

Part-Time Work and Work Norms in the Netherlands

Rudi Wielers* and Dennis Raven

Abstract: We argue that in the Netherlands, due to the growth of part-time work, work norms have declined. The mechanism behind this norm change is in the changed organization of family life. The increased labour market participation of women has put the traditional organization of family life under pressure. Working mothers in the Netherlands opt for part-time jobs, thus sacrificing career opportunities for family life. Working fathers also have to trade-off hours, because a greater contribution to family life is expected from them. This implies that work norms are supported less by both women and men in their redefined roles than in their traditional roles. The hypotheses that follow from this argument are tested in multilevel regression analysis on the OSA Labour Supply Panel surveys for the period 1988–2002. The tests show that part-time working women and their partners adhere less to the work obligation norm than breadwinners and housewives. Adherence to the work obligation norm among parents has decreased with the growth of part-time work. Among non-parents, support for the norm has decreased too, but less than among parents. Our analyses show that, due to the growth of part-time work, the traditional division of labour is no longer predominant, and, as a result, the traditional work ethic is declining.

Introduction

During the last decades, part-time work has grown substantially in almost all Western countries. For many women, this growth of part-time work has facilitated their participation in paid work. The increased labour market participation of women has had its effects on the relations between men and women, on the organization of family life and on the support of work and family values. In this article, we focus upon the effects of the growth of part-time work on work norms.

We investigate the effect for the Netherlands, the country that was labelled the *'first part-time economy'* in the world (Visser, 2002). The Netherlands is a country with a relatively high rate of labour market participation, but, due to the high number of part-time workers, a low number of annual work hours (OECD, 2011). During the last decade, subsequent governments have developed policies to increase the number of work hours of Dutch workers. So far, these policies have not been very successful. In the literature, the Netherlands is considered to be a country of over-employment, that is, a country in which the preference for fewer work hours

exceeds the preference for more work hours (e.g. Bielinski, Bosch and Wagner, 2002). In comparison to other countries, in which part-time work is much less common, the willingness of Dutch part-time workers to work full time is low (OECD, 2011).

In this article, we will argue that the growth of part-time work in the Netherlands has coincided with a decline in the support for the work obligation norm. The increased labour market participation of women has shifted the family time balance to more hours of paid work and this has put the traditional division of labour in the family under pressure. To balance work and family life, Dutch women opt to work part time. This releases time pressure in family life, but this also means that the employment career and the work obligation norm have to be viewed in a new perspective. Married men also have to reconsider their balance of work and family life. Men can no longer almost exclusively focus on paid work, but are expected to contribute to family life. Confronted with part-time working partners and increased opportunities to work part time themselves, their support for the work obligation also declines.

Department of Sociology/ICS, University of Groningen, Grote Rozenstraat 31, 9712 TG Groningen, The Netherlands. *Corresponding author. E-mail: r.j.wielers@rug.nl

An important condition for such a norm change is that opportunities to work part time are good. In the Netherlands, part-time jobs are widely available. Employers are willing or forced by trade unions and law to offer part-time contracts on the employee's request. The wide availability and acceptance of part-time contracts enables workers to adapt their number of work hours to the needs of their family. In a full-time economy, the only choice is between participating full time or not participating at all, but in a part-time economy, workers can choose to reduce the number of work hours. For that reason, work norms are under greater pressure in a part-time economy.

In the next section, we will formulate testable hypotheses. We test these hypotheses for the Netherlands during the period 1988–2002, using the Dutch OSA-labour supply panel as data set.

Theory and Hypotheses

The Work Obligation Norm

We refer to the work obligation norm as the extent to which people perceive work, paid or unpaid, as a social obligation towards their society. Following this definition, the norm applies not only to employed workers, but to all members of society, regardless of their labour market position. Despite large differences in labour market position, adherence to the work obligation norm is only slightly stronger among men than among women (Furnham, 1990). This indicates that adherence is only to a small extent dependent on gender and labour market participation. Support depends mainly upon socialization contexts, such as education, religion, and family. Higher educated workers usually work more hours, but they do not support the norm as strongly as lower educated workers. Church members adhere to the norm more than non-members, but there are hardly any differences between members of different churches (Furnham, 1990; ter Voert, 1994). Roest, Dubas and Gerris (2009) and ter Bogt, Raaijmakers and van Wel (2005) have shown that work norms are intergenerationally transmitted in families. These research results imply that work norms are internalized at a young age, and change only marginally during the life course. In addition, there are differences in support for the norm between the generations (cf. Inglehart, 1990). Intergenerational change depends on broader developments in society that, due to the pace of socialization, have a gradual and slow impact upon the development of the value system.

