



Making Part-Time Work a Fully-Fledged Alternative: How the Dutch social partners responded to a dual labour market, 1966–1993

Timon de Groot

To cite this article: Timon de Groot (2021): Making Part-Time Work a Fully-Fledged Alternative: How the Dutch social partners responded to a dual labour market, 1966–1993, Labor History, DOI: [10.1080/0023656X.2021.1994533](https://doi.org/10.1080/0023656X.2021.1994533)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/0023656X.2021.1994533>



© 2021 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group.



Published online: 29 Oct 2021.



[Submit your article to this journal](#)



Article views: 192




[View related articles](#)



[View Crossmark data](#)

Making Part-Time Work a Fully-Fledged Alternative: How the Dutch social partners responded to a dual labour market, 1966–1993

Timon de Groot 

Department of History and Art History, Utrecht University, Utrecht, Netherlands

ABSTRACT

The Dual Labour Market theory suggests that in collective bargaining, the perceived threat of outsiders leads to a more beneficial outcome for insiders, while the outsiders are further marginalized. The history of part-time employment in the Dutch labour market suggests a different path. After female labour force participation started to increase in the 1970s, the Netherlands witnessed a growing divide between core workers with a 'standard employment relationship', who were mostly male breadwinners, and part-time working women who were often underpaid and had little protection against dismissal and other social risks. Flexible part-time jobs, however, were not just desired by women who aspired to combine work and care, these jobs also fitted the needs of certain businesses, particularly in the retail sector. To prevent low wage competition between retail companies, unions in the retail sector started to demand equal treatment between part-time and full-time employees. To mitigate the burden of more expensive part-time jobs, however, several organizations promoted high-quality part-time work across the sectors so that part-time workers would not crowd in one sector. Eventually, this programme was meant to contribute to making voluntary part-time work a legitimate and fully fledged option in the Dutch labour market

ARTICLE HISTORY

Received 14 June 2021
Accepted 11 October 2021

KEYWORDS

Part-time work; dual labour market; collective bargaining; female labour force participation; The Netherlands

Introduction

A dual labour market is when two distinct labour markets emerge in which two groups of society participate, each earning different wages and enjoying different working conditions. The notion of the dual labour market was developed in the 1970s and 1980s to describe the growing segmentation between insiders and outsiders in a coordinated labour market: a disparity between people in fixed employment positions and precarious peripheral workers (Berger & Piore, 1980; Gordon et al., 1982; Piore, 1971; Reich et al., 1973). Dualization occurs predominantly in sectors that rely heavily on labour costs, for instance, in the service industry (Allaart et al., 2007). In recent years, the notion of the dual labour market has generated renewed attention, due to the rise of more flexible forms of employment and fixed-term contracts, in the shareholder revolution of the late 20th century and its labour reducing strategies (Palier & Thelen, 2010). Furthermore, European welfare states seem to face a rise of in-work poverty, as the result of an increasing disparity between 'core' workers with high-quality jobs and people in precarious positions (Eichhorst & Marx, 2021; Emmenegger et al., 2012).

Labour historians often emphasise the organisation of workers as a critical factor in the increasing conditions of workers, wage compression and social security provisions (Bremner & Van der Linden, 2014; Fichtenbaum, 2009; Oude Nijhuis, 2017; Vernon, 2006). Declining trade union power and individualisation in labour relations can then be considered the primary cause of deterioration in

CONTACT Timon de Groot  mail@timondegroot.com  Bezuidenhoutseweg 67, 2594 AC Den Haag

© 2021 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group.
This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>), which permits non-commercial re-use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited, and is not altered, transformed, or built upon in any way.

working conditions and dualization (Beck, 1992, 2000; Boeri et al., 2001; Stone, 2013). In the framework of the dual labour market, however, Thelen and Kume (2006) argue that the process of dualization is rather the outcome of an 'intensification of cooperation between labour and capital', and not of simple economic liberalization, individualization, or a decreased level of coordination. The theory of the dual labour market thus suggests that segmentation is rather reinforced by the fact that 'insiders' instrumentalize the threat of 'outsiders' to guarantee a better position for themselves in collective bargaining. In this way, the emergence of a dual labour market is an important challenge to welfare states in which there is traditionally a high level of coordination between labour and capital.

Instead of focusing on how dual labour markets emerge, this article shifts the focus to the question how corporatist structures historically responded to a process of dualization. It focusses on initiatives to coordinate part-time employment on the Dutch labour market in the period of 1966–1993, a period in which a looming dual labour market urged the social partners to take action regarding part-time employment. In the 1970s, in countries with a developed welfare system, part-time workers were often the 'outsiders' in a dual labour market; they were underpaid and enjoyed little protection against dismissal and social risks, while their counterparts, full-time workers enjoyed most of the benefits and protections of the modern welfare state. These two groups were also divided along gendered lines: most part-time jobs were occupied by women and men occupied most full-time jobs.

The theory of the dual labour market holds that there is little mobility between the two groups in the labour market and low-quality jobs are often occupied by marginalized groups in society. In international comparisons of different processes of labour market segmentation, precarious jobs are usually defined as either a 'steppingstone' to tenured contracts or as 'dead-end jobs' (Bentolila et al., 2019). A high occurrence of dead-end jobs then functions as evidence of a segmented labour market and dualization can be mitigated once precarious jobs become steppingstones to stable positions. The history of part-time work in The Netherlands, however, suggests a different path. Labour market segmentation in the 1970s was not prevented by making dead-end jobs into steppingstones, but by making part-time work into a fully fledged alternative.

This article traces how the reaction to dualization developed in the Dutch corporatist landscape and explicitly draws in the perspective of employers, which is often missing in most of the current historical literature on part-time employment in the Netherlands (Portegijs, 2008, pp. 22–41; Visser, 2002). Generally, in the case of working hour reduction, the emphasis on collective action and unionization is strong (Alesina et al., 2005). Dutch part-time workers, however, were hardly organised in the 20th century. In 1988, for instance, less than 10% of all part-time workers were union members (Delsen, 1995, p. 90). Meanwhile, this was exactly when most of the current policies on part-time work crystallised. The organization of labour is therefore not sufficient to understand the development in which part-time workers were seen as equal to full-time workers.

However, the levelling up of part-time employment can neither be exclusively understood as merely a sign of individualization and declining trade union power. As a matter of fact, in 2018 *Statistics Netherlands* estimated that the difference in organisation rates between people with a part-time job with longer working hours (20 hours or more) and a fulltime job was insignificant (CBS, 2018), which indicates not just a decline in union membership among fulltime workers, but also a growth in membership among part-time employees. Certainly, the broad corporatist structure of Dutch trade unions can in part explain the improving conditions of people who desired part-time employment, in the sense that they were better able to serve the interests 'of a broad and heterogenous rank and file' (Touwen, 2014, p. 180). Yet, part-time employment not only gave workers individual 'control over the use of time' (Kalleberg, 2011); on many occasions the promotion of part-time employment served the needs of employers too. The primary aim of this article is therefore to trace the history of the coordinated response to dualization in the Dutch labour market.

From the breadwinner era to the dual labour market

In the Dutch labour market of the 1970s segmentation occurred mainly when married women increasingly joined the labour force. In many cases, these women were employed on a part-time basis; they were peripheral workers who served to fill temporary gaps in staffing or were recruited to deal with temporary peaks in demand. As several studies of the time showed, part-time work was often simple, repetitive low-skilled work, which was generally considered most suitable for married women due to their professional inexperience and lack of vocational training (Deggeller, 1972; De Jong et al., 1974). In addition, they were commonly left out of collective labour agreements, did not have the protection of other workers and were more easily let off (Bruyn-Hundt, 1982, pp. 17–20). Many companies, such as the *Philips light bulb factory*, used hierarchies to determine who were dismissed first when the company was shrinking: part-time workers and ‘non-breadwinners’ came out on top (Projectgroep Sociale Zaken Philips, 1975). The notion of ‘part-time work’ was furthermore often used as placeholder for various forms of flexible labour, such as temp agency work and standby employment (Albeda et al., 1972).

The marginalisation of female labour is commonly seen as a longer process starting in the early 19th century (Boxer, 1986; Van der Linden 2014, p. 14; Tilly & Scott, 1989). This long-term marginalisation has various explanations: not in the least the ideological attachment of male workers and employers to the breadwinner model and ‘family wages’ (Damsma, 1994; Humphries, 1977; Land, 1980). In the Dutch case, the breadwinner model manifested itself after in child allowances, the tax system and social security provisions. Centralised wage bargaining within the margins dictated by the government and rigid legal protections for the ‘standard employment relationship’ subsequently helped to sustain the breadwinner model after World War II (Bottenburg, 1995, pp. 74–80; Touwen, 2014, pp. 169–70; Windmuller et al., 1990, pp. 161–8).

In this period, female labour force participation reached a low point (Mol et al., 1988). The income of married women was often described as simply an ‘extra income’ (*bijverdienste*): ‘A married woman needs nothing but an extra income, she needs no other income, because as a woman she has her main task in the household, and she can rely on her husband’s income’, a (otherwise socially progressive) Christian Democratic Member of Parliament stated in 1963.¹ From the viewpoint of the breadwinner model – a typical aspect of ‘corporatist welfare states’ in Gøsta Esping-Andersen’s theory of welfare capitalism (Esping-Andersen, 1990) – the status of married women as the precariat of the Dutch labour market was therefore not by all means considered problematic.

