specific case of the Netherlands the number of full-time working women with children in the Netherlands is extremely small (Van Gils, 2007). The usual career pattern of women in the Netherlands is that they work full-time until they get children, and then start to work part-time. Full-time and part-time jobs are different stages in the same career, and this explains the lack of differences between full-time and part-time working women. It is nevertheless an important issue whether the increase in the labour market participation of women is in itself a sufficient condition for the decline in support for the work obligation norm, or that, as we have argued, the additional condition of a growth of part-time jobs is also necessary. Countries show considerable differences in the share of part-time jobs (see table 1; Steenvoorden & Keuzenkamp, 2008) and the hypothesis to be tested is whether and how in different countries participation in part-time work relates to support for the work obligation norm.

A first indication that support for the norm would have developed differently if the opportunities to work part-time would have been less can be drawn from research in the U.S. In the U.S. labour market participation of women during the last decades has increased to a level comparable to that of the Netherlands. However, women did not get access via part-time but via full-time jobs. Part-time workers were a small and marginal minority of people, that often had to combine several small jobs to earn sufficient income to sustain themselves (e.g., Tilly, 1991; Ehrenreich, 2005). The weekly work hour norm of 40 hours stayed intact (Jacobs & Gerson, 2004), and the literature gives strong indications that work morale in the U.S. is considerably higher than in western Europe (Bell & Freeman, 2001; Stiglitz, 2008). Whereas in almost all western countries, the Netherlands amongst them, the number of work hours per worker has decreased, this number has stayed about the same in the U.S, and even has increased for the occupational categories of managers and professionals (Schor, 1998; Jacobs & Gerson, 2004). After extensive computations Stiglitz (2008) concluded that these

differences in work hours are not caused by differences in financial incentives, such as tax regulation or the social security system. The more plausible interpretation is a different development in the valuation of work. Whereas in the Netherlands the increased labour market participation of women has led to a decrease in the work obligation norm, such a decrease does not seem to have taken place in the U.S.. Several sociologists and economists analyze the dynamics in the U.S. as the outcome of a treadmill of long work days and increasing consumption, with the level of consumption as the ultimate status good (Schor, 1998; Frank, 1996; Bowles & Park, 2005; Stiglitz, 2008). Other authors have argued that this strong emphasis on work and consumption has gone at the cost of family life and the own well-being. (Hochschild, 1997; Becker & Moen, 1999; Wuthnow, 1996; Lane, 2000; Layard, 2005).

The Netherlands and the U.S. show different patterns. In the U.S. with its growth of full-time jobs, the strong work norms appear to be much more intact, but now embedded in a cultural pattern directed towards consumption. In the Netherlands the number of part-time jobs has grown, and this has caused a decline in work norms, but also seems to have led to a relatively good balance between work and private life.

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Table 1 Labour market participation, part-time jobs and annual work hours in different western countries, 2000-2006

	Labour market participation ^A				Share of part-time working women ^A		Annual work hours per worker ^B	
	Total (%)		Women (%)		(%)		2000	2006
	2000	2006	2000	2006	2000	2006		
EU-15	63.4	66.2	54.1	58.8	33.2	36.7	1.655	1.625
EU-27	62.2	64.5	53.7	57.3	28.9	31.2	-	-
Netherlands	72.9	74.3	63.5	67.7	71.0	74.7	1.372	1.391
Belgium	60.5	61.0	51.5	54.0	37.4	41.1	1.554	1.571
Denmark	76.3	77.4	71.6	73.4	34.1	35.4	1.554	1.584
Germany ^C	65.6	67.5	58.1	62.2	37.9	45.6	1.473	1.436
Great-Brittain	71.2	71.6	64.7	65.8	44.4	42.5	1.711	1.669
United States	74.0	71.9	67.7	66.0	-	-	1.832	1.797
Sweden ^C	73.0	73.1	70.9	70.7	32.3	40.2	1.625	1.583

^A Source: EuroStat (Euroindicators database)

^B Source: OECD (<http://stats.oecd.org>)

