

Project title: Social and individual mechanisms behind choices for work hours

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Project description: This PhD project is part of the larger project called “Meer uren werkt!” which is a joint program of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment and various research institutions. The goal of the program is to break through the Dutch part-time culture and remove barriers so that part-timers who want to can work more hours. Various interventions are being tested to build an evidence base, after which only those interventions that work will be scaled up.

Background: Many people in the Netherlands work part-time. Some of them would actually like to work more hours but do not do so, for example, because they believe it would not benefit them. Some do not know how to combine working more hours with care for children or parents, or find that the way their work is organized makes it difficult to take on more hours. Within the program, we study how people who would like to work more can actually do so. This is done by:

1. implementing various interventions in a pilot phase in childcare, healthcare, and education; and
2. developing experiments to study the individual and contextual factors that influence people's choices.

These interventions and experiments focus on the various barriers that currently prevent part-time workers from increasing their work hours. The experiments provide evidence on the key mechanisms at play. Through a thorough evaluation of the interventions, we determine whether they are effective in increasing the number of hours worked, for whom, and in which context. Subsequently, the mechanisms that prove effective will be applied further in new interventions, and successful interventions will be scaled up to the entire Dutch labor market.

In my PhD project, the focus is on the different social and individual mechanisms that influence the choices behind work hours. We will develop experiments that provide causal evidence for such mechanisms. This could include vignette experiments in which participants decide between different scenarios to study which individual factors influence these choices. We will also design interactive laboratory experiments in which participants must make choices that resemble choices about work hours, but also face financial consequences.

Participants will observe what others do, which allows us to investigate contextual mechanisms, such as social influence effects.

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