

## Female Labour-Market Participation in the Netherlands: Developments in the Relationship between Family Cycle and Employment

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### *The Rise of Part-Time Work*

In the Netherlands, female labour-market participation increased enormously between 1960 and 1990. Until the 1960s, only one out of five women between the ages of 15 and 64 was active in the labour market; this proportion increased to one in two by the early 1990s. To a large extent, this increase has been the result of married women entering the labour market in the 1970s and 1980s. Until the 1960s, only women who were not (yet) married or who were active in their husband's firm went to work. This marks a trend similar to changes in the countries neighbouring the Netherlands, and can be explained on the basis of the usual cultural and economic issues, such as modernization, secularization, individualization, and the increasing demand for labour in the service sector. Norms against the participation of women in the labour market have been softened, and it is nowadays a widely accepted fact that married women also work. Educational expansion has increased women's labour-market opportunities, both from the demand side of the labour market due to occupational restructuring and labour shortages, and also from the supply side, as higher educated women are more strongly motivated to participate in the labour market.

Although the direction of the trend of women's labour-market participation in the Netherlands is the same as in neighbouring countries, the timing has been different in the Netherlands. The relatively late increase in the labour-market participation of married women in the Netherlands can be explained by two specific developments. The first is the religious composition of the Netherlands and the persistent effects of religion on fertility and married women's labour-market participation. The second is the way the Dutch labour market has developed (Mol, Van Ours, and Theeuwes, 1988; Hooghiemstra and Niphuis-Nell, 1993; Plantenga, 1993).

The first specific development is in the Netherlands' unparalleled system of pillarization (Lijphart, 1975). This system reached its summum in the period after the Second World War and resulted from the religious composition of the population. The members of the Roman Catholic church and several Protestant denominations did not collaborate in the educational system, in political parties, or in any other organization. The social-democratic party formed a pillar of its own. The 'front mentality' of the religious and political leaders facilitated value systems strongly tied to religion. In this climate, the wife's role remained confined within the family (Van Heek, 1954) and she was not expected to be active in paid labour outside the home. An important consequence of religious rigidity in the Netherlands is a high fertility rate until the late 1960s, whereas fertility in neighbouring countries like Germany, the UK, Belgium, and France had started to drop years before. Most religious pillars were against any form of birth control, and in the Netherlands they could impose their norms on the faithful longer than in these less pillarized countries.

Since the 1970s, the modernization process has been powerful in the Netherlands, and the trend towards secularization has been strong, as indicated by the abrupt decline in the religious proportion of the population. In 1960, the proportion of the population recorded as religious in official (municipal) records was 82 per cent; by 1990, it had fallen to 62 per cent (Becker and Vink, 1994: 46). In the Netherlands, municipal records used to underestimate the number of non-religious persons, as they automatically assumed that children have the same religion as their parents. Interviews show that the proportion of the population that considers itself religious has decreased much faster than is shown by municipal records. In 1994, about half of the population responded negatively to the question of whether they could be considered religious, whereas in 1960 the proportion was over 70 per cent (Peters, 1993; Becker and Vink, 1994). The pillars lost their power and could no longer prevent people from using contraceptives. This process led to both decreasing fertility and to a more tolerant general attitude towards the participation of married women in the labour market (Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau, 1994: 543).

The second specific development in the Netherlands that explains the relatively late appearance of married women's paid work has been the restructuring of the labour market. The labour market developed somewhat differently in the Netherlands than in its neighbouring countries. After the Second World War, the industrial sector did not develop as strongly as in Germany or Britain. Until 1960, married women were not needed in the labour market, and although the economic boom of the 1960s put the labour market under pressure, they were still not allowed to participate in the labour market. The shortage of unskilled manual workers was solved by engaging migrant workers instead, and jobs in the growing tertiary sec-

tor were taken by Dutch men. However, after 1970, increased labour demand for employment in the service and welfare-state sectors influenced female labour-market participation to a large degree. By this time, the religious system had loosened its grip on society, and married women became available for service-sector work. Educational expansion and the diminishing power of the ideological pillars gave way to an emancipation of women in the Netherlands, and their occupational aspirations increased.