In 1950, the Dutch government had set up a tripartite consultative structure, known as the *Publiekrechtelijke Bedrijfsorganisatie* (short: PBO). This structure of consultation was devoted to defending the interests of various parties in Dutch industry, but also to safeguarding the breadwinner model and the standard employment relationship. PBO united all stakeholders in a certain sector in either *Productschappen* (for firms making similar products) or *Bedrijfsschappen* (for businesses with the same economic function) to discuss issues of common interest, such as working hours, vocational training, and pricing policy (Touwen, 2014, p. 168). At the top of this national structure coordination was the Social and Economic Council (SER), a consultative body made of representatives of employers’ organizations, unions, and scientific experts (known as ‘crown members’). The PBO was thought out for the entire economy, but in the end, it was only really applied in the retail and agricultural sector, where the *Bedrijfsschappen* became an influential body (Sluyterman, 2003, p. 180).

The rise of the gendered Dutch dual labour market was in many ways supported by the peak level of the PBO. With one of the lowest GNP per capita (Gilbert, 1958) and the worries about the international competitive position of Dutch industry, economists feared that Dutch productivity and national income would stay behind if women were not recruited for industry. This call for more female labour force participation was clearly informed by supply economics and the fixed distinction between male and female professions leading concerns about a ‘female staff shortage’ (Commissie van advies voor de arbeid van vrouwen en meisjes, 1963). To mitigate the ‘harmful’ effects of increased female

labour force participation on family life, an important prerequisite in many of the official recommendations was that married women should be recruited on a part-time basis. An important example was a 1966 SER advice on the activation of women for the labour market, which devised an inventory of the industries where women were most needed: first in the manufacturing industry, then services and health care. The SER, however, added that increased labour force participation of married women was only possible if it was voluntary and on a part-time basis (Sociaal-Economische Raad, 1966).

Yet, issues concerning staff shortage were gradually replaced by a focus on a growing supply of part-time workers. Consultative bodies came to understand that many married women often ambioned nothing more than a part-time job. In the mid-1950s, several researchers had already noted that extrinsic rewards, such as the possibility to work part-time, played an important role for women to prefer factory work. This was when female labour force participation started to increase in manufacturing. A 1957 study on working married women in the Zaan district (north of Amsterdam), for instance, indicated that they preferred factory work, as these jobs only required a short training period, were well paid and often had the option of part-time work (International Institute for Social History, Amsterdam [henceforth: IISH], Archief Zaanse Stichting voor Bedrijfspsychologie en Personeelsbeleid: Een oriënterend onderzoek naar de situatie van een aantal werkende gehuwde vrouwen in enkele industriële bedrijven in de Zaanstreek). The same report also speculated that long working weeks and overtime hours pushed women out of other sectors such as retail.

A study commissioned by the government in 1964, based on a sample of surveys, further estimated that there were at least 290,000 to 390,000 married women with a 'positive attitude' towards wage work, but who also had 'diverging' wishes about working hours and flexibility (Zeldenrust-Noordanus, 1964). The participants of this survey moreover indicated they did not need better day care facilities for their children, which made the researchers conclude that many married women desired part-time jobs in order to combine 'two professions', i.e. motherhood and a job outside of their homes (Nationaal Archief, The Hague [henceforth: NL-HaNA], 2.15.61, Centrale Dienst van de Arbeidsvoorziening, inv. no. 797).

The need to create more part-time opportunities to meet the supply of married women then came to dominate recommendations in the early 1970s. In 1974, for instance, feminist researcher Hedy D'Ancona anticipated that around 325.000 women were not registered with the employment office, but ambioned part-time work (D'Ancona, 1974). She warned about a severe discrepancy between supply and demand in part-time employment opportunities. This conclusion was shared in a research that was commissioned by the Ministry of Social Affairs a year later (Instituut voor psychologisch marktonderzoek, 1974).

In a second recommendation on the recruitment of married women from 1973, the SER also clearly shifted its attention, as they noticed that labour force participation of married women 'should not just be discussed as a necessary response to the unmet demand for workers but must also be seen in light of the wishes of a growing number of married women for a place in the labour force' (Sociaal-Economische Raad, 1973, p. 3). Gradually, the 'diverging' wishes of working mothers thus became central to the considerations about part-time job opportunities.

The dualization that occurred in the 1970s was not born out of the need to reduce labour costs, but rather to mitigate a staff shortage. Important was that all of this happened in the context of a booming economy, where women were recruited as a reserve capacity in times of overproduction but were often dismissed when trade declined. In this context, Dutch feminists later used the term 'folding chair effect' to describe women's situation on the labour market: in times of great need the chair was unfolded but folded in times of economic crisis (Bom et al., 1989).

Occupational overcrowding

In the 1970s, a general rediscovery of the notion of precarious labour took place on an international level and in the context of by that time established norm of the standard employment relationship (Betti, 2018, pp. 281–3). Economic globalization, the offshoring of many manufacturing jobs, the

growth of service industry and the economic recession of the 1970s, reinforced the call for cheap labour, predominantly in services. In the 1970s, the, by far, largest group who earned the minimum wage on the Dutch labour then were women employed on a part-time basis (Figure 1). Since female labour force participation was significantly lower than male labour force participation, this data is even more revealing. The growth of male minimum wage workers between 1971 and 1974 was accounted for by the fact that statutory minimum wages were raised significantly between these years. Between 1974 and 1976, however, statutory minimum wages remained stable, and the increase of workers with minimum wage was almost entirely on account of women with a part-time employment contract.

The idea that the income of married women was considered an ‘extra income’ was one reason why female wages remained low; there was no need for government control to keep them to a certain minimum. In 1968, when the statutory minimum wage was introduced, people who worked less than one-third were excluded, as these people were expected to have ‘additional incomes’. There was furthermore no legal guarantee of equal pay between men and women. Differences in wages between part-time workers and full-time workers were often considered justified since part-time work was often ‘female work’ (FNV-Secretariaat voor Vrouwelijke Werknemers, 1979, p. 21).

Another important explanation to understand why married women with a part-time job were underpaid, was that of occupational crowding (Blau & Jusenius, 1976; Blau et al., 1998; Bruyn-Hundt, 1979). The marginalisation of female workers had much to do with the demand for flexible employees in one specific sector the 1960s and 70s, which was retail. As noted, in the 1950s female labour force participation increased mainly in manufacturing (even though female labour force participation decreased overall), but from 1960 onward an occupational shift took place in female labour force participation and women crowded mostly in retail, or other labour-intensive industries with small businesses and low wages (Vissers et al., 1977).

The disappearance of the textile industry from the Dutch industrial landscape, traditionally an important employer for women, certainly contributed to this sectoral shift (Heerma van Voss et al., 2010, pp. 363–95). The main reason for this shift, however, was a general trend of working hour reduction. In 1960, large factories such as *Philips Lightbulbs*, the car manufacturing company *DAF*, aircraft manufacturer *Fokker* and shipyard *Verolme* introduced the five-day working week (Beckers, 1983, pp. 238–9). The reduction was a result of collective bargaining with unions, and all workers in the manufacturing industries collectively shortened their hours. Employers were thereby forced to shorten their operating hours too, and factories were closed in the weekend from the 1960s onward. In the end, all sectors of the Dutch economy joined in this process. In the short period between 1960 and 1975 the standard working week in most industries was reduced from 48 to 40 hours; the five-day working week was introduced, and the 40-hour work week had become the norm.

Minimum wage-earners, 1971–1979

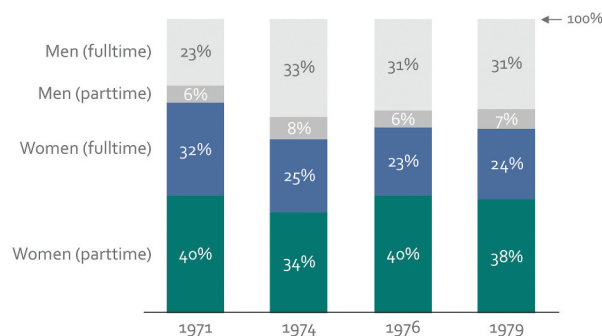


Figure 1. Minimum wage-earners, 1971–1979. Source: CBS, *Sociale en economische maandstatistiek* (author's own calculations)

In retail, however, where the same reduction of working hours occurred, employers were hesitant to change their opening hours. Consumers and employers wanted shops to open on Saturdays and much of the sales were achieved on Saturdays – while the working hours of core employees were reduced to weekdays only. The discrepancy between working hours and opening hours therefore created significant scheduling problems for employers and whilst applying a ‘chase demand’ strategy (Sasser, 1976), employers in retail needed a flexible work force that could fill the gaps and step in during high demand (Van Schilfgaarde, 1984, pp. 57–73).

An exemplary company for fully integrating part-time employment on their shop floor in the 1970s was the supermarket chain *Albert Heijn*. In 1975 more than 12% of their staff consisted of women over the age of 23 who worked between one-third and two-thirds of a normal working week. Besides that, many adolescents from the age of 15–22 worked less than one-third of a normal week (Ahold, 1975, p. 9). ‘Part-time employment has become completely indispensable for our company’, the Personnel Manager of Albert Heijn’s parent company *Ahold*, declared in 1975 (Ibid, p. 7). In 1979, a report from the *Hoofdbedrijfschap Detailhandel* noted an increase from 7% to 20% from 1960 to 1977 (see Table 1). These jobs were mostly occupied by married women. As the report noted: part-time jobs befitted many older women, ‘these jobs do not require much professional knowledge [...] but do require well-developed contact skills’ (Hoofdbedrijfschap detailhandel, commissie werkgelegenheid, 1979, p. 14).