^C Measurement changed between 2000 and 2006

Table 2 Results of multi-level regression models predicting Work obligation norm

	Households (n=19,161)			Men (n=9,513)		Women (n=9,648)	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6	Model 7
Constant	3.28 **	3.23 **	3.23 **	3.26 **	3.24 **	3.25 **	3.16 **
Time (ref. = 1994)	-0.02 **	-0.02 **	-0.03 **	-0.03 **	-0.03 **	-0.03 **	-0.03 **
Woman (ref.)	-	-	-				
Man	0.13 **	0.08 *	0.07 ~				
<i>Labour market position (ref. = part-time)</i>							
Full-time worker		-0.02	0.01	0.10 **	0.09 *	0.01	0.01
Houseman/-wife		0.10 **	0.06 **	-0.06	-0.06	0.09 **	0.09 **
Residual		0.12 **	0.08 **	0.16 **	0.15 **	0.08 **	0.06 **
<i>Interaction effect Gender * Labour market position (ref. = part-time working women)</i>							
Man*Full-time		0.10 **	0.09 *				
Man*Houseman		-0.17	-0.19				
Man*Residual		0.05	0.03				
<i>Individual characteristics</i>							
Age (centered)			0.01 **	0.01 **	0.01 *	0.01 **	0.01 **
Cohort 1923-1939			0.13 **	0.19 **	0.18 **	0.09	0.07
Cohort 1940-1949			0.06 *	0.10 *	0.09 *	0.04	0.05
Cohort 1950-1959 (ref.)			-	-	-	-	-
Cohort 1960-1969			0.03	0.07 ~	0.07 ~	0.07 *	0.06
Cohort 1970-1982			0.16 **	0.26 **	0.25 **	0.26 **	0.23 **
Primary educational level (ref.)			-	-	-	-	-
Secondary educational level			-0.06 **	-0.07 **	-0.07 **	-0.13 **	-0.13 **
Tertiary educational level			-0.24 **	-0.35 **	-0.34 **	-0.35 **	-0.34 **
No church member (ref.)			-	-	-	-	-
Church member			0.12 **	0.14 **	0.14 **	0.14 **	0.14 **
Married (ref.)			-	-	-	-	-
Cohabiting			-0.08 **	-0.10 **	-0.09 **	-0.05	-0.05 ~
No child <12 years (ref.)			-	-	-	-	-
Child <12 years			-0.05 **	-0.03 ~	-0.05 **	-0.07 **	-0.07 **
<i>Partner's labour market position (ref. = part-time)</i>							
Full-time					0.00		0.08 *
Houseman/-wife					0.09 **		0.02
Residual					0.04		0.19 **
<i>Variance</i>							
Household (level 3)	0.27	0.26	0.20				
Individual (level 2)	0.03	0.03	0.04	0.24	0.24	0.20	0.20
Observation (level 1)	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.28	0.28
Deviance (-2*LL)	36,988	36,897	36,180	18,594	18,570	18,963	18,926

Source: OSA Labour Supply Panel, own computations

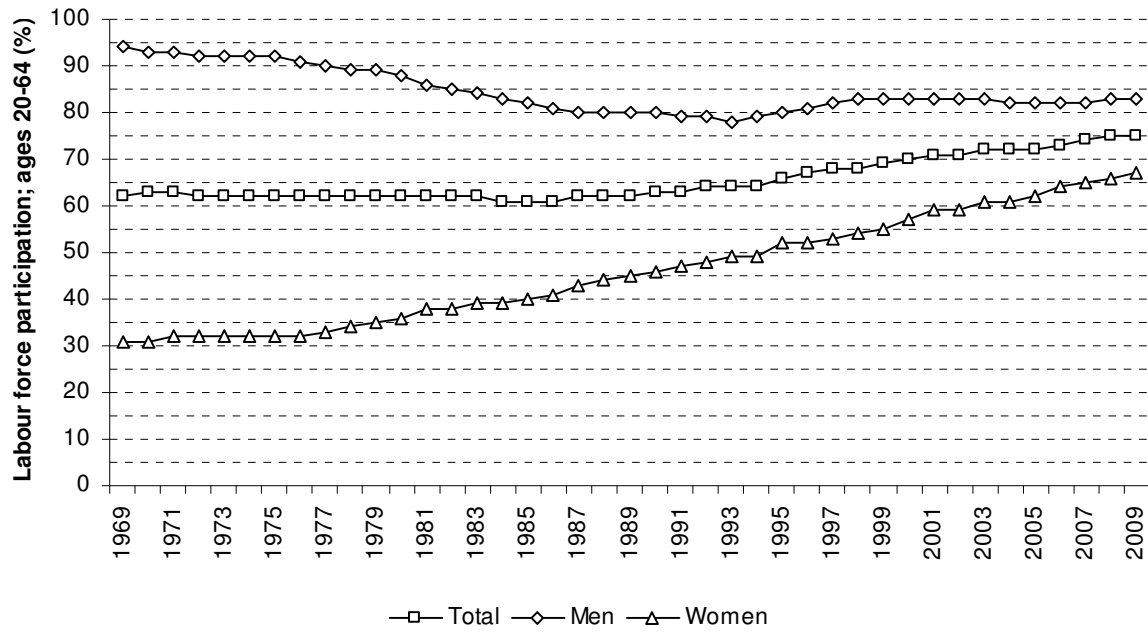
~ p < 0.10 * p < 0.05 ** p < 0.10

Table 3 Gender and labour market position; composition of Dutch population (18-65 years) 1988-2002

	1988 (n = 3,286) %	1990 (n = 3,132) %	1992 (n = 3,199) %	1994 (n = 3,149) %	1996 (n = 3,145) %	2002 (n = 3,250) %
Man; full-time	38.3	39.2	38.3	37.4	37.8	38.1
Woman; full-time	7.8	8.6	8.3	9.6	9.7	9.4
Man; part-time	1.4	1.2	1.3	1.6	1.8	3.5
Woman; part-time	11.1	12.1	14.3	15.6	17.8	25.8
Houseman	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.1
Housewife	25.8	23.3	20.8	17.6	15.1	7.7
Total	84.5	84.5	83.2	81.9	82.4	84.6