The availability of part-time employment is strongly related to this process. Until the 1960s, part-time employment was barely available in the Netherlands, and it did not become an important phenomenon until the 1970s. In the 1970s, the proportion of women working in part-time jobs increased enormously, and in the 1990s three out of five working women in the Netherlands have a part-time job. Among married women, the proportion is more than four out of five. Eurostat statistics show that the Netherlands has the highest proportion of women working in part-time jobs in the European Community (OECD, 1991). It is hard to explain this exceptional situation. Women work part-time in all sectors of the labour market, so the absence of women in manufacturing and construction cannot be the main reason. It is possible that the remnants of the value system of the pillarization period are still at work. These are present not only in the norms that people hold with respect to the role of married women in the family, but have also been crystallized in institutions, for example the lack of childcare services and the tax system. It is uncertain whether these institutional barriers do indeed depress female labour-market participation, or whether both low participation and the lack of favourable conditions are jointly caused by a generally negative attitude towards full-time work by married women. It is significant that the large proportion of women working in part-time jobs is not the result of the unavailability of full-time jobs. On the contrary, in the Netherlands 35 per cent of women working full-time would like to work part-time, whereas only 8 per cent of women working part-time would prefer full-time jobs (Kunnen *et al.*, 1995). Many women seem to accept full-time jobs only because part-time jobs are not available to them. This fact does not remove our uncertainty over whether the lack of childcare services is the cause of the small proportion in full-time jobs, or whether the demand for it is low.

Table 8.1 illustrates developments in the labour-market participation of women and men in the Netherlands between 1960 and 1994. All data come from nationally representative data-sets, starting with the Censuses of 1960 and 1971, which were the last Censuses in the Netherlands, and proceeding with the labour-market surveys collected by the Netherlands Central Bureau of Statistics. Although strict comparability is problematic due to changes in the definition of employment, it is clear that there has been a very strong overall upward trend in female employment. In 1960, only 23

TABLE 8.1. Trends in employment rates in the Netherlands, 1960-1994 (%)

	Women aged 15-64				Men aged 15-64			
	No job		Part-time: 1-34 hours		No job		Part-time: 1-34 hours	
	Full-time: >35 hours	Part-time: 1-34 hours	Full-time: >35 hours	Part-time: 1-34 hours	Full-time: >35 hours	Part-time: 1-34 hours	Full-time: >35 hours	Part-time: 1-34 hours
1960	77	21	2	11	—	—	—	—
1971	70	24	6	15	—	—	—	—
1973	69	22	9	17	—	—	—	—
1975	68	23	9	18	—	—	—	—
1977	67	19	14	20	76	—	4	—
1981	61	21	18	22	73	—	7	—
1985	58	20	22	23	71	—	6	—
1987	57	18	25	27	63	—	11	—
1988	55	18	27	26	63	—	11	—
1989	55	18	28	25	64	—	11	—
1990	52	19	29	25	64	—	11	—
1991	50	19	30	24	64	—	12	—
1992	49	19	32	24	66	—	10	—
1993	48	19	33	25	65	—	10	—
1994	47	19	34	25	64	—	11	—

Sources: Census 1960, Census 1971, Labour Force Surveys (AKT and EBB) 1973-94; own computations and as cited by Mol, Van Ours, and Theeuwes (1988) and Hooghiemstra and Niphuis-Neil (1993).

per cent of all Dutch women between 15 and 64 had a job; by 1994, this proportion had increased to 53 per cent. Developments in the availability of part-time employment completely explain this trend. In 1960, part-time work was virtually non-existent: only 2 per cent of all Dutch women worked in part-time jobs; by 1994, this had increased to 34 per cent. Today, about 60 per cent of all working women have a part-time job. It is striking that the proportion of Dutch women working full-time was stable during this period. In 1960, only one in five women was employed in a full-time job and this proportion did not change over 35 years.

The increase in part-time employment can be observed for men as well, but among men, part-time work is mainly limited to the first part of the occupational career, especially in times of high unemployment, when there are limited opportunities for finding full-time work. It is also more prevalent near the end of a career, when early retirement programmes offer reduced working hours. Only a small proportion of men choose to work part-time (Kunnen *et al.*, 1995) and the apparent increase is generally a result of changes in the labour market.

The strong increase in female labour-market participation is often seen as an indicator of growing equality between men and women, and specifically as an indicator of a reduction in the dependency of wives upon their husbands, as the number of dual-earner couples has grown. However, these developments must be seen from a life-course perspective. Although a growing number of married women have paid jobs, most women are still financially dependent on their husbands during substantial periods in their lives, especially when they are taking care of young children. Table 8.2 illustrates this point, using cross-sectional data from the 1991 Labour Market Survey, as collected by the Central Bureau of Statistics (Enquête Beroepsbevolking). Although cross-sectional data are not appropriate for the demonstration of historical or individual developments in female labour-market participation, this large-scale data-set (N=83,996) gives a reliable picture of the present situation in the Netherlands. The table shows the relationship between family formation and employment in 1991.

Among the unmarried population without children only small differences in the labour supply of men and women can be observed, regardless of age. About 87 per cent and 73 per cent of the age groups between 18 and 40 years and between 41 and 54, respectively, are economically active, which holds for both men and women. However, about 10 to 15 per cent more unmarried women than unmarried men are working in part-time jobs. When people in the Netherlands get married, the differences between men and women grow, even when there are no children at home. Whereas married men without children have a slightly higher rate of labour-market participation than unmarried men without children, married women without children have a much lower labour-market participation than their

TABLE 8.2. Employment rate related to family status in 1991 (%)

	Women			Men		
	No job	Full-time: >35 hours	Part-time: 1-34 hours	No job	Full-time: >35 hours	Part-time: 1-34 hours
Unmarried, no children, aged 18-40	12	67	21	13	75	11
Unmarried, no children, aged 41-54	27	48	26	26	62	12
Married, no children, aged 18-40	13	53	33	6	87	7
Youngest child 0-3 years	60	5	35	7	83	9
Youngest child 4-17 years	48	11	41	7	83	10
Married, no children, aged 41-54	55	12	33	16	74	10

Note: Base = population aged 18-54, not in education or military service.

Source: Labour Force Survey (EBB) 1991, own computations.

unmarried counterparts. Whereas 67 per cent of unmarried women without children between 18 and 40 have a full-time job, only 53 per cent of married women without children in this age group work full-time. The difference can be explained by an increase in part-time work. If this cross-sectional data could be interpreted as offering a life-history perspective (which of course it cannot, due to the conflation of life-cycle and cohort effects), we could claim that about 15 per cent of women entering marriage leave their full-time jobs for part-time work.

In the Netherlands, more than 50 per cent of women seem to leave the labour market completely or partially as soon as they have children. Of course, we must again recognize that this interpretation of cross-sectional evidence is not completely warranted. Only 5 per cent of all women with a child of pre-school age have a full-time job; 35 per cent have a part-time job; and 60 per cent have no job at all. When children go to school, more but not many more, mothers return to the labour market: the proportion rises from 40 per cent to 52 per cent. It is notable that married women aged 41 to 54 who do not have childcare responsibilities have the same labour-market participation as women who take care of children between the ages of 4 and 17. The return to the labour market seems to be either undesired or not feasible.

Educational attainment is strongly associated with the labour-market participation of women at all phases of the life-cycle, as is shown in Table 8.3. Whereas only 41 per cent of all less well educated married women without children have full-time jobs, 63 per cent of their highly educated counterparts work full-time. The combination of working full-time and having a child younger than 4 years of age does not seem to be an option for any woman, regardless of her level of schooling. However, the proportion of mothers of young children who work part-time is strongly related to educational attainment: 19 per cent of the less educated and 57 per cent of the highly educated mothers of pre-school-aged children have part-time jobs. As the children get older, the differences between the two groups become somewhat smaller, but they are still considerable. Whereas 58 per cent of all less well educated mothers with a youngest child between the ages of 4 and 17 have no job, only 28 per cent of highly educated mothers remain out of the labour market. The strong relationship between schooling and employment might be an explanation for the increasing labour-market participation of married women in the Netherlands.

#### *Historical Changes in Labour-Market Participation from a Life-Course Perspective*

It is tempting to interpret employment differences between family statuses from a life-course perspective. However, doing so can lead to false

TABLE 8.3. *Female employment rate related to family status and level of schooling in 1991 (%)*

	No job	Full-time: >35 hours	Part-time: 1-34 hours
Unmarried, no children, aged 18-40			
Education: low	20	61	19
middle	9	71	20
high	10	67	24
Married, no children, aged 18-40			
Education: low	25	41	35
middle	9	57	34
high	7	63	31
Youngest child 0-3 years			
Education: low	77	4	19
middle	55	5	40
high	35	8	57
Youngest child 4-17 years			
Education: low	58	8	34
middle	40	14	46
high	28	15	58
Married, no children younger than 18, aged 41-54			
Education: low	62	8	30
middle	45	17	38
high	34	27	39
Unmarried, no children, aged 41-54			
Education: low	47	35	18
middle	14	58	28
high	15	53	31

*Notes:*

Base = female population aged 18-54, not in education.

Education low: primary and lower secondary (LO, LBO, MAVO).

Education middle: higher secondary (MBO, HAVO, VWO).

Education high: tertiary (HBO, WO).

*Source:* Labour Force Survey (EBB) 1991, own computations.

interpretations and prevent us from gaining insight into historical developments. Women in the later stages of family formation are from older birth cohorts and may in general have lower attachment to the labour market. To gain a better insight into women's position in the labour market over the life-course, we present the results from an analysis that maps out the complete employment careers of birth cohorts born between 1925 and 1974, using data from a recent life-history study which enables us to analyse the relationship between family formation and labour-market participation over time. First, we look at the labour-market participation of successive birth cohorts over the life-course to find out how patterns have changed over half a century. Second, we analyse the covariates of female



labour-market participation, linking it to the process of family formation and the husband's career.

The life-course data-set is the Family Survey of the Dutch Populations 1992-3 (Ultee and Ganzeboom, 1993). This survey is representative of the Dutch population and provides information on the life histories of 1,000 primary respondents and their spouses (or partners in cohabiting couples). A retrospective research design was used to map all life events: educational and occupational careers, family formation, fertility, migration, and health. Spouses were asked exactly the same questions, providing information on another 800 individuals. We thus have information for 890 women.

The analysis examines labour-market transitions and their dependence on phases in the family cycle. It is not self-evident which definition of part-time and full-time employment should be chosen, but we decided to use the same definition as the Netherlands Bureau of Statistics. The three key statuses are:

1. No job (housewife, unemployed, disabled, etc.);
2. Part-time job (less than 35 hours a week);
3. Full-time job (35 hours or more a week).

Transitions between these states will be the units of analysis. The 890 women are categorized into five birth cohorts:

1. Born between 1925 and 1934 N=85;
2. Born between 1935 and 1944 N=172;
3. Born between 1945 and 1954 N=252;
4. Born between 1955 and 1964 N=274;
5. Born between 1965 and 1974 N=107.

Although the sample sizes of these cohorts are not very large, we will show that they allow us to establish clear and significant historical patterns. Finally, we distinguish five phases in the family cycle:

1. Not married or living together;
2. Married/living together, no children;
3. Married/living together, youngest child younger than 4 years;
4. Married/living together, youngest child between 4 and 18 years old;
5. Married/living together, youngest child older than 18 years old.

In contrast to the statistics presented above, we can now present longitudinal information. We can see how a cohort of women has gone through the several phases of family formation and how these women have participated in the labour market. First, we distinguish women before and after marriage (grouping together marriage and consensual unions). When the youngest child in the family is younger than three years, free daycare is not available. When the youngest child is four years old, he or she goes to pri-

mary school (or kindergarten). We assume that when the youngest child becomes 18 years of age, the family ceases to have childcare responsibilities.

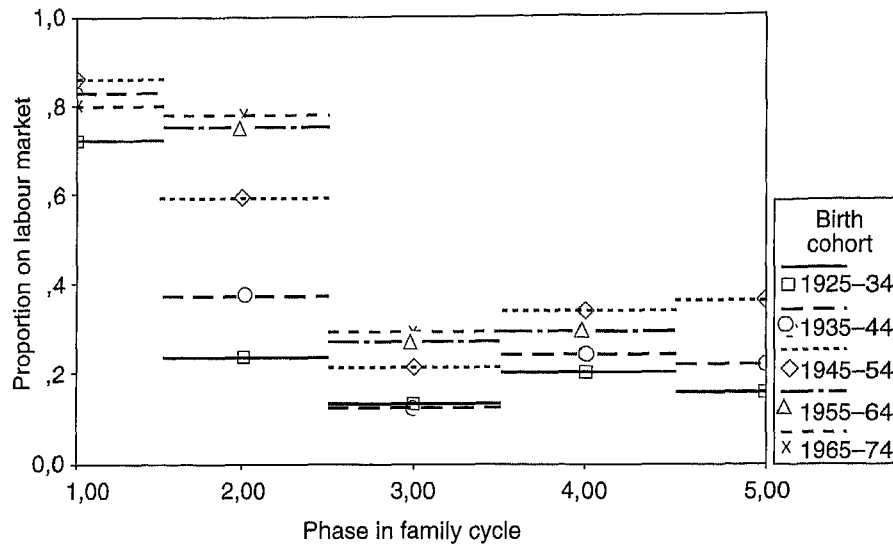


FIG. 8.1. Labour-market participation of cohorts of married women in the Netherlands, according to family cycle

