



The Netherlands Institute
for Social Research

First steps on the labour market



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Contents

The web version of this publication differs slightly from the printed paper version in terms of lay-out. Any references to pages in this edition should therefore state that they are referring to the web version.

Foreword	4
1 From leading the way to lagging behind?	5
2 School-leavers: eighteen months later	6
3 Young women and men in the Netherlands	11
4 Young women and men in Europe	19
5 Conclusions	23
Appendices (can be found at www.scp.nl under the title of this publication)	
References	25



Foreword

Girls and young women in the Netherlands have been outperforming boys and young men in education since the end of the 1990s. They are more often enrolled in the higher streams of education, less often drop out of their studies and complete higher education programmes more quickly. As a result, the education level of women aged under 45 is now higher than that of men. However, the *Emancipation Monitor 2016* reveals that this superior educational achievement does not translate into a more favourable position on the labour market for this group of women; their labour participation rate is still lower than that of men, and they more often work part-time.

There is a suspicion that differences between men and women begin at an early age. At the request of the Emancipation Department of the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, the Netherlands Institute for Social Research | scp began a study of the labour market position and experiences of young women and men aged between 18 and 35 years. This report presents a first picture: do young women and men find work to the same extent immediately after leaving education and in the ensuing years? How many hours do they work, and how much do they earn? Respondents were also asked how satisfied they are with their jobs and how they assess their career prospects. The next phase of the study will provide a more detailed description of differences between young women and men, and will look in more depth at the explanations for those differences.

We would like to thank Christoph Meng from the Research Centre for Education and Labour Market (ROA) at Maastricht University for his analyses of the school-leaver surveys presented in this report. Thanks are also due to Els Veenis and Lieke van Schouwenburg for supervising this project from the Emancipation Department. Finally, thanks go to the members of the external supervisory committee: Saskia Keuzenkamp (Movisie and Professor of Participation and Effectiveness, vu Amsterdam), Joop Schippers (Professor of Labour Economics, Utrecht University), Anne van Putten (Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment), Edwin Meeuwssen (Ministry of Education, Culture and Science), Ted Reininga (Ministry of Education, Culture and Science) and Scarlett Braat (National Youth Council).

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Professor Kim Putters
Director, Netherlands Institute for Social Research



1 From leading the way to lagging behind?

The educational performance of girls and women in the Netherlands has been better than that of boys and men since the end of the last century. They go on to higher education more often than male students, have lower drop-out rates and complete their higher education studies more quickly. As a result, women aged under 45 years have for some time been better educated than men in the same age category (Hartgers et al. 2016). Despite this, these women are still in a less favourable position on the labour market in many respects than men and this situation has been virtually the same in the last 10 years: women are less often in work than men and more often work part-time (Dirven & Portegijs 2016; Souren 2015). These are both aspects that impact negatively on their economic independence, whereas increasing women's economic independence is one of the central objectives of Dutch emancipation policy. It is considered important because it makes them less dependent on a partner or on benefits, and therefore reduces the risk of poverty (TK 2012/2013).

There is a suspicion that differences between the labour market and financial position of women and men arise at an early age. Against this background, the Netherlands Institute for Social Research|SCP was requested by the Emancipation Department of the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science to carry out a study of the position and the experiences on the Dutch labour market of young women and men aged between 18 and 35 years. The aim of the study is to make clear at what point in their careers differences arise between women and men, and what explanations can be put forward for this. This report presents the first, descriptive findings of the study of the careers of young working people (aged 18-35 years). A subsequent phase of the study will explore explanations for the differences found.¹ We drew on several sources for this study, including school-leaver surveys by the Research Centre for Education and the Labour Market (ROA), the Labour Force Survey and Income Statistics by Statistics Netherlands (CBS) and the European Union Labour Force Survey (for further information: see Appendix A 'Datasets used', via www.scp.nl).