The literature suggests that under the influence of the Reformation, work ethics have slowly increased in

western societies since the end of the Middle Ages. The zenith was reached in the 19th century (Anthony, 1977). Since the 1960s, several sociologists have argued that under the influence of increased affluence (Bell, 1976) and growing flexibility of the labour market (Bauman, 2005), work norms are declining. The thesis of declining work norms is contested (e.g. Schor, 1991; Stiglitz, 2008), but empirical research is scarce. With its strong work norms in the 19th century and in the first decade of the 20th century, the Netherlands is no exception to the general picture. In addition, as for other countries, it is unclear how the norm has developed since then. We suspect that the strong growth of part-time work in the Netherlands has substantially influenced the development of the work norm.

Growth of Part-time Work in the Netherlands

In comparison to other countries, the Netherlands has the largest number of part-time jobs in the world and the quality of the part-time jobs is relatively good. The growth of part-time jobs in the Netherlands started in the 1960s and accelerated in the loose labour market of the 1980s, when employers, trade unions and the government accepted part-time work as an instrument to increase labour market flexibility and labour market participation. The number of part-time workers increased further in the booming labour market of the 1990s, when work conditions for part-time work gradually improved through regulation in collective labour agreements and legislation. Since 2000, all Dutch workers have the right to do their job in part-time hours. Legislation prohibits wage discrimination between full-time and part-time workers. Most part-time jobs in the Netherlands are under retrenchment protection. The major drawback is that part-time jobs offer less career opportunities than full-time jobs (Román, Fouarge and Luijckx, 2004).

The growth of part-time work in the Netherlands has had a large impact especially on the life course of women with children. In the 1950s and 1960s, women had a paid, usually full-time job until they got married or bore children. From then on, they focused exclusively on the household and the upbringing of the children. The housewife's activities were perceived as unpaid but necessary work. Since the 1960s, the number of women combining the upbringing of the children with part-time employment has continuously increased. The now usual life course pattern is that women start working part time after bearing their first child, and then continue working part time, without increasing their number of work

hours when the children get older (Vlasblom and Schippers, 2005; Portegijs and Keuzenkamp, 2008).

Although women with children are predominant among part-time workers, they are not the only ones to work part time. Among women, the share of part-time workers has increased from 53.3 per cent in 1992 to 70.1 per cent in 2009; among men from 8.6 to 16.7 per cent (CBS Statline, 2011). In all age categories of women and men, the share of part-time workers is increasing. Men with children, the category least involved in part-time work, are not excluded from this development. In 2009, 6.5 per cent of men with children were working in part-time jobs compared to 2.1 per cent in 1992.

Adjustment Processes in the Family

Given the predominance of mothers among part-time workers, we start by comparing their support for the work obligation norm with that of full-time working men and housewives. We do not compare part-time with full-time working women, because for many Dutch women full-time and part-time employment mark subsequent phases in their employment career.

Contrary to the traditional breadwinner, who focuses exclusively on paid work, working mothers are also responsible for the household and the upbringing of the children. They feel time pressure from the home domain, and adjustment strategies such as the greater involvement of husbands and the outsourcing of household tasks do not offer easy solutions. Also within the work domain, time tensions arise, because the number of work hours influence promotion opportunities (Román, Fouarge and Luijckx, 2004).

Dutch women solve this dilemma by working part time. Part-time work enables them to combine paid work with the care for their children. Due to part-time work, having children no longer implies that women have to give up paid work, but, nevertheless, that they let go of career ambitions. The decision to work part time is a decision not to let career ambitions dominate the family life. In this value system, the work obligation norm is subjugated to the demands of the family, and thus loses adherence. A consequence of the lower adherence is that women do not increase their work hours when their children get older. We, therefore, expect that *part-time working mothers support the work obligation norm less than full-time working fathers* (H1).

Furthermore, we expect less support for the norm from part-time working women than from housewives. In the traditional gender-based division of labour, housewives had an infinite number of tasks and concerns, that kept them busy from early morning to

late night: 'a woman's work is never done'. Housewives were motivated by a strong work ethic that found its fulfilment in long hours of unpaid household work. Around 1960, when Dutch men spent about 48 h on paid work, the first surveys among housewives showed work weeks of about 60 h (Kloek, 2010).

The decision to work part time not only affects aspirations in the work domain, but also in the family domain. Due to time constraints, working mothers are not able to meet the high household standards of full-time housewives. As a consequence, part-time working women adhere less to the work obligation norm than housewives, because housewives are less often confronted with the moral dilemmas and practical implications of adherence to the work obligation norm. We therefore expect that *part-time working mothers support the work obligation norm less than housewives* (H2).

