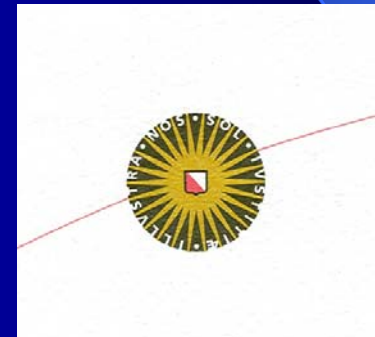


Working Time and Social Policy in the Netherlands

Anneke van
Doorne-Huiskes

Utrecht University

The Netherlands



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Focus on

- Part-time and full-time work in the Netherlands
- Why so many part-time workers?
- Part-time work as an effect of “strong preferences”
- The problematic labour force participation of older workers
- OECD warnings: European live too long and work too little
- The life course discussion on the social policy agenda

Share of full-time and part-time workers

- Of all working women: 66 percent in part-time jobs (12 – 34 hours per week)
- Women in full-time jobs (35 hours and more per week): 34 percent
- Men part-time: 14 percent
- Men full-time: 86 percent

Some international data on shares of female part-timers

- NL 73 %
- UK 44 %
- Germany 36 %
- Sweden 33 %
- France 29 %

- Italy 17 %
- Portugal 16 %

- Bulgaria 3 %
- Hungary 5 %

- EU total 30 %

Some specifications

- Women (NL) reduce their working time, when having children
- Fathers gererally do not
- Of all working women with child(ren) under 12 years of age, only 12 % work full-time
- Because of many part-time working women, the one-and-a-half-earner model is a popular model among couples in the Netherlands

Why so many part-time working women in NL?

- Till the late 1960's NL a prime candidate for the archetype of the breadwinner model (Sainsbury, 1996)
- Married women with (young) children were not supposed to have paid jobs
- “Strong preferences” and a strong motherhood ideology in the recent past
- Norms that say to parents: you have to do (part of) the caring work yourselves, still rather strong

To continue.....

- Collective forms of working time reduction in the early eighties (high unemployment!) facilitated the employers' acceptance of part-time work
- Gradually, employers began to see and to experience the advantages of part-time workers
- Part-time work protected by law

(Dis)Advantages of part-time work

- Time for caring and for work–life balance
- Children in childcare institutions during the whole week (people in NL think this is bad for children)
- Traditional gender division paid and domestic work continues
- Infrastructure of childcare facilities remains insufficient and (too) expensive
- Negative effects on incomes and career perspectives of women

Rather low participation of older workers

- Participation rate (2003) age groups 55 – 64
(M/F): 39 %
- Men 60 – 64: 27 %
- Women 60 – 64: 11 %
- Dutch government wants to stimulate longer working life of older people
- Average life expectation in EU for 60 years old people
 - M 19 years
 - F 24 years

“Europeans live too long and work too little”

- Minister Conference OECD May 2004
- Economic recovery in Europe
- Europeans need to be concerned about the future: many elderly people in good health who wish to retire at a relative young age
- Radical measures are needed, says OECD

Expansion of working life over the lifecourse

- The general credo: people have to work longer over the lifecourse
- Employers and their attitudes towards older workers
- What measures do organisations take to keep older employees?
- Employers usually look for measures that spare the workers
- Almost no investments in older workers

The older employees

- Desires and ideas of older employees about retiring
- A general conclusion: working longer is not what (most) people want
- Early retirement is very much present in people's minds
- Employees do not discuss questions on early retirement with the management of their organisations
- Management: retirement a sovereign decision of the employee

Developments of adequate life-course policies: a recent issue in social policy

- Same issue in many European countries
- How do modern people arrange their lives?
- What part does paid work play in the lives of men and women?
- How does modern society offer its citizens an institutional framework to combine work and family life?
- How to realise in Europe a longer workforce participation of older people?
- The overarching goal of making the EU economy the most competitive by 2010

The lifecourse as policy principle: a few starting points

- The lifecourse survey from Dutch government (2002)
- Time pressures in the middle phase of life: important reasons to introduce the concept of lifecourse in social policy
- De-standardisation of the lifecourse
- Difficulties in stepping across from one life sphere to another or in combining several life spheres

Three challenges for European countries

- Reduce the overload during the middle stage of life
- Combat underutilisation during the active old age
- Maintain and accumulate human capital during all stages of life

Effective lifecourse policies

- Not just a plea for more leaves, more time for care... etc. and less working hours
- Such a policy would be unpayable
- Investments in human capital of vital importance and essential for lifecourse policy
- In present labour force people too early put aside

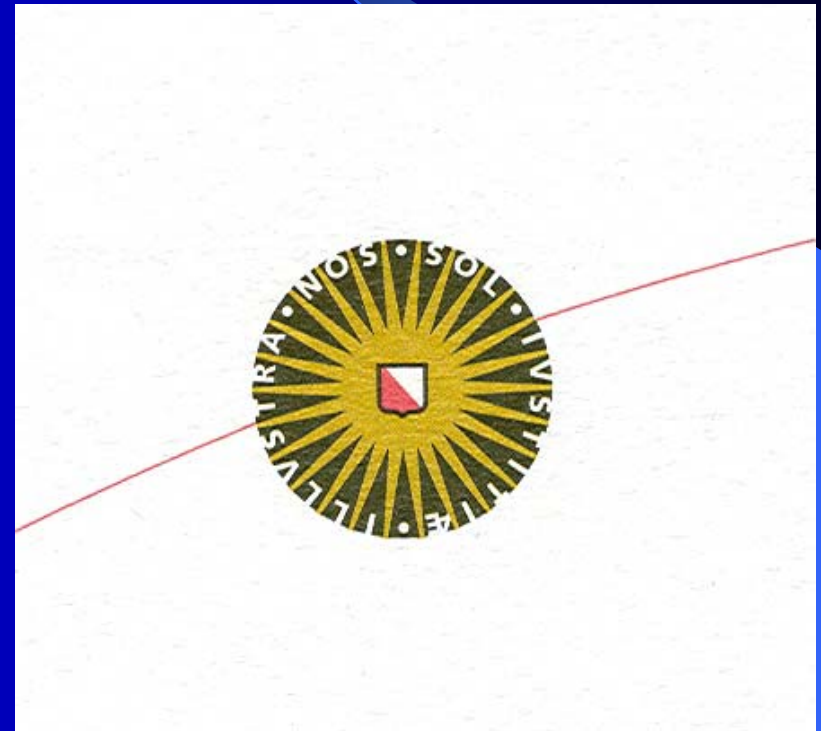
Effective lifecourse policy means.....

- Promotion of working more hours over the life cycle
- Leads to postponement of retirement, but also to better and more qualified jobs
- Needs commitment from the government, from unions and employers and from the workers (M/F) themselves
- Still far away from effective lifecourse policies

Thank you for your attention

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