1 The final report is scheduled for publication in early 2018.



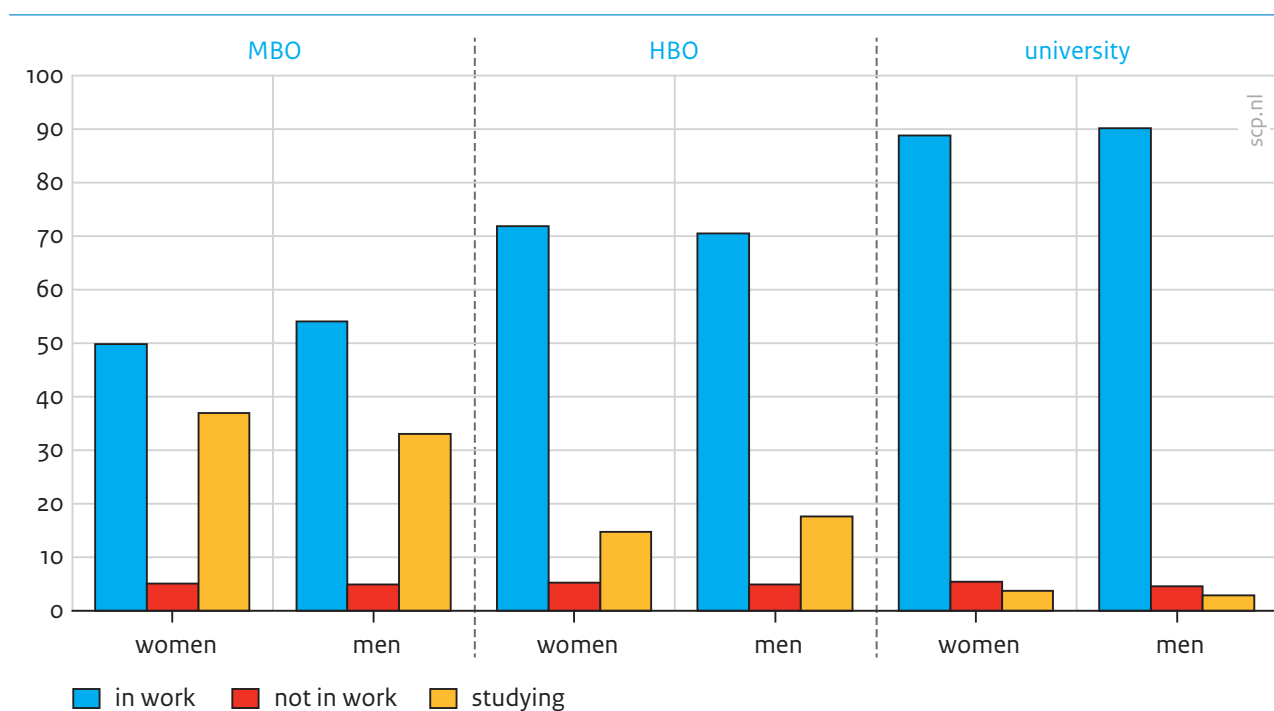
2 School-leavers: eighteen months later

How are young people faring around eighteen months after obtaining their educational qualification? The differences in the labour market positions of students graduating from the different education levels are considerable, but the differences between young women and young men are generally small.

After eighteen months, over half those graduating from senior secondary vocational education (MBO) are in paid work (Figure 2.1). This applies slightly more for men than for women, but the differences are small. More than a third of MBO graduates are in (further) education; this applies slightly more often for women than men.

Figure 2.1

Labour market position of recent graduates^a, by sex and education level, 2013-2015 (in percentages)^b



a Graduates from a (full-time) MBO programme, (full-time) HBO Bachelor programme or (full-time) university Master's programme who were aged below 30 years at the time of the survey.

b The share of MBO and HBO graduates who are working and studying differs significantly for women and men ($p < 0.05$). The differences are not significant for university graduates.

Source: ROA (SIS'13-'15 combined) excluding HBO programmes in fine and performing arts, weighted data; VSNU (wo-Monitor'13)

Over seven out of ten higher professional education (HBO) students have a job after eighteen months after graduating – women slightly more often than men. Just under one in seven are engaged in (further) study. Almost nine out of ten university graduates have a



job after eighteen months. There are no (statistically significant) differences here between young women and young men.

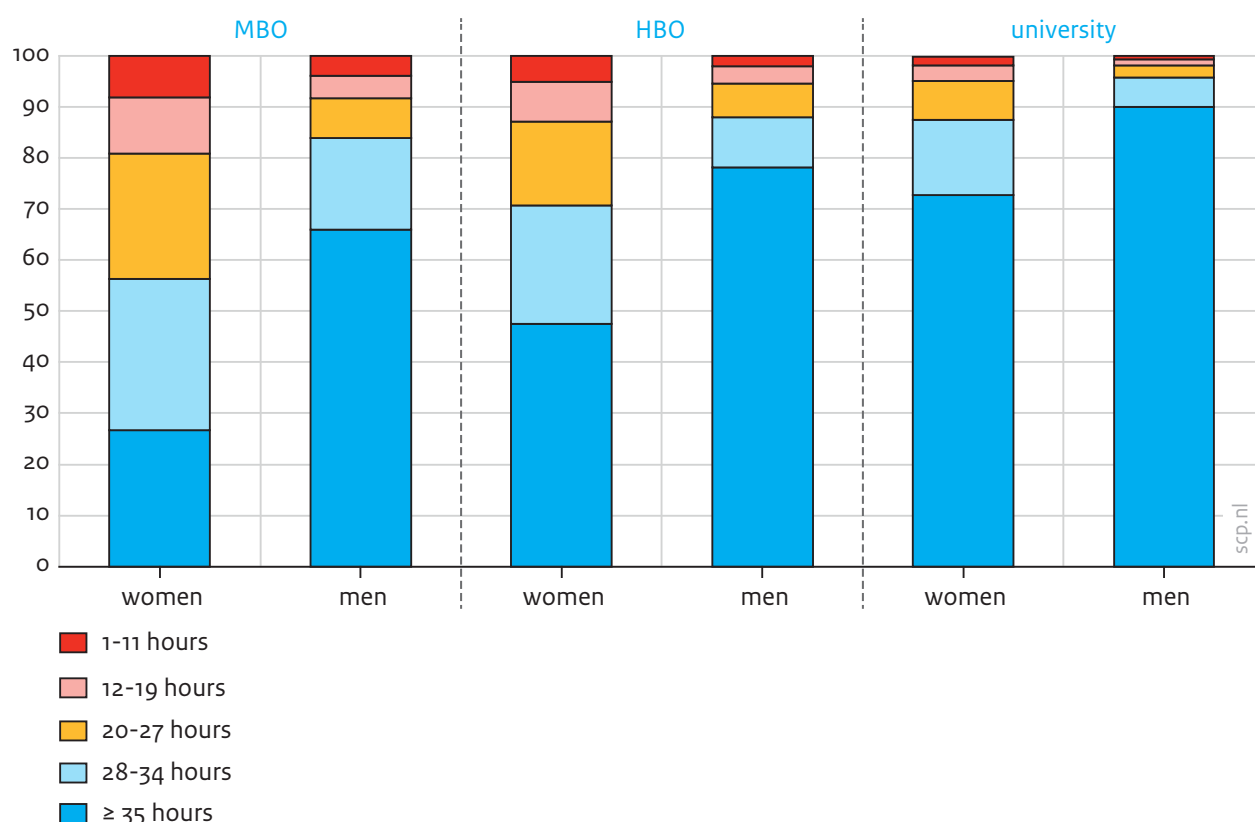
There is also little difference between young women and men as regards occupational level and discipline (not shown in figure). Among MBO graduates, women are slightly more often employed at their own level or higher; among HBO and university graduates this is the case for men. Among MBO graduates, men have a job that matches their education slightly more often than women; there are no differences in the other groups. (More information on these latter findings may be found in Appendix B2, Table B2.4).

Female school-leavers more often working part-time

Three-quarters of female employees in the Netherlands work part-time (Dirven & Portegijs 2016). This pattern is also reflected in the first jobs of school-leavers, with women more often working in part-time jobs than men after graduating (Figure 2.2).

Figure 2.2

Weekly working hours of recent graduates^a, by sex and education level, 2013-2015 (in percentages)^b



a Graduates from a (full-time) MBO programme, (full-time) HBO Bachelor programme or (full-time) university Master's programme who were in paid work and were aged below 30 years at the time of the survey.

b Differences between women and men are significant ($p < 0.05$).

Source: ROA (SIS'13-'15 combined) excluding HBO programmes in fine and performing arts, weighted data; VSNU (wo-Monitor'13)



The differences are most marked among MBO graduates, with only a quarter of women working full-time. Many of them work in medium-sized or large part-time jobs. The differences between young women and men are smaller among HBO and university graduates.

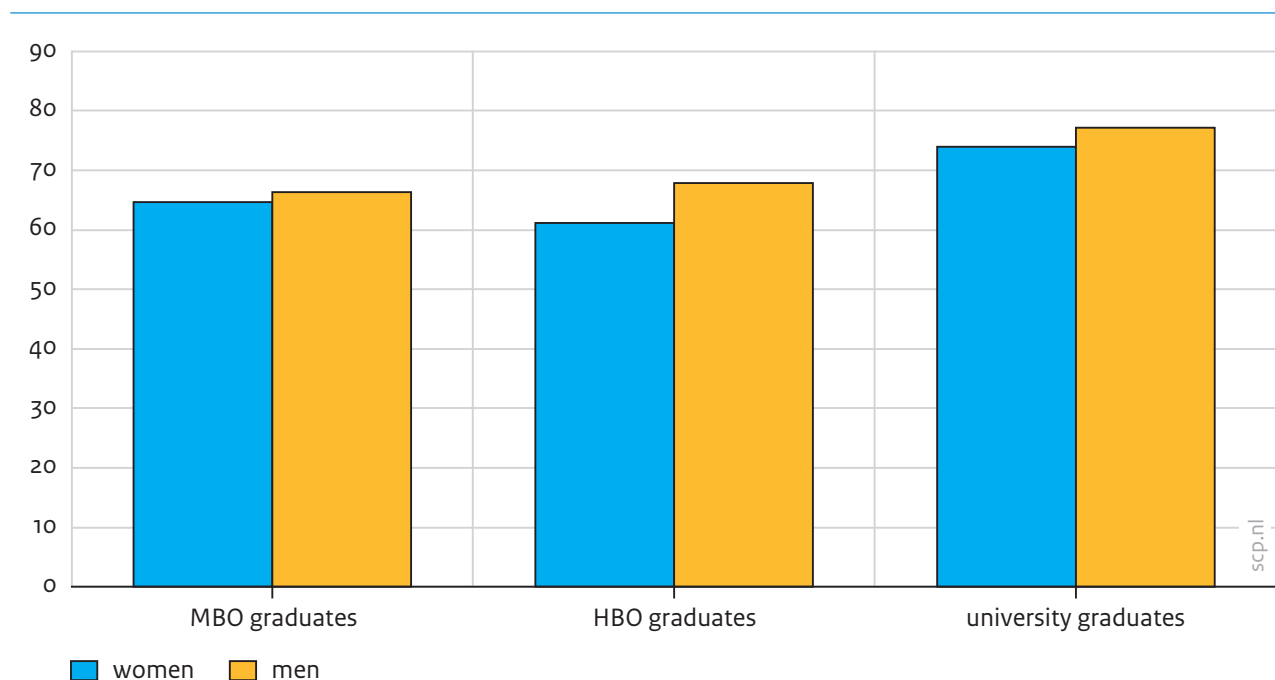
The finding that recently graduated women work fewer hours than men applies both for Dutch natives and migrant groups (for more information, see Appendix B2, Table B2.5). The differences are greater in the non-commercial sectors (such as the civil service and other non-profit organisations) than in the commercial sectors (for more information, see Appendix B2, