



Part-time and Partly Equal: Gender and Work in the Netherlands



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Foreword

Societies may tout the benefits of part-time work, but such conversations often overlook a crucial consequence – that part-time jobs are disproportionately held by women, with negative effects on gender equality at home and in the labour market. Part-time work is often associated with slower career progression, lower earnings, lower earnings-related pensions, and, in many countries, lower job quality than that experienced by full-time workers

The OECD has long championed gender equality through the OECD Gender Initiative, which has produced an extensive stream of research assessing policies to promote gender equality in different countries. OECD data and reports have been crucial for raising the profile of the gender agenda internationally, including by securing strong commitments by G20 and G7 leaders. This report, *Part time and partly equal*, takes a close look at the Netherlands and assesses whether – and how – part-time jobs can “work” for women. It asks an important question: how can governments and employers foster workplace flexibility without disadvantaging women?

The OECD report was prepared in the OECD Directorate for Employment, Labour and Social Affairs (ELS), under the supervision of Willem Adema and under the senior leadership of Stefano Scarpetta (Director of ELS), Mark Pearson (Deputy Director of ELS) and Monika Queisser (Head of Social Policy).

The report was written by Valerie Frey, with valuable contributions from Chris Clarke and Willem Adema. The report benefited from comments and feedback from Mark Baker, Boele Bonthuis, Andrea Garnero, Maciej Lis, Ana Llana Nozal, Annabelle Mourougane, Monika Queisser, the Dutch authorities, and Delegates to the OECD Employment, Labour and Social Affairs Committee. Liv Gudmundson prepared the report for publication, with Fatima Perez, Lucy Hulett, and Alastair Wood providing further logistical, publication and communications support.

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Executive summary

The Netherlands performs well on many measures of gender equality, but the country continues to face a major challenge in reaching equality between women and men: the high share of women in part-time jobs. Nearly 60% of women in the Dutch labour market work part-time, roughly three times the rate for Dutch men and the OECD average for women. The Netherlands' gender gap in hours worked has pernicious effects on the gender gap in earnings, the gender gap in pensions, women's slower progression into management roles, and the unequal division of unpaid work at home.

The gender gap in hours worked widens when partners become parents, as mothers in the Netherlands – like in much of the world – often reduce their time in the labour market to take on more unpaid caregiving responsibilities. A majority of mothers and fathers in the Netherlands report wanting to share an equal distribution of care work, but under 40% say that this happens in practice.

The large gender gap in part-time work shows little sign of abating. While Dutch men are more likely to work part-time now than they were in the 1980s, so too are Dutch women. The gender gap in part-time work status has hovered at around 40 percentage points over the past thirty years.

How can the government of the Netherlands encourage a more equal distribution of paid and unpaid work hours? The government must pursue a multi-pronged approach. Policy measures should:

- Encourage fathers to take more parental leave and do more caregiving throughout the life course, and change societal expectations that mothers “should” be the parent who works part-time.
- Improve access to high-quality, affordable childcare.
- Improve the reliability of school schedules and offer more social supports before and after the school day.
- Reform marginal effective tax rates to encourage more full-time work among both partners in couple households.

Strengthening the policy environment, so that it provides a continuum of supports to working parents throughout their children's early years, will help parents better achieve their work-life balance aspirations. Better policy supports can help level the playing field between men and women, contribute to more egalitarian norms around the division of work, and foster more gender-equal behaviours in paid and unpaid work in the Netherlands.

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1 Gender inequality in the Dutch labour market

1.1. Introduction

Nearly 40% of all workers in the Netherlands work part-time – a rate that is higher than in all other countries in the OECD. The availability and take-up of part-time work has been lauded for helping workers achieve work-life balance and promoting personal well-being (OECD, 2017^[1]), but there is a catch: part-time work is often associated with slower career progression, lower earnings and earnings-related pensions, and, in many countries, lower job quality than those experienced by full-time workers (OECD, 2010^[2]).

Women make up a large share of the part-time workforce in the Netherlands and, indeed, around the world. This leads to the unintended negative consequence of deepening gender inequalities. Inequalities deepen in the unequal division of *paid* work, as men are better able to commit time to (and advance in) full-time jobs. Correlated with this, inequalities are reinforced and grow in the unequal division of *unpaid* work at home, as women tend to do more housework and childcare than their spouses. This represents a serious economic and moral challenge for the Netherlands.

Government policies promoting gender equality must therefore consider the distribution of part-time work, while regulations around part-time work should be designed and reformed with gender equality goals in mind. Policies enabling part-time work can respect personal or family preferences, but should also ensure that both men and women have equal opportunities to contribute at home and at work. The Netherlands has been recognised as having relatively strong protections for part-time work and has made notable efforts to ensure good job quality for part-time workers, but the country has been less successful in eliminating gender inequalities in hours worked.

This report looks at the gendered effects of part-time work in the Netherlands from an international perspective. While the Netherlands is a global leader in some measures of gender equality, the gender gap in hours worked persists. This has harmful consequences for women's wages, women's career progression, and men's participation in the family. This report therefore attempts to address the following: How do gender inequalities manifest in part-time versus full-time work? What are the reasons for this division? And how can policymakers ensure access to good-quality part-time and full-time work for both men and women?

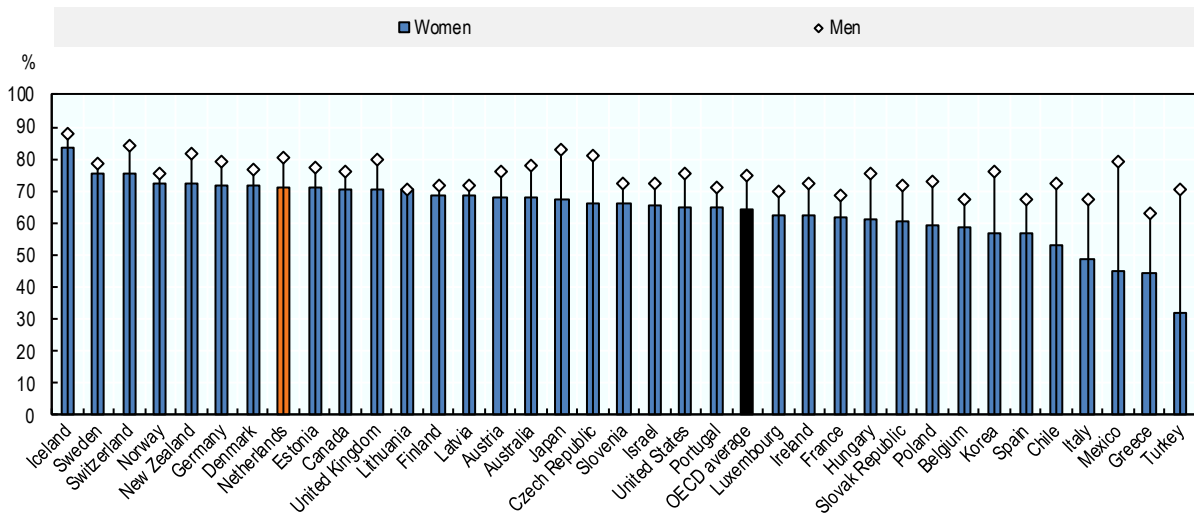
1.2. The puzzle of lingering gender inequalities in the Netherlands

At quick glance, the Netherlands appears to be a strong example of gender equality in the OECD. Dutch 15-year-old boys and girls perform almost equally well in the mathematics tests of the OECD Programme of International Student Assessment (PISA), young women attain more years of education than young men, and the Netherlands' female employment rate is relatively high, with 71.3% of working-age women employed (Figure 1.1). This is well above the OECD average of 64%. Compared to other OECD countries,

Dutch women also do well in reaching public leadership positions. While the Netherlands is still far from reaching gender parity in government, over one-third of seats in parliament are held by women – one of the highest rates in the OECD (OECD, 2017^[1]).

Figure 1.1. Female employment is high in the Netherlands, and the gender gap in employment is low

Employment rates by sex, 15- to 64-year-olds, 2017



Note: Men and women in employment as a percentage of the 15- to 64-year-old population. Information on statistical data for Israel: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932315602>.

Source: OECD Employment Database, <http://www.oecd.org/employment/emp/onlineoecdemploymentdatabase.htm>.

Yet in other important dimensions of gender equality, the Netherlands performs poorly. The share of women in management positions is low: only 26.6% of managers are women, one of the lowest rates in the OECD and well below the OECD average of 32.5% (OECD Family Database, n.d.^[3]). Gender gaps persist in wages and pension income.

A major culprit behind these gender inequalities is the large imbalance between men and women in hours worked in the labour market. Women disproportionately work in part-time jobs and do the lion's share of unpaid work.

1.2.1. Women take home smaller pay cheques at the end of the month

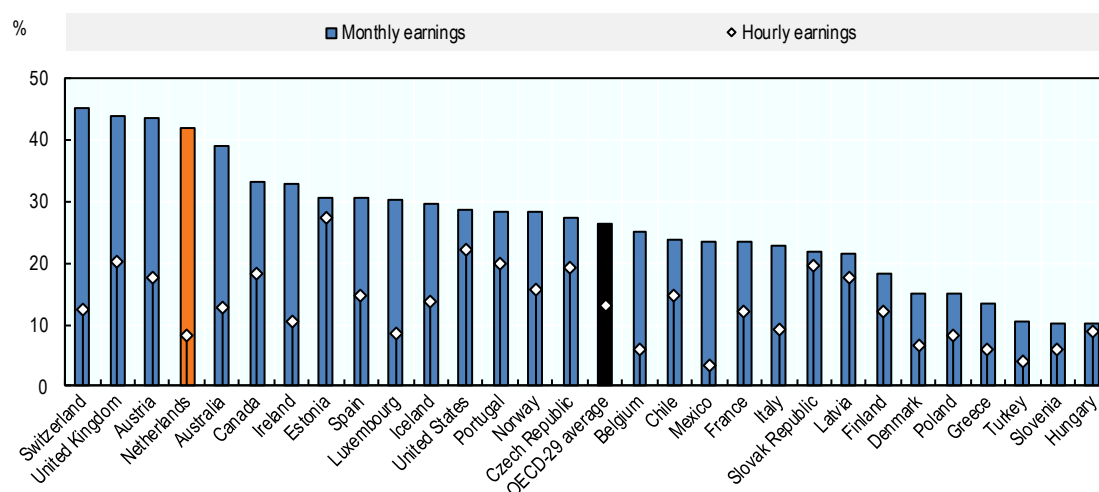
The Netherlands, like every country in the OECD, suffers from a gender wage gap. The *hourly* gender wage gap in the Netherlands is relatively small, indicating that hourly pay does not dramatically differ between men and women. This suggests that Dutch female workers are not necessarily shifted to poorly paid jobs when they work fewer hours – as is the case in many countries. Indeed, OECD estimates suggest that many Dutch women are in so-called “voluntary” part-time jobs rather than “involuntary” part-time jobs.¹ Instead, poor earnings outcomes at the end of the month are driven in large part by the far fewer hours worked by women than men.

The gender gap in monthly earnings in the Netherlands is one of the largest in the OECD. The monthly gender wage gap in 2014 was 41.8% - meaning that women in the Netherlands earned about EUR 580 to every EUR 1 000 earned by a man, on average, at the end of each month (Figure 1.2). This compares

unfavourably to an OECD average monthly wage gap of 12.9%, or EUR 870 earned by a woman versus EUR 1 000 earned by a man.

Figure 1.2. Dutch women face a large gender gap in monthly earnings

Gender gaps in median hourly earnings and in median monthly earnings, all employees, 2014



Note: The gender gap in median earnings is defined as the difference between male and female median earnings divided by male median earnings. Data for Chile and Turkey refer to 2013.

Source: (OECD, 2017^[1])

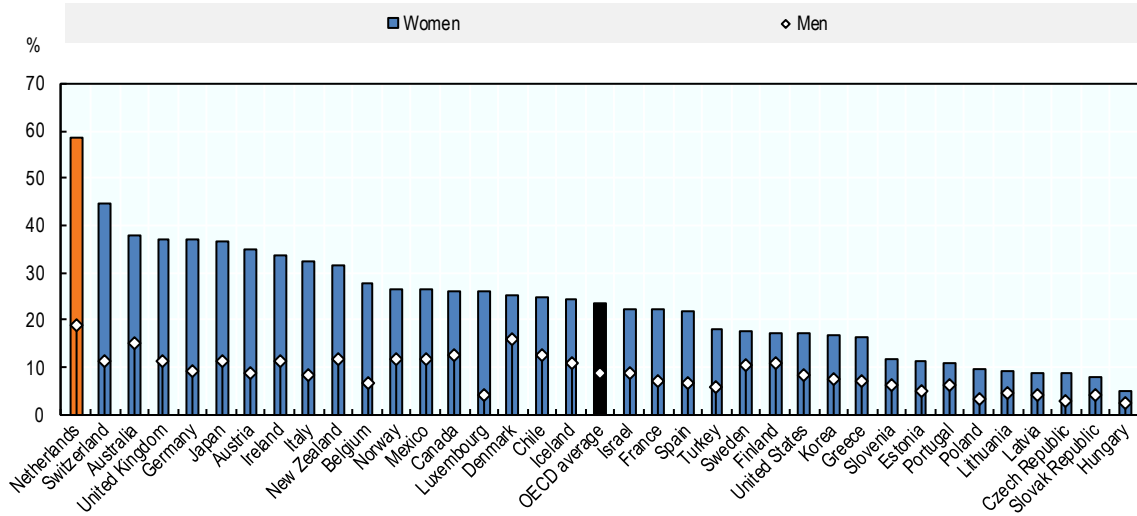
1.2.2. Women do most of the part-time work

The gender gap in hours worked is perhaps the most persistent challenge surrounding part-time jobs in the Netherlands, and this inequality shows little sign of abating. 58.7% of women in the Dutch labour market work part-time, i.e. fewer than 30 hours per week. This is by far the highest share in the OECD, which averages 23.48% of working women in part-time roles (Figure 1.3).

Particularly concerning is the fact that the *size* of the gender gap in part-time work status has barely moved in over thirty years (Figure 1.4). This is a remarkably stable gendered division of labour. While Dutch men are more likely to work part-time than they were in the 1980s, Dutch women are, too. The rate of part-time work has grown for both, but the gender gap in part-time work status has hovered at around 40 percentage points over the past three decades. (For further historical discussion, see Section 2.1).

Figure 1.3. Women are most likely to work part-time in the Netherlands

Part-time employment as a percentage of total employment, by sex, all ages, 2017

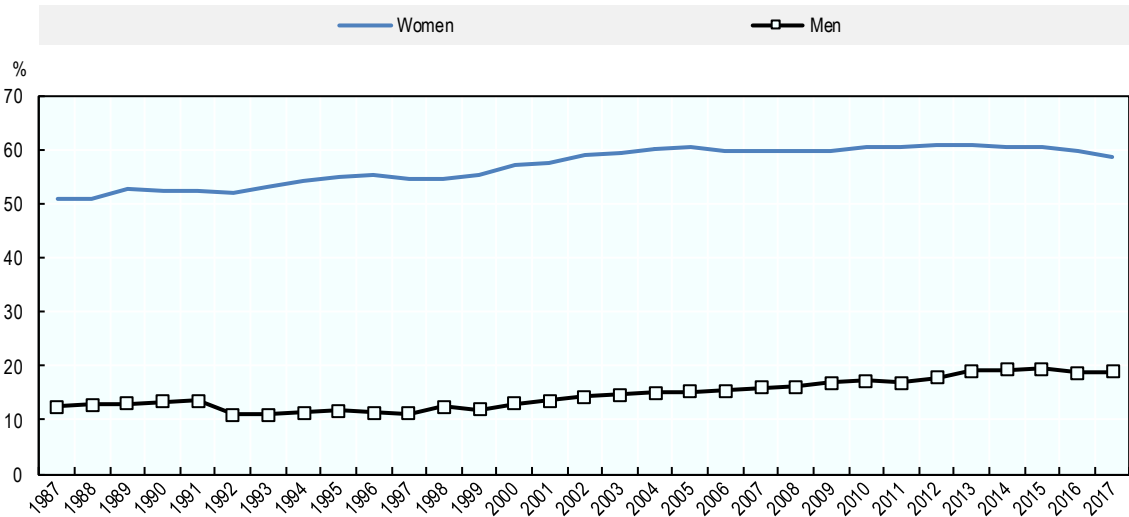


Note: Part-time employment is defined as usual weekly working hours of fewer than 30 hours per week in the main job. For the United States, data refer to dependent employees only. For Australia, Finland, Iceland, New Zealand, Norway and Turkey, data refer to usual weekly working hours in all jobs. For Japan and Korea, data refer to actual weekly working hours in all jobs. Information on statistical data for Israel: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932315602>.

Source: OECD Employment Database, <http://www.oecd.org/employment/emp/onlineoecdemploymentdatabase.htm>.

Figure 1.4. The gender gap in part-time work has held steady for three decades

Part-time employment as a percentage of total employment, by sex, all ages, the Netherlands, 1987-2017



Note: Part-time employment is defined as usual weekly working hours of fewer than 30 hours per week in the main job.

