

# Chapter Three

## ►► HOUSEHOLDS, WORK AND FLEXIBILITY Critical Review of Literature

### THE NETHERLANDS

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## 1. INTRODUCTION: THE DISCOURSE ON FLEXIBILITY IN THE NETHERLANDS

The debate on the increasing flexibility of work in the Netherlands is a complex one. Not only do the arguments in the discussion differ greatly, they also overlap each other. The flexible approach in the Netherlands can be viewed from various disciplines; from a business and economical view or from a more sociological view and aimed at the discussions surrounding emancipation and the combination of care and work (Remery et al, 1999). Various publications have been issued in

recent years. Some studies are based on the diversity of employees' flexible contracts, others look at the flexibility of working procedures within companies and yet others are more conceptual in origin and target new divisions, typologies or forms of flexibility models. There is also a movement that approaches the discussion from the normative aspects such as the social consequences of more flexibility and the role of the government in this (see Goudswaard and Batenburg, 2000).

## 2. THE DISCUSSION ABOUT FLEXIBILITY

Flexibility of work is high in the public interest at the moment (Remery et al, 1999). Flexibility is a "buzz" word, one of the fashionable words in the present Dutch employment system and also that of the last decennium (Ester and Vinken, 2000, Hofman, Van der Laan and Steijn, 1997, Fourage et al, 1998). Flexibility received a prominent role in policy discussions as an answer to the continuing high unemployment in the late eighties and early nineties. A combination of national and international factors prompted many employers to more flexibility in employment (Ester and Vinken, 2000, Fourage et al, 1998, Faber and Schippers, 1997, Remery et al, 1999). Faber and Schippers (1997) summarise the following causes of this large increase in work flexibility in the Netherlands:

- The increase in competition (this is linked to the globalisation process) that drives companies to continually improve quality, create innovations and increase productivity and to which forms of work flexibility can contribute.
- Fluctuations and uncertainties in the market necessitate a more flexible (numeric) mobilisation of personnel.
- Technical modernisation imposes new and often higher demands on current and new personnel (functional flexibility).
- Employees are personally interested in flexible working for various reasons, for example to better combine working and caring.

- From the government's point of view it is important that flexible work generates employment growth possibilities.
- A possible important explanation for the amount of flexiwork is the law on employment protection (Faber en Schippers, 1997).

In the discussion about flexibility, varying value is attached to a greater flexibility in the labour market. It is not immediately clear whether a large degree of flexibility is 'good' or 'bad' for the economy in general, or for the employees concerned (Kleinknecht et al 1997). Muffels and Steijn (1998) state that work flexibility is often seen as a form of liberalisation of the labour market. Proponents of work flexibility see advantages for the labour market and job mobility and a growth in employment. In the economic debate it is some-

times automatically presumed that an increase in flexibility is therefore 'good'. In addition, the necessity for increased flexibility in society is stressed to prevent rigidity of the society (Hofman, Van der Laan and Steijn, 1997).

At the same time the socio-economic debates stress equally strongly that work flexibility will harm the employees' prosperity. In particular, the weaker in the labour market would become the victims of a greater work flexibility. The advantages of work flexibility are uncertain and must be balanced against the disadvantages in the rights and the legal position of the employees. There is clearly tension here between flexibility and security (Muffels and Steijn, 1998, Kleinknecht et al 1997).

### 3. A QUESTION OF DEFINITION

The debate over flexibility is also clouded because various definitions are used. Work flexibility is a rather broad and ambivalent concept that has become to mean a great many different things (Muffels and Steijn, 1998, Goudswaard and Batenburg, 2000, Jonker, J. Hoof, A. van and H. Messchendorp, 1998, Hofman, Van der Laan and Steijn, 1997). The sometimes undifferentiated and poorly defined use of the term often gives rise to confused discussion. It can occur that people are in agreement about the principle of work flexibility but disagree about the practical application (Kleinknecht et al, 1997). Work flexibility can also be defined at different levels; for example at the level of the labour market, the organisation of labour, the conditions of employment or at the level of the employees. (see Goudswaard en Batenburg, 2000). Moreover, making labour relations more flexible can then be regarded from varying motivations and in several ways. On the one hand, work flexibility is necessary for many organisations to survive. In other words, the degree to which the organisation is capable of adapting the efforts of people and equipment to changed circumstances. On the other hand, the employees

may have other intentions, they choose for work flexibility as a fitting solution for their preferences, for example to adjust their job content and working hours to suit their personal (family) situation and ambitions (Hofman, Van der Laan and Steijn, 1997).

For a better insight into Dutch work flexibility, I will look more closely at the various types of work flexibility that occur in the Netherlands.

In labour market literature (thinking flexibly) there is generally a distinction made between two forms of flexibility: numeric flexibility and functional flexibility. Numeric flexibility is adjusting the quantity of the personnel, for example employing temporary workers, stand-by employees, outworkers and overtime. Functional flexibility targets the possibility of using the available workforce at different points in the organisation in response to the demand (see Atkinson, 1984, Ester and Vinken, 2000, Zant et al 2000, Fourage et al 1998, Remery et al, 1999, Steenbakkens 1994, Goudswaard et al, 2000, Kleinknecht, 1997, Jonker, J. Hoof, A. van and H. Messchendorp, 1998, Tijdens, 1998).

In addition, when considering flexibility a distinction is made between internal and external flexibility. Internal flexibility is the available possibilities that the employer has to use the permanent employees flexibly within the organisation. By external flexibility is meant, for example temporary adjustments to the personnel with employees that are not included in the permanent personnel and who work on a temporary or ad hoc basis (De Jong en Van Bolhuis, 1997, Kleinknecht, 1997, De Haan et al, 1994).

Furthermore other people use a definition of quantitative and qualitative flexibility (Hofman, Van der Laan en Steijn, 1997, Ester en Vinken, 2000, Faber en Schippers, 1997). By quantitative flexibility, Hofman, Van der Laan and Steijn (1997) talk about wage flexibility as well as internal and external mobility. External mobility is when an employee changes employer, the step from unemployment to employment or vice versa or a change in work location. Internal mobility is a change of function within one company (horizontal or vertical). From the attempts of companies to better react to fast changes, an important relationship is often made between work flexibility and internal mobility; a flexible company requires mobile personnel. Qualitative flexibility is the question of how far the qualitative demands of the work meet the training of the labour available (Hofman, Van der Laan and Steijn, 1997).