During the second half of the 1970s, the notion of the ‘dual labour market’ truly entered the debate on the Dutch labour market (Mok, 1975; Vissers, 1977; Vissers et al., 1977). In 1979, a government appointed research group warned that especially women, lower educated adolescents and those immigrated from Surinam were bound to become second-class workers at the expense of white men aged 25–45 (Valkenburg & Vissers, 1979). They were also those who held the most part-time jobs. Importantly, however, segregation on the Dutch labour market was multi-faceted: there was not just segregation between core workers with stable full-time jobs and peripheral workers with uncertain part-time jobs, there was also a segregation between sectors: much flexible employment in retail and mostly ‘standard employment’ in other sectors. In the end, this situation was detrimental in two different ways for working women, as they were both more active in retail, and in part-time jobs (Van Mourik et al., 1983).

Fighting low wage competition in retail

With the increase of part-time employment in retail, unions in the retail sector feared a fierce low-wage competition among retail companies. Their main concern was that full-time employees were eventually replaced with lower paid part-time employees. Yet, these unions were not outright dismissive of part-time employment, as they did acknowledge the need for these workers. *Mercurius*, the largest trade union for the service sector, for instance, stated in their 1975 programme that part-time workers were indispensable to retail companies, but warned that part-time workers should not compete with full-time employees (IISH, Archief Algemene Bond ‘Mercurius’, inv. 143). They considered part-time workers a necessary supplement to the core staff of companies to accommodate the internal flexibility in working hours, but not as a replacement for full-time staff members.

Table 1. Employees in retail trade, 1960.

	Total (*1000)	Part-time (*1000)	Part-time percentage
1960	396	27	7%
1965	430	38	9%
1970	437	58	13%
1977	447	91	20%

Source: Detailhandel & Werkgelegenheid, 1979, p. 7.

An important first step in this programme was made by a collaboration between trade unions in retail named *Decom*. These trade unions started this collaboration in 1967 to take collective action against developments in the retail sector. A concern of theirs was the increasing liberalisation of opening hours, since a further expansion in opening hours would lead to core staff either being forced to work overtime, or more flexible employees being hired to replace full-time employees. In order to avoid low wage competition and social dumping, *Decom* urged the government to mitigate the 'unacceptable legal inequality' of part-time and full-time employees in the Unemployment Insurance in 1975 (*Decom*, 1975; 'WW voor part-timer?', *Parool*, 8 August 1975).

Part-time workers were in many ways excluded from benefits of the mandatory Unemployment Insurance. A condition for obtaining benefits was, for instance, that unemployed workers should make themselves available for a 'normal' job. If people were registered at the Public Employment Offices for only a part-time job, however, they were ineligible. The insistence of *Decom* on including part-time workers in the Unemployment Insurance was partially motivated to make part-time employees less attractive as a low wage alternative, since employers took higher financial risks when hiring a part-time worker.

In the same year, the Central Appeals Court ruled that – as long as they worked according to an established work pattern – part-time employees deserved equal treatment in the eligibility for unemployment benefits, even if they only made themselves available for other part-time jobs. This decision was an important step in acknowledging the status of part-time work as a legitimate form of employment but also urged the sector to reconsider their recruitment strategies (*Centraal Overleg Detailhandel*, 1977).

It is important to note that a tripartite distinction in staff existed in the retail sector itself: full-time workers, part-time workers, and so-called 'assistants' (*hulpkrachten*). The dividing line between part-time workers and assistants was often 12 or 15 hours a week (*Centraal Overleg Detailhandel*, 1977). In the regulations of the luxury department stores *Bijenkorf* from the 1950s one could already find this distinction (*Stadsarchief Amsterdam, Archief van de Koninklijke Bijenkorf Beheer N.V., inv. 9291*). The threshold in the statutory minimum wage made assistants a particularly cheap labour force.

Since the SER advised the government against abolishing the one-third threshold in statutory minimum wages in 1976 (*Sociaal-Economische Raad*, 1976), the members of the service unions continued to battle low wage competition with two strategies: by improving the status of part-time workers by making them uninteresting as a low-cost alternative and by pushing back the status of assistants. Better conditions for both full-time and part-time employees and curtailing the growth of flexible stand-by employees were in fact central demands for the retail sector of the Services' Union in 1979 (*Dienstenbonden FNV, bedrijfsgroep detailhandel*, 1979).

Meanwhile, one of the important effects of the increasing female labour force participation in retail, was an increase in female unemployment. After the first oil shock in 1974, the Dutch economy plunged into a deep recession, and subsequently entered a long period of stagflation and unemployment skyrocketed (*Zanden & Griffiths*, 1989, pp. 255–265). The recession also hit the retail sector and as a result, many women in this sector became unemployed. The fact that part-time working women were now eligible for unemployment benefits placed a large financial burden on this sector. In 1979, 76% of all unemployed shopworkers were in fact women (*Hoofdbedrijfschap detailhandel*, 1979, p. 36). However, there were not many job opportunities for them in other sectors.

The strategy of unions to increase the status of part-time employees was therefore a great concern to employers in retail, particularly in times of high unemployment. Eventually, in 1979, it was the PBO-body *Hoofdbedrijfschap detailhandel* who urged the government to create more job opportunities in other sectors for women who desired a part-time job, so that they did not have to resort to jobs in retail (*NL-HaNA, 2.15.53, Emancipatiebeleid, inv. 784, Letter from the Hoofdbedrijfschap detailhandel*, 31 August 1979). A more equal distribution of part-time jobs over all sectors was therefore the desired solution to combat the marginalisation of working women and to take the pressure off of the retail sector.

The government

The occupational segregation of men and women and the overrepresentation of part-time workers in retail was not just a concern of stakeholders in the retail sector. The marginalisation of female labour was a point of concern of feminist organisations and the government likewise. Distribution of female labour force participation over all sectors was therefore a core ambition of these organisations. One of the pathways to achieve this was a general working hour reduction, to redistribute work and care duties among men and women. This was one of the strategies the newly founded *Scientific Council for Government Policy* suggested in 1976 (Schoonenboom & Langeveld, 1976). Yet, most social partners were sceptical about the employment effects and the effect on emancipation of general working hour reduction. In the late 1970s employers' organisations from the manufacturing industry voiced their doubts about the emancipatory effects of universal working hour reduction. Even if working hour reduction created new jobs, these were not deemed appropriate for married women and they advocated that special part-time jobs should be created which fit the qualities and interests of married women, not being in the manufacturing industry (Nederlands Christelijk Werkgeversverbond, 1980, p. 41; Raad van Bestuur in Arbeidszaken, 1978).

Scepticism about part-time employment had always existed among employers in the manufacturing industry. In times of boom, married women would be recruited as a makeshift solution; but only if it concerned work on the fringes of companies' main activities, such as sorting and packing. In the long term, however, part-time work was considered more costly, as it asked for complicated reorganisations. Their reserve was also informed by their general ideas about married women as a labour force. In 1968, research from the special SER-commission on productivity matters, the *Commissie Opvoering Productiviteit* (COP), confirmed that most companies had a strong preference for hiring unmarried women as they believed that married women showed too much absence and had a large turnover (Willems & Janmaat, 1968); they placed 'too high demands on the flexibility of an organisation', employers who attended a COP conference noted in 1971 (NL-HaNA, 2.06.064, Sociaal Economische Raad (SER), inv. 949). The clear paradox in their argument was that the thing that made married women so attractive to employers, their flexibility, was simultaneously the aspect that made them unattractive for the longer term. High turnover and high absenteeism could not be afforded in company's core staff.

A working hour reduction without a reduction in operating hours could be a solution, as happened in the past decades in retail and could similarly bring about more part-time jobs in other sectors. The board of the Christian trade union, CNV, for instance, argued for this position in 1979 (*Het Parool*, 29–12-1979, 'CNV: bedrijven zouden langer moeten draaien'). However, an expert commission of the SER published a critical rebuke of this idea in 1979. The experts compared the effects of this kind of working hour reduction on the private with the public sector, and while working hour reduction could be beneficial for employment opportunities in the public sector, particularly in the caring professions, since the demand for these services would not decline, the private sector would not benefit of the effects (Sociaal-Economische Raad, 1979).

The implicit recommendation of the SER to stimulate voluntary part-time jobs only in the public sector was in fact already underway. As an employer, the Dutch government took a leading role in creating part-time jobs in the second half of the 1970s. The publication of two important memorandums contributed to part-time employment in health care and primary and secondary education (Centrale Raad voor de Volksgezondheid, 1973; Ministerie van Onderwijs en wetenschappen, 1979). Besides, the governmental taskforce *Emancipation and Part-Time Work in the Government's Employment Policy* (short: EDO) laid the groundwork for promoting part-time work among civil servants. The title of this taskforce was revealing; it illustrated the idea that emancipation and part-time work were two sides of the same coin. One of the cornerstones of this policy involved 'equal rights' to part-time employment for both male and female civil servants (*Werkgroep emancipatie en deeltijdarbeid als aspecten van het overheidspersoneelsbeleid*, 1977). In 1978, the governmental tax office was officially reprimanded when they implemented a policy that only allowed female

employees to work part-time, and only if they provided evidence that they needed working hour reduction for caregiving duties (NL-HaNA, 2.15.53, Emancipatiebeleid, inv. 784, Dossier belastingdienst; deeltijdarbeid voor vrouwelijk personeel, 28 December 1978).

The government was thus already actively creating part-time job opportunities in the 1970s. However, the problem of the unequal distribution of part-time jobs had not been solved yet. Wil Albeda, minister of Social Affairs from 1977 to 1981 and a prominent Christian-Democratic politician, was an active supporter of creating part-time job opportunities across the economy, in order for part-time employment to truly become a 'fully-fledged' alternative: not a steppingstone to full-time employment, nor as a temporary solution to conjunctural problems. An important way of achieving that, he argued, was by 'masculinizing' part-time work, therefore making it a reasonable alternative for men as well. As Albeda argued in 1978:

[t]here is a danger that the promotion of part-time work reinforces the trend that women are relegated to sub-altern positions in the labour market [. . .] It is therefore very important that the promotion of part-time work not only focuses on women, but that we also emphasize the desirability that men are free to choose part-time work (*Handelingen II, OCV/UCV, 1978/79, p. 44*).

The notion of 'fulfilling' work was at the time often heard within the broader context of the 'humanisation' of work (Hofstede, 1978; Van Strien, 1978). An important 1975 governmental policy document 'Selective Growth', for instance, explicitly mentioned the goal of creating not only a situation of 'full' but also of 'fulfilling' (*volwaardige*) employment (Ministerie van Economische Zaken, 1976). This was also part of the many spearheads of the feminist movement that were integrated in government policy in 1975, the 'international year of the woman', under Social Democratic Prime Minister Joop den Uyl (Davidson, 2021, pp. 171–173).

The government together with the SER determined to use its 'soft power' to encourage the creation of part-time jobs. The SER had first asked consultancy firm *Berenschot*, who had established an important reputation for itself in management training and job classification (Karsten, 1998, pp. 19–20), to assess the organisation of part-time work in various industries. One of their central conclusions was the large discrepancy between perception and reality regarding absenteeism. Most employers believed that part-time workers had a higher absence rate, but their research showed that part-time employees were less absent and more productive than their full-time colleagues (Jong et al., 1974).

The results of the endeavours of the SER can be seen in an important 1980 memorandum of the joint employers' organisations (Raad van de Centrale Ondernemersorganisaties, 1980). The largest central employers' organisations acknowledged in this document that part-time work could not only contribute in the fight against unemployment but also in lowering the absence rate in companies, as many more surveys demonstrated (Raad van de Centrale Ondernemersorganisaties, 1980). In the Unilever factory in the town of Oss, for instance, part-time work and shift work effectively lowered the absence rate on the shopfloor ('De glamour van deeltijdarbeid', *Intermediair* 17, no. 40 (1981) p. 51). These insights on the positive relation between absenteeism and part-time work, were reasons for the combined employers' organisations to point out the benefits of introducing more part-time jobs to their members.

Yet, despite this gradual change in mentality regarding part-time jobs, the central employers' organisations opposed collective and cross-sector solutions to the problem of unemployment: So, no general working hour reduction and no forced creation of part-time jobs. They insisted that cost/benefits considerations of working hour reduction should be made by employees individually. Voluntary part-time work was therefore a perfect way to pass the responsibility of redistribution of labour onto the decisions of individual workers. The RCO was in this context particularly favourable of the so-called 'cafeteria model' in which employees could individually choose between various benefits: working hour reduction or flexible rewards (Raad van de Centrale Ondernemersorganisaties, 1980, pp. 61–77).

Such ideas fitted well with ideas frequently heard in the media to the extent that people increasingly valued leisure time over work. Voluntary part-time work was often mentioned as a sign of ongoing individualisation in the so-called 'me-decade' (Galen, 1980; Van Gils, 1980; Jager, 1974; Janssens, 1982). This perception, however, was contradicted by research that showed that almost all part-time workers were 'newcomers' to the labour market who were previously inactive – not people who voluntarily 'sacrificed' working hours for more leisure (Goedhart, 1977). Subsequent studies into the motivations behind requests for working hour reduction emphasised that the wish for shorter working weeks was not the sign of a diminished appreciation for wage work and increasing demand for more leisure time, but rather the sign of a growing appreciation for non-paid work (Jehoel-Gijsbers & Schepens, 1981). Yet, stimulating part-time employment as an individual choice gave employers the time to adjust and by highlighting individuality, they would not be pressured into accepting a forced increase in part-time jobs.

Dutch corporatism in the 1970s

In the mid-1970s, the large federation of trade unions became an increasingly important political force to reckon with. After the government-controlled 'guided wage policy' was abandoned in 1968, the structure of wage negotiations was still highly centralised and bargaining took place at the top level between employers' representatives and union representatives (Touwen, 2014, p. 193). The platform for these negotiations was the *Stichting van de Arbeid* (StAr), founded in 1945 as a bipartite body. It was agreed that decisions made in the StAr were binding for all subordinate associations. In the mid-1970s, furthermore, the newly founded federation of unions, FNV, which was a merger of the social democratic NVV and catholic NKV, gained a very prominent position in these negotiations (Hellema, 2012, pp. 27–34). Both FNV and the smaller protestant CNV had a broad corporatist structure and by design they represented the interests of several individual trade unions and different workers – such as the members of the Services Unions and the Industries' Unions in the manufacturing industry – in centralized bargaining (Visser & Hemerijck, 1997, pp. 83–4).

A common position on part-time work did not exist in the FNV, but there was an ongoing struggle over general working hour reduction and the question whether this should happen on a weekly basis or on a daily basis. The Industries' Unions for the manufacturing industry demanded working hour reduction to prevent more dismissals in times of high unemployment and to redistribute available work among employed and unemployed in the manufacturing industry (Klandermans, 1983), but they were generally uninterested in redistributing male and female labour force participation. Board members of the Industries' Unions, Groenevelt and De Jonge, in fact explicitly stated that 'the policies behind collective labour agreements are not to be adjusted to emancipation efforts' (*Vrij Nederland*, 7 October 1978).

While the Industries' Unions demanded a shorter working week (an extra Friday afternoon off), the women's secretariat of FNV, however, made the case for reducing daily workhours (Van Eijl, 1997, pp. 242–248). The demand for a 5-hour working day was an important call from feminist circles at that time (Smit, 1978). The position of the women's secretariat of FNV has sometimes been described as overtly hostile to voluntary part-time work (Van Eijl, 1997, p. 241). Indeed, in a critical 1979 working paper, they dismissed part-time jobs, together with all forms of flexible employment, for its low quality, low wages, and its incapacity to make people financially independent (FNV-Secretariaat voor Vrouwelijke Werknemers, 1979). Yet, in an internal memorandum, the president of the women's secretariat explicitly warned that their document should not be used as a vindication to stall policy initiatives improving the conditions of part-time workers (IISH, Archief FNV, inv. 4429, memorandum from 7 September 1979). In other words, they were not entirely opposed to voluntary part-time employment.

From internal deliberations on the federation's position on part-time work, it became clear that members of the Industries' Union and Services Union were divided on the issue of part-time employment. Members of the Industries' Union were unambiguously negative about part-time

employment and argued that employers only created these jobs as a low-cost alternative to full-time workers. Services' Union members, however, stressed the ever-increasing desire of people to voluntarily choose for part-time employment (IISH, Archief FNV, inv. 2696). They urged that the quality of these jobs had to be improved.

In 1981, the FNV came to a position on part-time employment, which in turn followed the strategy of the unions in the retail sector. They advocated a strategy based on high-quality part-time jobs and agreed that the 'uncontrolled' growth of 'discardable' part-time jobs needed to be curbed. In other words, they first wanted to make non-incidental" and 'regular' part-time work fulfilling. On-call employment was 'absolutely unacceptable' (FNV, 1981, pp. 27–28). In the programme of FNV, 'part-time work' thus came to stand for tenured, full-year employment for a voluntarily chosen number of hours a week, which implied an important narrowing down of the definition of part-time work. Thereby they deviated from other countries where part-time jobs were often still fixed-term contracts with little extra protections.

Quality instead of quantity

The quality agenda of FNV was clearly intended to widen the gap between flexible employees and tenured part-time employees and to put a stop to social dumping. The simple creation of more part-time jobs was therefore an absolute no-go for both unions and employers' organizations. In 1981, they used the platform of the StAr to collectively endorse the view that part-time workers have equal rights as full-time workers. This meant first equal pay (in proportion to the hours worked), equal protections against dismissal, and inclusion of the rights of part-time employees in collective labour agreements (Stichting van de Arbeid, 1981). They were unclear about inclusion in workers' insurances and retirement schemes, even though the Services' Unions had included the right to a pension for part-time workers already in their programme in 1976 (IISH, Amsterdam, Archief Mercurius, inv. 144).

The second oil shock of 1979 hit the Dutch economy even harder than the first one. In the context of a continually rising unemployment rate, the social partners' rejection of simply creating more part-time job opportunities became therefore a heated topic of debate between the government, the unions, and employers' organisations in 1982. The government had proposed a huge job stimulus package with a large share of part-time jobs (the so-called *Banenplan of Den Uyl*), but this artificial creation of more part-time jobs was precisely what the unions did not want. FNV leader Wim Kok reacted with explicit criticism to the government's plans (*Nederlands Dagblad*, 11 February 1982, 'FNV tegen overheersende rol deeltijdarbeid'). Similar objections were raised when a year later, the government proposed a policy that full-time jobs could be turned into part-time jobs with the use of unemployment benefits – the idea was immediately rejected by the social partners. FNV was clearest in their opposition and stated that part-time work should remain a 'luxury' for those who could afford it (IISH, Archief FNV, inv. 2697, statement from 6 March 1983).

The social partners were clear in their rejection of government interference, but there were two things they were willing to do: 1) contributing to changing the mentality among employers about part-time jobs, 2) stimulating agreements about the conditions of voluntary part-time work in collective labour agreements. The idea behind the latter was that better conditions would stimulate full-time workers to choose for part-time work too. Thereby, part-time employment opportunities would gradually become available in all sectors. Employers' organizations were convinced that collective labour agreements between unions and employers created better and more satisfying opportunities for both part-time workers and employers and emphasized their reserve about government interference in an elaborate exchange with the Minister in 1982 (IISH, Archief Stichting van de Arbeid, inv. 89.11.3).

By the end of 1982, trade unions and employer's organisations came to a historic agreement over the exchange of wage moderation for working hour reduction. With this so-called 'Wassenaar agreement' the social partners averted government wage control that was in the air. The form

that working hour reduction should take, however, would be negotiated in decentralised negotiations among branches of industry in the following years (Tijdens, 2002; Touwen, 2014, p. 173; Visser & Hemerijck, 1997, pp. 102–5).

Whether there really was a large-scale working hour reduction after 1982 remained to be seen (De Beer, 2012). More important about the Wassenaar agreement, however, was that it opened a path for increased differentiation between sectors. Differentiation and individualisation were leading aspects in labour relations in the years to come. In some branches, the combination of working hour reduction and the emphasis on maintaining companies' operating hours opened the door for more part-time jobs, but this was mostly the case in the public sector (Tijdens, 2002, p. 310).

Making companies part-time friendly

Parallel to the decentralised negotiations about labour agreements, the SER organised several initiatives to make use of the organisational insights of different sectors. This was all targeted at creating part-time job opportunities across all sectors without government interference. A 1984 publication, in which the experiences of retail companies were contrasted with the scepticism among employees in manufacturing industry such as the chemical company DSM, was explicitly intended to let companies in the manufacturing industry learn from retail (Van Schilfgaarde, 1984). The idea was to convince employers that part-time work need not be cost-intensive but could contribute to the internal flexibility of companies – a much needed development in times of economic uncertainty (Streeck, 1987).

One important impetus for organisational research came from a study on the amount of 'grey' part-time work existing in many industries (Schoemaker et al., 1981, pp. 80–81), which covered the amount of time that workers spent on other activities than their core tasks. This research was done in the context of the wider development of consultancy firms obtaining a more prominent place in Dutch economy (Karsten, 1998, p. 39). Consultancy firm *Twijnstra Gudde* became an important player. They were asked by the government to create a 'toolbox' to diagnose the organisational benefits of implementing flexible working hours and split functions in the context of a plan to stimulate part-time employment in the southern province of Limburg (NL-HaNa 2.15.47, Ministerie van Sociale Zaken Werkgelegenheid, DG Algemeen, inv. 1395). They gave recommendations to introduce part-time work in higher level-functions and suggested more drastic forms of 'task-reallocation' than just horizontally or vertically splitting jobs (IISH, Archief Stichting van de Arbeid, inv. 89.29.2 Looncommissie Deeltijdarbeid, Diagnose Instrument Deeltijdarbeid). Their conviction was that government should look more at 'factory-friendly' policies than 'employee-friendly' regulations (NL-HaNa 2.15.47, Ministerie van Sociale Zaken Werkgelegenheid, DG Algemeen, inv. 1395, letter from 1 June 1987).

Given the success of this operation, the government recommended banks and insurance companies to use *Twijnstra's* toolbox. *ABN AMRO*, the largest Dutch commercial bank, was one of the first organisations to do so. The government gave no financial bounties to create part-time jobs, but companies could receive a reimbursement of their expenses of up to 80% for research into the benefits of implementing flexible working hours (NL-HaNa 2.15.47 SZW, DG Algemeen, inv. 2062). The success of this approach strengthened the belief that promoting part-time work should not occur with financial incentives, but with programmes assisting companies to make part-time work beneficial for their own organisation. Indeed, *Twijnstra* reaped the benefits from this programme to stimulate part-time employment. In 1988, when they considered expanding their operations abroad, its partners particularly looked at 'exporting' the successful and 'typical Dutch formula' of part-time work (NRC, 7 September 1988, 'Twijnstra & Gudde, 1987 wil samenwerken met Frans en Noren')

An additional effect of the growing influence of consultancy firms, was the growth and stimulation of small business, through these companies' strategies of outsourcing and horizontal disintegration (Carlsson, 1992). An important study of the *Organisatie voor Strategisch Arbeidsmarktonderzoek* in fact stressed the importance of stimulating small business to develop part-

time opportunities (Van Ginneken, 1988). It was particularly in small businesses where part-time jobs could be beneficial. The first and second Lubbers cabinet (1982–1989), made up of Christian-Democrats and liberals, continuously emphasised that their policy instruments to stimulate part-time employment were very limited (*Kamerstukken II*, 1984/8,518,751, no. 1, Notitie inzake deeltijdarbeid).

The government's lack of support in promoting part-time jobs raised many questions, particularly when in 1986 it turned out that part-time employment opportunities did not grow as much as predicted. Liberal democrats *D66* pushed the government to take action so as to increase part-time employment opportunities, as they emphasised the demand for more part-time job opportunities within Dutch society (NL-HANa 2.15.62 Ministerie SZW: Directoraat-Generaal voor de Arbeidsvoorziening, inv. 1315, Delsen, 1986). Yet, following a WRR policy brief on activating labour market policies (*Wetenschappelijke Raad voor het Regeringsbeleid*, 1987, p. 137), the government chose a distanced role in the promotion of part-time work (*Nota Deeltijdarbeid*, 1987). In a tripartite meeting in 1987, they agreed with the social partners that creating part-time jobs was the responsibility of the 'inventiveness' of employers (IISH, Archief Stichting van de Arbeid, inv. 89.92.2, Conclusies van tripartite overleg, 7 June 1987).

Committing to bipartite solutions

The quality-instead-of-quantity approach of the unions, however, was not reaching its desired effects. The labour inspectorate concluded in 1986 that too many branches of industry had no or unfair regulations for part-time employees in their collective labour agreements (*Dienst Collectieve Arbeidsvoorwaarden*, 1986). Meanwhile, the civil servants' union *Abvakabo* was openly protesting the discriminatory regulations in their collective labour agreements, particularly where it concerned equal wages and the legal position of part-time workers (NA 2.19.042.89, Comité Verontruste Deeltijders, 1983–1988). Moreover, the fact that since 1977 the number of smaller part-time jobs was growing faster than larger part-time jobs (TABLE 1, 2) was considered evidence that employers preferred smaller part-time jobs for purposes of low wage competition and were therefore reluctant about larger part-time jobs.

The FNV board became thus increasingly convinced that only part-time jobs should be encouraged which truly contributed to financial independence (i.e. more than 20 hours), something which could only be reached if the financial incentive for smaller part-time jobs were abolished (IISH, Archief FNV, inv. 4432).

The position over the 1/3 threshold in the minimum wage and the question whether the right to part-time work should be laid down in statutory laws led to a conflict within the *StAr* between employers' organisations and union representatives. A statutory right to part-time employment could contribute to people voluntarily choosing part-time employment, which was a reason for the unions to support the 1984 EC-directive on the legal recognition of part-time workers.

Employers' organisations, however, were hostile toward legislative measures that forced them to grant requests for part-time employment. They opposed the 1984 EC-directive (*Sociaal-Economische Raad*, 1985). From 1987 onward, the largest employers' organisation (*VNO*) blocked further

Table 2. Amount and size of part-time jobs, 1977/1990.

	1977 (*1000)	1990 (*1000)
15 hours or less	178 (27.2%)	870 (41.2%)
15 to 24 hours	266 (40.7%)	683 (32.4%)
25 to 34 hours	210 (32.1%)	556 (26.4%)
Total	654	2,109

Source: CBS, *Bedrijfskrachtentelling/Enquête Beroepsbevolking*.
Cited in: IISH, Archief FNV, inv. 4432.

negotiations on part-time employment. They refused to participate in a central task force for the regulation of part-time work and the negotiations in the StAr reached an impasse. President of the VNO, Jan Willem van den Braak, feared a zero-sum result (NL-HaNa 2.15.47 SZW, DG Algemeen, inv 1395).

Gradually, however, the social partners found common ground. A new line on active labour market policy, the shifting emphasis from unemployment rates to participation rates and a renewed belief in the bipartite negotiations were the occasion of this (Visser & Hemerijck, p. 140). In 1992, a unanimous advice of the SER on the future and purpose of the Dutch consultation economy was published. After years of negotiating, it reinforced the ambitions of employers' organisations and trade unions to make labour affairs 'a primary responsibility' of the social partners. They considered government protections 'dated' and found that the government should promote self-regulation in the years to come (Sociaal-Economische Raad, 1992, pp. 119–120).