The participation of women in part-time work also has its effects on the appreciation of the work obligation norm by men. The organization of family life changes when women enter the labour market. The household is no longer organized around the work schedule of the man and the school hours of the children, but also around the work schedule of the woman. A further change is that the highly gender-differentiated norms that governed the traditional division of labour in the household lose support and are replaced by more egalitarian norms (Kalmijn, 2005; Cloin and Hermans, 2006). Men are expected to make an equal contribution to the unpaid household work, which is a considerably higher share than they actually realise. Despite the slow process, the number of 'task combiners', people who combine at least 12 h of paid work per week with at least 12 h of household work, has increased substantially, among both women and men (Merens and Hermans, 2009). In the new division of labour, fathers with working partners trade-off time to be spent on the job and time to be spent with the family. This redefinition of roles is stimulated by government policies, such as tax regulations and parental leave programmes, which aim to increase women's labour market participation. This leads us to expect that *partners of part-time working mothers support the work obligation norm less than partners of housewives* (H3). Accepting the practical consequence of the redefined role, some fathers decide to work part time themselves. We expect that *these part-time working fathers adhere less to the work obligation norm than full-time working fathers* (H4). All in all, we expect that *as a consequence of the growth of part-time work adherence to the work obligation norm has declined among both mothers and fathers in households with children* (H5).

Norm Change Among Non-parents

So far, we have focused on the support for the work obligation norm among families. We have argued that the growth of part-time work has affected the organization of family life, and thereby influenced the adherence to the work obligation norm of women and men with children. Because of the growth of the one-and-a-half earner families at the cost of traditional breadwinner families, we expect that the value system in the Netherlands has changed and that adherence to the work obligation norm has declined.

In addition to change among families, we expect that the growth of part-time jobs also affects work norms of men and women without children. The greater availability of part-time jobs increases their options and gives them a greater opportunity to combine paid work with other life interests. For instance, younger workers may combine their studying with paid part-time work, and older men may anticipate retirement by reducing work hours (Delsen, 1998). Since part-time jobs offer these workers the opportunity to combine paid work with other life interests, we expect that *also among non-parents, part-time workers support the work obligation less than full-time workers* (H6). As a corollary, we expect that *the growth of part-time work leads to a gradual decline in the adherence to the work obligation norm among non-parents* as well (H7). However, due to the greater impact of part-time work on family life, we expect stronger effects for parents than for non-parents: *adherence to the work obligation norm has declined stronger among parents than among non-parents* (H8).

Methods

Data

To test these hypotheses, we use data from the OSA Labour Supply Panel. OSA is a household panel in the Netherlands that bi-annually collects data about respondents' labour market situation and behaviour. Using interviews and questionnaires, information is gathered on subjects such as education and training, labour market mobility, income, job characteristics, and unemployment. On average, 4,400 respondents participate in each wave. Households that drop out are replaced by households with similar characteristics. Comparison with data of Statistics Netherlands shows that OSA is a representative sample of the Dutch labour force (Fouarge *et al.*, 2004).

We use data from the waves of 1988 through 1996 and 2002, because the statements about the work obligation norm were not included in 1998 and 2000, nor

after 2002. To test Hypotheses 1 through 5, we selected households with two partners and at least one child for which all necessary information was available. This resulted in a sample of 3,709 households, and a total of 14,451 observations. The selected sample contains data on 3,414 women (7,370 observations) and 3,531 men (7,081 observations). The partner restriction does not apply to Hypotheses 6 through 8, as these do not focus on within-family mechanisms. Hypotheses 6 and 7 are tested on a sample of childless respondents (4,362 individuals, 6,977 observations), and Hypothesis 8 is tested on all cases with complete information (11,626 individuals, 23,414 observations).

Measurement Instruments

The dependent variable in our analyses is a measure of the attitude towards work, that has been labelled the 'work obligation' (Parboteeah, Hoegl, and Cullen, 2009), 'work ethics' (van Oorschot, 2006) or 'work-as-duty' scale (Roest, Dubas and Gerris, 2009). Selected items from this scale have been included in large-scale data collections, such as the World Values Survey, the Netherlands Kinship Panel Study, and the OSA panel. The items measure the respondent's attitude towards the position of work in society. The respondents indicate to what extent they assign work a central position in life and to what extent work is a social obligation. The perspective is that of generalized statements which do not refer to the position of work in the life of the respondents themselves.