Hofman, Van der Laan and Steijn (1997) gave a summary of the various forms of work flexibility that occur:

- Adaptation of the duration of the work required: Examples are overtime, working with stand-by and temporary employees and

flexible annual contracts (in certain periods more hours will be worked).

- Flexible employment contracts.
- More flexibility in the job content. This applies to the availability of employees in varying locations.
- More flexibility in the conditions of employment. The traditional work relationships are reducing and making way for individualisation of employment contracts, forms of salary differentiation, performance rewards, flexible salary systems and profit sharing schemes.
- Changes in the traditional work relationships. A diversity of new empowerment, the manager as coach. One characteristic is the room and freedom that the individual employee has to carry out his function.

To summarise, it is about the following four divisions (Ester and Vinken, 2000, Faber and Schippers, 1997).

- Quantitative flexibility (flexibility of time).
- Qualitative internal flexibility (functional flexibility), management methods is apparent; for example self-directed.
- Quantitative external flexibility (contract flexibility) and
- Qualitative external flexibility.

As a consequence of the arguments by Smulders and Klein Hesseling (1997) and Remery et al (1999) I employ the following categories of the various forms of flexibility to explain the work flexibility in the Netherlands. Although it does not include all the above mentioned forms of flexibility, it gives a broad overview.

Figure 1. Categories of forms of flexible work

	Internal	External
Quantitative/numerical	<p><i>Flexibility of time (length of time)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Part-time work</li> <li>• Overtime</li> <li>• 2<sup>nd</sup> job</li> </ul> <p><i>Flexibility of time (point of time)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Weekend work</li> <li>• Shift work</li> <li>• Variable hours / flexitime</li> <li>• Career break</li> <li>• Flexible retirement</li> </ul>	<p><i>Flexibility of contract</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Temporary work</li> <li>• Short-term contracts</li> <li>• Flexible or stand-by contracts</li> <li>• Borrowing and lending</li> <li>• Accepting work</li> <li>• Outwork</li> <li>• Labour pool</li> </ul>
Qualitative/functional	<p><i>Flexibility of function</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Occasional employment</li> <li>• Employable in several workplaces</li> <li>• Task/function rotation</li> </ul>	<p><i>Flexibility of knowledge</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hiring in/ Borrowing knowledge or employees</li> <li>• Contract work out</li> <li>• Secondment</li> <li>• Freelance work</li> <li>• Advising</li> </ul>

Source: Smulders & Klein Hesselink (1997) in: Remery et al, 1999

#### 4. SHIFTING ATTENTION FOR FLEXIBILITY

After the economic growth in the nineties and the large decrease in unemployment, internal forms of flexibility (flexibility of function, flexibility of time) are receiving much more attention in the flexibility discussion. We also see that the (wishes of the) employees becoming more central.

So the discussions about qualitative flexibility in the Netherlands also take shape in the 'employability' discussion. Employability is described as the capacity of people to obtain a job and to keep it. (Ministry of Economic Affairs, 1997). This adaptability and also the speed at which employees can react to the faster and faster developments in the workplace (such as fast international competition developments, globalisation of the economy, innovation pressure, the dynamic broad applications of ICT, increasingly customer and market oriented, integral quality control and the necessity for long-term professionalism). Job security 'lifetime employment' has made way for work security 'lifetime employability' (Ministry of Economic Affairs, 1997, Derksen in Faber and Schippers, 1997). It is notable, however,

that this discussion mainly takes place at the management and employers level. We see that in recent years, gradually more is required from the individual employee, a broad availability is demanded, whether this involves changing organisation contexts, working times, work locations, organisation objectives or investment in keeping knowledge and skills up-to-date (Gaspersz, 1999, In: Ester and Vinken, 2000). We also see that employees are gradually obtaining more flexibility in their conditions of employment. The Dutch labour market has a great deal of movement and a labour shortage. Therefore, employees are critical and make more demands on their employer and conditions of work. Employers are obliged to offer adaptable conditions of work in which flexibility and individuality are central (we can also see that as a result, the government is slowly pulling out of social security so that the responsibility for conditions of work rests with the employers and the employees). More and more we see the development of à la carte conditions of work or à la carte collective labour agreements. The employer

offers the employee a greater freedom in composing his or her own package of work conditions (see Felderhoff n.d). There are also developments

in the area of flexible rewards (such as special bonuses in case of shortages of employees, more flexible pensions and (care) leave).

## 5. FLEXIBILITY IN FIGURES

In the Netherlands several sources illustrate the trends in flexibility. In particular, Statistics Netherlands with the Labour Force Survey and OSA (Institute for Labour Studies) with its supply and demand panel, provide the possibility to follow the trends in flexibility. These files contain either information about employees (Labour Force Survey and OSA labour supply panel; a representative sample of approx. 4500 people aged 15 to 64 and interviewed every two years from, first fielded in 1985) or employers information (labour demand panel OSA; a biannual survey first conducted in 1989, among some 2,500 firms and institutions, which is fielded in rotation to the labour supply panel) (Goudswaard et al, 2000). Much Dutch research uses these sources.

Research in the Netherlands has provided mainly systematic information up to now about external flexibility (probably easier to measure and to trace through individual information compared to internal flexibility) (Remery et al, 1999).

Hofman, Van der Laan and Steijn (1997) discovered that the empirical data about flexibility in the Dutch labour market in the nineties showed a gradual **increase in the number of external flexible jobs**. There was an increase in contracting out, temporary work and part-time work. Ester and Vinken (2000) show, in addition, that especially in the period 1993–1997 the **numerical flexibility** in the Netherlands took a relatively high leap upwards (see Houtman et al 1999 in Ester and Vinken, 2000). This is in contrast to the motives for flexibility as the answer to high unemployment years in the eighties and early nineties. Remery et al (1999) also concluded that the portion of employees with a flexible contract has in-

creased over the last ten years, although one cannot say that there is a very dramatic growth in flexible jobs. A permanent position remains the norm in general in the Netherlands (Remery et al, 1999). According to Muffels and Steijn (1998) in 1996, one in five jobs in the Netherlands was a flexible job (they take a broad definition of flexibility work even including small, permanent jobs). Between 1998 and 1996 the number of flexible jobs increased by 40% while the total employment only grew by 15%.