Note: 1. before marriage; 2. married, without children; 3. married, youngest child younger than 4 years old; 4. married, youngest child between 4 and 18 years old; 5. married, youngest child 18 years or older.

#### *Cohort Analysis of Full-Time and Part-Time Work*

Fig. 8.1 presents changes in the relationship between female economic activity and the family cycle in the Netherlands. It displays the proportion of married women in work at each stage of family formation, grouping together full-time and part-time work. The overall relationship between family status and female labour-market participation found in cross-sectional data is replicated in this longitudinal analysis. Before marriage, employment rates are high. Employment decreases after marriage, and after the first child is born, rates are low in all cohorts. When children grow up, there is a slight increase in work rates.

In each successive cohort, employment rates rise in each phase of the life-cycle. Before marriage, the increase in labour-market participation is limited, rising from about 70 per cent to about 90 per cent. Between marriage and the birth of the first child (phase 2), the change is spectacular: almost all women born before 1945 stopped working as soon as they married, but

the pattern changed completely for the post-war cohorts. In the youngest cohorts, marriage has little impact on participation in the labour market. After children are born (phase 3), most married women refrain from participation in the labour market even in post-war cohorts, but, a firm trend towards greater economic activity can be observed even for those women who have a young child. The proportion of working women with a child of pre-school age has increased from about 15 per cent in the oldest cohort to 30 per cent in the cohort born around 1970. When the children reach school-age and leave the household (phase 5), labour-market participation of married women is far below 50 per cent, even for the youngest cohort reaching this phase in the family cycle (born around 1950). An upward trend can also be observed here: for married women who no longer have childcare responsibilities, the proportion employed has increased from about 20 to 40 per cent.

Fig. 8.2 also displays the development of female labour-market participation over time, but it only examines full-time jobs. The results are striking: an increase in full-time employment is only visible before children enter the family. Younger cohorts of women continue to work full-time until they have their first child. In all further phases, full-time employment is scarce and there is not much of a change. Hardly any woman born

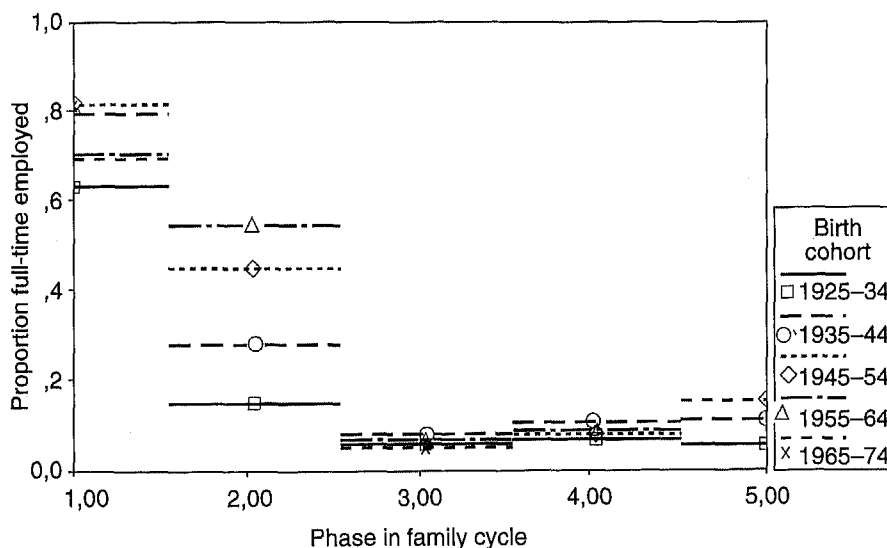


FIG. 8.2. Full-time labour-market participation of cohorts of married women in the Netherlands, according to family cycle

Note: 1. before marriage; 2. married, without children; 3. married, youngest child younger than 4 years old; 4. married, youngest child between 4 and 18 years old; 5. married, youngest child 18 years or older.

before 1975 kept her full-time job after having her first child. Only women who did not yet have children worked full-time, and for women with children it was apparently not feasible to be in full-time employment.