The OSA panel includes four items from the scale, with approval measures from 1 to 5. The items are: 'work is an obligation towards society', 'you can do what you like only after having fulfilled your obligation', 'work always comes first, even when this implies less leisure time', and 'if someone wants to enjoy life, he (or she) must be willing to work hard'. The dependent variable is the mean score on these items, with a maximum of 5 indicating strong adherence to the work obligation norm. Cronbach's α is 0.68, which is about the usual reliability for this scale (cf. van Oorschot, 2006; Roest, Dubas and Gerris, 2009). Factor analyses show similar answer patterns for men and women.

For this study, three specific labour market positions are distinguished: full-time worker, part-time worker, and housewife/-husband. We consider workers with employment contracts that exceed 32 h per week full-time workers and workers with employment contracts of 32 h or less part-time workers. This cut-off equals a 4 day work week, and is more appropriate for the Dutch labour market than the cut-offs typically used in Europe (30 h) or the USA (35 h). Respondents who

indicated not to work for family reasons, such as lack of child care or other family needs, were categorized as housewife/-husband. The remaining cases, consisting of several categories with strong work norms (self-employed, early retired, disabled, and unemployed), were grouped in a residual category. Labour market position is captured by three dummy variables with part-time workers as the reference category.

Rather than using a linear effect for time, the decline of support for the work obligation norm is more convincingly tested against the part-time work rate in the Netherlands. In the selected years, the part-time work rate increased from 26.9 per cent in 1988 to 28.2 per cent (1990), 27.3 per cent (1992), 28.9 per cent (1994), 29.3 per cent (1996), and 33.9 per cent in 2002 (OECD, 2011). The part-time work rate was centred on 1994. When estimating such period effects, cohort and age effects should also be included (e.g. Mason and Fienberg, 1985). Age effects are operationalized in terms of age (centred) and age squared. Cohort effects are estimated using dummy variables for the birth cohorts 1923–1939, 1940–1949, 1960–1969, and 1970–1982, with 1950–1959 as the reference category. The available data cover a period of only 14 years, but employment careers are considerably longer. This restricts the opportunities to disentangle age and cohort effects, especially for the youngest and oldest cohorts.

Parental status, indicating whether or not the respondent has (a) child(ren), is captured by a dummy variable with parents as the reference category. We include dummy variables for self-reported *church membership*, *educational level*, and *marital status*. When testing Hypotheses 1 through 5, four dummy variables capture the *age of the youngest child*. We distinguish between the age groups 0–1 year (reference category), 2–5 years, and 6–12 years, all living in the household, and a residual category combining children in the household aged 13 years or older with children of any age not living in the household. *Household income* (centred) is measured as the combined income from labour and benefits of both partners, corrected for inflation.

Analytical Strategy

To test the hypotheses, we estimate five two-level fully multivariate multilevel models, with adherence to the work obligation norm as the dependent variable, and the explanatory variables discussed above included as fixed effects. Model 1 is the family model, including only partnered fathers and mothers. Effects for mothers and fathers are separately estimated in Models 2 and 3, respectively. Model 4 includes the childless respondents and Model 5 includes all cases.

Multivariate multilevel models include dummy variables for each measurement occasion, each with a random slope at level 2 (Snijders and Bosker, 1999). All variances and covariances between measurement occasions are estimated freely from the data, resulting in an unconstrained covariance matrix. As we use six measurement occasions, Models 2 through 5 include six dummy variables, resulting in 6×6 covariance matrices. We do not estimate fixed effects for the dummy variables because these effects are captured by the part-time work rate.

Rather than using a three-level model for Model 1 (occasions nested within individuals nested within families), we extended the two-level model, by including dummy variables for each measurement occasion for mothers and for fathers separately. In total, the family model includes 12 dummy variables, resulting in a 12×12 covariance matrix. This matrix is in essence composed of three separately identifiable 6×6 covariance matrices: one for mothers, one for fathers, and one for mothers and fathers together. This last 6×6 covariance matrix shows how the work obligation norm covaries between partners, thus preserving the three-level structure of the data.

The covariance matrices show rather stable values. Variances fluctuate around 0.48. Correlations between measurement occasions decrease from about 0.5 for 2-year time intervals to about 0.3 for larger intervals. Correlations are weaker for women than for men. The covariance matrices are not presented in detail and are available as [Supplementary Appendix A](#).