Even so the **external mobility** – the number of people that change jobs – in the Dutch labour market is fairly considerable (Hofman et al, 1997).

The research by Zant et al (2000) showed that the changes in the position in the labour market are concentrated on people with short-term work and people without work who are seeking work. On average these people change jobs a factor of 1.5 to 5 times more often than people who have a permanent job or are self-employed. The number of changes is strongly linked to age, level of education and type of appointments: young people with a higher education and temporary contracts change the most while older (married) people with less education and with a permanent contract change jobs least often.

Kleinknecht et al (1997) also found in their research into patterns in flexibility, that individuals are more flexible in the labour market when they are younger and with a higher education. People with children are less flexible. The research carried out by Zant et al (2000) also showed that changing from flexible to permanent and from looking for work to flexible are valued positively while changing from permanent to flexible is regarded as being negative. So a flexible contract is valued much less than a permanent

one. Self-employment gives the highest level of job satisfaction (Zant et al, 2000). Research from Kleinknecht et al (1997) showed the same results, that people who change their jobs generally increase their satisfaction.

It is not the case that once a flexible contract, means always a flexible contract. Remery et al (1999) found that a relatively large number of people with a flexible contract at a certain time (after two years) have a permanent contract later (although this proportion reduces over time). Flexible jobs do not always lead to permanent ones (see Kleinknecht et al, (1997), Remery et al, (1999). The probability of changing from a short-term contract reduces in relation to age, although substantial fluctuations between age categories on top of the trends towards reduction with increasing age were observed (see Kleinknecht et al 1997, Zant et al, 2000).

In general, more men have permanent positions than do women, higher educated more than lower educated and older rather than younger workers (Fourage et al 1998). They also ascertained that jobs with flexible characteristics occur twice as often among women than among men. Young people also more often have a job with flexible characteristics (Fourage et al, 1998, compare with Muffels and Steijn 1998).

A flexible job has a lower salary than a permanent one (see Remery et al, 1999, Kleinknecht et al, 1997). For example the gross hourly wage for flexiworkers in 1996 was 15% lower than for employees in permanent jobs (Remery et al, 1999). Research by Kleinknecht et al (1997) showed that if in a company there is a high percentage of employees with temporary contracts, then this is accompanied by lower average wages. People with temporary contracts earn less than people with permanent ones. (Kleinknecht et al, 1997)

Research shows that indicators of flexibility (internal and external flexibility, job duration, dismissals and resignations) have a clear sectorial pattern (see Zant et al, 2000, Muffels and Steijn 1998, Fourage et al, 1998). Zant et al (2000) conclude that commercial services and, to a slightly

lesser extent, trade, transport and communication services are the most flexible sectors. The education sector, on the other hand, has an extremely poor record in terms of flexibility. Muffels and Steijn (1998) show that flexible jobs occur most often in the service industry, catering, trade and in the agriculture sectors. Fourage et al (1998) then concluded that the transport sector as well as the banking and insurance world make a relatively high use of temporary workers. The research also showed that the transport sector has very flexible work times and the employees in this sector work the most overtime (Fourage et al, 1998).

In addition, commuting in the Netherlands is high. More than half of the working population in the Netherlands works in a different municipality than where they live (see Van der Laan, Arissen and Schalke, 1995 in Hofman et al, 1997). The percentage of commuters is also increasing. These figures are higher in the highly urban areas than elsewhere in the country, but mobility is fairly high in other areas (Central Statistical Office, 1993 and Van der Laan 1995 in Hofman et al, 1997).<sup>1</sup>

Another form of mobility is **migration**. Hofman, Van der Laan and Steijn (1997) ascertained that finding a job, as against being in employment, is not always accompanied by moving house. It appears that the municipal areas are the major areas of residence for job finders. The number of flexible jobs in the large cities is greater than elsewhere (SCP, 1996 in Hofman et al, 1997).

Recent research by Van der Vlist (2001) into residential mobility, job mobility and commuting by households shows that the distance commuted plays a smaller part in the decision whether or not to move house than had previously been presumed. The composition of the household and the associated living wishes are important factors that play a part. It appears that households adjust their living and working locations to each other in varying ways. Van der Vlist shows that someone with a long working week is more prepared to move house and a house owner is more likely to change jobs. A notable result from the research is



that households that live a great distance from their work prefer to change job than to move house. An important subtle distinction is, according to Van der Vlist, that this is not because large commuting distances are not important but that households can change their work location or adjust the length of their working week. Although more research is necessary, it appears that the distance a household commutes reduces over time, because the households gradually improve the relationship between living and working locations, according to Van der Vlist (2001).

One form of working that reduces commuting is telework (Kraan and Dhondt (2001); when work is carried out with the aid of information and communication technology at a location other than that of the employee or client. Part of the work, aimed at input or using information in the broadest sense is not dependant on face-to-face contact and produces a measurable result that can be planned so that it fits in with all the activities.

Kraan and Dhondt (2001) ascertained that in the Netherlands 6% of employees telework as against an average of 4.1% in the rest of Europe (see Merllié and Paoli (2001) *Third European survey on working conditions European Foundation of the improvement of living and working conditions.*). The Netherlands is therefore one of the leaders (along with Great Britain) in (West) Europe. They concluded that the percentages for the Netherlands are lower than the actual number of teleworkers (according to discussions about what the actual figures might be). Teleworking mainly takes place in the white-collar areas of employment in the Netherlands and hardly ever for blue-collar workers. In addition Kraan and Dhondt (2001) ascertained a clear link with the job level; teleworking occurs eight times more often by legislators, senior officials and managers than by administrative personnel (office workers). A possible explanation is that the first group are trusted more – without limits – by the employer.

## 6. FIGURES FROM OSA AND STATISTICS NETHERLANDS

It has already been stated that data from Statistics Netherlands (CBS) and OSA illustrates the trends in flexible working. Using the following data I will expand on the results described above (see Fourage et al 1998 Report on trends in the work force 1999).