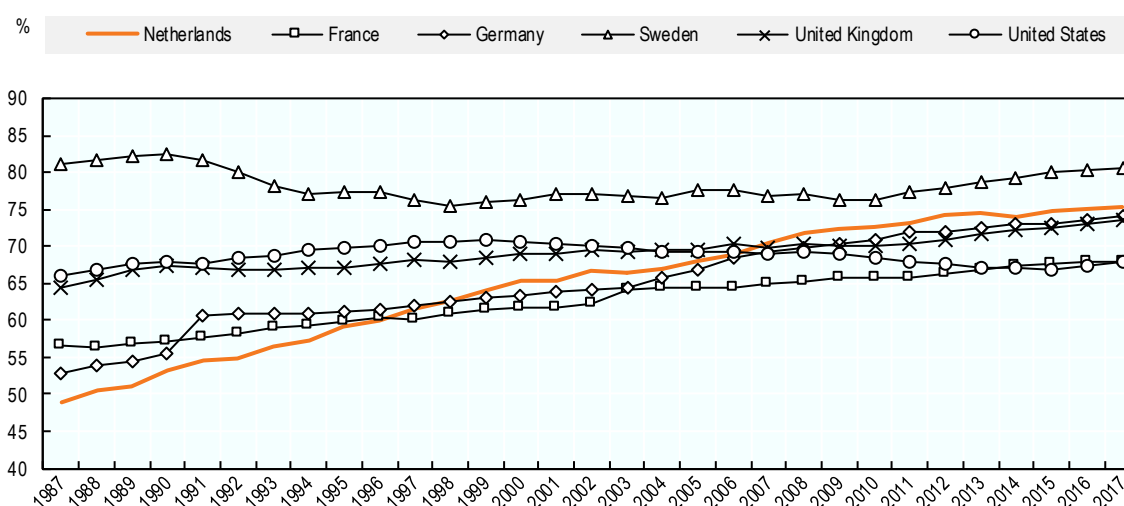
Source: OECD Employment Database, <http://www.oecd.org/employment/emp/onlineoecdemploymentdatabase.htm>.

The growing prevalence of part-time work has enabled the steadily growth of the total share of women in the Dutch labour force over the past few decades (Figure 1.5). In the late-1980s, fewer than half of women aged 15-64 in the Netherlands were active in the labour force. By 2000 this had increased to 65%, and as

of 2017, 75% of women were in the labour market - a jump of more than 50% in just three decades. Today, the Netherlands has one of the highest female labour force participation rates in the OECD.

Figure 1.5. Women's labour force participation in the Netherlands has increased by more than half over the past 30 years

Labour force participation rates, women, 15- to 64-year-olds, selected OECD countries, 1987-2017



Source: OECD Employment Database, <http://www.oecd.org/employment/emp/onlineoecdemploymentdatabase.htm>.

When looking within households, the Netherlands stands out in the OECD for the comparatively low number of households in which both partners work full-time. In only 28% of Dutch couples do both partners work full-time (in partnerships of 15- to 64-year-olds) – a rate that is lower than nearly every other country in Europe (Section 2). The “one-and-a-half” earner model dominates in the Netherlands instead, whereas the earnings gap between partners in dual earnings households in other European countries is often smaller (OECD, 2017^[1]).

1.2.3. Gender gaps persist in pensions

The gender gap in hours worked has lifelong implications. A sizeable gender gap in pensions among older people has arisen in the Netherlands, driven largely by the gender gap in lifetime earnings. This is a major consequence of women spending less time in paid work throughout their lifetimes, usually to provide unpaid caregiving instead. Similar to the gender gap in monthly earnings in working years, Dutch women aged 65 and older took in about EUR 590 to every EUR 1 000 a Dutch man collected as pension income, on average, in 2016 (Figure 1.6).

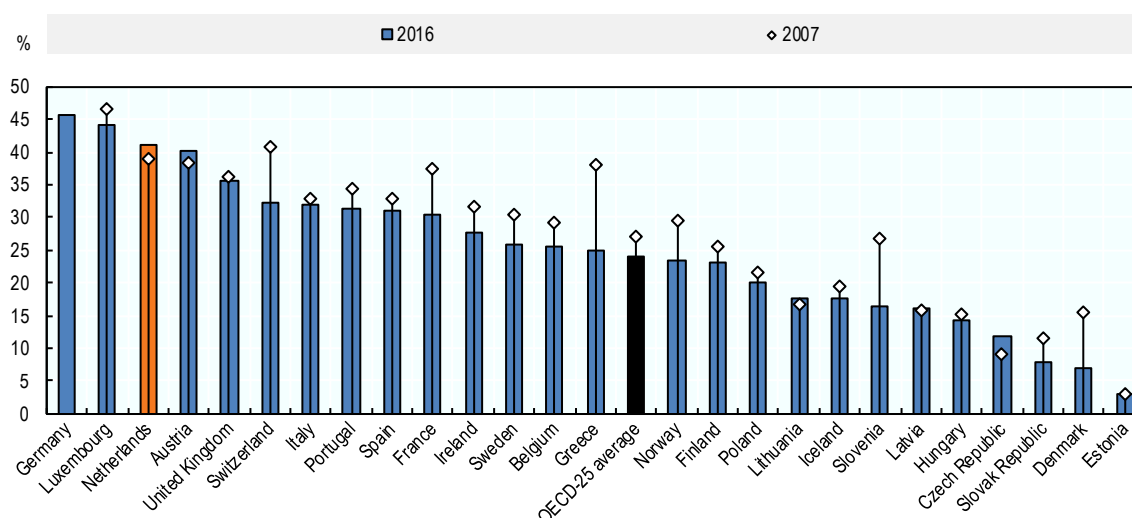
The Netherlands is one of the few European countries where the gender gap in pension income was actually higher in 2016 than in 2007. Overall, there has been a fairly linear annual increase in the gender gap in pensions since 2005 in the Netherlands.

Importantly, the Dutch flat-rate basic pension has been successful in preventing old-age poverty among women (and older people in general). There is hardly any gender gap in the *incidence* of obtaining a pension in the Netherlands, as there is universal coverage by basic pensions (OECD, 2018^[4]). The basic pension also helps to shrink the size of the gender gap in pensions among current elderly Dutch men and women, as it offers a minimum floor. Relative poverty rates among women in the Netherlands – defined as the share of individuals older than 65 having less than half the median disposable income for the total

population – were among the lowest in the OECD in 2016, at 2.2% for women aged 66-75 and 5.2% for women over age 75. The respective values for men in the Netherlands were 1.9% and 4.4%.

Figure 1.6. The gender gap in pension income is high in the Netherlands

Gender gap in pension income, 2007 and 2016 or latest



Note: Gender gap in pensions is calculated for persons at age of 65 and more. It includes persons who obtain old-age benefit (public or private), survival pension or disability benefit. Individual public pensions, private pensions, survivor's benefits and disability benefits are included in the calculation. The gender gap in pension income is defined as the difference between male and female median pension income divided by male pension income. Method of calculation available in (OECD, 2018^[4]), Box 1. Data for Iceland refer to 2014, and for Ireland, Norway, Switzerland and the United Kingdom to 2015.

Source: OECD calculations based on the European Union Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC) survey, <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/microdata/european-union-statistics-on-income-and-living-conditions>

1.2.4. Men engage less in caregiving and cleaning

Many of the women who work part-time in the Netherlands are mothers who have reduced work hours to care for children or elderly family members (Section 2). Gender inequalities in part-time versus full-time work arrangements therefore reflect inequalities in the division of *unpaid* labour, as well (OECD, 2017^[5]).

Dutch women spend more time on unpaid caregiving and chores than women in many other northern European countries (Figure 1.7), and there is a larger gender gap in unpaid work in the Netherlands than in northern European counterparts – though the Dutch gender gap in 2015 was slightly narrower than in 2005. Women in the Netherlands spend 3.75 hours (225 minutes) daily, on average, on unpaid work. This is about a third more time than that spent by Dutch men, who spend just 145 minutes, on average, on unpaid work. (Dutch men, in turn, spend more time in *paid* work than Dutch women.)

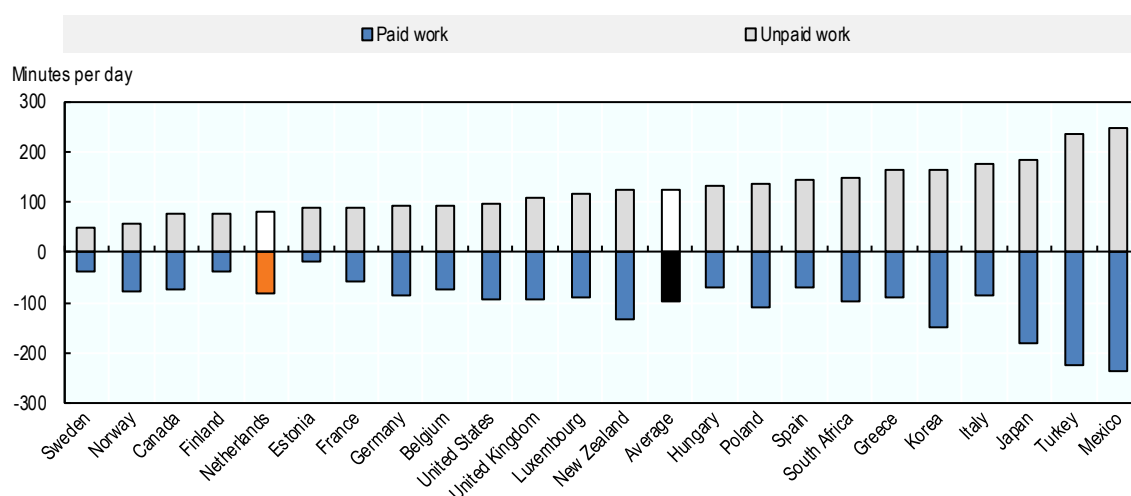
The division of unpaid work – the question of “Who cooks, cleans, and cares for the kids?” – is important not only for gender equality today, but for gender equality tomorrow. When mothers work outside of the home, and fathers do their fair share at home, children are more likely to exhibit gender-egalitarian behaviours when they become adults (Box 3.1). Mothers’ attachment to the labour market also serves as an important buffer to financial insecurity, for example in the case of divorce or when a partner loses their income.

This unpaid labour is valuable in an economic sense. It represents money saved over what a household would have to pay for the same service in the private market. Unpaid work at home increases the overall

consumption of goods and services, represents implicit income, and is crucial for enabling the labour force participation of beneficiary household members (Becker, 1965^[6]). Consumption and production can be more broadly defined to include the production and rearing of children, as well as maintaining a clean home (Browning, Chiappori and Weiss, 2013^[7]). With this in mind, OECD research has called for a better incorporation of unpaid work in the estimation of national accounts (Ferrant, Pesando and Nowacka, 2014^[8]) (Van De Ven, P and Zwijnenburg, 2016^[9]).

Figure 1.7. Gender gaps in time spent on paid and unpaid work are smaller in the Netherlands than in many OECD countries, but larger than in Nordic countries

Gender gap in minutes spent per day on paid and unpaid work, women minus men, 15-64 year-olds



Note: Data for Belgium are for 12+ year-olds; for Greece 10+ year-olds; for Hungary 15-74 year olds; and for Sweden 25-64 year olds. Reference years vary across countries: Belgium: 2013; Canada: 2015; Estonia: 2009-10; Finland: 2009-10; France: 2009-10; Germany: 2012-13; Greece: 2013; Hungary: 2010; Italy: 2013-14; Japan: 2016; Korea: 2014; Luxembourg: 2013; Mexico: 2014; the Netherlands: 2015-16; New Zealand: 2009-10; Norway: 2010-11; Poland: 2013; Spain: 2009-10; Sweden: 2010; Turkey: 2014-15; the United Kingdom: 2014-15; the United States: 2017; and South Africa: 2010.

Source: OECD Gender Data Portal, <http://www.oecd.org/gender/data/>.

1.3. The macroeconomic case for women working more hours

There is also an economic case to be made for Dutch women increasing their labour supply. OECD estimates based on current demographic projections and recent labour market entry and exit rates suggest that the Dutch labour force is set to shrink over the next few decades, perhaps by as many as 539 000 full-time equivalent workers, or about 8% of the current labour force (Figure 1.8, scenario A).

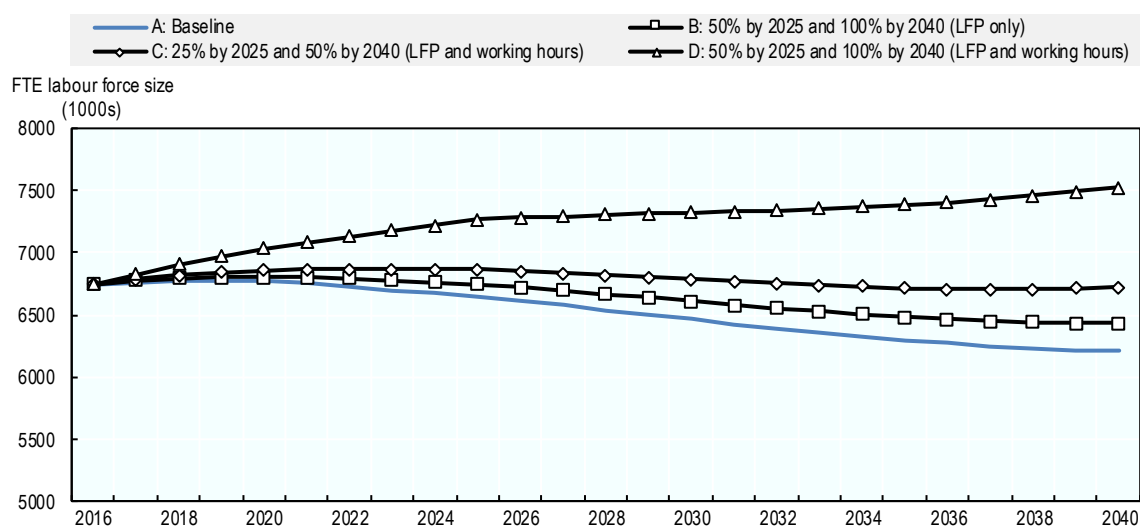
Closing the gender gap in labour force participation and especially working hours could help offset this projected decline (Figure 1.8). Given the high number of women already active in the labour Dutch labour force (see Section 1.2.2), closing the gender *participation* gap would have only a modest effect on the projected size of the labour force. OECD projections suggest fully closing the participation gap by 2040 (through increases in women's participation) could boost the size of the equivalent labour force by 220 000 full-time equivalent workers relative to the baseline (Figure 1.8, scenario B). Even so, the labour force would remain roughly 320 000 full-time equivalent workers short of its current size.

Closing the gender working hours gap alongside the participation gap would likely have a larger effect. Boosting women's participation rates and working hours so that both gaps are halved by 2040 could boost the size of the labour force by 510 000 relative to the baseline (Figure 1.8, scenario C), virtually offsetting

the expected decline between now and 2040. Going further and fully closing both the gender participation and working hours gaps by 2040 would increase the size of the labour force by 1 320 000 full-time equivalent workers relative to the baseline – producing a labour force roughly three-quarters of a million full-time equivalent workers larger than today (Figure 1.8, scenario D).

Figure 1.8. Closing gender gaps in participation and especially working hours could help offset looming declines in labour supply in the Netherlands

Projected total full-time equivalent labour force (1000s) under different gender gap scenarios, 15- to 74-year-olds, the Netherlands, 2016-40



Note: The full-time equivalent labour force is the size of the labour force (in 1 000s) if all workers had usual weekly working hours equal to 40 hours per week on average.

A: Baseline: labour force participation rates of men and women (15-74) are estimated (by gender and five-year age-groups) based on current (2007-16) rates of labour market entry and exit, and average usual weekly working hours for each gender and five year age group are held constant at their 2016 values.

B: 50% by 2025 and 100% by 2040 (LFP only): male participation rates are held at the baseline and female rates are projected so that the gender participation gap within each five-year age group in 2012 falls by 50% by 2025, and 100% (i.e. is fully closed) by 2040. Average usual weekly working hours are held at the baseline.

C: 25% by 2025 and 50% by 2040 (LFP and working hours): male participation rates and average usual weekly working hours are held at the baseline, and female rates and hours are projected so that gender gaps in both participation rates and working hours decline for each five-year age-group by 25% by 2025 and 50% by 2040.

D: 50% by 2025 and 100% by 2040 (LFP and working hours): male participation rates and average usual weekly working hours are held at the baseline, and female rates and hours are projected so that gender gaps in both participation rates and working hours decline for each five-year age-group by 50% by 2025 and 100% by 2040.

Source: OECD estimates based on OECD population data and the OECD Employment Database, <http://www.oecd.org/employment/emp/onlineoecdemploymentdatabase.htm>.

1.4. The Netherlands' gender equality challenge: Changing patterns and preferences in part-time work

While there is an economic case to be made for Dutch women increasing their labour supply, the potential macroeconomic gains of a large shift in women moving into full-time work are probably not as large in the Netherlands as they are elsewhere, i.e. in countries where current female labour force participation is already low (OECD, 2017_[11]).

There is also survey evidence suggesting that many Dutch women and men are happy with the status quo in the work-hours distribution: only 12.5% of women report wanting to work more hours, and 8.8% of men report wanting to work fewer hours (Portegijs et al., 2018^[10]), in the current social and economic environment.

Nevertheless, there are important reasons to ensure that both women *and* men feel they have equal opportunities to work full-time, advance in the workforce, and contribute fully at home. Women's earnings have important implications for the within-household distribution of income (from which children typically benefit), women need to ensure their economic independence today and in the future, and – importantly for inequality in future generations – working mothers show their children what is possible for women in the labour market (Box 2.1).

Gender equality is an imperative for men, as well. Fathers' leave-taking to care for children, for example, is associated with better health and developmental outcomes for children and for fathers themselves. Men who are more involved with their children report greater life satisfaction and better psychological well-being (OECD, 2017^[11]).

Many fathers in the Netherlands want more time with their children, but both men and women acknowledge that gender equality aspirations are far from reality. More than half (58.6%) of Dutch parents with a child younger than age 18 report that they would like an equal distribution of care work between parents, but under 40% of these parents say that this actually happens (Portegijs et al., 2018^[10]). Only 17.2% of Dutch parents say that it is “ideal” for a father to work more in the labour market and a mother to provide more caregiving, but 43% report that this is the division of labour that actually happens.