Results

The models reported in Table 1 show effects that correspond with findings generally reported in the literature. Men adhere more to the norm than women, older workers more than younger workers and older cohorts more than younger cohorts. The erratic curve for the youngest cohort is exceptional, but this is caused by the earlier labour market entrance of lower educated workers. 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 adhere to the norm more strongly than cohabitants. The presence of children has little effect. Only parents whose youngest child is in the age group of 2–5 years report lower support for the norm. Support is lower in households with higher income. The strong positive effect of the residual labour market category (self-employed, early retired, disabled, unemployed) is also in accordance with effects reported

Table 1 Results of multilevel regression models predicting adherence to work obligation norm

	Model 1 Families Coef. (SE)	Model 2 Mothers Coef. (SE)	Model 3 Fathers Coef. (SE)	Model 4 Non-parents Coef. (SE)	Model 5 All Coef. (SE)
N_{level2}	3,709	3,414	3,531	4,362	11,626
N_{level1}	14,451	7,370	7,081	6,977	23,414
Constant	3.20** (0.033)	3.13** (0.054)	3.18** (0.052)	3.08** (0.041)	3.17** (0.018)
Part-time work rate (centred)	-0.03** (0.004)	-0.02** (0.006)	-0.04** (0.006)	-0.02* (0.006)	-0.03** (0.004)
Gender (reference = woman)					
Man	0.05 (0.034)			0.10** (0.021)	0.11** (0.014)
Labour market position (reference = part time)					
Full time	-0.01 (0.030)	0.00 (0.033)	0.11* (0.037)	0.08** (0.024)	0.08** (0.015)
House husband/-wife	0.04* (0.018)	0.07* (0.022)	0.07 (0.149)	0.01 (0.059)	0.06** (0.018)
Residual	0.06* (0.025)	0.05 (0.028)	0.14** (0.043)	0.01 (0.032)	0.06* (0.017)
Interaction effect Gender × Labour market position (reference = part-time working women)					
Full time × Man	0.12* (0.044)				
House husband	-0.07 (0.135)				
Residual × Man	0.04 (0.044)				
Partner's labour market position (reference = part time)					
Full time	0.09* (0.036)		0.04 (0.032)		
House husband/wife	0.13 (0.149)		0.09** (0.022)		
Residual	0.19** (0.041)		0.02 (0.027)		
Parental status (reference = has a child)					
Non-parent					0.00 (0.017)
Interaction effect non-parent × part-time work rate					0.01* (0.005)
Age (÷ 10; centred)					0.08** (0.016)
Age ²	0.08** (0.023)	0.08** (0.032)	0.08* (0.034)	0.07* (0.030)	0.08** (0.005)
Cohort 1923–1939	0.03* (0.009)	0.02~ (0.011)	0.03* (0.012)	0.04** (0.010)	0.04** (0.005)
Cohort 1940–1949	0.10* (0.046)	0.11 (0.069)	0.08 (0.069)	0.25* (0.091)	0.13** (0.040)
Cohort 1950–1959 (reference)	0.05* (0.026)	0.06~ (0.037)	0.04 (0.039)	0.10 (0.060)	0.08** (0.023)
Cohort 1960–1969	0.01 (0.028)	0.01 (0.040)	0.06 (0.043)	0.12* (0.040)	0.04 (0.023)
Cohort 1970–1982	0.01 (0.061)	-0.01 (0.080)	0.28* (0.097)	0.22** (0.057)	0.15** (0.038)
Primary education (reference)					
Secondary education	-0.08** (0.015)	-0.13** (0.023)	-0.09** (0.024)	-0.11** (0.023)	-0.13** (0.013)
Tertiary education	-0.24** (0.020)	-0.32** (0.032)	-0.34** (0.029)	-0.37** (0.028)	-0.37** (0.016)
No church member (reference)					
Church member	0.11** (0.015)	0.12** (0.020)	0.14** (0.020)	0.19** (0.019)	0.16** (0.011)
Married (reference)					
Cohabiting	-0.07~ (0.041)	-0.03 (0.050)	-0.10* (0.049)	-0.12** (0.027)	-0.11** (0.020)
Single				-0.04 (0.061)	-0.07* (0.025)
Separated				-0.04 (0.028)	-0.06* (0.021)
Child age (reference = at home, aged 0–1 year)					
Child at home aged 2–5 years	-0.05* (0.023)	-0.07* (0.029)	-0.03 (0.028)		
Child at home aged 6–12 years	0.02 (0.027)	-0.01 (0.035)	0.06~ (0.034)		
Child at home aged ≥ 13 years or any child living not at home	0.05 (0.031)	0.01 (0.040)	0.07~ (0.038)		
Household income (÷ 1,000 centred)	-0.033** (0.007)	-0.03* (0.008)	-0.01 (0.010)	0.01 (0.012)	-0.01* (0.005)

~ $P < 0.10$; * $P < 0.05$; ** $P < 0.001$.