Table 1 shows the development in the percentage of permanent and non-permanent jobs over the last ten years, based on the OSA labour force panel.

**Table 1. Type of contract 1988-1998** (as percentage of the total salaried workforce)

	1988	1990	1992	1994	1996	1998
Permanent	87.6	86.1	88.2	86.9	84.6	86.5
Temporary with the prospect of becoming permanent	4.3	5.6	3.7	3.5	5.3	6.0
Other	8.1	8.3	8.1	9.6	10.1	7.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: OSA Report on trends in the work force, Fourage et al, 1998.

**Table 2. Flexible job characteristics according to the type of employment**  
(as percentage of the total salaried workforce)

	Permanent	Temporary with the prospect of becoming permanent	Temporary	Other	Total
Flexible characteristics of which:	3.7	23.0	31.3	60.0	7.7
- via employment agency	0.8	12.6	20.9	16.0	2.9
- secondment/loan	2.4	5.2	4.3	1.3	2.6
- stand-by worker/outworker	0.6	5.2	6.1	42.7	2.2
No flexible characteristics	96.3	77.0	68.7	40.0	92.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: OSA Report on trends in the work force, Fourage et al, 1998.

Table 2 looks at whether the employment is flexible or not according to a number of job characteristics. The definition of flexible work as defined by Fourage et al (1998) includes working for an employment agency, secondment, on loan, outworking and as a stand-by worker. The table shows that just fewer than 8% of all employees have jobs with flexible characteristics. If flexiworkers are defined as employees with a temporary or other type of flexible contract or with one of the characteristics given above, then the percentage of flexiworkers in 1998 is 12% (Fourage et al, OSA, Report on trends in the work force, 1998).

The figures based on the Survey of the Labour Force (CBS, 1999) by Statistics Netherlands (CBS) show a different picture. Statistics Netherlands uses another definition and sampling method. Statistics Netherlands figures are based on employees who work for at least 12 hours per week. Table 3 illustrates the difference. In addition, with temporary employment Statistics Netherlands differentiates according to the length of the employment. Appointments for longer than one year are considered to be permanent appointments. Appointments where the employee is not employed for a fixed number of hours are defined by Statistics Netherlands as always being flexible jobs (Fourage et al, OSA, Trend rapport aanbod van arbeid, 1998, CBS, 1999).

Table 4 shows the position of men and women in the work sphere from 1995 to 1999. The table shows that in this period the number of employees with a permanent job has increased to just over 5.5 million. The numbers of both men and women in permanent employment have increased. The portion of men with a permanent job is greater than the portion of women. Also the number of employees with flexible forms of employment rose, although in 1999 there was a reduction: in 1999 571,000 people had a flexible job. This pattern applies to both men and women in flexible work. The number of women with flexible work is greater than the number of men with flexible work. The total of self-employed rose up to 1998. After that it fell to 733,000 self-employed in 1999. The number of female self-employed actually rose.

Table 5 presents figures about the job duration and the working hours of the working population. Table 3 and 5 show that in general women work shorter hours than do men. In 1999, almost 3.3 million employees had regular working hours, a reduction with regard to the previous year. The number of people working irregular hours in the period 1995 to 1999 increased. In 1999 nearly 3.5 million employees had some irregular working hours.

**Table 3. Working population (according to sex and age)**

		Total number of employed people	People working: < 12 hours per week	People working: ≥ 12 hours per week
<b>Total</b>	<b>1995</b>	6835	771	6063
	<b>1996</b>	6971	784	6187
	<b>1997</b>	7194	794	6400
	<b>1998</b>	7398	789	6609
	<b>1999</b>	7601	796	6805
<b>Men</b>	<b>1995</b>	4047	233	3814
	<b>1996</b>	4109	237	3872
	<b>1997</b>	4194	244	3951
	<b>1998</b>	4289	243	4047
	<b>1999</b>	4361	239	4121
<b>Women</b>	<b>1995</b>	2787	539	2249
	<b>1996</b>	2862	547	2315
	<b>1997</b>	3000	550	2450
	<b>1998</b>	3109	547	2562
	<b>1999</b>	3241	557	2684

Numbers x1000, Employed people are all the people who have a paid job.

Source: CBS, Working population, personal characteristics 1992 – 1999. Survey of the working population, 1999

**Table 4. Types of labour contracts in the working population**

		Total employees	Employees with permanent jobs	Employees with flexible jobs					Self- employed
				Total employees flexible jobs	Temporary workers	Stand-by workers	Stand in workers	Other flexible work	
<b>Total</b>	<b>1995</b>	5357	4880	477	149	105	34	189	706
	<b>1996</b>	5459	4920	538	187	114	48	188	728
	<b>1997</b>	5644	5077	566	207	121	43	195	757
	<b>1998</b>	5874	5270	604	223	138	49	195	734
	<b>1999</b>	6072	5502	571	210	112	44	205	733
<b>Men</b>	<b>1995</b>	3322	3103	219	89	33	7	89	492
	<b>1996</b>	3367	3120	248	105	34	16	93	505
	<b>1997</b>	3427	3175	252	113	35	13	91	523
	<b>1998</b>	3541	3275	266	123	41	13	89	506
	<b>1999</b>	3624	3369	255	103	39	12	101	497
<b>Women</b>	<b>1995</b>	2035	1777	258	60	71	27	100	213
	<b>1996</b>	2092	1801	291	83	80	32	96	223
	<b>1997</b>	2216	1902	314	94	86	30	104	233
	<b>1998</b>	2333	1995	338	99	97	35	107	229
	<b>1999</b>	2449	2133	316	106	73	32	104	235

Numbers x 1000 Employees with permanent jobs; The employment contract is not for a limited period and the employee is employed for an agreed number of hours. Employees with a flexible job; The employment contract is for a limited period and/or the employee is employed for a variable number of hours.