Moreover, the decision to lower the minimum wage level in 1993 was an opportunity for the employers' organizations to leave their objections to the 1/3 criterium, which the government abolished in 1993. In 1993, the StAr also came to an agreement regarding equal treatment of part-time and full-time workers in collective labour agreements. They supported the view that part-time workers receive similar benefits, wages, and training opportunities as full-time employees – in accordance with the hours they worked. The social partners made perfectly clear what their intentions were regarding the difference between part-time and full-time workers: 'Two bottles of different sizes: both full, but not the same' (Stichting van de Arbeid, 1993, p. 15). However, they also emphasised 'tailor-made' regulations for all companies. Part-time work should be 'in the mutual interest of optimal flexibility, differentiation and customisation, so that part-time work should become a fully fledged alternative in all sectors' (Ibid. p. 10–1). This meant that part-time work remained an issue of individual labour agreements, not of statutory law.

The unions came to acknowledge the importance of part-time employment in the case of participation rates. However, by this time, they too were convinced that the growth in part-time jobs should be in the mutual interest of employers and employees, and not enforced by statutory law. They therefore dismissed the idea of a statutory 'right to part-time' employment. This became most clear when the Dutch Green Party (*GroenLinks*) presented a proposal for the right to part-time employment to become a law. This plan was presented a few months after the understanding about part-time was reached between the employers' organisations and unions in 1993. The Green Party was displeased that the partners opted out of legislative arrangements for part-time workers. Yet, the unions argued in several writings to the Minister, it was not the government's duty to 'meddle' with labour relations (IISH, Archief Stichting van de Arbeid, inv. 99.83.2 Deeltijdarbeid).

Even after the proposal was adjusted several times, the unions FNV and CNV refused to support the Green Party's initiative (NRC, 16 December 1997, 'Wettelijk recht op deeltijd afgewezen'). They kept emphasising that the immense growth of part-time jobs and the improvement of conditions for part-time employees through CLAs in the years between 1986 and 1993, confirmed by two reports of the labour inspectorate (Dienst Collectieve Arbeidsvoorwaarden, 1991; Loontechnische Dienst, 1991), were one of the 'crown jewels' of bipartite negotiations. In 1993, FNV-president Stekelenburg even stated that bipartite negotiations had improved the conditions of part-time workers more than legislation could (NRC, 7 June 1993, 'FNV zoekt "nieuwe werknemer"').

Arguably, the unions had dropped their ideas on the statutory right to part-time employment to make a trade-off with employers' representatives about the minimum wage threshold. To compensate for the missing legal protections for part-time employment, FNV started a broad campaign to actively promote part-time jobs, particularly among men, and took on a role as organisational advisers, developing their own guide on reforming work arrangements to facilitate part-time jobs in companies in all sectors. It even included an English-language leaflet to explain the Dutch part-time model to foreign trade unions (IISH, Archief FNV, inventory no. 2698).

The programme of the social partners can indeed be considered successful regarding the promotion of good-quality part-time jobs. The growth of part-time jobs from the end of the 1980s onward occurred predominantly in jobs ranging from 20 to 30 hours. If the main goal, however, was to make part-time jobs available across all sectors and professions, the mission was not accomplished. A 1994 evaluation of the 'part-time stimulating instruments' showed that the attitudes of employers in most industries were still negative. In most sectors, for instance, the initiative to create part-time jobs mostly came from employees – not from employers (Simmelink & De Jonge, 1994) Simmelink, V. I., & De Jonge, J. F. M. (1994). *Deeltijdarbeid en deeltijdbevorderende instrumenten: Een evaluatie*. COB/Sociaal-Economische Raad. Bipartite negotiations and coordination between representatives of different sectors thus contributed to a gradual expansion of better conditions for part-time workers, but the continuing restraint of employers in traditional 'masculine' sectors to actually grant their employees the right to part-time employment, made that the statutory 'right to part-time employment' was an unavoidable next step in the process of levelling up part-time workers. Eventually, this law was introduced in the year 2000.

Conclusion

From the 1980s onward, the status of part-time work in the Dutch labour market was gradually levelled up to become a different group of 'insiders', meaning that they had working conditions and protections that were equal to full-time employees. Part-time employment in that period contributed significantly to the increased labour force participation of women and the successful recovery after the economic crisis of the 1980s (OECD, 2019, p. 16; Van Oorschot, 2002). In the 1990s, various scholars therefore lauded the regulation of part-time employment as a successful outcome of the Dutch model of market coordination with its active consultation between employers' organizations and trade unions (Berkouwer, 1998; Visser & Hemerijck, 1997, pp. 181–2). A 2014 OECD report stated that 'the Dutch model has emerged as one of the better practice models across Europe in terms of implementation of the principle of equal treatment; penetration into higher occupational levels and organisational hierarchies; and, regulations giving employees the right to request an individual adjustment between full- and part-time working' (Fagan et al., 2014, pp. 11–12). Part-time jobs, in the Netherlands thereby meet to a large extent the conditions for Arne Kallebergs definition of 'good jobs' (Kalleberg, 2011).

Promoting the individual option to choose for part-time employment was central to the policy of part-time employment in the 20th century. Yet, the fact that employees could choose themselves should not be seen as an indication that there were no attempts at controlling the development of part-time jobs. From the mid-1960s onward, the individualised wishes of working mothers were a central concern to government agencies, but gradually the increased participation of women became a collective concern for various parties in the Dutch economy. The overburdening of the retail sector and the marginalisation of working women were two issues that needed to be arranged collectively. A quality agenda could both curb the growth of low-quality part-time jobs and make the choice more attractive for traditional 'core' workers to work part-time. In addition, organisational research could help to distribute part-time employment equally over all sectors.

All in all, the history of part-time employment in the Netherlands shows that there was a coordinated response to a process of dualization, initially addressed by both unions and employers in the retail sector. The Dutch structure of deliberation and consultation, with organisations representing the interests of an entire sector, accommodated this process. In this structure, the stakeholders made sure that part-time employment was both to the satisfaction of employers and employees. Stimulating high-quality voluntary part-time work was a perfect solution to meet the wishes of most sectors in the Dutch economy. Instead of collectively downgrading the norm of full-time employment, they collectively upgraded a third group of workers between traditional core workers and flexible workers. Meanwhile, it remains to be seen if policy lessons are to be applied

from successfully mitigating the process of dualization between part-time workers and full-time workers to the challenge of dealing with the segmentation between workers with temporary labour contracts and fixed contracts, which many corporatist-welfare states, including the Dutch, are facing today (Eichhorst & Marx, 2021).

Note

1. Arnold Tilanus (MP for the *Christian Historical Union*) as cited in (Asscher-Vonk et al., 1974, p. 54).

Acknowledgments

Thanks to Jeroen van Veldhoven, Jeroen Touwen and Lex Heerma van Voss for their helpful comments.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

Funding

The research for this article is funded by Instituut Gak

Notes on contributor

Timon de Groot is a historian of labour and criminal justice. Until the summer of 2021, he was a post-doctoral fellow at Utrecht University, where he conducted research into the history of flexible work arrangements.

ORCID

Timon de Groot  <http://orcid.org/0000-0003-4134-3707>

References

- Ahold, N. V. (1975). *Personeelsjaarverslag*. Koog a/d Zaan.
- Albeda, W., Van de Braak, H. J., M., & Veldkamp, G. M. J. (1972). *Uitzendarbeid: Ontwikkeling en verwikkeling*. Universitaire Pers.
- Alesina, A., Glaeser, E., and Sacerdote, B. (2005) Work and Leisure in the United States and Europe: Why So Different? NBER Macroeconomics Annual. 20,1–64. <http://www.nber.org/books/gert06-1>
- Allaart, P., Bellmann, L., & Altavilla, C. (2007). Reasons for part-time work: An empirical analysis for Germany and The Netherlands. *International Journal of Manpower*, 28(7), 557–570. <https://doi.org/10.1108/01437720710830052>
- Asscher-Vonk, I. P., Van den Heuvel, L. H., (1974). *Rapport vrouw en sociale verzekering*. Staatsuitgeverij.
- Beck, U. (1992). *Risk society: Towards a new modernity*. Sage Publications.
- Beck, U. (2000). *The brave new world of work*. Polity Press.
- Beckers, T. A. M. (1983). *Planning voor vrijheid: Een historisch-sociologische studie van de overheidsinterventie in recreatie en vrije tijd*. Dissertation Wageningen University.
- Bentolila, S., Dolado, J. J., & Jimeno, J. F. (2019). *Dual labour markets revisited* (Working Paper No. 7479). Center for Economic Studies.
- Berger, S., & Piore, M. J. (1980). *Dualism and discontinuity in industrial societies*. Cambridge University Press.
- Berkouwer, J. (1998). Mythe en werkelijkheid van het poldermodel. *Ons Erfdeel*, 41(1), 3–13 https://www.dbnl.org/tekst/_ons003199801_01/_ons003199801_01_0001.php.
- Betti, E. (2018). Historicizing precarious work: Forty years of research in the social sciences and humanities. *International Review of Social History*, 63(2), 273–319. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020859018000329>
- Blau, F. D., & Jusenius, C. L. (1976). Economists' approaches to sex segregation in the labor market: An appraisal. *Signs*, 1(3), 181–199. <https://doi.org/10.1086/493286>
- Blau, F. D., Simpson, P., & Anderson, D. (1998). Continuing progress? Trends in occupational segregation in the United States over the 1970s and 1980s. *Feminist Economics*, 4(3), 29–71. <https://doi.org/10.1080/135457098338301>