Notes: Coefficients are unstandardized fixed effects. All models are fully multivariate multilevel models. Covariance matrices including random effects available as Supplementary Appendix A. Source: OSA Labour Supply Panel; Own calculations.

in the literature (Furnham, 1990). We restrict further interpretations of results to the tests of the hypotheses.

Hypothesis 1 predicts that part-time working women support the work obligation norm less than full-time working fathers. Model 1 shows a positive and significant interaction term for full-time working fathers ($b=0.12$; $P<0.05$). Full-time working fathers support the work obligation norm more than part-time and full-time working mothers. Hypothesis 1 is supported by the data.

Hypothesis 2 predicts that support for the work obligation norm is weaker among part-time working women than among housewives. Model 2 shows that housewives adhere significantly more to the work obligation norm than part-time and full-time working mothers ($b=0.07$; $P<0.05$). The data thus support Hypothesis 2.

Hypothesis 3 predicts that partners of part-time working mothers adhere less to the work obligation norm among partners of housewives. Model 3 shows a significantly stronger support for the norm from partners of housewives than among partners of mothers working part time ($b=0.09$; $P<0.001$). Full-time and part-time working women have the same effect on their partner ($b=0.04$; $P=0.21$). These results support Hypothesis 3.

Hypothesis 4 predicts that part-time working fathers adhere less to the work obligation norm than full-time working fathers. Model 3 shows that part-time working fathers indeed support the norm less strongly than full-time working fathers ($b=0.11$; $P<0.05$). This supports Hypothesis 4.

Hypothesis 5 predicts that with the growth of part-time work, adherence to the work obligation norm has declined among both mothers and fathers in households with children. Models 1 through 3 show significant negative effects for families ($b=-0.03$; $P<0.001$), mothers ($b=-0.02$; $P<0.001$), and fathers ($b=-0.04$; $P<0.001$) separately. These results corroborate Hypothesis 5.

Hypothesis 6 predicts that also among non-parents, part-time workers support the work obligation norm less than full-time workers. Model 4 shows a significant positive effect for full-time workers ($b=0.08$; $P<0.001$). This effect supports Hypothesis 6.

Hypothesis 7 predicts that the growth of part-time work has led to a gradual decline in the adherence to the work obligation norm among non-parents as well. Model 4 shows a significant negative effect of the work rate on the work obligation norm ($b=-0.02$; $P<0.05$). This result corroborates Hypothesis 7.

Finally, Hypothesis 8 predicts that adherence to the work obligation norm has declined stronger among parents than among non-parents. Model 5 shows a

negative main effect for the part-time work rate ($b=-0.03$; $P<0.001$). The dummy variable representing non-parental status does not show a significant effect ($b=0.00$; $P=0.86$), but the interaction effect between non-parental status and the part-time work rate is significant ($b=0.01$; $P<0.05$). The effect of the part-time work rate for non-parents ($b=-0.03+0.01=-0.02$) is significantly weaker than the effect for parents ($b=-0.03$). Hypothesis 8 is supported by the data.

Conclusions and Discussions

Our analyses have shown that the growth of part-time work in the Netherlands has contributed to the declining support for the work obligation norm. The growth of part-time work was stimulated by the desire of women to keep their paid job after childbirth. We have demonstrated how this increased participation of women in part-time work leads to a decrease in adherence to the work obligation norm. Participation in the labour market increases time pressure, and women with children have to trade-off time spent on the job and time spent on the family. A wide availability of part-time jobs enables them to adjust the number of work hours to the needs of family life. The difficult balance between family life and the paid job is released when they let go of the high work standards of both the full-time worker and the housewife. As a consequence, work norms lose salience.

Not only among working mothers, but also among fathers, the work obligation norm has lost support. In the new organization of family life, fathers are expected to contribute to household chores and the upbringing of the children. Fathers can only meet these expectations by trading-off work and family norms. This trade-off, absent in the traditional division of labour, puts the work norms in a new perspective. Our results show that in families in which the partner has a part-time job, men support the work obligation norm less than in families in which the woman is a housewife. The number of men with part-time working partners has strongly increased during the last decades. In addition, there is a relatively small, but increasing number of fathers who work part-time themselves, and these men support the work obligation norm less than full-time working fathers.