Source: CBS, Working population, personal characteristics 1992 – 1999. Survey of the working population, 1999

Table 5. Job duration and working hours of the working population

		Job duration			Regular working hours	Irregular working hours			
		12-19 hours per week	20-34 hours per week	35 or more hours per week		Total irregular work times	Evening and night shifts	Evening shift	Weekend day shifts
Total	1995	425	1263	4375	3143	2887	881	1011	995
	1996	422	1317	4448	3172	2998	896	1080	1022
	1997	455	1396	4549	3272	3114	949	1152	1013
	1998	526	1462	4621	3318	3271	977	1195	1100
	1999	559	1534	4712	3292	3497	1048	1411	1037
Men	1995	74	313	3428	1931	1860	604	603	653
	1996	71	326	3475	1934	1928	610	650	668
	1997	72	344	3535	1984	1960	638	677	646
	1998	90	365	3592	1976	2063	652	700	711
	1999	99	370	3653	1925	2190	703	822	665
Women	1995	351	950	947	1213	1027	277	408	342
	1996	351	991	973	1238	1070	286	430	354
	1997	384	1052	1014	1289	1154	311	475	367
	1998	436	1097	1029	1343	1209	324	495	389
	1999	460	1164	1060	1367	1307	345	589	373

Number x1000, Job duration The number of hours that a person works in a normal or average week.

Source: CBS, Working population, personal characteristics 1992 – 1999. Survey of the working population, 1999

The number of working hours is regulated in various ways in the Netherlands. The maximum hours are set down in the Working Hours Act. The hours agreed are recorded in the Collective Labour Agreements (CAO's) for each industrial sector or company. The hours can then be specified in more detail for each company. The working hours are fixed in the contract for each employee. The actual working hours in any week can deviate from the contract because of, for example, overtime, illness or holidays (see Tijdens, 1998). Since 1990 the average annual working hours for full-time employees has reduced from 1741 to 1709 hours (CBS website <http://www.CBS.nl>, CBS Annual Statistics 2001).

Tijdens (1998) names a second dimension of working hours as the 'location of the time'. A more usual differentiation is between regular (daytime) and irregular hours. Although these may differ per Collective Labour Agreement, Statistics Netherlands (CBS) counts the hours between 6 a.m. and 7 p.m. from Monday to Friday as regular working hours. Anything outside these

hours is included in irregular hours (Tijdens, 1998, CBS, 2000). Tijdens (1998) ascertained that the developments in the Collective Labour Agreements indicate that the patterns of work will be more varied in the coming years. The day-time hours will be expanded and work will be carried out more often in hours adjoining the day-time hours.

A third dimension of working hours Tijdens (1998) names, is regularity or variability. This includes such things as shift work. In addition, flexible working hours can also be found when the employer determines the hours. Another example is varying start and finish times determined not by the employer, but by the employee (Tijdens, 1998).

Table 6 is a follow-on from table 5 and shows the types of employment in paid employment against a number of characteristics of flexible times. (Fourage et al, OSA Report on trends in the work force, 1998). The percentage of employees with irregular work times or shift work and changeable shifts has decreased in the last ten

years. However, the percentage of employees in paid jobs that can determine their own starting and finishing times has risen slightly. This is also an example of time flexibility that is best suited to the wishes of the employees. On average, the

number of hours worked in overtime has increased slightly over last few years (Fourage et al, OSA Report on trends in the work force, 1998).

**Table 6. Flexible work times** (as a percentage of employees in paid jobs where this arises)

	Type of employment:				Total
	Permanent	Temporary with the prospect of becoming permanent	Temporary	Others	
Irregular working hours (determined by the employer)	24.6	23.7	19.0	34.6	<b>24.5</b>
Shift work / varying shifts	17.2	17.6	13.5	19.5	<b>17.1</b>
Sunday work	22.6	22.7	19.6	33.3	<b>22.7</b>
Saturday work	33.6	35.8	31.9	50.0	<b>34.0</b>
Self-determined start and finish times	28.1	15.5	24.1	37.2	<b>27.3</b>
% with unpaid overtime	29.8	20.2	14.1	5.3	<b>27.8</b>
Average number of unpaid overtime hours per week	2.0	0.9	0.8	0.2	<b>1.8</b>
% with paid overtime	26.6	34.0	16.6	10.5	<b>26.1</b>
Average number of paid overtime hours per week	1.4	2.0	0.8	0.8	<b>1.4</b>

Source: OSA Report on trends in the work force, 1999

## 7. PART-TIME WORK AND THE COMBINATION OF WORK AND CARE

The tendency towards flexibility can be found everywhere in Western Europe, it is not unique to the Netherlands (Faber en Schippers, 1997). But there is one specific form of flexibility that is far more common in the Netherlands than elsewhere, namely part-time employment. However this variety of work in the Netherlands is not included in concepts of the typical flexiwork. In the Netherlands most part-time workers are on permanent employment contracts and as a rule the number of hours worked by part-time workers are fixed. Hence, part-time workers do not face the uncertainty of continued or reduced earnings that temporary workers or workers with variable hours contracts do. Part-time work is in no way comparable to short-time work or 'Kurzarbeit'. This does not mean that part-time employment does not also introduce an additional element of flexibility (Visser, 2000).

The discussion over part-time employment, particularly in the nineties has concentrated on two topics in the Netherlands: is there a right to part-time employment and is there equality of treatment between full-time and part-time employees. Equality of treatment of part-time employees was arranged by law in 1996. There should be no distinction between primary and secondary conditions of employment based on working hours. The right to part-time work remained a topic of discussion until the end of the nineties. Although over the years more and more people worked part-time and the right to part-time work is included in an increasing number of Collective Labour Agreements (CAO's), the right to part-time work was only regulated in 2000 in the Law on the right to adapt working hours (Wet Recht op aanpassing van de arbeidsduur, 1 July, 2000). An employee can submit a request to work part-time. The employer can only refuse it if there

are very strong arguments. This law will become part of the future Labour and Care Law (*Wet Arbeid en Zorg*) in which regulations will be included that should ease the combination of work and care, such as the right to ten days care leave, pregnancy leave and birth leave, adoption leave and baby care leave.

Part-time work is an accepted phenomenon in the Netherlands and a good third of the work-

ing population work part-time (see tables 7 and 8). Nowhere else in Europe is there as much part-time work as in the Netherlands, both by men and by women (see Faber and Schippers, 1997, Remery et al, 1999, Evans, Lippold, Marianna, 2001, Grift et al, 1999, Den Dulk, Van Doorne-Huiskes and Schippers, 2000, Euwals, 1999).