When compared to people in other countries, the Dutch express fairly egalitarian attitudes about whether children are harmed by mothers working outside the home. 79% of Dutch people in the 2014 World Values Survey *disagree* with the statement “When a mother works for pay, children suffer,” compared to 66% of respondents in Germany, 68% in Spain, 64% in Sweden and 74% in the United States. The survey does not ask the optimal number of hours a mother “should” work for pay, which might produce different results given the entrenched culture of mothers' part-time work in the Netherlands.

Given that these stated preferences often do not match observed labour patterns, how can we enable gender equality in paid and unpaid hours worked? Doing so requires supporting mothers in moving into full-time hours, and ensuring that both parents – mothers *and* fathers – have an equal opportunity to reduce hours when a household determines that one parent must do so.

To address these issues, the Dutch government must take a multi-pronged approach. Policy measures must encourage fathers to take more parental leave; offer more affordable formal care supports before and after the school day and when children are very young; reform marginal effective tax rates to encourage more full-time dual-earner households; and ensure equal access (in practice) to flexitime and teleworking, so that mothers and parents are not informally penalised for doing so. Importantly, the country must also consider how societal expectations around motherhood and fatherhood drive the patterns of paid and unpaid work we see today.

2 The gendered nature of part-time work in the Netherlands

The Netherlands stands out in the OECD for the large share of workers who work part-time hours. While the Netherlands has made important strides in ensuring that part-time work is of good quality, relative to other OECD countries, it still needs to tackle a major challenge in its part-time workforce: that part-time jobs are disproportionately held by women, with negative consequences for gender equality in the labour force and at home. Section 2 overviews part-time work in the Netherlands, looks at who in the household typically works part-time (mothers), and explores Dutch workers' rationales for working part-time. It also takes a closer look at two sectors whose workers are disproportionately female and disproportionately work part-time: teachers and care providers.

High numbers of women in part-time work does help increase the overall female labour force participation rate. The Netherlands does well on this measure of the total share of women working in the labour market. Cross-nationally, the alternative is often *not* women in full-time work, but rather women opting out of the workforce entirely.

In countries where part-time work is less common, women sometimes leave the labour market completely after becoming mothers. In the United States, for example, part-time work is often of poor quality, for low pay, and comes with little social security or fiscal support (Wielers and Raven, 2013^[12]). This, combined with relatively weak childcare supports for infant and pre-primary age children (OECD, 2017^[13]) (Adema, Clarke and Frey, 2016^[14]), leads to a dropout of women from the workforce after having children.

Any discussion of moving women into full-time work should note that part-time work is, of course, better for women's economic self-sufficiency than complete labour market withdrawal. Also, aside from the economic implications, many Dutch people say they are satisfied working part-time hours (Portegijs et al., 2018^[10]) and the Netherlands scores highly on the OECD "Better Life Index." The Netherlands has relatively low rates of long work hours and a relatively high degree of satisfaction with life. When asked to rate their general life satisfaction on a scale from zero to ten, Dutch people gave, on average, a grade of 7.4 – higher than the OECD average of 6.5 (OECD, 2017^[15]).

Box 2.1. Why change the status quo?

Many Dutch women say they are happy working part-time (Portegijs et al., 2018^[10]). Why, then, should we encourage gender equality in paid and unpaid work?

Mothers' participation in the market changes the distribution of resources at home

Aside from raising overall family income, mothers' labour force participation can influence the within-household distribution of resources in couple families. Women's participation in paid work helps with bargaining over unpaid labour, as dual-earner households have more egalitarian approaches to housework: across countries, women's decrease in unpaid work correlates with their increase in

earnings, at least to the point where both spouses contribute equal incomes (OECD, 2017^[5]). However, female partners still do many more hours of unpaid housework than their male partners across countries. There is even evidence from Australia and the United States that women take on a greater share of housework when they earn more than their male partners, perhaps to compensate for their divergence from traditional gender norms in pay – an example of so-called “doing gender” behaviour (Bertrand, Pan and Kamenica, 2013^[16]) (Bittman et al., 2003^[17]).

It is now almost conventional wisdom in economics that children do better when their mothers control a larger share of household resources, and this control over spending is influenced (though obviously not entirely) by who brings the income into the home. The income controlled by a father versus a mother has significantly different effects on family spending and outcomes such as child health, as women tend to allocate more resources to their children than men do (OECD, 2017^[18]).

Women need economic alternatives during working years and in old age

Women’s participation in paid work affects more than just family income. A woman’s ability to engage in the labour market is a key determinant of her economic independence. Spouses and partners must consider what the economic consequences would be if their union fails. In the Netherlands, the marriage rate is lower than the OECD average and has been steadily declining over the past four decades, while the divorce rate is above the OECD average and has been steadily rising (OECD Family Database, n.d.^[3]). The prospect of an unstable partnership provides an incentive for women to enter full-time work, as a well-paying job can ensure self-sufficiency and serve as insurance against future poverty risks as a single person. The need to ensure financial security in old age (Section 1) is also a crucial consideration, though this is less of a concern in the Netherlands, where there is a basic pension.

Working mothers and caregiving fathers change gender norms

There are important intergenerational effects on future gender inequality when mothers work, as gender attitudes are shaped both at home and in public. When mothers participate in the labour force, children are socialised to expect that women have as equal an opportunity to work as men – with all of the implications for childcare and housework at home.

Consistent with earlier research, a recent 24-country cross-national study finds that the adult daughters of employed mothers are more likely to work, hold management roles, and earn higher wages than women whose mothers stayed home full-time, *ceteris paribus*. In terms of unpaid labour, men whose mothers worked grew up to spend more time caring for family members than men who had stay-at-home-mothers. Daughters raised by an employed mother spend less time on housework than women who had a stay-at-home-mother (McGinn, Ruiz Castro and Lingo, 2018^[19]). Similar research in the Netherlands also finds that mothers’ working outside the home has intergenerational implications: women who were raised by a working mother work about two more hours per week than those raised by a homemaking mother (van Putten, Dykstra and Schippers, 2008^[20]).

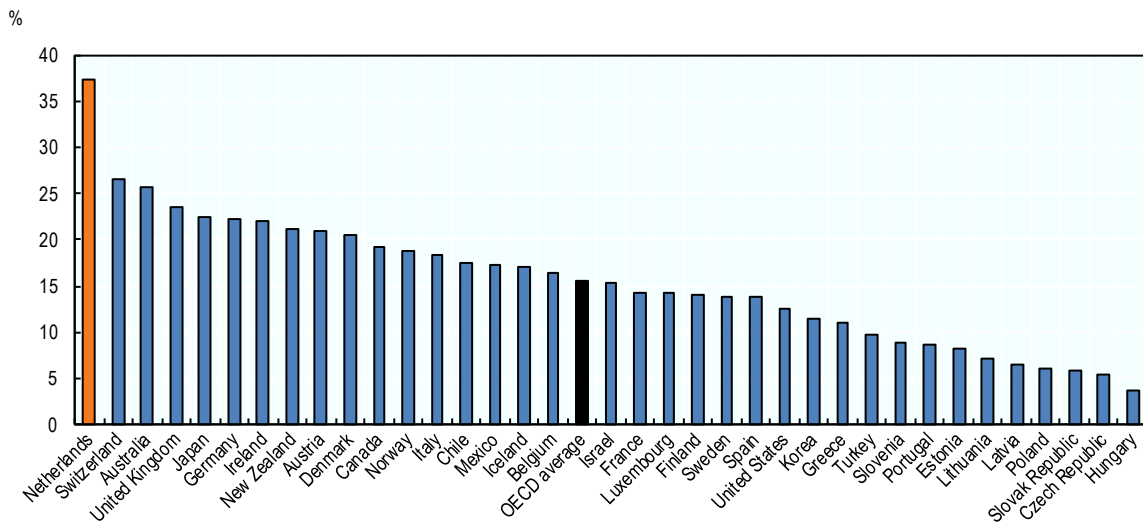
There are downstream gender equality effects of fathers doing more at home, as well, though this literature is less developed. In a quasi-experimental study of the extension of father-reserved parental leave in Norway, for example, researchers found that fathers’ leave-taking led to a later decrease in the traditional gender gap between adolescent boys’ and girls’ household chores; girls whose fathers have been affected by the leave offer were less likely to do housework than peers whose fathers just missed the start of the leave programme (Kotsadam and Finseraas, 2013^[21]).

2.1. Short work hours are the norm in the Netherlands

While women carry out much of the part-time work in the Netherlands, part-time jobs are far more common for both genders in the Netherlands than in any other country in the OECD. In 2017, 37.4% of workers in the Netherlands had usual weekly working hours of fewer than 30 hours per week in their main job (Figure 2.1). The Netherlands' rate is more than double the OECD's average rate of part-time work, and is eleven percentage points greater than the country with the second-largest share of workers in part-time jobs, Switzerland.

Figure 2.1. Part-time work is more common in the Netherlands than in all other OECD countries

Part-time employment as a percentage of total (men and women) employment, all ages, 2017



Note: Part-time employment is defined as usual weekly working hours of fewer than 30 hours per week in the main job. For the United States, data refer to dependent employees only. For Australia, Finland, Iceland, New Zealand, Norway and Turkey, data refer to usual weekly working hours in all jobs. For Japan and Korea, data refer to actual weekly working hours in all jobs. Information on statistical data for Israel: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932315602>.

Source: OECD Employment Database, <http://www.oecd.org/employment/emp/onlineoecdemploymentdatabase.htm>

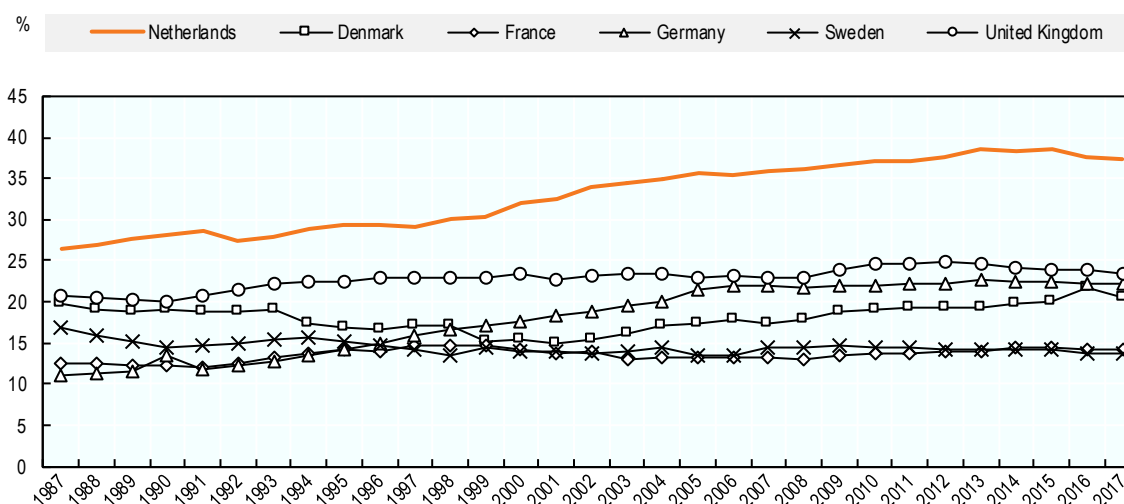
In the early 1970s, part-time employment constituted only about 5% of total employment in the Netherlands (Baaijens, 1999^[22]). Its prevalence started to increase during the 1970s but really took off during the 1980s, 1990s, and early 2000s. The incidence of part-time employment in the Netherlands has increased by almost 50% since 1987 - from 26.4% of the employed to 37.4% - though the rate has plateaued somewhat over the past decade (Figure 2.2).

The rise in part-time employment is due to a mix of labour supply and market demand factors. On the supply side, there was a notable change in attitudes towards working mothers: while 84% of respondents frowned upon working mothers in 1965, a point at which many women were completely inactive in the labour market, the rate of disapproval was about 40% ten years later and down to 16% in 1995. The education gap between men and women diminished rapidly, and with access to birth control, family sizes and unpaid care burdens declined (Baaijens, 1999^[22]). On the demand side, in the aftermath of the oil shocks in the early 1970s and 1980s (Langenberg and Nauta, 2007^[23]), the “Akkoord van Wassenaar” between Employers and Unions led to wage moderation and reduced working hours (Stichting van de Arbeid, 1982^[24]). The growth of part-time employment was also facilitated by the rapid expansion of the commercial service sector, and the associated demand for short hours around peak time. In addition,

during the 1990s the laws and collective labour agreements started to move towards equal treatment of part- and full-time employees (Baaijens, 1999^[22]).

Figure 2.2. The Netherlands' rate of part-time work has increased by almost 50% over the past few decades

Part-time employment as a percentage of total employment, all ages, selected OECD countries, 1987-2017



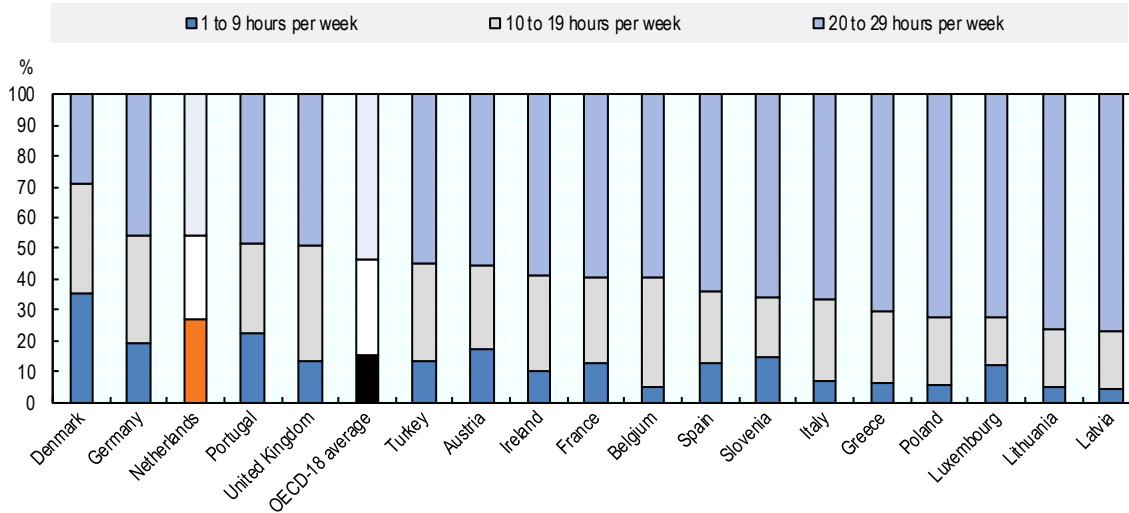
Note: Part-time employment is defined as usual weekly working hours of less than 30 hours per week in the main job. Employment refers to self-employed and dependent employed workers.

Source: OECD Employment Database, <http://www.oecd.org/employment/emp/onlineoecdemploymentdatabase.htm>.

With the exception of Germany, the growth of part-time work has been faster in the Netherlands than in many other OECD countries (Figure 2.2). In countries like Denmark and Sweden, the share of workers in part-time roles actually decreased, as gender equality concerns and the development of a comprehensive early childhood education and care (ECEC) system was associated with more women entering full-time jobs (OECD, 2002^[25]; 2005^[26]).

Figure 2.3. More than in many other countries, part-time work in the Netherlands often means very short hours

Distribution of part-time workers by usual weekly hours bands, 15- to 74-year-olds, 2017



Note: Part-time work is defined as usual weekly working hours of fewer than 30 hours per week in the main job. Countries are ranked according to the percentage of part-time workers usually working 20 to 29 hours per week.

Source: OECD calculations based on the *OECD Working Hours Database* (unpublished data).

Not only do many people in the Netherlands work part-time, they are also more likely to work *short* part-time hours, relative to part-time workers in other OECD countries. 53.9% of part-time workers in the Netherlands work fewer than 20 hours per week (Figure 2.3). Only Denmark and Germany have equal or greater shares of part-time workers working so few hours per week.

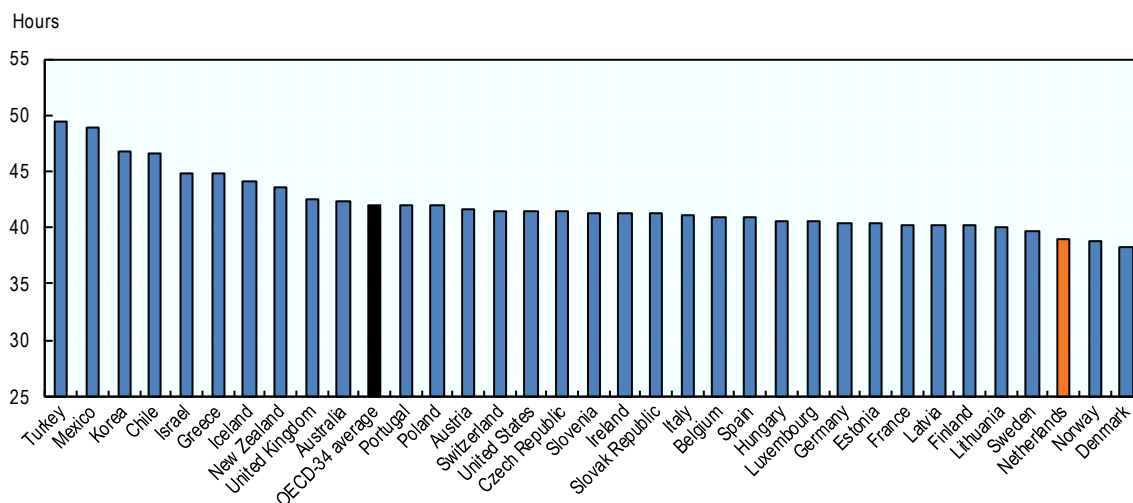
Full-time workers in the Netherlands also work relatively fewer hours than their full-time counterparts in other OECD countries (Figure 2.4). In line with the Nordics, the average Dutch worker in a full-time job works 38.9 hours in a usual week. This contrasts with 42.4 hours per week in, for example, the United Kingdom.