Fig. 8.3 is complementary to Fig. 8.2, showing that the trends in female employment are totally due to changing rates in part-time employment. These trends are not only apparent in the phases where we expect them (when married women are preoccupied with taking care of children). Even in preceding and succeeding phases, the proportion of part-time working women has increased. Apparently, for many women (and their husbands), part-time employment is indeed an acceptable way to be active in the labour market and also continue working in the household.

#### *Event-History Analysis: Labour-Market Transitions*

In this section, we investigate the determinants of transitions between the three states 'full-time job', 'part-time job', and 'no job', by following the occupational career from month to month. For each woman, we constructed a separate data record for every month on which information is

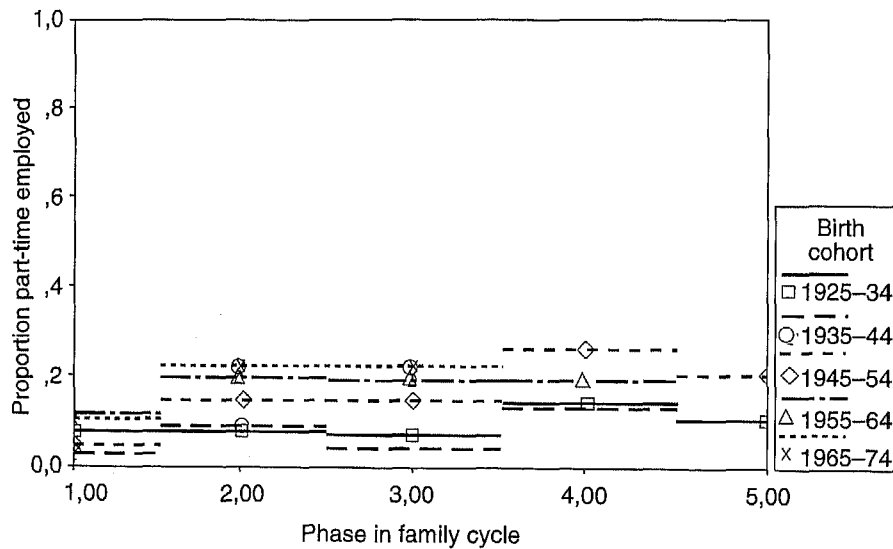


FIG. 8.3. Part-time labour-market participation of cohorts of married women in the Netherlands, according to birth cohort and family cycle

Note: 1. before marriage; 2. married, without children; 3. married, youngest child younger than 4 years old; 4. married, youngest child between 4 and 18 years old; 5. married, youngest child 18 years or older.

available (each record is called a month-person record). The first month of the data record is the month exactly one year before she marries or starts a consensual union. This enables us to investigate how women's employment careers are structured over the life-course, from the phase before marriage until (if applicable) the phase in which the children leave their parents' household. Table 8.4 displays a cross-tabulation of all month-person records, in which the employment status on the first day of a given month is compared with the employment status one month earlier. This transition table shows, for example, that married women exited the labour market 781 times from a full-time job and 349 times from a part-time job. A transition from the state of no job ('housewife') to a part-time job occurred 506 times, and to a full-time job 871 times. To estimate the effects of covariates on transitions, we used event-history analysis (Allison, 1984). We used a 'discrete time analysis' with a logistic response model, in which the transition was the dependent variable. The logistic response model is:

$$\log (p \setminus 1 - p) = \beta X$$

in which  $p$  is the probability of a transition occurring and  $\log (p \setminus 1 - p)$  is the logit of this probability, which is the dependent variable in the analysis.  $X$  is the collection of predictor variables and  $\beta$  represents the effects of the predictor variables on the logit which must be estimated. In the regression equations that we present below,  $\beta$  is displayed in exponential form, which enables us to interpret the effects as multiplicative partial effects on the odds ( $p / 1 - p$ ). Because the transition probability in a given month is very low (due to the large number of immobile women in each month,  $p \setminus 1 - p$  is almost equal to  $p$ , and we can interpret the transformed effects as multiplicative effects on the monthly transition probability itself.