**Table 7. Part-time employment as a percentage of the total employment, 1990-1999<sup>a</sup>**

	1990	1996	1997	1998	1999
Australia <sup>b,c</sup>	22.6	25.2	26.0	25.9	26.1
Canada	17.0	18.9	19.1	18.9	18.5
Czech Republic		3.4	3.4	3.3	3.4
Finland <sup>b</sup>	7.5	8.4	9.4	9.6	9.9
France	12.2	14.3	14.9	14.8	14.7
Germany	13.4	14.9	15.8	16.6	17.1
Iceland <sup>d</sup>	22.2	20.9	22.4	23.2	21.2
Ireland	9.8	14.1	15.2	18.0	18.3
Italy	8.8	10.5	11.3	11.2	11.8
Japan <sup>b,e</sup>	19.2	21.8	23.3	23.6	24.1
Korea <sup>b</sup>	4.5	4.4	5.1	6.8	7.8
Mexico		14.9	15.9	15.0	13.8
<b>The Netherlands</b>	<b>28.2</b>	<b>29.3</b>	<b>29.1</b>	<b>30.0</b>	<b>30.4</b>
New Zealand	19.6	22.0	22.4	22.8	23.0
Norway	21.8	21.6	21.0	20.8	20.7
Portugal	6.8	9.2	10.2	9.9	9.3
Spain	4.6	7.5	7.9	7.7	7.9
Sweden	14.5	14.8	14.2	13.5	14.5
Switzerland <sup>c</sup>	22.1	23.7	24.0	24.2	24.8
United Kingdom	20.1	22.9	22.9	23.0	23.0
United States <sup>f</sup>	13.8	14.0	13.6	13.4	13.3
European Union <sup>g</sup>	13.3	15.2	15.7	15.9	16.4
OECD Europe <sup>g</sup>	13.2	13.8	14.1	14.3	15.0
Total OECD <sup>g</sup>	14.3	15.1	15.4	15.5	15.8

a) Part-time employment refers to persons who usually work less than 30 hours a week in their main job. Data include only persons declaring usual hours.

b) Data are based on actual hours worked.

c) Part-time employment based on hours worked in all jobs.

d) 1991 instead of 1990.

e) Less than 35 hours per week.

f) Estimates are for wage and salary workers only.

g) For above countries only.

Source: Table E, Statistical Annex, OECD Employment Outlook, 2000 In: Evans, J.M., Lippoldt, D.C. and P. Marianna (2001). Labour Market and Social Policy – Occasional paper no.45. Trends in working hours in OECD countries. Directorate for Education, Employment, Labour and Social Affairs, OECD.

This form of work is not divided equally between men and women. Part-time work by men is (still) an incidental, temporary phenomenon mainly at the beginning or at the end of their career. The participation of women in the labour market in the Netherlands has increased over the last de-

cennium, but it is still mostly women who work part-time (measured in full-time jobs the Dutch work participation is still below the EC average) (SCP, 2000, 2001, Breedveld, 2000, Den Dulk, Van Doorne-Huiskes and Schippers, 2000).

**Table 8. Percentages of part-time workers in the employment population, by sex (1996)**

	Men	Women	Total
<b>EUR 15</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>16</b>
Belgium	3	31	14
Denmark	11	35	22
Germany	4	34	17
Greece	3	9	5
Spain	3	17	8
France	5	30	16
Ireland	5	22	12
Italy	3	13	7
Luxembourg	2	18	8
The Netherlands	17	69	38
Austria	4	29	15
Portugal	5	13	9
Finland	8	16	12
Sweden	9	42	25
United Kingdom	8	45	25

Source: Employment in Europe, 1997 in: Den Dulk, Van Doorne-Huiskes and Schippers (2000) <sup>2</sup>

Part-time work for women in the Netherlands is often an opening to the labour market, a way of combining work and care. We see more and more that couples delay the birth of their first child so that both partners can build a career. When the children come along, women generally work part-time so that they have enough time for their family and domestic tasks. Amongst other things, this is because many women believe that they should care for the children and would be a bad mother if they were not there for the children. There continues to be a strong ideology of care of children by parents themselves in Dutch society. This is considered especially important for children up to the age of five (Remery et al, 2000).

the age of five (Remery et al, 2000). Therefore, even in the period when children are small and the care obligations extensive, people still participate in the labour market and combine paid work outside the home with unpaid work in the home (SCP, 2001, Faber en Schippers, 1997).

Table 9 shows that this type of earning by couples (where the man works full-time and the woman works part-time), the so called one-and-a-half earner model unlike the traditional single earner model (meaning usually that the man alone in full time work), is gradually developing to be the dominant pattern in the Netherlands.

**Table 9. The share of single income-earners and double earners amongst couples <sup>(a)</sup>, related to their participation in the labour market 1986-1998 (in percentages)**

	1986	1990	1994	1998
<b>Single earner</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>34</b>
Man has job	50	46	36	30
Woman has job	3	3	6	4
<b>Double earners</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>56</b>
One-and-a-half-earners with:				
- man in full-time work	16	21	26	36
- woman in full-time work	1	1	1	1
Half-and-half earners (both partners work part-time)	1	2	2	4
Double earners (both partners work full-time)	11	13	14	14
<b>No income-earners</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

<sup>a)</sup> Heterosexual couples in which both partners are aged between 15 and 65.

Source: CBS (WBO'85/86-'98) weighed results; SCP-calculations

Although part-time work gives women the possibility to work, on the other hand this form of work tends to emphasise instead of undermining traditional differences between men and women (Faber en Schippers, 1997, Nieborg, 2000).

Table 10 shows that between 1975 and 1995 women spent more time in paid work and proportionally less time in unpaid work and that over the years men do more housework but there is absolutely no question of an equal division between men and women (Breedveld, 2000, SCP/CBS, 2000, Nieborg, 2000, Tjijdens, Van der Lippe, De Ruijter, 2000).

Research shows that the reduction in inequality occurs much more in the life course phase when there are no children (yet) or when the children have left home than in the phase when there are children to care for. The time spent on paid and on unpaid (care) work and the distorted sharing of the tasks in the home are closely linked to the presence of children (and their age) (Tjijdens et al, 1994, SCP/CBS, 2000 Tjijdens, Van der Lippe, De Ruijter, 2000, Nieborg, 2000).