Work patterns in France offer an interesting comparison for the Netherlands. France has a similar number of total annual hours worked as the Netherlands: workers report 1 514 average annual hours actually worked in France, versus 1 433 in the Netherlands and 1 744 as the OECD average (OECD, 2019^[27]). Yet part-time work in France is uncommon, and when it happens, part-time jobs look more like full-time jobs in terms of hours. The *distribution* of hours worked in France is more closely clustered around the legislated 35-hour full-time workweek (OECD, 2017^[5]).

France legislated 35 hours as full-time work in 2000. While today very few French workers actually work only 35 hours – in practice, the work culture is such that employees often work longer weekly hours and shift the extra hours into longer paid leave periods – the incidence of short part-time hours is rare. Only 40.5% of part-time workers in France work fewer than twenty hours per week, and only 12.9% work fewer than ten hours per week (Figure 2.3). In contrast, the incidence of longer part-time work is more common in France: 59.5% of French part-time workers work 20-29 hours per week, compared to just 46.4% of Dutch part-time workers. At the same time, the Netherlands has a higher female labour force participation rate than France: 75.3% versus 67.9% of women, respectively, are in the labour market (Figure 1.5).

Figure 2.4. Full-time hours are short in the Netherlands

Average usual weekly working hours, total full-time employed, all ages, 2017



Note: Full-time employment is defined as usual weekly working hours of 30 or more hours per week in the main job. For the United States, data refer to dependent employees only. For Australia, Iceland, New Zealand and Norway, data refer to usual weekly working hours in all jobs. For Korea, data refer to actual weekly working hours in all jobs. Data for Norway refer to 2016. Information on statistical data for Israel: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932315602>.

Source: OECD Employment Database, <http://www.oecd.org/employment/emp/onlineoecdemploymentdatabase.htm>.

2.2. Job quality and worker traits in part-time jobs

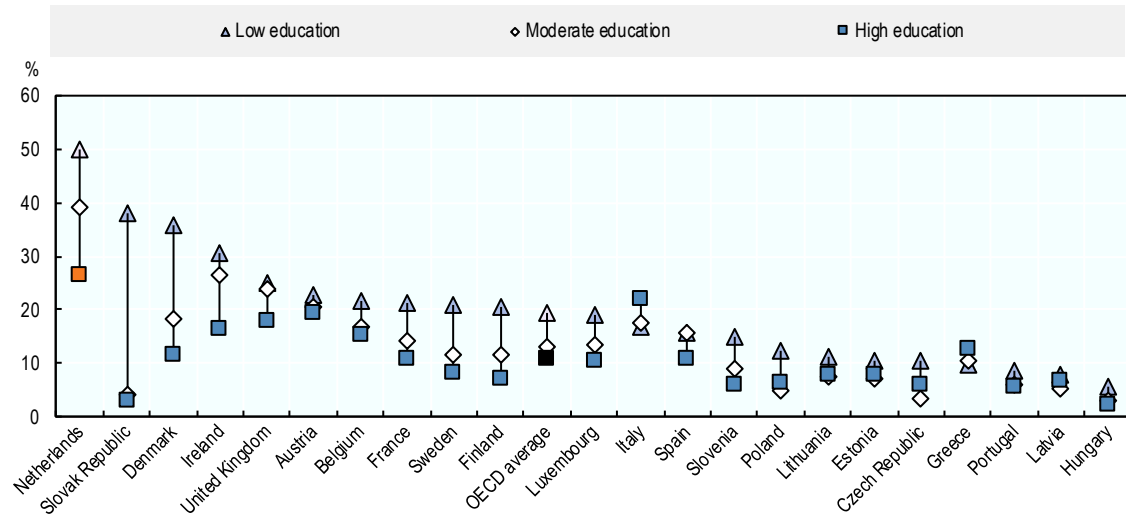
While part-time jobs can enable organisations to respond more quickly to demands and offer workers some flexibility in hours worked, a persistent concern is job quality. Across countries, workers in part-time jobs often have lower job security, lower pay, fewer opportunities for training and promotion, face a higher poverty risk and are less likely to have access to unemployment benefits if they become unemployed (OECD, 2010^[2]). Switching to a part-time role can imply a drop in occupational status and wages (Chung and van der Horst, 2018^[28]). Job quality can be affected by the skill set of workers in part-time roles, as this is often the domain of less-educated, lower-skilled workers. The quality of work also depends crucially on whether or not part-time work is “involuntary” or “voluntary.”

The Netherlands is doing relatively well in ensuring good-quality part-time jobs (C. Fagan, 2014^[29]), particularly compared to OECD counterparts like the United Kingdom, which also has a relatively high share of workers in part-time jobs (Manning and Petrongolo, 2008^[30]). Highly skilled and less-skilled people work part-time in the Netherlands, the rate of *involuntary* part-time work is low, and the country has made good commitments to ensuring work quality. Nevertheless, the gender inequalities in part-time work persist, with lifelong consequences (Yerkes, 2009^[31]).

In the Netherlands, workers from a range of different socioeconomic levels work part-time. Part-time employment is most common for workers with low education, but, at the same time, it is not uncommon for highly educated workers. 26.5% of the Netherlands’ highly educated workers (those with tertiary education) work part-time – the highest share among European OECD countries. Half of workers with low levels of education work part-time, a rate that is also the highest among European OECD countries (Figure 2.5).

Figure 2.5. Part-time work is not uncommon for highly educated workers in the Netherlands

Part-time employment as a percentage of total employment, by education level, 15- to 64-year-olds, 2017



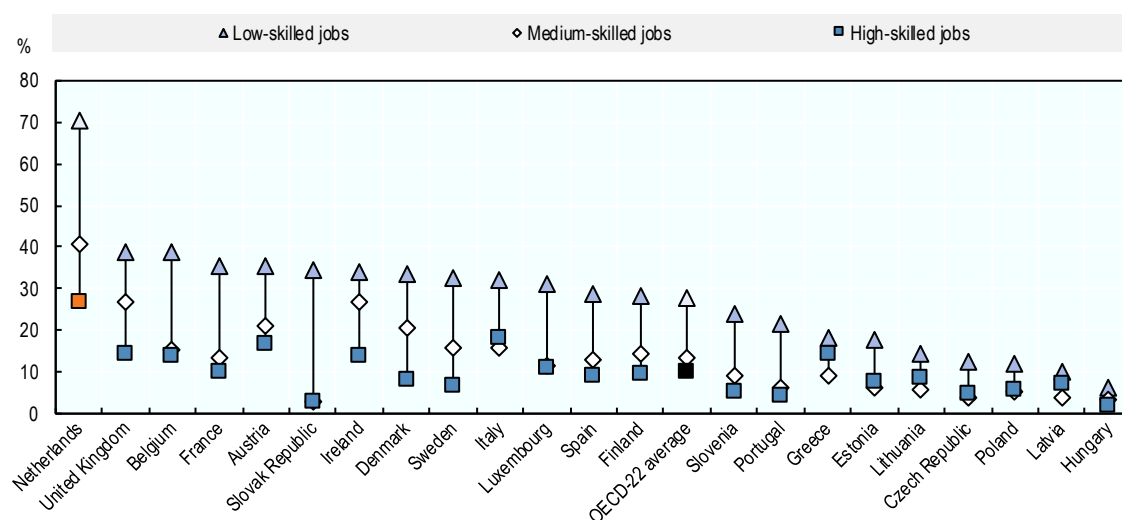
Note: Part-time employment is defined as usual weekly working hours of less than 30 hours per week in the main job. Educational attainment is measured on a three-part ordinal variable (low education, medium education and high education), with distinctions between the three levels corresponding to the usual ISCED classification system: 'low education' corresponds to a highest level of educational attainment at ISCED 2011 levels 0-2 (early-childhood education, primary or lower secondary education); 'medium education' reflects a highest level of educational attainment at ISCED 2011 levels 3-4 (upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education); and 'high education' corresponds to a highest level of educational attainment at ISCED 2011 levels 5-8 (short-cycle tertiary education, bachelor or equivalent, master or equivalent, doctoral or equivalent).

Source: OECD estimates based on the European Union Labour Force Survey 2017, <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/microdata/european-union-labour-force-survey>.

Furthermore, unlike in many other countries, part-time work in the Netherlands is not confined to low-skilled jobs only. In fact, over 25% of workers in highly skilled managerial, professional and technical occupations also work part-time – well over twice the OECD average for people in these roles (Figure 2.6).

Figure 2.6. Part-time hours are common across skill levels in the Netherlands

Part-time employment as a percentage of total employment, by occupational skill level, 15- to 64-year-olds



Note: Part-time employment is defined as usual weekly working hours of less than 30 hours per week in the main job. Occupational skill level is based on the ISCO-08 classification of occupations. Low-skilled jobs refer to those in ISCO-08 group 9 (elementary occupations). Medium-skilled jobs refer to those in ISCO-08 groups 4-8 (clerical support workers; services and sales workers; skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery workers; craft and related trades workers; and plant and machine operators and assemblers). High-skilled jobs refer to those in ISCO-08 groups 1-3 (managers; professionals; and technicians and associate professionals). Armed forces occupations are excluded.

Source: OECD estimates based on the European Union Labour Force Survey 2017, <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/microdata/european-union-labour-force-survey>

2.3. Who will cut hours to care for the kids? Parenthood, part-time work, and gender inequality in hours worked

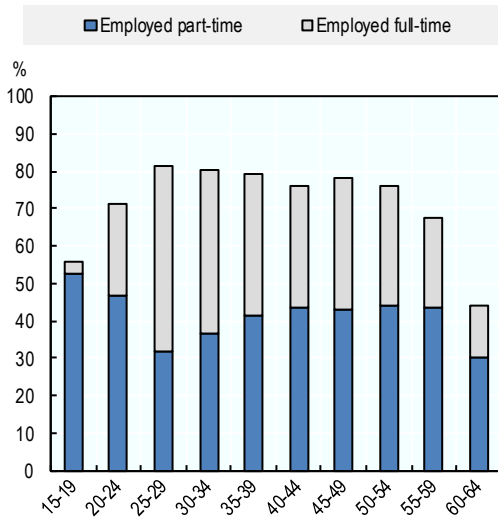
Working part-time is not unusual for Dutch women throughout the life course (Figure 2.7, Panel A). Indeed, research shows that even recently graduated women without children in the Netherlands are more likely to work part-time than men (Merens and Bucx, 2018^[32]), in part because their educational choices may have led them to enter sectors where part-time work is the norm (SCP, 2018^[33]). There has been little progress in recent years in moving these female workers into full-time roles (European Commission, 2019^[34]).

Women's transition to part-time work is especially common after they become parents. After most schooling is completed, and within the main child-rearing years, the share of the female population who are employed part-time reaches 44% among 40- to 44-year-olds. In this group of women working part-time, 66.9% are mothers of children aged 14-years-old or younger (Figure 2.7, Panel B). 75.2% of part-time workers in the 35-39 age group are mothers. After age thirty, the share of the female population working full-time declines with age.

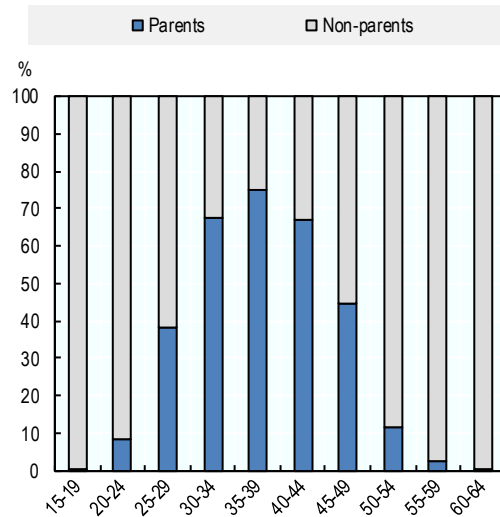
Figure 2.7. Part-time work is a consistent feature of women's employment across the life course

Employment rate by part-time/full-time status, and the distribution of the part-time employed by parent status, by five-year age group, women, the Netherlands, 2017

Panel A. Employment rate by part-time/full-time status



Panel B. Distribution of part-time employed by parent status



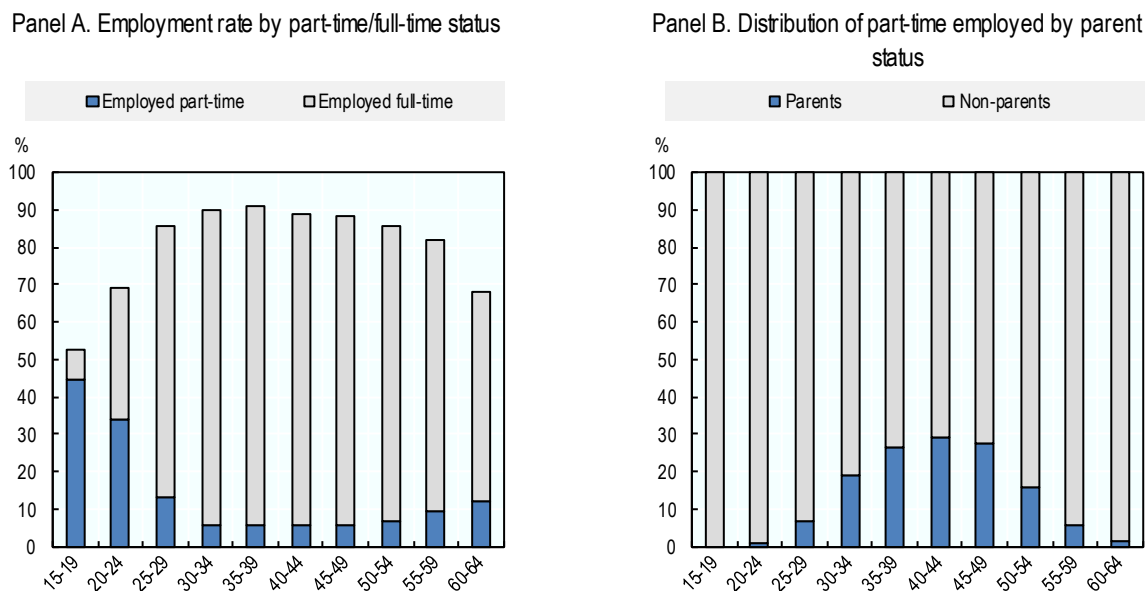
Note: Part-time employment is defined as usual weekly working hours of less than 30 hours per week in the main job. Parents are defined as those with an 'own child' aged 0-14 living in the same household.

Source: OECD estimates based on the European Union Labour Force Survey 2017, <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/microdata/european-union-labour-force-survey>.

Men in the Netherlands, in contrast, are actually *less* likely to work part-time during the main child-rearing years (Figure 2.8). When Dutch men become fathers, they are more likely to stay in full-time work and, correspondingly, they do less caregiving and unpaid work at home than their female partner (Section 1). While over 40% of 40- to 44-year-old women work part-time in the Netherlands, less than 6% of 40- to 44-year-old Dutch men work part-time. And among those men who *do* work part-time, very few are parents, relative to the distribution of female part-time workers (Figure 2.8, Panel B).

Figure 2.8. Few Dutch men work part-time during the child-rearing years

Employment rate by part-time/full-time status, and the distribution of the part-time employed by parent status, by five-year age group, men, the Netherlands, 2017



Note: Part-time employment is defined as usual weekly working hours of less than 30 hours per week in the main job. Parents are defined as those with an 'own child' aged 0-14 living in the same household.

Source: OECD estimates based on the European Union Labour Force Survey 2017, <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/microdata/european-union-labour-force-survey>.

This situation is problematic in that the reduction in paid work hours (and increase in unpaid hours) is borne largely by women.

To some degree, this inequality in work hours may reflect an economically “efficient” division of labour, in which the higher earner specialise in the labour market and the lower earner specialises in household labour. This explanation has traditionally been used to explain the male breadwinner model.

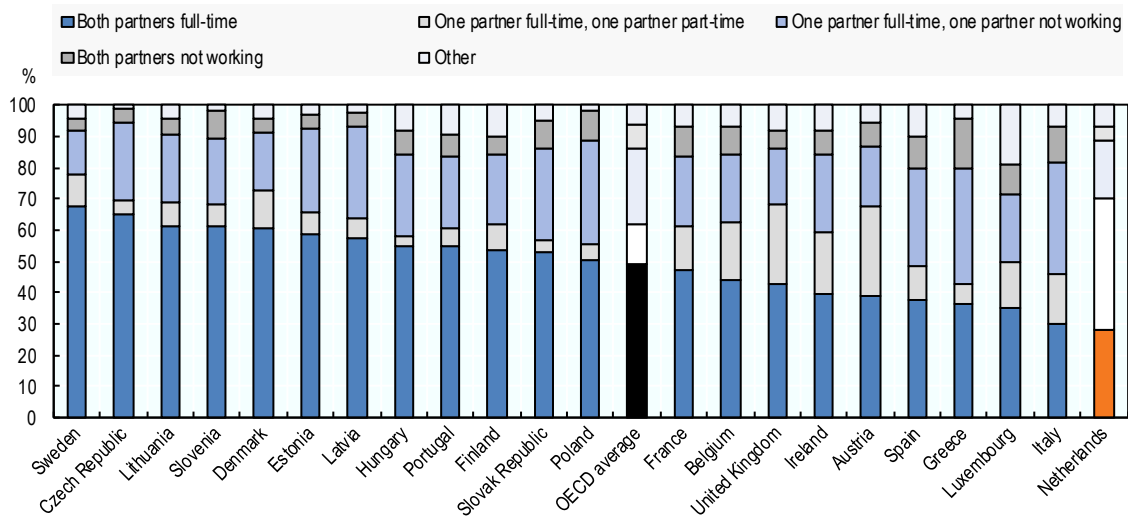
However, as women have made tremendous gains in education over the past few decades, the “efficient division of labour” answer holds weaker explanatory power (OECD, 2017_[1]). Indeed, even when couples begin their partnership with similar job and income profiles, gender gaps in labour force participation, pay, and hours worked tend to widen when workers become parents (OECD, 2017_[5]). The Netherlands stands out as one of the few OECD countries where the gender pay gap is very small or to the *advantage* of women when they are in their twenties (OECD, 2017_[1]), i.e., women earn more.

When looking at work arrangements within households, the Netherlands is an outlier in the relatively low number of households in which both partners work full-time. In only 28% of Dutch couples do both partners work full-time (in partnerships of 15- to 64-year-olds). This is lower than other countries in Europe, including southern European countries like Italy, Greece, and Spain, which tend to do less well on other indicators of gender equality. Of course, the Netherlands does relatively well in the share of households in which both partners are working at all.

Instead, the “one-and-a-half” worker model dominates in the Netherlands. 42.4% of partnered couples exhibit this working arrangement, in which one partner (usually the man) works full-time and the other partner (typically a woman) works relatively few hours in part-time.

Figure 2.9. The Netherlands is least likely to have two full-time working partners

Distribution of couples by employment pattern, couples with both partners aged 15-64, 2017

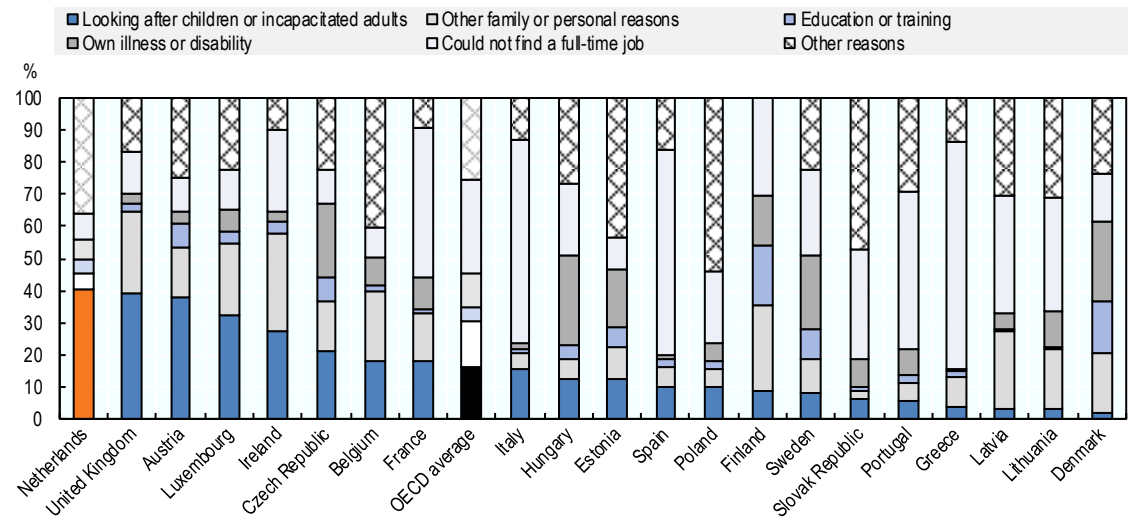


Note: Part-time employment is defined as usual weekly working hours of less than 30 hours per week in the main job.

Source: OECD estimates based on the European Union Labour Force Survey 2017, <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/microdata/european-union-labour-force-survey>.

Figure 2.10. Care responsibilities commonly drive part-time work decisions

Distribution of the part-time employed by reason for part-time employment, 25- to 64-year-olds, 2017



Note: Part-time employment is defined as usual weekly working hours of less than 30 hours per week in the main job.

Source: OECD estimates based on the European Union Labour Force Survey 2017, <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/microdata/european-union-labour-force-survey>.

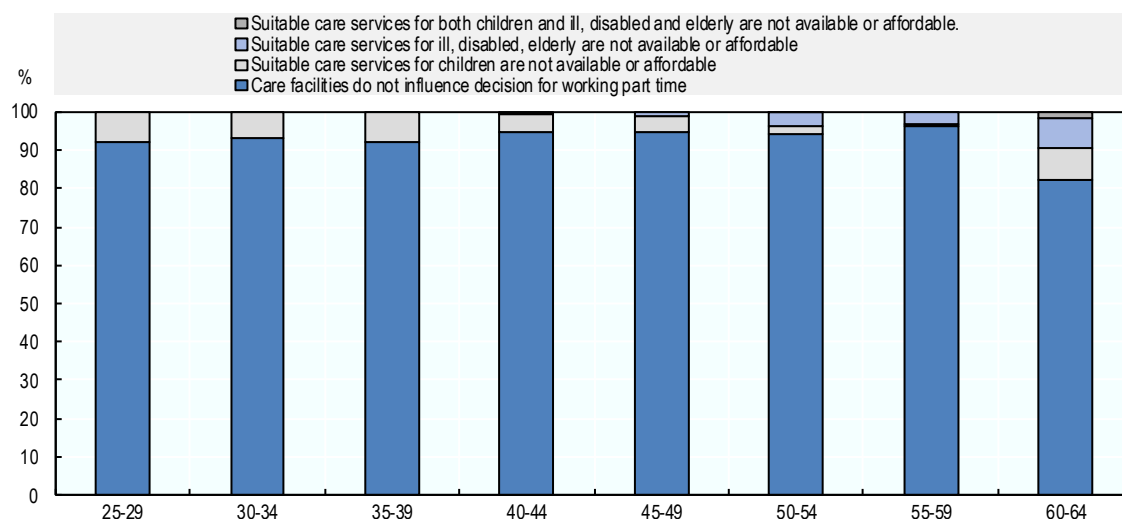
Why do parents cut hours when children enter the home? Part-time workers in the Netherlands are more likely than their counterparts in many other countries to cite unpaid care work as the reason for working part-time in the labour market. 40.2% of Dutch part-time workers caring for dependent children or other

family members as their reason for not working full-time – a higher percentage pointing to care needs as motivation for part-time work than in any other countries.

When care responsibilities lead women to drop out of the labour market in OECD countries, this often reveals an inadequacy in formal childcare services – insufficient supply, poor quality care, unaffordability, or some combination therein (Adema, Clarke and Frey, 2015^[35]) (OECD, 2017^[18]). The puzzling twist in the Netherlands is that, among people who cite care responsibilities as their reason for working part-time, few say care facilities influence their decision to work less than full-time hours in the labour market. Under 10% of part-time workers who provide unpaid care say that care services or facilities are not available or affordable (Figure 2.11), though dissatisfaction with care services increases significantly among 60- to 64-year-olds, who are most likely to be providing elder care. This suggests that the simple supply and cost of formal care are not the only factors driving women to work less than full-time hours (Section 3).

Figure 2.11. Very few of those working part-time for care reasons express an unmet need for care services

Distribution of the part-time employed who cite "looking after children or incapacitated adults" as the reason for part-time work by unmet need for care services, by five-year age group, 25- to 64-year-olds, the Netherlands, 2017



Note: Part-time employment is defined as usual weekly working hours of less than 30 hours per week in the main job. Data cover part-time employed who cite "looking after children or incapacitated adults" as the main reason for part-time work, only.

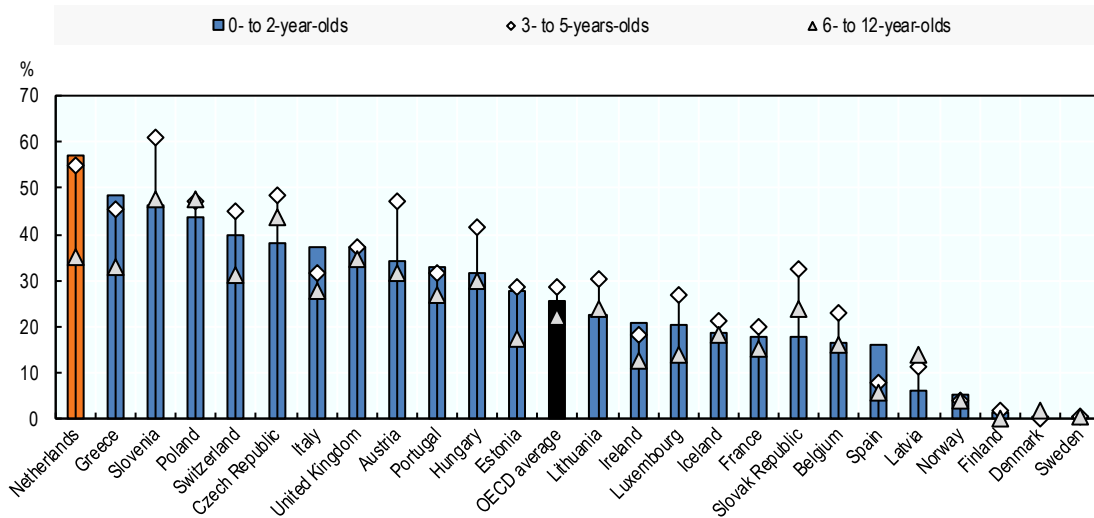
Source: OECD estimates based on the European Union Labour Force Survey 2017, <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/microdata/european-union-labour-force-survey>.

2.4. Calling on Grandma or Grandpa to look after the kids

Caregiving responsibilities often do not end when children leave the home, and gender roles can continue into older adulthood. In addition to carrying out unpaid eldercare for spouses and elderly relatives, older Dutch grandparents are often tasked with caring for grandchildren. Indeed, the Netherlands leads the OECD in the share of 0- to 2-year-old children who receive informal care by relatives, friends or neighbours.

Figure 2.12. Dutch parents rely on informal childcare

Percent (%) of children using informal childcare arrangements during a typical week, by age group, 2016



Note: Data for Malta and Switzerland refer to 2014, and for Iceland to 2015. 'Informal' childcare here refers to unpaid care, usually provided by a grandparent of the child or by other relatives, friends or neighbours. It excludes any care that is paid for regardless of who is providing the paid-for care.

Source: OECD Family Database, <http://www.oecd.org/els/family/database.htm>.

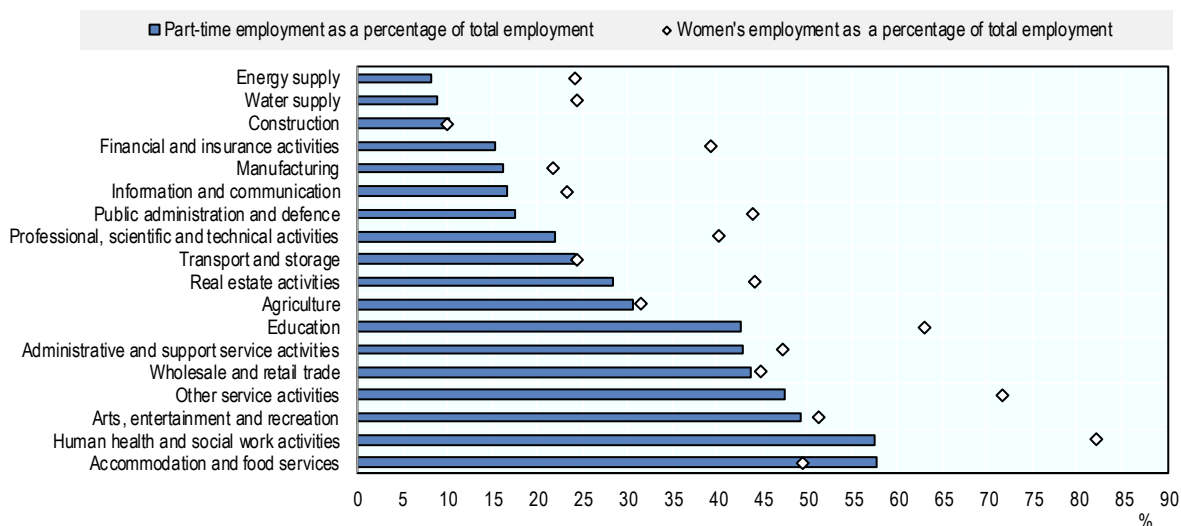
Caring for grandchildren may contribute to some female Dutch workers remaining in part-time work late in their careers, well after their own children have left the home. Many of these women therefore face challenges when trying to close the lifetime gap in earnings that developed when they devoted more time to unpaid caregiving in their prime working years.

2.5. Short hours in teaching and care sectors

There is a positive correlation between the share of women working in a sector and the share of jobs in that sector that are part-time (Figure 2.13). This is especially true in the health and services fields today. As early as 1997, about 60% of jobs in the health and social care sector were part-time, while part-time roles made up almost half of the jobs in the catering industry and a more moderate 38% in the education sector (Baaijens, 1999^[22]). Part-time employment in the public sector, care and education sectors continued to grow even when such growth was more moderate in commercial service sectors (Langenberg, 2004^[36]). Women in 2017 made up 82.1% of jobs in the broader health, human and social work activities, a sector in which 57.4% of jobs are part-time (Figure 2.13).

Figure 2.13. Female-dominated professions have higher shares of part-time jobs

Part-time employment as a percentage of total employment and women's employment as a percentage of total employment, by sector, 15- to 64-year-olds, the Netherlands, 2017



Notes: Part-time employment is defined as usual weekly working hours of less than 30 hours per week in the main job. Employment by sector is classified based on European Classification of Economic Activities (NACE) rev. 2.

Source: OECD estimates based on the European Union Labour Force Survey 2017, <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/microdata/european-union-labour-force-survey>.

2.5.1. Short hours in teaching jobs, and unpredictable school schedules for families

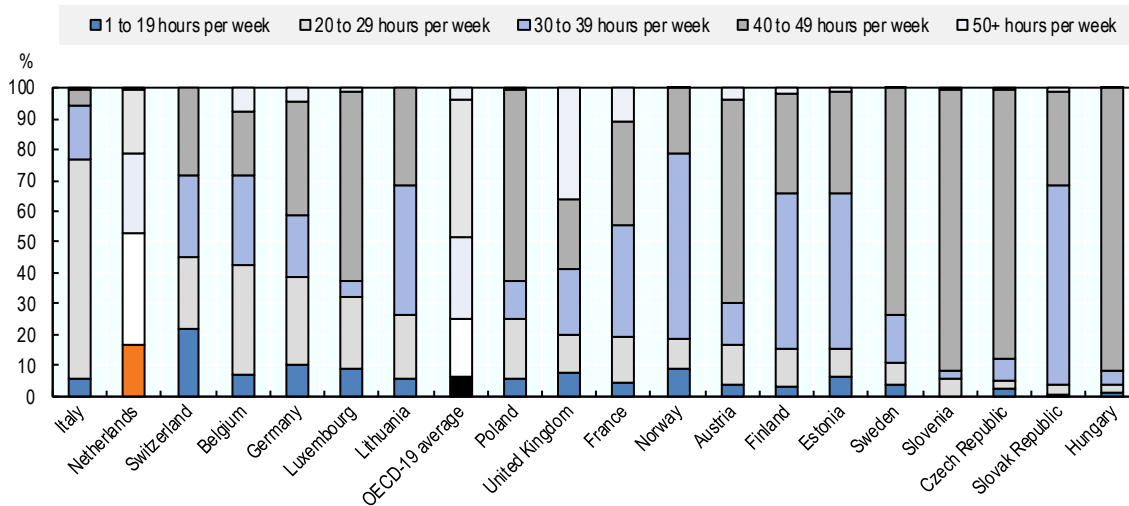
Teachers in the Netherlands report working shorter hours than teachers in most other OECD countries. In most countries, teaching is effectively a full-time job (Figure 2.14). Just over half (52.7%) of Dutch primary school teachers work part-time, i.e. under 30 hours per week. In a comparison with 19 other European countries, Italy is the only country where more primary school teachers work part-time (76.9% work under 30 hours per week). Dutch teachers are relatively happy with the hours they work: only 8.8% of primary school teachers in the Netherlands report wanting to work more hours (OECD estimates of EU Labour Force Survey, 2017).

In contrast, 73.77% of primary school teachers in Sweden work 40-49 hours per week and in Austria 66.2% do. The United Kingdom is an outlier in that many teachers work very long hours: over one-third of primary school teachers work 50 or more hours in a typical week, a high workload (Higton et al., 2017^[37]).

Dutch working parents face a peculiar issue around school hours: they are somewhat unpredictable due to a teacher shortage in the Netherlands. The shortage is not so much in staff numbers as in hours that teachers are willing to work. Replacement teachers in case of holidays or illness are hard to find, and this can lead to pupils being placed in other classes or being taught by non-qualified staff. Entire classes can be sent home, with often hundreds of students missing school on a given day (data sampled in January 2019 from (Lerarentekort is nu, 2019^[38])), particularly in the western part of the Netherlands.²

Figure 2.14. Primary school teachers in the Netherlands work relatively short hours

Distribution of primary school teachers by usual weekly hours bands, all ages, 2017



Note: Primary school teachers are defined as the employed that hold jobs classified in International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO) 08 category 2341 ("Primary School Teachers"). Individuals reporting no set hours and or with missing data for usual weekly working hours are excluded. Countries are ranked according to the percentage of primary school teachers usually working between one and 29 hours per week.

Source: OECD estimates based on the European Union Labour Force Survey 2017, <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/microdata/european-union-labour-force-survey>

With children being sent home irregularly, the school week can be reduced to four days a week and Ministry guidelines suggest this is allowed for seven weeks per annum (OC&W, 2018_[39]). The government has recognised that there is a growing deficit in the number of teaching hours and has proposed new measures to address these gaps, such as reducing fees for new teacher training and focusing on teacher retention (Rijksoverheid, 2019_[40]). Again, this could be tied to arguments that it is less disruptive to have one rather than two teachers, that the tax system should make full-time work more attractive, and that it would be good to attract male teachers in an increasingly feminised profession (OECD, 2017_[11]).

In practice, a common primary school day lasts from 8.30am until noon and from 1pm until 3pm. These school hours make it difficult for parents to combine school hours with a full-time job, which is likely to have contributed to the entrenchment of the part-time work culture among working parents. If, for example, an engineer cannot rely on their child having regular access to over 35 hours/week of school and out-of-school hours care, they may, in turn, reduce their own working hours to cover the gap.