We analyse only three transitions:

TABLE 8.4. *Transitions in labour-market careers of married (or cohabitating) women in the Netherlands*

Month n+1	Month n			
	No job	Part-time: 1-34 hours	Full-time: 35+ hours	All
No job	155 448	349	781	156 578
Part-time job (1-34 hours)	506	37 731	164	38 401
Full-time job (35+ hours)	871	73	75 827	76 771
All	156 825	38153	76 772	271 750

Source: Family-Survey Dutch Population 1992/93 (Ultee and Ganzeboom, 1993).

- a transition from the labour market to no job (exit);
- a transition from no job to any job (re-entrance), without differentiating between part-time and full-time work—generally, entrance to the labour market will be re-entry in this data-set given the sample used, and we have not distinguished between first entries and re-entries,
- (re-)entrance to the labour market with a full-time job.

The predictor variables employed in the analysis are:

- The phase in the family cycle and the birth cohorts, as defined above, and their interaction terms. The interaction effects of family cycle and cohort indicate whether changes have occurred in the labour-market transitions of the successive birth cohorts.
- Educational attainment, measured on a scale from 1 to 10 (from primary school to post-university education). This scale takes into account that the Dutch educational system has different tracks within secondary and tertiary education, although they have the same duration. Types of education are scaled according to their value in the labour market.
- Educational status, indicating whether a woman is still at school.
- Occupational prestige, coded according to the prestige scale of Sixma and Ultee (1983).
- Experience/duration, which is measured as the time a woman has been in the labour market (in the analysis of the determinants of employment exit) or as the time a woman has been out of the labour market (in the analysis of the determinants of employment entry). Both the linear and the quadratic terms of these indicators of duration are included in the analysis.
- Educational attainment of the husband.
- Occupational prestige of the husband.

The inclusion of the educational and occupational position of the husband needs some additional explanation. We test two hypotheses which argue that the employment history of women is affected by their husbands (cf. Bernasco, 1994). The first hypothesis stems from the household production theory (Becker, 1981); it argues that the occupational success of a husband has a negative impact on the wife's incentive to be active in the labour market. The second hypothesis stems from the 'social capital' theory. It argues that women can profit from the knowledge and social resources of their husbands. De Graaf and Ultee (1991) have shown that spouse effects are mainly positive. Spouse's employment status affects transitions from unemployment to employment positively and transitions from employment to unemployment negatively. This helps to explain why employment and unemployment come in couples (Ultee, Dessens, and Jansen, 1988). Bernasco (1994) argues that in a multivariate model, husband's occupa-

tional position should have negative effects, and husband's educational status should have positive effects on women's employment entry. For employment exits, the effects should be the other way around. Since these hypotheses are supported by our data, we gain additional corroboration for our idea that women's labour-market participation must be seen from a household perspective.

Table 8.5 gives the estimates of the logistic regression equations. The first equation deals with the determinants of employment exit. The probability of a woman leaving the labour market is affected by the family cycle, and this relationship has changed over the century. For the older cohorts, the probability of employment exit is relatively high in the phase between marriage and the first child, but for the youngest cohort this is no longer the case. For the oldest cohort of women, born between 1935 and 1944, the odds of leaving employment are 18.9 higher in the phase after marriage than in the phase before. This factor of 18.9 decreases at a factor of 0.5 for every next cohort and from the second to the fifth cohort, it reaches the low values of 9.7, 5.0, 2.6, and 1.3. Therefore, the youngest cohort of women are no longer inclined to leave the labour force when they marry. In the other phases of the family cycle, we do not observe a change over cohorts, as can be seen from the non-significant interaction terms in the equation. The inclination to become a full-time housewife is larger if there are young children to take care of, and the impact of this relationship has not changed in 40 years. It seems that the attachment of married women to the labour market, as indicated by the quality of their job, is directly related to the probability of employment exit. Occupational prestige has a negative effect on employment exit. Educational attainment and spouse's characteristics do not have any effect at all.

The second regression equation analyses employment re-entry. We observe that in all phases of the family cycle, younger cohorts re-enter the labour market at higher probabilities, but least so in the phase when there are children younger than 4 years of age in the family. In general, the probability of employment entry is very low for all cohorts. In the phase when the youngest child is between 4 and 18, the (conditional) odds ratio has increased—from 0.04 for the oldest cohort to 0.22 for the youngest cohort. It is very likely that the option of part-time employment has facilitated this increase.