Although more and more Dutch would like to combine work and care and to have a more equal division of these tasks between men and women, it is not so apparent in practice. The tra-

dition role pattern still exists, even though it is more in the shape of the one-and-a-half earner model. (Faber and Schippers, 1997, Grift et al, 1999, Wieling, 2000, SCP, 2001, 2000, Tjijdens et al, 1994, Breedveld, 2000).

An explanation for this typically Dutch solution to combining work and care is probably because in the Netherlands, a social infrastructure with facilities to combine (full-time) work and care is not yet adequately available. A conclusion from the discussion about combining work and care that is often repeated, for example, is that the government needs to play a bigger role in the field of childcare facilities (Schippers, 2000, Den Dulk, Van Doorne-Huiskes en Schippers, 2000).

Given the shortage of childcare facilities, the vast majority of parents choose or feel forced to choose to take care of their children themselves or to make use of one or more forms of informal childcare. Furthermore, many parents who do make use of formal care, combine this form of care with informal childcare either for pedagogical reasons or because they feel that the costs of formal care are (too) high (Remery et al, 2000). The use of formal childcare is strongly correlated with the educational level of employees (Tjijdens, 2000).



**Table 10. Time spent on paid and unpaid work by those over 25 according to sex 1975-1995 (in hours per week)**

	1975	1980	1985	1990	1995
<b>Women</b>					
Unpaid work:	42.6	44.4	43.3	39.1	37.7
Housekeeping and family tasks	40.9	42.5	41.0	36.7	35.4
- Housekeeping tasks	30.6	30.2	28.8	26.1	25.3
- Care for children and other family members	4.6	5.2	4.7	5.0	5.1
- DIY work	5.7	7.1	7.5	5.6	5.0
- Helping family and friends	0.9	1.0	1.1	1.2	1.1
Voluntary work	0.8	0.9	1.1	1.1	1.2
Paid work	3.9	4.4	5.9	7.7	9.3
<b>Men</b>					
Unpaid work:	17.4	18.5	20.4	19.7	21.1
Housekeeping and family tasks	15.3	16.2	17.7	17.0	18.3
- Housekeeping tasks	8.5	8.8	10.3	10.0	11.1
- Care for children and other family members	1.9	1.9	1.8	1.9	1.9
- DIY work	4.9	5.5	5.6	5.2	5.2
- Helping family and friends	0.7	0.7	1.2	0.9	1.2
Voluntary work	1.5	1.6	1.5	1.8	1.7
Paid work	27.3	25.6	25.1	27.3	28.6
<b>Total</b>					
Unpaid work:	30.3	31.8	32.1	29.5	29.7
Housekeeping and family tasks	28.4	29.6	29.7	27.0	27.2
- Housekeeping tasks	19.8	19.7	19.8	18.2	18.5
- Care for children and other family members	3.3	3.6	3.3	3.5	3.6
- DIY work	5.3	6.3	6.6	5.4	5.1
- Helping family and friends	0.8	0.9	1.1	1.0	1.2
Voluntary work	1.1	1.3	1.3	1.5	1.4
Paid work	15.3	14.8	15.2	17.3	18.6

Source: SCP (TBO'75-'95) in SCP/CBS, 2000

Precise figures on the supply of informal childcare in The Netherlands are difficult to determine as research is mainly focused on formal childcare. Suppliers of informal childcare are often women (Remery et al, 2000). Remery et al (2000) concluded in their research that the most common form of informal childcare is carried out by grandparents.

The employment of domestic workers and cleaners in private households is practically/almost entirely within the informal circuit.<sup>3</sup>

Just as there is a lack of figures on informal childcare, there is no recent Dutch research avail-

able on the extent of employment in informal domestic labour in general. Estimates on the matter diverge a lot (Tijdens, 2000). Visser (2000) writes that given the low threshold of hours and the rather encompassing regime of social security (every part-time job is covered), there is no reason to believe that informal labour other than in 'do-it-yourself' and neighbour- and family help (including care for children and elderly people) is very widespread in the Netherlands. Referring to an article of Delsen (1988) about part time employment and informal economy, he writes that in fact the high degree of flexibility tends to com-

press the need and the market for informal employment (Visser, 2000).

Table 11 shows how many hours Dutch households make use of domestic help (however it is not clear if this is formal or informal). Initially the percentage of households with domestic help declines (probably attributed to the economic cri-

sis in the early eighties). Subsequently, the share of households with domestic help rises up to 10% in 1995 (supposedly because of the rise of the amount of dual earners among households and the changed allocation behaviour among these households) (Tijdens, Van der Lippe and De Ruijter, 2000).

**Table 11. Hours of domestic help per week of persons aged 18-65, 1975-1995 (in percents)**

Domestic help per week	1975	1980	1985	1990	1995
0 hour	91.9	93.0	94.2	92.0	89.6
1-4 hours	7.4	3.9	3.8	5.6	8.1
5-9 hours	0.7	1.9	1.5	1.3	1.9
≥ 10 hours		0.7	0.6	1.0	0.4

Source: SCP (TBO '75, '80, '85, '90 and '95) in: Tijdens, Van der Lippe and De Ruijter (2000).

In addition, Dutch policy has stressed individual working patterns and individual solutions for the problem of the combination concerning the combination of work and care. The solution for the combination problem lies primarily at the level of the individual and is seen as a private arrangement. And although there are more and more work and care arrangements developed by employees and included in Collective Labour Agreements, there are still large differences between economic sectors and types of organisations. A view of combining work and care with

flexible working hours from the personnel management side is not yet common to all the business world (Den Dulk, Van Doorne-Huiskes and Schippers, 2000, Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, 1996).

Caring work in Dutch homes is therefore mainly a question of 'do-it-yourself part-time' activity (Faber and Schippers, 1997, Schippers, 2000, Plantenga and Schippers, in Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, 2000, Tijdens, Van Doorne-Huiskes, Willemsen, 1997).