While Dutch teachers work relatively short *weekly* hours, they are in school for more weeks of the year than most of their counterparts in the OECD. The Netherlands has relatively short school breaks. Most schools in the Netherlands have a minimum of 11 weeks off per year, which is less than in countries like Estonia (17 weeks), France (16 weeks), and Sweden (15 weeks). The effect of these school breaks on parents' schedules is not obvious. It could help parents insofar as they have less need for childcare during break periods. Yet parents still need to develop flexible work and childcare arrangements for the other 41 weeks of the year, when children are supposed to be in school, to adapt to variable school schedules.

2.5.2. High rates of part-time work in long-term care

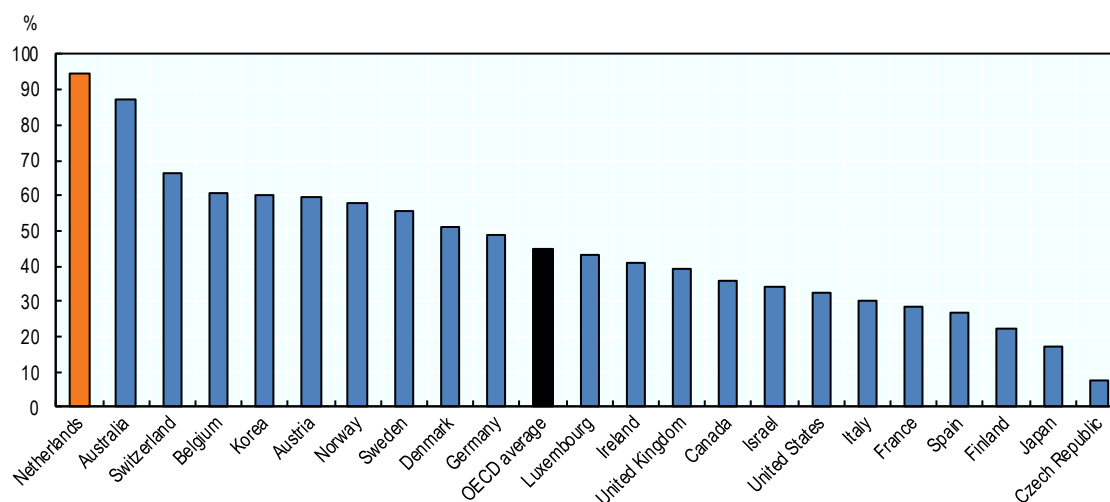
Hours are short in long-term care jobs, too – another sector in which female workers predominate. Over 90% of the long-term care workforce in the Netherlands works part-time, a rate far above most other

European countries. This relatively high rate may reflect the normalisation of part-time work throughout the Dutch labour market.

Unlike teaching jobs, many long-term care positions require, by their nature, short part-time hours. Many care workers aiding the elderly, for example, are only needed at the beginning and the end of the day, to help with daily tasks associated with getting out of bed in the morning and going to bed in the evening (OECD, 2019, forthcoming^[41]). It would likely take several of such part-time jobs to reach over thirty hours of work per week.

Figure 2.15. A large share of long-term care workers hold part-time positions

Percent of the long-term care workforce reporting working part-time, 2016



Note: Data for European countries are based on ISCO 4-digit and NACE 2-digit employment classifications, with the exceptions of Denmark, Ireland, Italy and Spain (ISCO 3-digit and NACE 2-digit employment classifications). Data for Australia cover only those with a permanent position. Data for Canada cover only those working mostly full-time or part-time. Information on statistical data for Israel: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932315602>.

Source: (OECD, 2019, forthcoming^[41])

3 Reducing barriers to full-time work

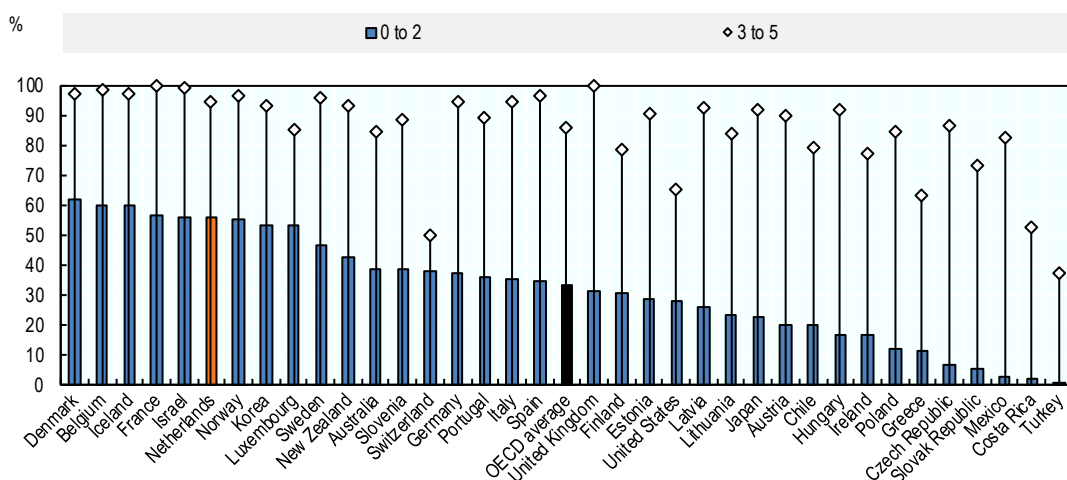
Closing the gender gap in working hours will require changes not only in government and organisations' policies, but also in cultural norms around the role of women and men (and mothers and fathers) in the Netherlands. This section reviews relevant policy measures aimed at lessening gender inequalities in hours worked: encouraging fathers to take more parental leave and/or become the part-time worker in their household; more social supports before and after the school day and when children are very young; reforming marginal effective tax rates to encourage more full-time dual-earner households; effective access by both genders to flexitime and teleworking; promoting longer hours in teaching professions; and tackling norms and culture around caregiving.

3.1. Increase the take-up of early childhood education and care

Increasing access to good quality and affordable early childhood education and care (ECEC) is one way to increase women's paid work hours. While a high share of children are enrolled in ECEC in the Netherlands, they are in care for very few hours, relative to peers in other European OECD countries. 55.9% of 0- to 2-year-olds in the Netherlands are in ECEC programmes, well above the OECD average of 33.2% (Figure 3.1).

Figure 3.1. ECEC enrolment rates are comparatively high in the Netherlands

Percent of 0- to 2-year-olds enrolled in early childhood education and care services (ISCED 0 and other registered ECEC services), and percent of 3- to 5-year-olds enrolled in early childhood education and care (ISCED 2011 level 0) or primary education (ISCED 2011 level 1), 2016 or latest available



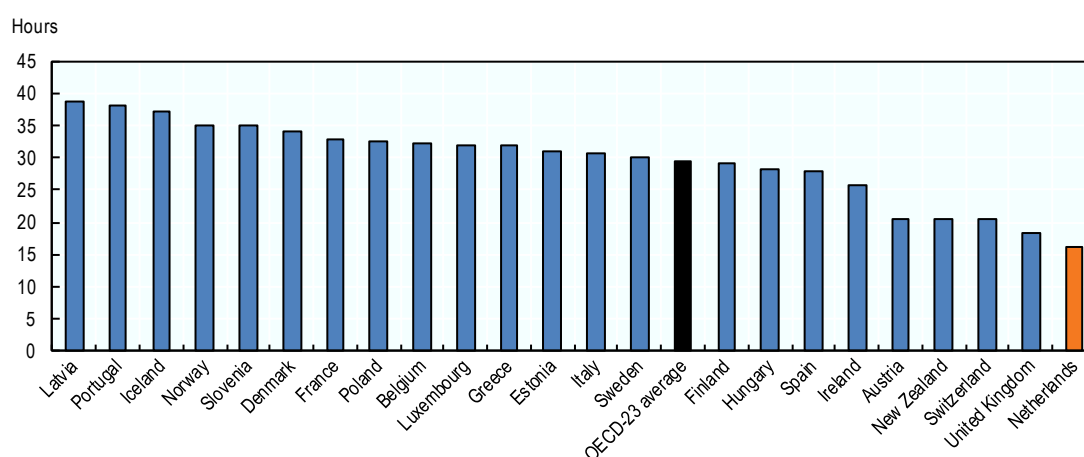
Note: For 0- to 2-year-olds: Data generally include children enrolled in early childhood education services (ISCED 2011 level 0) and other registered ECEC services (ECEC services outside the scope of ISCED 0, because they are not in adherence with all ISCED-2011), but exact definitions differ across countries. Data for the United States refer to 2011, for Switzerland and Malta to 2014, and for Japan and Argentina to 2015. For 3- to 5-year-olds: Data include children enrolled in early childhood education and care (ISCED 2011 level 0) and primary education (ISCED 2011 level 1). Data for South Africa refer to 2015. See *OECD Family Database* (<http://www.oecd.org/els/family/database.htm>) Indicator PF3.2 for more detail. Information on statistical data for Israel: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932315602>.

Source: *OECD Family Database*, <http://www.oecd.org/els/family/database.htm>.

Infants and children under age three in the Netherlands spend 16 hours per week, on average, in ECEC. This is well below the over thirty hours per week that young children spend in care, on average, in Latvia, Portugal, Iceland, Norway, Slovenia, Denmark, France, Poland, Belgium, Luxembourg, Greece, Estonia, Italy and Sweden.

Figure 3.2. Average hours in ECEC are short in the Netherlands

Average usual weekly hours for children using early childhood education and care services, 0- to 2-year-olds, 2016 or latest available



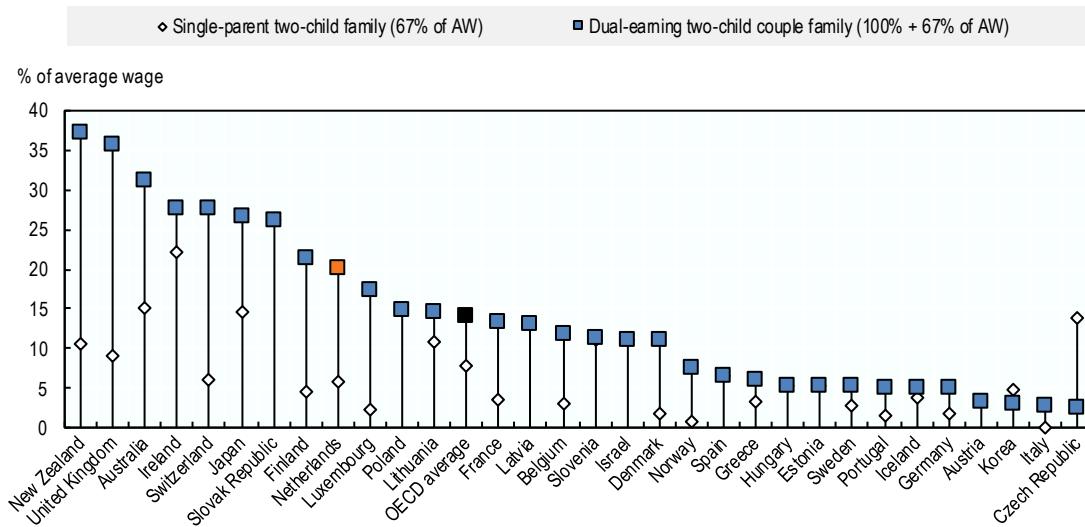
Note: Data for Switzerland and Malta refer to 2014, and for Iceland to 2015. With the exception of New Zealand, data are OECD estimates based on information from EU-SILC. Data refer to children using centre-based services (e.g. nurseries or day care centres and pre-schools, both public and private), organised family day care, and care services provided by (paid) professional childminders, regardless of whether or not the service is registered or ISCED-recognised. For New Zealand, data cover children using licensed centre-based (e.g. 'Education and Care' services, Playcentres, Kōhanga Reo, Kindergartens) and home-based services, only. All non-licensed care is excluded regardless of whether it is paid or unpaid. See *OECD Family Database* (<http://www.oecd.org/els/family/database.htm>) Indicator PF3.2 for more detail.

Source: *OECD Family Database*, <http://www.oecd.org/els/family/database.htm>.

Full-time childcare costs in the Netherlands are higher than in many other OECD countries (Figure 3.3), which likely depresses take-up. For a dual-earner household in the Netherlands making 100% and 67% of average wage, childcare costs for two children (aged two and three) equate to just over 20% of the national average wage. This is well above the OECD average (14.0%) for this type of household, and roughly four times higher than in countries like Germany (5.0%), Iceland (5.1%) and Sweden (5.2%). Childcare costs are somewhat progressive as households move up the income distribution, and families with lower incomes pay lower net costs. Still, for a typical single-parent household with two children (again aged two and three) in the Netherlands, childcare costs equate to 5.7% of the average work. About four out of ten parents say that childcare is too expensive (Roeters and Bucx, 2018^[42]).

Figure 3.3. Childcare costs in the Netherlands are higher than the OECD average for a dual-earner family

Out-of-pocket childcare costs for a two-child family as a proportion (%) of the national average wage, by family type, 2018



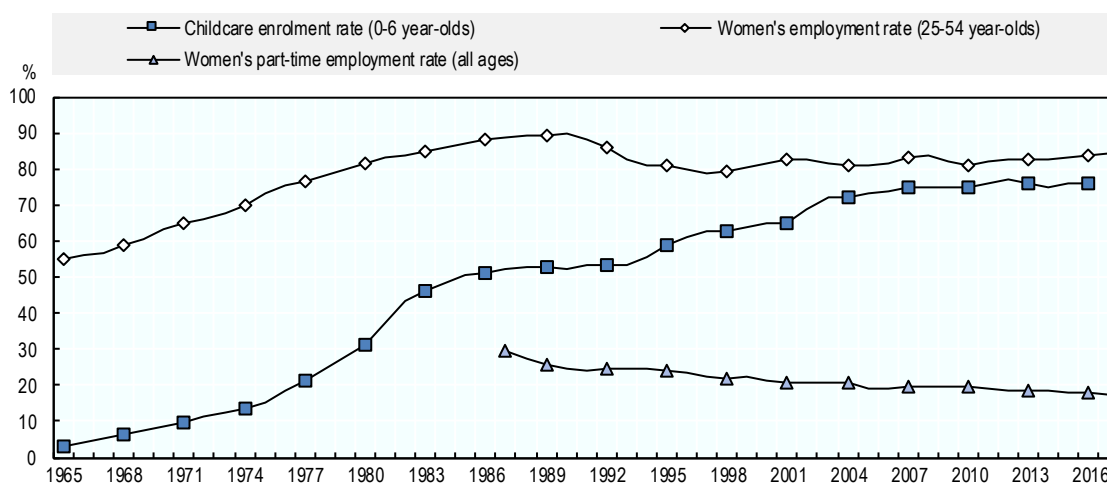
Note: Data reflect the net cost (gross fees less childcare benefits/rebates and tax deductions, plus any resulting changes in other benefits received following the use of childcare and/or change in family income) of full-time care in a typical childcare centre for a two-parent two-child family, where both parents are in full-time employment and the children are aged two and three. Gross earnings for the two earners in the 'dual-earning two-child couple family' are set equal to 100% of average earnings for the first earner and 67% of average earnings for the second earner. Those for the single earner in the 'single-parent two-child family' are set to 67% of average earnings. 'Full-time' care is defined as care for at least 40 hours per week. Where benefit rules are not determined on a national level but vary by region or municipality, results refer to a "typical" case (e.g. Michigan in the United States, the capital in some other countries). See the OECD Tax and Benefit Systems website (<http://www.oecd.org/els/soc/benefits-and-wages.htm>) for more detail on the methods and assumptions used and information on the policies modelled for each country. Information on statistical data for Israel: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932315602>. Source: OECD Tax and Benefit Models 2018, <http://www.oecd.org/els/soc/benefits-and-wages.htm>.

Although the Netherlands performs well on internationally comparative measures of childcare quality (LKK, 2018), there remains room for improvement in the quality of care and ensuring equal access. There is considerable sub-national variation in quality across care providers; the care system for children of working parents and the educational system for children in play groups and preschool classes are managed by different Ministries and private/public/non-profit actors; and there is no national curriculum for content for childcare centres (Schreyer and Oberhuemer, 2017^[43]). ECEC programmes targeting educationally disadvantaged children have come under criticism in recent years for doing little to close the achievement gap between disadvantaged (often first- or second-generation migrant) children and children of highly educated (usually native Dutch) parents, and access to these programmes varies enormously across regions and municipalities (Driessen, 2017^[44]).

Sweden offers a useful example of a country where childcare enrolment grew in tandem with female employment. The share of 0- to 6-year-olds in childcare grew from a meagre 3% in 1965 to a high of 77% in 2012. What is noteworthy is that the share of female workers in *part-time* roles nearly halved from 1987 (when 29.77% of female workers were in part-time jobs) to 2017 (when 17.5% were), as Swedish children are in childcare for relatively long hours (see Figure 3.2). On average, Swedish 0- to 2-year-olds spend 30 hours per week in childcare, compared to just 16 hours for Dutch children of the same age.

Figure 3.4. Childcare enrolment growth coincided with more women entering full-time jobs in Sweden

Childcare enrolment rate, 0-6 year-olds, women's employment rate, 25-54 year-olds, and women's part-time employment rate (all ages), Sweden, 1965-2017



Source: For women's employment rate and women's part-time employment rate: *OECD Employment Database*, <http://www.oecd.org/employment/emp/onlineoecdemploymentdatabase.htm>; for the childcare enrolment rate: data provided by the Swedish authorities for 1965-2002, and NOSOSCO (various years), *Social Protection in the Nordic Countries: Scope, Expenditure and Financing*, <http://nowbase.org/da>, for 2003-16.