The third regression equation only looks at entries into full-time jobs. The hypothesis that cohort developments in employment rates of married women are facilitated by the emergence of part-time work is strongly supported, as can be seen from the disappearance of the interaction effects of cohort and family cycle. Apparently, re-entry into full-time employment is not a satisfactory alternative for married women.

Furthermore, we observe that women with higher educational attain-

TABLE 8.5. *The effects of family cycle on entry into and exit from the labour market of married (or cohabitating) women in the Netherlands*

	Exit	Entry	Entry to full-time job
Before marriage (reference)	1	1	1
Cohort	1.121	1.211*	1.177*
Married, no children	18.902*	0.111*	0.103
* cohort	0.513*	1.399*	1.244
Married, youngest child 0-3	3.640*	0.035*	0.016*
* cohort	1.098	1.167	1.037
Married, youngest child 4-17	2.329*	0.036*	0.013*
* cohort	0.753	1.577*	1.491
Married, youngest child 18+	0.982	0.002*	0.004*
* cohort	1.080	6.618*	1.666*
Experience/duration	0.939*	1.006	0.948
Experience/duration squared	0.999	0.999	0.999
Educational attainment	0.967	1.156*	1.168*
In education	—	0.107*	0.079*
Occupational prestige	0.993*	—	—
Education husband	1.028	1.064*	1.048*
Occupation husband	0.998	0.993*	0.989*
Number of events	702	774	492
Number at risk	68 127	108 081	108 081

*Notes:* The number of cases is considerably lower than in Table 8.4 due to missing values. The models are logistic response models.

\* denotes p significant at 0.05 level.

*Source:* Family-Survey Dutch Population 1992/93 (Ultee and Ganzeboom, 1993).

ment are more likely to re-enter the labour market, and that women who are in education have a very low probability of re-entering the labour market. Less trivial are the effects of husband's educational and occupational status. As predicted, the spouse's occupational position affects the employment entry of women negatively. A lack of financial incentives must explain this (Bernasco, 1994). In contrast, husband's educational attainment is positively related to employment entry, which indicates that at the time of marriage, a woman who has a well-educated husband benefits from his occupational career. These effects only emerge, when both education and occupation (or income) are taken into account at the same time, as otherwise they cancel each other out.



### *Conclusions*

Female employment has increased in the Netherlands since the 1960s and especially in the 1980s, as in most other European countries. The conclusions that we draw from our life-history data-set are in line with the cross-sectional evidence, so this can now be placed in historical perspective. Our results show that the increase in female employment arises from two developments.

The first is married women's increased participation in full-time work after marriage and before motherhood. Only one in five women in the labour market has a full-time job, and they are to be found among unmarried women, and, increasingly, among married women without children. Because the period between the completion of educational attainment and marriage (or living together) has decreased as a result of longer years in full-time education, and because at the same time the period between marriage and the first birth has increased, the total proportion of women working full-time has not changed. Seen from a life-course perspective, this implies that women from younger cohorts do not work more years in full-time employment than women from older cohorts.

The second important development is the availability of part-time work. Increasing proportions of women are active in the labour market after they have their first child, but only on a part-time basis. Therefore, the significance of increasing female economic activity for gender stratification can be over-estimated. Most of the work done by married women with children is part-time work, which brings fewer financial rewards than full-time employment, and if married women keep on working significantly fewer hours than their husbands, decreasing dependency does not follow. In 1989, only 30 per cent of all women between the ages of 18 and 64, which is 70 per cent of all working women, could be considered to be financially independent in the Netherlands (Hooghiemstra and Niphuis-Nell, 1993: 168). They had an income above the social minimum, which was about DFL 1100 (Dutch guilders) in 1994. Most women are, of course, financially independent before they have children, but since the majority of young women plan to have children, they anticipate a period of economic dependency. This influences their work orientations even in the period before they become dependent.

This does not mean that the increase in part-time work is a negative development. Married women's part-time attachment to the labour market will increase their status within the household to some extent. It may also facilitate a return to full-time work after the children are older. In the Netherlands, hourly wages are only slightly lower for part-time than for full-time workers, and job security for part-time work is as good as for

full-time work (Delsen, 1988). Moreover, most part-time employment takes place in the service sector of the labour market, which is not very sensitive to economic conditions. It seems that in the Netherlands, part-time work is the rational way for married women to contribute to the family income, as it does not depart from prevailing norms that married women should give priority to their domestic work.

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