- Boeri, T., Brugiavini, A., Calmfors, L., & Fondazione Rodolfo, D. (eds.). (2001). *The role of unions in the twenty-first century: A report for the Fondazione Rodolfo De Benedetti*. Oxford University Press.
- Bom, W., Pepping, G., & Hornman, M. (1989). *Van klapstoel naar fauteuil: Methodiek banen- en beroepenoriëntatie herintredende vrouwen*. Landelijk Steunpunt Vrouw en Werk.
- Boxer, M. J. (1986). Protective legislation and home industry: The marginalization of women workers in late nineteenth early twentieth-century France. *Journal of Social History*, 20(1), 45–65. <https://doi.org/10.1353/jsh/20.1.45>
- Bruyn-Hundt, M. (1979). Vrouwen: Paupers op de arbeidsmarkt. *Socialisme en Democratie*, 10, 479–488.
- Breman, J., & Van der Linden, M. (2014) Informalizing the economy: The return of the social question at a global level. *Development and Change*, 45(5), 920–940. <https://doi.org/10.1111/dech.12115>
- Bruyn-Hundt, M. (1982). *Deeltijdwerk*. Van Loghum Slaterus.
- Carlsson, B. (1992). The rise of small business: Causes and consequences. In W. J. Adams (Ed.), *Singular Europe, economy and policy of the European community after 1992* (pp. 145–169). University of Michigan Press.
- CBS. (2018). *Wie is er nog lid van een vakbond? Inzicht in lidmaatschap, belang en tevredenheid* (Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek).
- Centraal Overleg Detailhandel. (1977). *Part-time arbeid in de detailhandel*. COD.
- Centrale Raad voor de Volksgezondheid. (1973). *Advies inzake het inschakelen van parttime krachten in en buiten inrichtingen van gezondheidszorg*. Staatsuitgeverij.
- Commissie van Advies voor de Arbeid van Vrouwen en Meisjes. (1963). *Advies inzake het tekort aan vrouwelijke arbeidskrachten*.
- D'Ancona, H. (1974). *De rol van de vrouw in Nederland anno 1974*. Nederlands centrum voor marketing analyses en sociaal wetenschappelijk onderzoek.
- Damsma, D. (1994). Family wages or family allowances? Debates in the Dutch labour movement. *Economic and Social History in the Netherlands*, 6, 169–18.
- Davidson, R. J. (2021). After accommodation? Inclusion and exclusion of emancipation interests in Dutch 'democratic corporatism'. *Acta Politica*, 56(1), 163–180. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41269-020-00153-9>
- Decom. (1975). *De plaats van de arbeid in detailhandel: Verslag Decom-dag 1975*.
- de Beer, P. (2012). De arbeidstijdverkorting die niet doorging en andere lessen uit de jaren tachtig. *TPEdigitaal*, 6(3–4), 45–62 <https://www.tpedigitaal.nl/artikel/de-arbeidskorting-die-niet-doorging-en-andere-lessen-uit-de-jaren-tachtig>.
- Deggeller, L. (1972). *De werkende vrouw in Nederland*. Uitgeverij Geïllustreerde Pers.
- Delsen, L. (1995) Atypical employment: An international perspective. Causes, consequences and policy Wolters-Noordhof.
- Delsen, L. (1986). Bevordering van deeltijdarbeid. Stand van zaken. *Tijdschrift Voor Arbeidsvraagstukken*, 2(4), 78–83 <https://ugp.rug.nl/arbeidsvraagstukken/article/view/26208>.
- De Jong, J. R., (1981). Intven, C. J. H., & Visser, P. (1974). *Part-time arbeid en het bedrijf: Verslag van een onderzoek dat van 1971- 1974 in opdracht van de Commissie opvoering productiviteit (COP) is uitgevoerd door het Raadgevend Bureau Berenschot*. Stenfert Kroese.
- Dienst Collectieve Arbeidsvoorwaarden. (1986). *Deeltijdarbeid in CAO's*. Ministerie van Sociale Zaken en Werkgelegenheid.
- Dienst Collectieve Arbeidsvoorwaarden. (1991). *Deeltijders en hun rechtspositie: Een onderzoek naar de arbeidsvoorwaarden voor werknemers met een deeltijd-dienstverband*. Ministerie van Sociale Zaken en Werkgelegenheid.
- Dienstenbonden, FNV bedrijfsgroep detailhandel (1979). *Aktieprogramma voor de detailhandel*. Dienstenbonden FNV.
- Eichhorst, W., & Marx, P. (2021). How stable is labour market dualism? Reforms of employment protection in nine European countries. *European Journal of Industrial Relations*, 27(1), 93–110. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0959680119899199>
- Emmenegger, P., Häusermann, S., Palier, B., & Seeleib-Kaiser, M. (2012). *The age of dualization: The changing face of inequality in deindustrializing societies*. Oxford University Press.
- Esping-Andersen, G. (1990). *The three worlds of welfare capitalism*. Polity Press.
- Fagan, C., Norman, H., Smith, M., Gonzalez Menendez, M. C. (2014). *In search of good quality part-time employment*. ILO.
- Fichtenbaum R. (2009). The Impact of Unions on Labor's Share of Income: A Time-Series Analysis. *Review of Political Economy*, 21(4), 567–588. [10.1080/09538250903214859](https://doi.org/10.1080/09538250903214859)
- FNV-Secretariaat voor Vrouwelijke Werknemers. (1979). *Kiezen voor delen: Achtergrond informatie voor de FNV-studiebijeenkomst over deeltijd werk*.
- FNV. (1981). *Een deel van het geheel. FNV-visie op deeltijdarbeid: Uitgangspunten voor een gefaseerd en gericht stimuleringsbeleid*.
- Galen, J. J. V. (1980). *Het Ik-tijdperk*. Haagse Post.
- Gilbert, M. (1958). *Comparative national products and price levels: A study of Western Europe and the United States*. Organisation for European Economic Cooperation.
- Goedhart. (1977). De keuze tussen inkomen en vrije tijd. *Sociale Maandstatistiek*, 25(2), 114–115.
- Goedhart, A. (1982). *Segmented work, divided workers: The historical transformation of labor in the United States*. Cambridge University Press.