Part-time work has not only had its effect upon parents, but also upon non-parents. The growth of part-time work has increased the opportunities to combine paid work with other life interests. Also among non-parents, adherence to the work obligation norm is less strong among part-time workers than among full-time workers, and adherence to the norm

decreased during the period 1988–2002. Nevertheless, support among non-parents has decreased less than among parents. Because of this smaller decrease in support, and because of the predominance of women with children among part-time workers, the main cause for the decrease in the support of the work obligation has to be located in the increased participation of women with children in part-time work.

In our attempt to explain the decreasing support for the work obligation norm, we focused on developments in the family, but this is not the sole explanation. Other developments in Dutch society, not discussed in this article, will have contributed to the loss of support, such as the growth in educational attainment, decreasing church membership, and the increasing number of singles. There is, however, good reason to emphasize the role of family life in the development of the norm in the Netherlands. Whereas adherence to the norm is dependent on socialization processes of education, religion, and family, it is the practical problems of everyday life that put pressure on the norm. In the trading-off process between time to be spent on the family and time to be spent on paid work different norms collide. Both partners are involved in this decision, and therefore have to explicate norms to negotiate a new consensus. It is therefore probable that norm adjustment has its main origins in the family.

The main shortcoming of our research is that we tested our hypotheses for only one country, the Netherlands, which is the first part-time economy in the world. The wide diffusion of part-time work in the Netherlands has allowed us to capture the development of adherence to the work obligation norm among part-time and full-time workers and housewives. Having established that the growth of part-time work leads to a decrease of adherence to the work obligation norm in the Netherlands, the next question is whether other countries with increasing part-time work rates will show the same development of the norm. It is probable that specific conditions in the Netherlands, such as the relatively good quality of part-time jobs and the policies of trade unions and the government to improve conditions for part-time work have influenced adherence to the work obligation norm. Without such conditions, part-time work would have a more peripheral status, and would for that reason be less attractive as an alternative to the full-time job.

There is, however, reason to believe that the validity of our results is not restricted to the Netherlands. Part-time work has been on the increase in most western countries for decades now, and with the higher share of part-time workers in the labour force, the rate of involuntary part-time work tends to decrease (OECD, 2011). This

indicates greater acceptance of part-time work, at least by the part-time workers themselves, and thus a less peripheral position of part-time work in the job structure. In addition, evidence from the European Values Survey shows that not only in the Netherlands, but in all European countries, part-time workers support the work obligation norm less than full-time workers (Warr, 2008). Given its large number of part-time workers, it is not surprising that cross-country comparison shows that support for the work obligation norm is relatively low in the Netherlands (Halman, Luijckx and van Zundert, 2005). However, additional research is needed to test this claim.

An 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. The value attached to work itself and the meaning of work as a requirement for a good life have declined. This implies that, after the decline of organized religion, work again loses an important normative pillar. Yet this does not imply that work is now on the fast track to losing its societal significance. The instrumental value of work, expressed in the income it generates, the involvement in socially useful activities, the interacting with other people, and the developing of one's own talents, is high. This is illustrated by research on differences in well-being of employed and unemployed people (Layard, 2005). For most people the specific combination of rewards work can give is much harder to realise outside the context of an employment relationship. Therefore, only a slow and limited decline of labour supply is to be expected.

Acknowledgements

The authors thank Marijtje van Duijn for her statistical advice and the anonymous reviewers for their useful comments. Earlier versions of this article were presented at the 2009 EqualSoc EMPLOY-FAMNET workshop in Berlin, the 2009 meeting of the Dutch and Flemish Sociological Associations in Amsterdam and the 2009 European Science Foundation TransEurope Workshop in Tallinn.

Supplementary Data

Supplementary data are available at *ESR* online.

References

- Anthony, P. D. (1977). *The Ideology of Work*. London: Tavistock.