## 8. THE DILEMMA OF COMBINING WORK AND CARE

For further growth of the participation of women in the labour force, a better division of care and the harmony between work and private life are important conditions. The attention paid to creating the necessary facilities has increased in the last few years. Not only has this been the case from the point of view of the government but also from social partners and from individual employers and employees. Legislation, conditions of employment agreements, the increasing role of work and care facilities as recruitment incentives and the appointment of the Task Force on the Daily

Timetable<sup>4</sup> (Commissie Dagindeling) are evidence of this (Sociale Nota 2001, Ministerie van Sociale Zaken en Werkgelegenheid, 2000, Grift et al, 1999, Commissie Dagindeling, 1998).

Half way through the nineties, the question of the (desirable) division of paid and unpaid work and the division of this between men and women gradually received more attention (Van Doorne-Huiskes and Willemsen In Tijdens et al red., 1997). The Task Force on Future Scenarios Redistribution of Unpaid Work in the report "Unpaid Work Equally Shared" (1995), commis-

sioned by the Dutch Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, presented four future scenarios relating to the redistribution of unpaid caring in 2010. These four scenarios differ in the degree in which caring (housekeeping and care tasks):

1. is mainly performed unpaid and by women;
2. is unpaid and shared equally by men and women;
3. is a combined mix of paid and unpaid work and is shared by men and women (the Combination Scenario);
4. is mainly paid and shared equally by men and women.

The Task Force considers the Combination Scenario to be the most desirable; based on the concept of a normal working week of 29 to 32 hours, childcare as a basic facility, individualisation of the Social Welfare and Taxation systems, the legal right to part-time work and an expansion of professional homecare (Task Force on future Scenarios Redistribution of Unpaid Work, 1995, Grift et al, 1997, Faber and Schippers, 1997, Grift et al, 1999).

This is also the scenario which has received the most support from the Dutch government and the emancipation movement (even if the Combination Scenario as described in the more recent policy documents is actually a stripped down version of the original Combination Scenario (SCP, 2000)). (See Grift et al, 1999, Faber and Schipper, 1997, Schippers, 2000, Breedveld, 2000).

## 9. FLEXIBILITY IN THE DUTCH FUTURE

How do the Dutch regard the flexible future? This question has hardly been researched. It was, however, a topic in the OSA Future of Work Survey (Ester and Vinken, 2000). The first Dutch study that provides an encompassing and integrative overview of the future expectations of the Dutch population in the domains of work, care and leisure for the first twenty-five years of this new millennium. Two themes are central to this: future

This scenario meets the preferences of the Dutch people in several different ways (inc. Ester and Vinken, 2000, Schippers, 2000, Plantenga and Schippers In: Ministerie SZW, 2000, Grift et al, 1999). As already noted, people in the Netherlands are far from this ideal, many people are not able to realise their preferences in regard to paid work and the combination of work and care (Schippers, 2000, Plantenga and Schippers In Ministerie SZW, 2000, Ester and Vinken, 2000). The Dutch Social and Cultural Planning Office (SCP) ascertained that the most popular form of task sharing the mixed earners type (both partners work part-time) but in reality only 4% of all couples actually achieve this (see table 9). Households choose their own form of combination that best fit their family situation, their job, the facilities available and their views, so giving rise to a very broad range of solutions for the combination of work and care. Thus, simultaneously raising questions about many aspects of policy (SCP, 2000).

Visser (2000, following Plantenga, 1996) remarks that the stress (by women and policy) may no longer be on women to participate in the labour market in a 'male' way, but rather that men should participate in the labour market in a 'female' way by also participating in care tasks. Therefore he concludes his paper with the interesting words: "The first part-time economy in the world. It works, but does it also care?".

expectations about labour relations and job contracts and the expectations for the labour demand and pressure of work.

Research shows that the Dutch recognise the trend towards increasing flexibility and do not expect that this will change much over the next twenty-five years. Quite the opposite. They predict a development:

- towards more temporary jobs without the prospect of a permanent contract;
- towards more individual conditions of employment;
- towards a more flexible law governing dismissal;
- towards a more frequent change of occupation during an individual's career;
- that the end of the classical permanent job is in sight.

From the study it appears that the Dutch are concerned about these developments towards more flexibility, people see the negative side effects of these trends and request that attention be paid to the social drawbacks (people have social pessimism but surprisingly not personal pessimism. A phenomenon not unknown in sociology and psychology).

The Dutch see the (also present day) social problem of pressure of work as one of the greatest drawbacks of the trend to a greater flexibility and employability. The Dutch population see this as issue in the future as a pressing, persistent and a structural characteristic of the employment sys-

tem; the work rate increases further, the stress increases proportionally, work in the weekend and in the evening will occur more often, absenteeism will increase and the enjoyment of work will decrease (Ester and Vincken, 2000).

At the same time, this research shows that the Dutch look to the future with confidence, as long as they are able to combine family, work and leisure, to be able to take holidays at certain times and to keep their knowledge up-to-date. They are fairly optimistic about combining work and care tasks because they foresee an improvement in childcare, paid care leave, outwork and a more equal sharing of tasks between men and women. It is predicted that the line dividing work and leisure will become less clear and that the Dutch people will spend less time on housekeeping tasks, voluntary work, unpaid caring and spend more time on paid work, leisure and parental leave (Ester and Vincken, 2000).

Altogether, this is a socially sombre but individually exciting scenarios for Dutch flexibility in the future. Only time will tell how the Dutch will fare...

## NOTES

- 1 Randstad; the region of the four largest cities in the Netherlands: Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Utrecht and Den Haag (conurbation).
- 2 Note the difference in figures in tables 7 and 8. Presumably use of other definitions and sampling methods.
- 3 We can make a difference between moonlighting (zwarte arbeid) and informal work (informele arbeid). Moonlighting is seen as work which is wrongly avoided from the obligation to register at the treasury of the social insurance authorities. Informal work is seen as unpaid work or work of which income is not reported at the treasury. Moreover, below a certain minimum income does not need to be reported. This seems to be the case for most people employed in domestic work.
- 4 The Task Force on the Daily Timetable was set up in 1996 by the Minister of Social Affairs and Employment with the commission to develop new and creative ideas for the daily schedule in Dutch Society; a schedule that would give society more room to combine work and care and which has a better coordination of (opening) times and locations of facilities.

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