- Heerma van Voss, L., Hiemstra-Kuperus, E., & Van Nederveen Meerkerk, E. (2010). *The Ashgate companion to the history of textile workers, 1650–2000*. Ashgate.
- Hellema, D. (2012). *Nederland en de jaren zeventig*. Amsterdam.
- Hoofdbedrijfschap detailhandel, commissie werkgelegenheid. (1979). *Werk in de winkel: Tweede rapport van de Commissie Werkgelegenheid van het Hoofdbedrijfschap Detailhandel*. Hoofdbedrijfschap Detailhandel.
- Hofstede, G. (1978). *Humanisering van de arbeid: De rol van waarden in een derde Industriële revolutie*. Stichting Maatschappij en Onderneming.
- Humphries, J. (1977). Class struggle and the persistence of the working-class family. *Cambridge Journal of Economics*, 1 (3), 241–258. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordjournals.cje.a035361>
- Instituut voor psychologisch marktonderzoek. (1974). *Onderzoek maatschappelijke participatie van vrouwen met gezinsverantwoordelijkheid*. Ministerie van Sociale Zaken.
- Jager, O. (1974). *Bevrijde tijd: Van prestatie maatschappij naar vrijetijdscultuur*. Zomer & Keuning.
- Janssens, R. J. A. (1982). *Emancipatie ten aanzien van de arbeid: In een Nederlandse post-industriële samenleving*. Deventer: Kluwer.
- Jehoel-Gijsbers, G. J. M., & Schepens, T. M. M. (1981). *Gedeelde arbeid: Gedeelde vreugd: Een studie over arbeidsduurverkorting*. Ministerie van Sociale Zaken en Werkgelegenheid.
- Kalleberg, A. L. (2011). *Good jobs. Bad jobs: The rise of polarized and precarious employment systems in the United States, 1970s–2000s*. Russell Sage Foundation.
- Karsten, L. (1998). *Managementconcepten in beweging*. Van Gorcum.
- Klandermans, P. G. (1983). *Participatie in een sociale beweging: Een mobilisatiecampagne onderzocht: Een theorie over de bereidheid om te participeren in een sociale beweging en een onderzoek naar het effect van pogingen van een vakbond om zijn achterban te mobiliseren*. VU Boekhandel.
- Loontechische dienst. (1991). *De rechtspositie bij deeltijdwerken en de praktijk*. Ministerie van Sociale Zaken en Werkgelegenheid.
- Land, H. (1980). The family wage. *Feminist Review*, 6(1), 55–77. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1394972>
- Ministerie van Economische Zaken. (1976). *Selectieve groei: Economische structuurnota*. Staatsuitgeverij.
- Ministerie van Onderwijs en wetenschappen. (1979). *Schets van een beleid voor emancipatie in onderwijs en wetenschappelijk onderzoek*. Staatsuitgeverij.
- Mok, A. L. (1975). Is er een dubbele arbeidsmarkt in Nederland? In A. L. den Broeder, and H. den Hartog (Eds.), *Werkloosheid: Aard, omvang, structurele oorzaken en beleidsalternatieven*. Martinus Nijhoff 145–160 .
- Mol, P. W., Van Ours, J. C., & Theeuwes, J. (1988). *Honderd jaar gehuwde vrouwen op de arbeidsmarkt*. Organisatie voor Strategisch Arbeidsmarktonderzoek.
- OECD. (2019). *Part-time and partly equal: Gender and work in the Netherlands*. OECD. <https://doi.org/10.1787/204235cf-en>
- Oude Nijhuis D. (2017). Explaining postwar wage compression. *Labor History*, 58(5), 587–610. [10.1080/0023656X.2017.1332652](https://doi.org/10.1080/0023656X.2017.1332652)
- Palier, B., & Thelen, K. (2010). Institutionalizing dualism: Complementarities and change in France and Germany. *Politics & Society*, 38(1), 119–148. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0032329209357888>
- Piore, M. J. (1971). The dual labor market: Theory and implications. In D. M. Gordon (Ed.), *Problems in political economy: An urban perspective* (pp. 90–93). D.C. Heath.
- Portegijs, W. (2008). *Verdeelde tijd: Waarom vrouwen in deeltijd werken*. Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau.
- Projectgroep Sociale Zaken Philips. (1975). *Toekomstige personeelsstructuur part-time werken* (Philips).
- Raad van Bestuur in Arbeidszaken. (1978). *Koers naar herstel: Sociaal economisch programma voor de komende jaren*. Raad van de Centrale Ondernemersorganisaties. (1980) . *Nota arbeidsduur*. RCO.
- Reich, M., Gordon, D., & Edwards, R. (1973). Dual labor markets: A theory of labor market segmentation. *American Economic Review*, 63, 359–365 <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1817097> .
- Sasser, W. E. (1976). Match supply and demand in service industries. *Harvard Business Review*, 54(6), 133–140.
- Schilfgaarde, P. V. (Ed.). (1984). *Werk in delen: Ervaringen van Nederlandse bedrijven met deeltijdarbeid*. Kluwer.
- Schoemaker, N., Van Gageldonk, A., & Demenint, M. (1981). *Deeltijdarbeid in het bedrijf*. Samsom.
- Schoonenboom, I. J., & Langeveld, H. M. (1976). *De emancipatie van de vrouw*. Voorlopige Wetenschappelijke Raad voor het Regeringsbeleid.
- Sluyterman, K. E. (2003). *Kerende kansen: Het Nederlandse bedrijfsleven in de twintigste eeuw*. Boom.
- Smit, J. (1978). De minderheidsgroep met de thuiswaarde. *Socialisme En Democratie*, 35(10), 461–489.
- Sociaal-Economische Raad. (1966). *Advies over de arbeid van de vrouwen in Nederland in het kader van de situatie op de arbeidsmarkt en het te voeren arbeidsmarktbeleid*.
- Sociaal-Economische Raad. (1973). *Advies inzake de inschakeling van de gehuwde vrouw in het arbeidsproces*.
- Sociaal-Economische Raad. (1976). *Advies inzake de wenselijkheid van het eventueel laten vervallen van het eenderdecriterium uit de Wet Minimumloon en Minimumvakantiebijslag*.
- Sociaal-Economische Raad. (1979). *Rapport van de Commissie Economische Deskundigen inzake arbeidstijdverkorting*.
- Sociaal-Economische Raad. (1985). *Advies vrijwillige deeltijdarbeid*.
- Sociaal-Economische Raad. (1992). *Convergentie en overleconomie: Advies inzake convergentie en overleconomie*.

- Stichting van de Arbeid. (1981). *Rapport inzake werkgelegenheid en arbeidsduur*.
- Stichting van de Arbeid. (1993). *Overwegingen en aanbevelingen ter bevordering van deeltijdarbeid en differentiatie in arbeidsduurpatronen*.
- Stone, K. V. W. (2013). The decline in the standard employment contract: A review of the evidence. In H. Arthurs & K. V. W. Stone (Eds.), *Rethinking workplace regulation: Beyond the standard contract of employment* (pp. 366–404). Russell Sage Foundation.
- Streeck, W. (1987). The uncertainties of management in the management of uncertainty: Employers, labor relations and industrial adjustment in the 1980s. *Work, Employment & Society*, 1(3), 281–308. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0950017087001003002>
- Thelen, K., & Kume, I. (2006). Coordination as a political problem in coordinated market economies. *Governance*, 19(1), 11–42. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-0491.2006.00302.x>
- Tijdens, K. G. (2002). Van arbeidsduurverkorting via deeltijdarbeid en verlofsparen naar de CAO-a-la-carte: De impact van het Akkoord van Wassenaar na twintig jaar. *Tijdschrift Voor Arbeidsvraagstukken*, 18(4), 309–318.
- Tilly, L. A., & Scott, J. W. (1989). *Women, work, and family* (Reprinted). Routledge.
- Twijnstra Guddé. (1987). *Deeltijdarbeid 'in geleide banen'* Twijnstra Guddé.
- Touwen, J. (2014). *Coordination in transition: The Netherlands and the world economy, 1950-2010*. Brill.
- Van Eijl, C. (1997). *Maandag tolereren we niets meer: Vrouwen, arbeid en vakbeweging, 1945-1990*. Stichting beheer IISG.
- Van Bottenburg, M. (1995). *Aan den arbeid!: In de wandelgangen van de Stichting van de Arbeid, 1945-1995*. Bert Bakker.
- Van der Linden, M. (2014). San Precario: A new inspiration for labor historians. *Labor: Studies in Working-class History of the Americas*, 10(1), 9–21. <https://doi.org/10.1215/15476715-2385372>
- Van Gils, M. R. (1980). *Werken en niet-werken in een veranderende samenleving: Verslag van de conferentie op 6 en 7 februari 1975 te Lunteren van de secties Bedrijfs- en Sociale Psychologie van het Nederlands Instituut van Psychologen*. Swets & Zeitlinger.
- Van Ginneken, C. C. P. M. (1988). *De ontwikkeling van de vraag naar deeltijdarbeid*. Organisatie voor Strategisch Arbeidsmarktonderzoek.
- Van Mourik, A., van, Siegers, J. J., & Poel, T. J. D. (1983). Ontwikkelingen in de beroepssegregatie tussen mannen en vrouwen in de jaren zeventig. In *Economisch statistische berichten*, -, 597–601. (No DOI, or URL) (pp. 597–601).
- Van Oorschot, W. J. H. (2002). Miracle or nightmare: A critical review of Dutch activation policies and their outcomes. *Journal of Social Policy*, 31(3), 339–420. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0047279402006670>
- Van Strien, P. J. (1978). *Humanisering van de arbeid en de kwaliteit van het bestaan*. Psychologische Instituten der Rijksuniversiteit Groningen.
- Van Zweeden, A. F. & Griffiths, R. T. (1989). *Economische geschiedenis van Nederland in de 20e eeuw*. Het Spectrum.
- Vernon G. (2006). Does Density Matter? The Significance of Comparative Historical Variation in Unionization. *European Journal of Industrial Relations*, 12(2), 189–209. [10.1177/0959680106065040](https://doi.org/10.1177/0959680106065040)
- Visser, J., & Hemerijck, A. (1997). *A Dutch miracle: Job growth, welfare reform and corporatism in the Netherlands*. Amsterdam University Press.
- Visser, J. (2002). The first part-time economy in the world: A model to be followed? *Journal of European Social Policy*, 12(1), 23–42. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0952872002012001561>
- Vissers, A., Koopmans, E., Valkenburg, F., & Van Wezel, J. (1977). Sociale ongelijkheid op de arbeidsmarkt. *Sociologische Gids*, 24(1–2), 34–57.
- Vissers, A. (1977). Arbeidsmobiliteit en segmentering van de arbeidsmarkt. In J. A. M. van Wezel (Ed.), *Arbeidsmarkt in beweging*. Vuga 51–73.
- Valkenburg, F. C., & Vissers, A. M. C. (1979). *Theorie van de dubbele arbeidsmarkt: Samenvatting*. Staatsuitgeverij.
- Nederlands Christelijk **Werkgeversverbond**. (1980). *Werkgelegenheid, nu en straks*. NCW.
- Wetenschappelijke Raad voor het Regeringsbeleid. (1987). *Activerend arbeidsmarktbeleid*. WRR.
- Werkgroep emancipatie en deeltijdarbeid als aspecten van het overheidspersoneelsbeleid. (1977). *Emancipatie en deeltijdarbeid als aspecten van het overheidspersoneelsbeleid*. Staatsuitgeverij.
- Willems, P. J., & Janmaat, J. F. J. (Ed.). (1968). *Het bedrijf en de werkende gehuwde vrouw: Verslag van een onderzoek uitgevoerd door de Afdeling Research van het Gemeenschappelijk Instituut voor Toegepaste Psychologie*. Sociaal-Economische Raad, Commissie Opvoering Productiviteit.
- Windmuller, J. P., De Galan, C. & Zweeden, A. F. V. (1990). *Arbeidsverhoudingen in Nederland*. Het Spectrum.
- Zeldenrust-Noordanus, M. (1964). *Rapport met betrekking tot een onderzoek inzake arbeid buitenshuis door vrouwen met gezinsverantwoordelijkheid*. Instituut voor Psychologische Markt- en Motievenonderzoek.