- Bauman, Z. (2005). *Work, Consumerism and the New Poor*. Maidenhead: Open University Press.
- Bell, D. (1976). *The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism*. New York: Basic Books.
- Bielinski, H., Bosch, G. and Wagner, A. (2002). *Working Time Preferences in Sixteen European Countries*. Dublin: European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions.
- CBS Statline (2011). Available from: <<http://statline.cbs.nl>> [accessed 26 January 2011].
- Cloin, M. and Hermans, B. (2006). Onbetaalde arbeid en de combinatie van arbeid en zorg [Unpaid labour and the combination of labour and care]. In Portegijs, W., Hermans, B. and Lalta, V. (Eds.), *Emancipatiemonitor 2006 [Emancipation Monitor 2006]*. Den Haag: Sociaal Cultureel Planbureau.
- Delsen, L. (1998). When do men work part-time? In O'reilly, J. and Fagan, C. (Eds.), *Part-time Prospects: An International Comparison of Part-time Work in Europe, North America and the Pacific Rim*. London: Routledge, pp. 57–76.
- Fouarge, D. J. A. G. et al. (2004). *Trendrapport Aanbod van Arbeid 2003 [Trend Report Labour Supply 2003]*. Tilburg: Organisatie voor Strategisch Arbeidsmarktonderzoek.
- Furnham, A. (1990). *The Protestant Work Ethic: The Psychology of Work-related Beliefs and Behaviours*. London: Routledge.
- Halman, L. C. J. M., Luijckx, R. and van Zundert, M. (2005). *Atlas of European Values*. Leiden: Brill.
- Inglehart, R. F. (1990). *Culture Shift in Advanced Industrial Society*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Kalmijn, M. (2005). Attitude alignment in marriage and cohabitation. The case of sex-role attitudes. *Personal Relationships*, **12**, 521–535.
- Kloek, E. (2010). *Vrouw des Huizes. Een Cultuurgeschiedenis van de Nederlandse Huisvrouw [Mistresses. A Cultural History of the Dutch Housewife]*. Amsterdam: Balans.
- Layard, P. R. G. (2005). *Happiness: Lessons from a New Science*. New York: Penguin.
- Mason, W. M. and Fienberg, S. E. (1985). *Cohort Analysis in Social Research: Beyond the Identification Problem*. New York: Springer.
- Merens, A. and Hermans, B. (2009). *Emancipatiemonitor 2008 [Emancipation Monitor 2008]*. Den Haag: Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau.
- OECD (2011). Available from: <<http://stats.oecd.org>> [accessed 26 January 2011].
- Parboteeah, K. P., Hoegl, M. and Cullen, J. (2009). Religious dimensions and work obligation. A country institutional profile model. *Human Relations*, **62**, 119–148.
- Portegijs, W. and Keuzenkamp, S. (2008). *Nederland Deeltijdland: Vrouwen en Deeltijdwerk [Part-time Country: Women and part-time work in the Netherlands]*. Den Haag: Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau.
- Roest, M. C., Dubas, J. S. and Gerris, J. R. M. (2009). Value transmissions between fathers, mothers and adolescent and emerging adult children. The role of the family climate. *Journal of Family Psychology*, **23**, 146–155.
- Román, A., Fouarge, D. J. A. G. and Luijckx, R. (2004). *Career Consequences of Part-time Work: Results from Dutch Panel Data 1990–2001*. Tilburg: Organisatie voor Strategisch Arbeidsmarktonderzoek.
- Schor, J. B. (1991). *The Overworked American: The Unexpected Decline of Leisure*. New York: Basic Books.
- Snijders, T. A. B. and Bosker, R. J. (1999). *Multilevel Analysis: An Introduction to Basic and Advanced Multilevel Modeling*. London: Sage.
- Stiglitz, J. E. (2008). Toward a general theory of consumerism: Reflections on Keynes's economic possibilities for our grandchildren. In Pecchi, L. and Piga, G. (Eds.), *Revisiting Keynes: Economic Possibilities for Our Grandchildren*. Cambridge: The MIT Press, pp. 41–86.
- ter Bogt, T. F. M., Raaijmakers, Q. and van Wel, F. (2005). Socialization and development of the work ethic among adolescents and young adults. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, **66**, 420–437.
- ter Voert, M. J. (1994). *Religie en het Burgerlijk-kapitalistisch Ethos: Een Onderzoek naar de Relatie Tussen Religieuze Overtuigingen en Opvattingen Over Arbeid, Consumptie en Eerlijkheid [Religion and the Middle Class Capitalist Ethic: An Investigation into the Relation between Religious Convictions and Attitudes towards Labour, Consumption and Honesty]*. Nijmegen: Katholieke Universiteit Nijmegen.
- van Oorschot, W. (2006). Making the difference in social Europe. Deservingness perceptions among citizens of European welfare states. *Journal of European Social Policy*, **16**, 23–42.
- Visser, J. (2002). The first part-time economy in the world. A model to be followed? *Journal of European Social Policy*, **12**, 23–42.
- Vlasblom, J. D. and Schippers, J. J. (2005). *Arbeidsmarktconsequenties van Kinderen Krijgen: een Verkenning van Langetermijngevolgen [Labour Market Consequences of having Children: An Exploration of Long-term Effects]*. Tilburg: OSA-publicatie A216.
- Warr, P. (2008). Work values: Some demographic and cultural correlates. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, **81**, 751–77.