Of course, having adequate and affordable formal childcare services may not be enough if people do not believe that childcare is good for children. Fewer than 30% of women and men believe that childcare is good for an infant under age one. The rate rises slightly as children age, but still, only 40% of women and 35% of Dutch men think that childcare is good for a one-year-old. There is fairly widespread acceptance of toddlers going to day-care, with over two-thirds of women and men supporting this, but support again drops when considering whether school-aged children should be in out-of-school hours care. At the same time, reviews of childcare quality are fairly positive when surveying Dutch people who actually have young children in childcare, relative to parents who do not use formal care (Roeters and Bucx, 2018^[42]),

If norms around childrearing do not support formal care for very young children, and preferences remain for infants and young toddlers to stay at home, this does not necessarily imply that *mothers* need to stay home. This again brings to the fore the fundamental question of which parent should exit the labour market to provide care (in cases where the household has decided that having a parent home is the best for children). While women have some biological advantages in childcare when infants are very young – for instance, in breastfeeding – the persistent gendered division of care labour as a child ages is often a reflection of social norms (Section 3).

The Netherlands should evaluate the costs and benefits of expanding the provision of affordable, high-quality childcare, so that everyone who needs space has access to it – but also to help improve trust in formal childcare and relax norms about mothers staying home with children.

3.2. More support during and after the school day

The school day does not necessarily facilitate the combination of care and full-time work commitments. Furthermore, the shortage of teaching hours means that school hours can be somewhat unpredictable so

that Dutch parents sometimes need to rearrange their paid work schedules in order to care for their children.

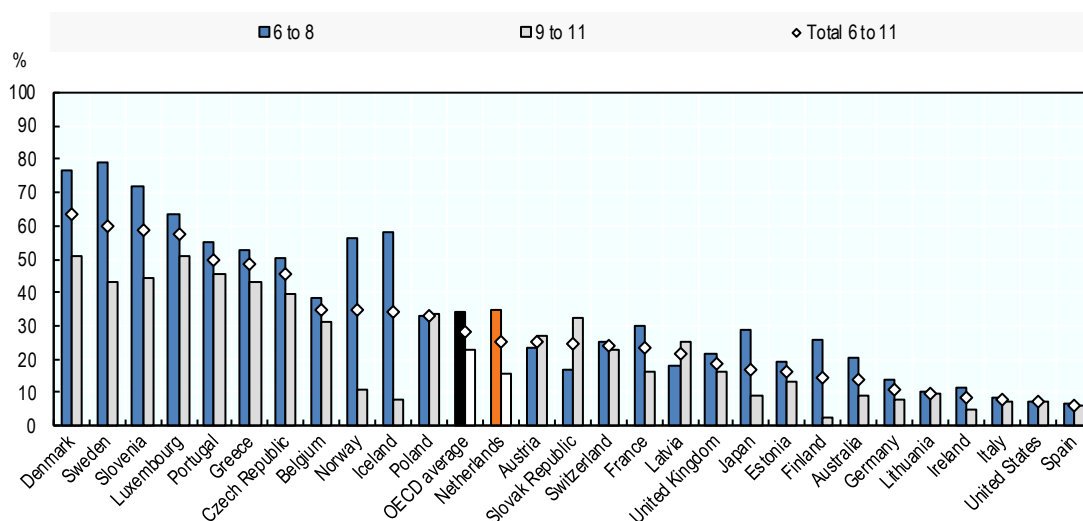
Efforts to grow the supply of teachers and incentivize longer work hours should be expanded and strengthened. This would help improve job quality among teachers – a largely female workforce – and have downstream effects for parents, as well, who might be better able to rely on schools to educate their children during the workweek.

School hours are an important determinant of whether (and how much) mothers work outside of the home. The total hours Dutch children spend annually in instruction in primary school may not be very different from neighbouring countries, but the Netherlands could do better in its provision of out-of-school hours (OSH) care.

The Netherlands is slightly below the OECD average in the share of 6- to 11-year-olds who use centre-based out-of-school-hours care services for at least one hour during a usual week, before or after school. 25.3% of 6- to 11-year-olds in the Netherlands use at least one hour of OSH care per week, compared to over 50% of similarly aged children in Denmark, Sweden, Slovenia, and Luxembourg. As noted above, public attitudes towards OSH are not very positive, though they are higher among parents who actually use these services. Better supply and take-up of OSH care would likely help parents work longer hours.

Figure 3.5. Participation rates in centre-based out-of-school-hours care services are on par with other countries

Proportion of 6- to 11-year-olds using centre-based out-of-school-hours (before and/or after school) care services during a usual week, by age group, 2016 or latest



Note: Data for the United States refer to 2011, for Iceland, Switzerland and Malta to 2014, and for Australia to 2017. Data generally reflect the proportion of children who use centre-based out-of-school-hours care services for at least one hour during a usual week, cover the use of services offered before and/or after school hours only, and do not cover 'school-going' children who use centre-based care services only during school holidays or only on days when schools are closed. Exact definitions differ across countries. Data for Australia refer to children aged 6 to 12 and the age groups 6 to 8 and 9 to 12, for Japan to children aged 7 to 11 and the age groups 7 to 8 and 9 to 11, and for the United States to children aged 5 to 11 and the age groups 5 to 8 and 9 to 11. See *OECD Family Database* (<http://www.oecd.org/els/family/database.htm>) Indicator PF4.3 for more detail.

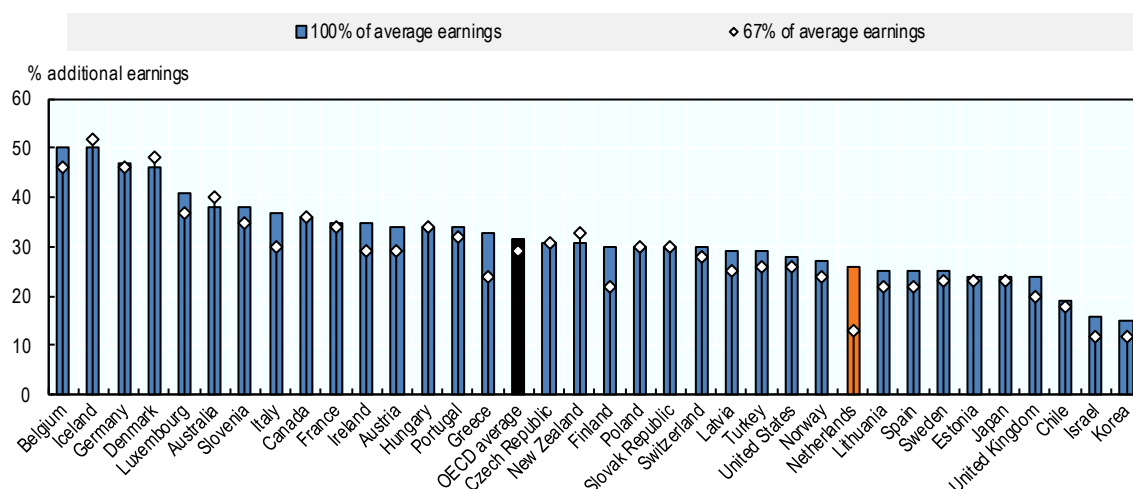
Source: *OECD Family Database*, <http://www.oecd.org/els/family/database.htm>.

3.3. Marginal effective tax rates may discourage women from shifting to full-time jobs

Another factor driving decisions to work (and how much) is tax rates. In a comparative perspective, the tax/benefit system in the Netherlands encourages second earners to enter employment (Figure 3.6). Take, for example, a two-parent Dutch household with two children, with one parent working full-time on average earnings, and the second out of work. When entering full-time work with average earnings, the second parent would lose 26% of their new earnings through taxation, social contributions, and changes in family benefits (the ‘effective tax rate’ on entering employment) (Figure 3.6). This a lower share than in most OECD countries, and almost six percentage points below the OECD average. Effective tax rates are even lower for second earners entering work on lower wages. For instance, a second earner in the Netherlands entering employment on 67% of average earnings faces an effective tax rate of just 13% – the third lowest in the OECD, and less than half the OECD average for this family type (Figure 3.6).

Figure 3.6. The tax system in the Netherlands encourages second earners to enter employment

Effective tax rate on entering full-time employment, second earner in a two-parent two-child family (children aged four and six), by earnings level, 2018



Note: Model estimates for a two-parent, two-child, dual-earning family. The first partner is assumed to work full-time with gross earnings at the national average. The second partner is assumed to be moving from out of work (on Guaranteed Minimum Income (GMI) benefits) to full-time employment, with gross earnings at the stated level. The effective tax rate refers to the share of additional earnings gained from the second earner moving into full-time employment that are lost through changes in family taxation/social contributions and/or adjustments to family benefit entitlements. Data for Chile refer to 2016, and for Canada, Korea and Turkey to 2017. See the OECD Benefits and Wages website (<http://www.oecd.org/social/benefits-and-wages/>) for more detail on the methods and assumptions used and information on the policies modelled for each country. Information on statistical data for Israel: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932315602>. Source: OECD Tax-Benefit Models 2018, <http://www.oecd.org/social/benefits-and-wages/>

At the same time, however, the Dutch system provides only weak incentives for second earners to move from part-time to full-time work. Indeed, while overall income increases as a function of hours worked, the shift from part-time to full-time work comes with a steep effective tax rate that may discourage some workers from making the transition (Figure 3.7). This might deter women from transitioning from part-time to full-time jobs when, for example, children enter primary or secondary school.

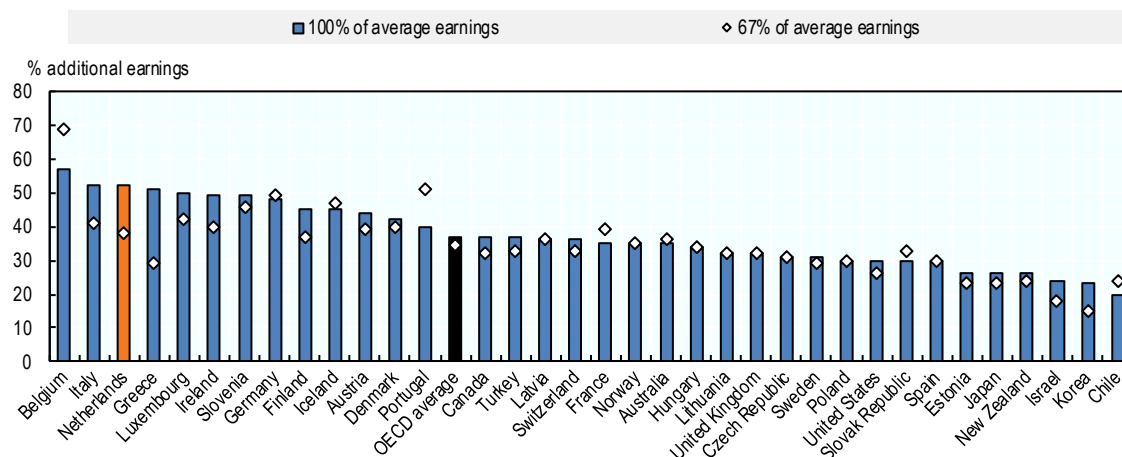
Take a similar example to above – a two-parent, two-child family in the Netherlands, with the first parent working full-time on average earnings, and the second working part-time on average earnings (reduced pro-rata). The second earner in that Dutch household would lose just over half (52%) of the extra earnings

they make from shifting from part-time to full-time work (Figure 3.7, Panel A), and with childcare costs the burden would be even higher. This is an enormous penalty for (typically women) switching to full-time work – the third-highest such tax liability in the OECD, after Belgium and Italy. A 38% penalty for lower earners (67% of average earnings) switching from part-time to full-time work is not as severe, but it is still one of the highest rates in the OECD (Figure 3.7, Panel A).

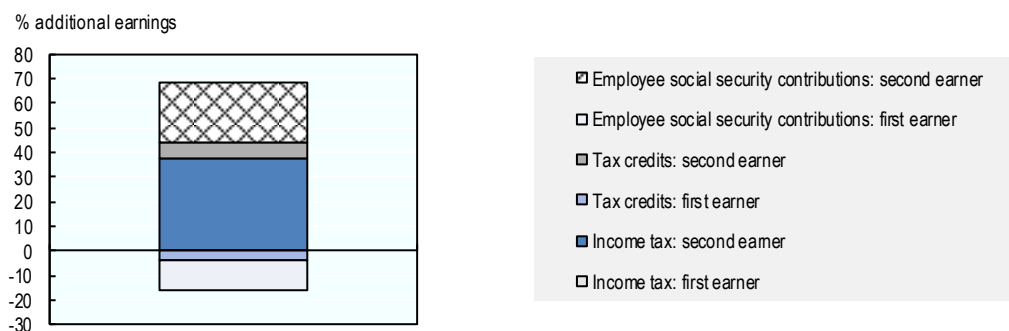
Marginal effective tax rates are comprised of a variety of components, such as income taxes, social security contributions, and benefits. In the Netherlands, the large penalty for a second earner (at average wage) moving into full-time work is driven mostly by an increase in the income tax burden (Figure 3.7, Panel B). For this worker profile, 40% of additional earnings gained from switching to full-time work are lost through income tax (Figure 3.7, Panel B), mostly on account of an increase in personal income tax on the second earner (38% of additional earnings), but also because of household net loss in tax credits (2%). Social contributions exert a smaller overall effect (Figure 3.7, Panel B). The second earner themselves actually pays substantially more in social contributions when switching to full-time work (24% of additional earnings) but, due to a re-allocation of tax credits, this is partially offset by a reduction in social contributions paid by the first earner (-12%).

Figure 3.7. Second earners in the Netherlands face high tax penalties switching from part-time to full-time work

Panel A. Effective tax rate on moving from part-time to full-time employment, second earner in a two-parent two-child family (children aged 4 and 6), by earnings level, 2018



Panel B. Contribution of different elements to the effective tax rate on moving from part-time to full-time employment, second earner in a two-parent two-child family (children aged 4 and 6) earning 100% of average wages, the Netherlands, 2018



Note: Model estimates for a two-parent, two-child, dual-earning family. The first partner is assumed to work full-time with gross earnings at the national average. The second partner is assumed to be moving from part-time (67% of full-time) to full-time employment, with gross earnings at the stated level. The effective tax rate refers to the share of additional earnings gained from the second earner moving to full-time employment that are lost through changes in family taxation/social contributions and/or adjustments to family benefit entitlements. Data for Chile refer to 2016. See the OECD Benefits and Wages website (<http://www.oecd.org/social/benefits-and-wages/>) for more detail on the methods and assumptions used and information on the policies modelled for each country. Information on statistical data for Israel: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932315602>.

Source: OECD Tax-Benefit Models 2018, <http://www.oecd.org/social/benefits-and-wages/>

3.4. Flexitime and teleworking: A substitute for part-time work?

Flexible workplace practices have been found to help promote work-life balance. While workplace flexibility often brings to mind part-time work, it also includes measures such as flexitime (starting and finishing work at different times of the day), spreading hours worked across weeks or months, and teleworking (OECD, 2017_[1]). Such measures enable workers to organise paid work hours with childcare obligations, reduce

commute times, and remain closer to dependent family members if caregiving is needed, although flexible workplace practices also have the potential to increase stress and total working hours (OECD, 2017^[1]).

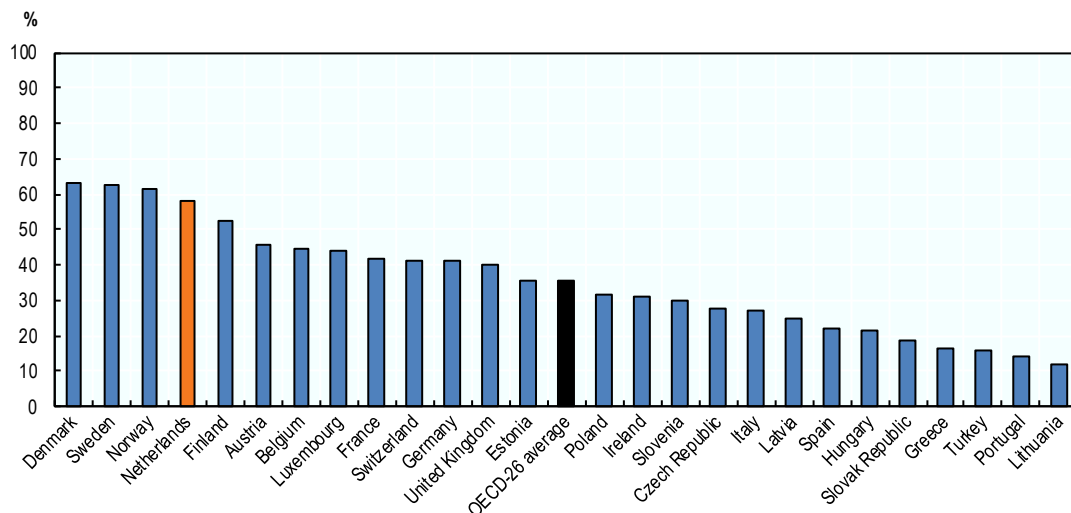
Many OECD countries, including the Netherlands, have expanded legislation ensuring workers' "right to request" part-time or flexible work arrangements. In Australia, Hungary, Portugal, Slovenia, and Turkey, the right to request was introduced or extended for parents with young children. Some, like Portugal, explicitly regulate that parents working part-time or with flexitime shall not be penalised in terms of assessment and career development.

The Netherlands (along with the United Kingdom) went further than most countries by widening the right to request to *all* workers (OECD, 2017^[1]). This is an important expansion: extending the right to request confers bargaining power and lessens the risk of discrimination against certain groups of workers when they have greater legal entitlements, e.g. parents (ibid). The Netherlands also protects the right to return to full-time work.

In the United Kingdom, where the right to request flexitime and teleworking was introduced and expanded quickly between 2003 and 2014, mothers have been found to be less likely to reduce work hours after childbirth when they have access to flexitime and teleworking (Chung and van der Horst, 2018^[28]). By "adapting work boundaries to fit around family demands," mothers are able to substitute telework and flexiwork for a reduction in work hours (ibid).