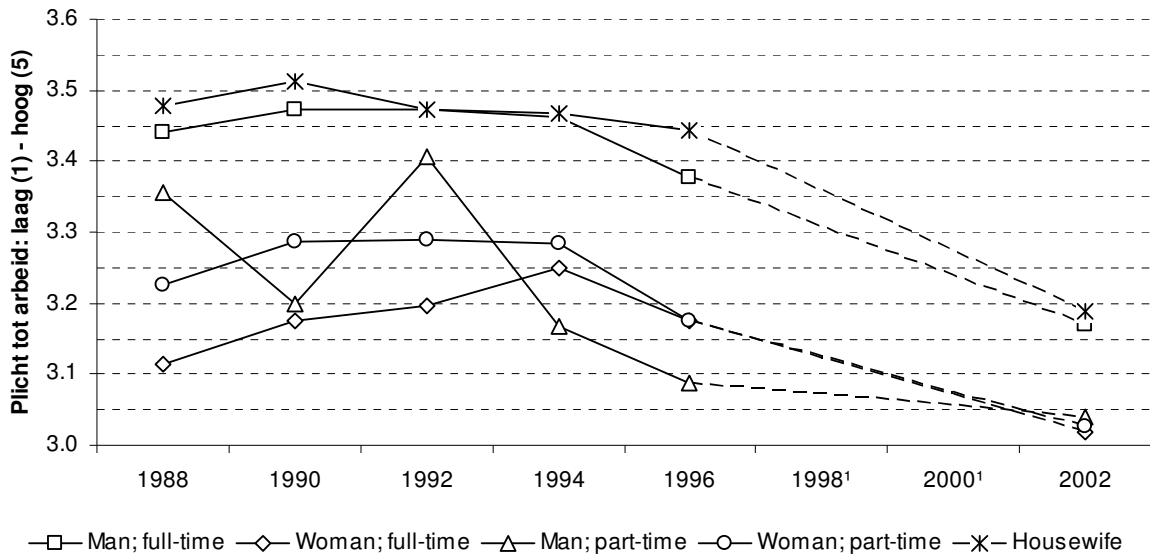
Source: OSA Labour Supply Panel; own computations

Figure 1 Development of labour market participation; the Netherlands 1969-2009



Source: Macro Economic Outlook 2009 (appendix 8E), Netherlands Bureau for Economic Policy Analysis (CPB)

Figure 2 Development of adherence to the work obligation norm (waves)

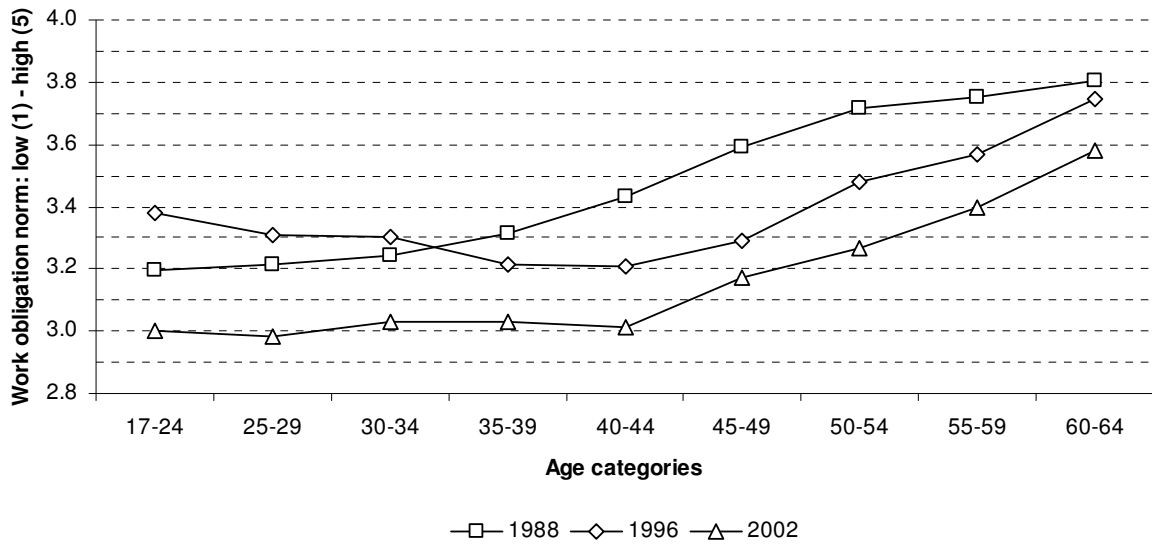


¹ Statements not included in 1998 and 2000

N varies per year (3,132 ~ 3,286)

Source: OSA Labour Supply Panel; own computations

Figure 3 Development of adherence to work obligation norm (age category)



N varies per year (3,132 ~ 3,286)
Source: OSA Labour Supply Panel; own computations