Figure 3.8. More than half of Dutch workers report having control over their work hours

Percentage of employees with some or total control over their working time, all ages, 2015



Note: Employees with "some or total control over their working time" are those who report they can choose between several fixed working schedules, can adapt their working hours within certain limits, or can determine their working hours entirely by themselves.

Source: OECD calculations based on the 6th European Working Conditions Survey (2015), www.eurofound.europa.eu/surveys

A study in the Netherlands finds that telework among Dutch workers is associated with moderate increase in actual hours worked, but not in contracted hours of preferred hours, and that flexi-time is not associated with an increase in hours worked. This research also finds that men were much more likely than women to have flexi-time or regularly telework in the Netherlands. However, this research does not make causal claims about the effects of flexitime and telework on labour supply and aside from the aforementioned study of the United Kingdom, little research has been conducted in other countries on the causal effects of flexitime and teleworking on decisions to work part-time versus full-time. This is an empirical question that

merits further analysis in the Netherlands and elsewhere: does the availability and take-up of flexible work arrangements encourage part-time workers to increase their labour supply?

It is also important, at the organisational level, to ensure that women and men are not treated differently when they request flexible work arrangements. While male workers who reduce hours or take long leaves to care for their family often face stigma and barriers in the workplace (Coltrane et al., 2013^[45]) (Vandello et al., 2013^[46]), there is evidence from the United States that women are penalised even more than men when both remain in the workforce but request flexible work. In a randomised experiment looking at the gendered effects of requesting telework, almost 70% of male employees who requested flexible schedules to accommodate child care requests were rated as “likely” or “very likely” to have the request granted. When female employees made the same request, that number dropped to around 57%. Participants were also much more likely to evaluate the men as more likable and committed than the women (Munsch, 2016^[47]).

3.5. More childcare and chores for men

Changes to social policies can only go so far if attitudes and norms do not change in tandem. Improving access to childcare and modifying the tax-benefit system will have little effect if Dutch parents continue a “traditional” division of paid and unpaid labour.

Arguably the most important next step for improving gender equality in the Netherlands is getting men to do a greater share of childcare, eldercare, cooking, and chores, so that women have greater flexibility to engage in paid work. At the moment, women are still doing most of the unpaid work at home (Section 1) – about one-third as much as Dutch men, on average, and more than their female counterparts in northern Europe. However, some have argued that the normalisation of part-time work in the Netherlands is helping to change norms around the priority of the family for both women and men (Wielers and Raven, 2013^[12]).

Dutch women and men say that they want more egalitarian outcomes, but they also acknowledge that reality does not match ideals (Section 1). Nearly 60% of Dutch parents with a child younger than age 18 report that they would like an equal distribution of childcare between parents, but under 40% say that this actually happens (Portegijs et al., 2018^[10]). 40.4% of Dutch parents with a child younger than 18 years think that care work *and* paid work should be distributed equally within a household

Despite these expressed desires for equality, there remain fairly strong beliefs that women are better suited for childrearing. Nearly one-fifth of Dutch parents – 17.2% – believe that a man should do more paid work and a woman should do more care work. Almost no one believes that a woman should do more paid work and a man should do more unpaid caregiving. And among parents who seek an equal division of childcare, only one in five report that they have achieved it at home (Portegijs et al., 2018^[10]).

These attitudes toward gender roles have become more egalitarian over time, but they remain quite entrenched. About 40% of men think that a woman is better suited to raise small children. This is progress from the rate of over 60% of men who held this belief in the early 1980s, but it is still a rather large share. It is not only men holding these beliefs: about a quarter of Dutch women, too, feel that women are better suited than men to raise small children (Portegijs et al., 2018^[10]).

These expressed beliefs help explain why women report working part-time in order to care for family, yet say they are not dissatisfied with access to childcare (Section 2).

Public perceptions around the (un)desirability of formal care for young children and perceptions around *who* can best care for children at home are strongly reinforcing the gendered division of labour found in the Netherlands. Simply put, many Dutch people do not think children should be in formal childcare (or at least, not for many hours). When children then stay home, many Dutch people think mothers are best suited to care for them.

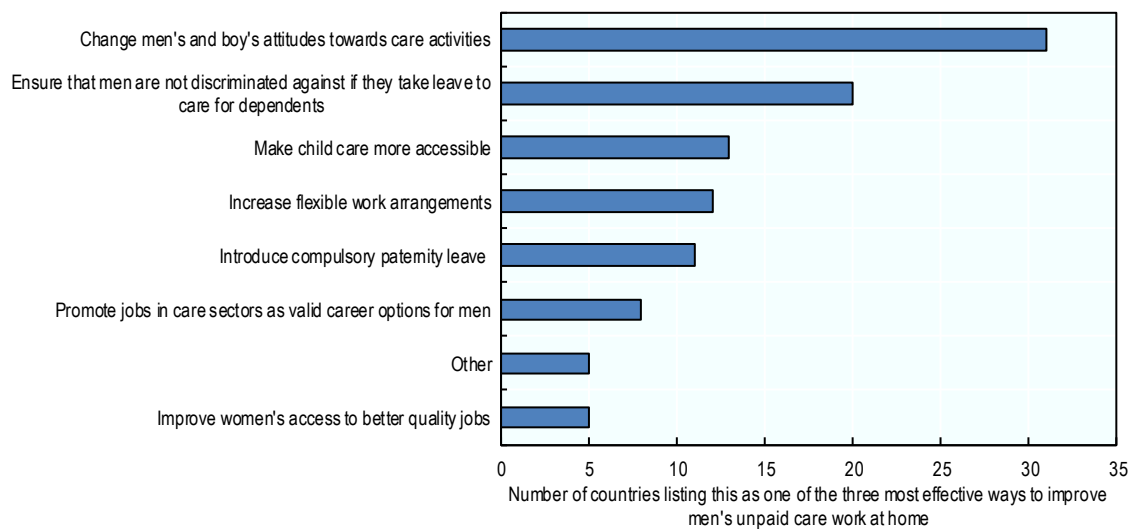
Given these beliefs, gender inequalities in paid and unpaid work have been slow to dissipate. There is room for improvement in policies and in changes in attitudes at home.

3.5.1. Paternity leave and parental leave for fathers

Paternity leave is a key policy measure for getting fathers more invested in caring for children from their earliest days as a parent. Governments recognise that getting fathers to participate in unpaid care work is a keystone of gender equality outside of the home. In a 2017 OECD survey of countries, when asked how best to increase men's unpaid care work at home, the most common answers were changing boys' and men's attitudes towards caregiving and ensuring that men do not experience discrimination when they take leave from work to care for dependents (OECD, 2017_[11]).

Figure 3.9. Country priority rankings: Getting men to spend more time on care activities

Number of adherent countries to the 2013 Gender Recommendation listing the following as one of the three most effective ways to improve men's unpaid care work at home



Note: 35 countries responded. Each country could select up to three strategies.

Source: OECD Employment, Labour and Social Affairs Committee (ELSAC), Questionnaire on Progress in Implementing the 2013 Gender Recommendation. Published in (OECD, 2017_[11]).

Many countries are trying to encourage a more equal division of paid and unpaid work across men and women through fathers' leave programmes, which incentivise fathers to leave work to care for young children immediately after or for a longer period after birth (OECD, 2017_[11]). In addition to helping child development and fathers' well-being, fathers' participation in parental leave may promote gender equality through several different channels. Fathers' leave-taking can help change the within-household distribution of unpaid work, as both mothers and fathers are involved in parenting tasks soon after birth – an important period for establishing caregiving habits. Fathers' leave-taking may also strengthen women's labour market participation (both entry and hours) by enabling mothers to return to work earlier and lessening the risk of statistical discrimination against women overall.

The Netherlands has mandated parental leave for the duration of 26 times the number of hours worked per week. In theory, this arrangement allows dual-earner couples to take leave and provide personal care for a young child for one year. However, for most employees this leave is *unpaid* as only some employers, e.g. the government, continue (partial) wage payments during this period. Available data for the 2001-13 period suggest that over this period the proportion of fathers who were eligible for parental leave (paid

and/or unpaid) increased from 10 to 25% (CBS, 2014^[48]), with men generally taking parental leave for one day per week for over a year.³

In many OECD countries, *paid* paternity leave and parental leave programmes give fathers the incentive to take up leave by setting aside reserved (or “bonus”) months of parental leave that the family receives only if the father commits to taking leave. This is an important step, given that parenting behaviours established at childbirth tend to persist as children age, with important implications for parents’ division of paid and unpaid work later in life. Parents’ behaviour, in turn, is one of the strongest predictors of an individual’s gendered behaviours and expectations, as adult children mimic (in attitudes and acts) how their parents shared paid and unpaid work (Cunningham, 2001; McGinn et al., 2015).

Since 2000, ten OECD countries have moved to provide fathers with strong financial incentives to take parental leave for at least two months. Nordic countries often reserve parts of the parental leave period for the exclusive use for each parent for a few months, and both Japan and Korea provide mothers and fathers with around one year of non-transferable paid parental leave each. Other options include “bonus periods”, where a couple may qualify for some extra weeks of paid leave if both parents use a certain amount of shareable leave. This is the case in Germany, where two bonus months can be granted.

Until 1 January 2019, Dutch fathers were entitled to two days of leave for paternity leave at full pay around childbirth, but since then the entitlement has become five days of leave at full pay. As of 1 July 2020, employees will be entitled to an additional five weeks of paid leave paid at 70% of earnings (Koninkrijk der Nederlanden, 2018^[49]). Leave reform will move the Netherlands close to the OECD average for father, but this period of paid leave for fathers is still shorter than for mothers. In future, fathers’ leave could be further developed and perhaps financed by equalising payment rates of leave for fathers and mother at 70% (it is now 100% for mothers up to a certain threshold). Leave can be taken on a part-time basis and such a support system would incentivize a more balanced sharing of care work during the early years.

The development of paid father leave is also an important step in building a “continuum of work and family supports” for parents with young children (OECD, 2016^[50]). At present, there are gaps in policy supports for parents with young children in the Netherlands. By contrast, Danish and Swedish families with young children are supported by a continuous flow of policy support: paid parental leave for about 12-18 months, followed by participation in quality ECEC services for 30 hours per week, followed by school and widely attended out-of-school hours services until children enter their teens.

Box 3.1. How does fathers-only leave affect the division of unpaid work?

Paternity leave and reserved-for-fathers parental leave programmes are relatively new in most countries (compared to maternity leave programmes), and take-up has historically been low (compared to mothers’ take-up), so it is still somewhat difficult to estimate precisely the effect of paternity or fathers’ parental leave on the downstream division of childcare and chores. Descriptive literature indicates that fathers’ leave-taking is associated with more hours spent by fathers on childcare, and that countries with more generous leave policies tend to see more men taking leave (see, for example, (Boll, Leppin and Reich, 2014^[51]); (Huerta et al., 2013^[52]); (Tanaka and Waldfogel, 2007^[53])). Of course, there are serious limitations in using observational data to assess paid and unpaid work outcomes vis-à-vis cross-national variation in leave policies, as policies may be endogenous to pre-existing conditions in those countries. Generous paternity leave policies may be driven by pre-existing norms around gender equality, for example, rather than policies driving norms.

What, then, are the *causal* effects of paid leave programmes reserved for fathers on caregiving activities? Quasi-experimental approaches, like regression discontinuity or difference-in-difference designs, exploit variation in fathers’ “exposure” to access paternity or parental leave. Such studies

contrast the outcomes for “treated” fathers with those of very comparable fathers who did not have access to the leave programme, either due to geographic or time variation.

Most quasi-experimental studies find that the introduction of a leave programme reserved for fathers does increase leave take-up by fathers (see, for example, (Ekberg, Eriksson and Friebel, 2013^[54]) on the case of Sweden; (Patnaik, 2018^[55]) on Quebec; (Kluve and Tamm, 2009^[56]) on Germany; (Farre and Gonzalez, 2018^[57]) on Spain; and (Cools, Fiva and Kirkebøen, 2015^[58]) on Norway). Evidence from Norway suggests that there is a positive ripple effect on take-up over time, as fathers’ take-up of leave induces strong peer effects on other men, specifically their brothers and co-workers (Dahl, Løken and Mogstad, 2012^[59]).

Furthermore, most quasi-experimental research using time use data suggests that fathers-only parental leave produces positive effects on fathers’ engagement in unpaid work. Looking at the 2007 introduction of two additional “daddy months” in Germany, Tamm (2018^[60]) finds that fathers exposed to the leave programme spent more time on childcare than those who did not, particularly on weekends, and that these effects carried throughout the entire period studied – six years after childbirth. Fathers with access to the German “daddy months” were also more engaged in housework and errands (Tamm, 2018^[60]). Kotsadam and Finseraas (2011^[61]) find that the introduction of reserved leave for fathers in Norway led partners to be around 50% more likely to divide equally the task of doing laundry (but not other chores), and also reduced levels of partner conflict over the household division of labour (Kotsadam and Finseraas, 2011^[61]). Farré and González (2018), looking at Spain, find that fathers who were eligible for paternity leave spent more time on childcare (by almost an hour per day) than fathers who were not eligible, and these effects persisted through the period studied - three years after birth (Farre and Gonzalez, 2018^[57]) In Québec, fathers exposed to the “daddy quota” in Québec spent more time in housework in the three years following the introduction of the quota, relative to fathers who were ineligible (Patnaik, 2018^[55]).

Some research on unpaid work outcomes of father-reserved leave has looked at parents’ division of sick days to care for children, rather than looking at time use data – actual (reported) hours spent in different activities. This research on sick days shows largely no positive effects of fathers-only parental leave. Ugreninov (2013^[62]), for example, finds that the introduction of four reserved weeks of parental leave for fathers in Norway had no causal reduction on mothers’ probability of taking sick days to care for children. Ekberg et al (2013^[54]), too, find that changes in the fathers’ allowance of parental leave in Sweden has had no effect on the probability that fathers (rather than mothers) will take sick days to care for children and mixed effects on mothers’ longer term employment outcomes. Of course, looking at sick days does not capture the daily, within-household division of care.

3.5.2. Ensuring that both mothers and fathers have equal opportunities to work full-time or part-time when children are very young

Public policies should support mothers and fathers who want to enter (or remain in) full-time work. However, when a household decides that one parent should work part-time, it is also important to ensure that both mothers and fathers have equal opportunity to do so. The default answer should not be the mother. Germany offers an interesting example of an effort to consolidate the equal sharing of parenting responsibilities. In 2015, Germany introduced the Parental Allowance Plus (ElterngeldPlus) and Partnership Bonus (Partnerschaftsbonus) measures, which provide financial incentives for both parents to work (relatively long) part-time hours (between 25-30 hours per week) and share caregiving when children are very young. The financial support varies by family but typically comes in the form of a supplement to the parental leave or child allowance, taking into consideration the parents’ labour market income during this period. The stated goal of the programme is to give parents more time for family, support a partnership

of family and vocation, promote shared parenting and ensure the livelihood of mothers (OECD, 2017^[5]). Take-up by fathers has been slow but is improving (ibid).

3.5.3. Changing policies to change minds: Targeting gender stereotypes

Many OECD governments have also sought to change gender stereotypes through public awareness campaigns. Since 2013, at least six OECD countries – Australia, Austria, the Czech Republic, Korea, Portugal and Slovenia – have carried out national public awareness campaigns against gender stereotyping and norms, using a mixture of traditional and online media channels. Australia’s joint public-private campaign, the “Equilibrium Man Challenge”, was a novel online micro-documentary series that sought to raise awareness of the work-life balance by following a group of men who had taken up flexible work arrangements, often to care for family members.

More information is needed on the positive and negative impacts that media and social networks may have on social norms and gender stereotypes. This research, combined with more rigorous evaluations of targeted public information campaigns (Paluck, 2016^[63]) could improve the effectiveness of future efforts to reduce gender stereotyping.

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Notes

¹ It is very difficult to determine whether a worker's decision to work part-time is truly "voluntary" or "involuntary." The work hours outcome may be a worker's freely selected choice, or an outcome forced upon a worker by his or her inability to find full-time work or due to some imposed constraint (like the absence of good-quality full-time childcare solutions). A variety of factors, including economic and cultural drivers, may guide or even force an individual's selection into a set of working hours. The terms "voluntary" and "involuntary" are used here as shorthand for this concept of choice and reflect commonly used language in national and international labour statistics. (See, for example, (Eurostat, 2018^[64]), (OECD, 2019^[65]), (C. Fagan, 2014^[29])).

² The unreliability of school hours is nothing new for Dutch parents. In the 1990s and early 2000s teachers had access to so-called labour-shortening holidays ("ADV-dagen") that could be taken up at short notice and contributed to children being sent home irregularly (OECD, 2002^[25]). Reform of the primary education system in the early 2000s led to reductions in class sizes, and while this is likely to have contributed to the quality of primary education overall, it also led to an increased demand for teachers (Parlementaire Monitor, 2002^[66]).

³ The data series was discontinued by the Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek.

Part-time and Partly Equal: Gender and Work in the Netherlands

The Netherlands performs well on many measures of gender equality, but the country faces a persistent equality challenge between women and men: the high share of women in part-time jobs. Nearly 60% of women in the Dutch labour market work part-time, roughly three times the OECD average for women, and over three times the rate for Dutch men. The Netherlands' gender gap in hours worked contributes to the gender gap in earnings, the gender gap in pensions, women's slower progression into management roles, and the unequal division of unpaid work at home. These gaps typically widen with parenthood, as mothers often reduce hours in the labour market to take on more unpaid care work at home.

The Dutch government must redouble its efforts to achieve gender equality. Better social policy support can help level the playing field between men and women, contribute to more egalitarian norms around the division of work, and foster more gender-equal behaviour in paid and unpaid work in the Netherlands.

Consult this publication on line at <https://doi.org/10.1787/204235cf-en>.

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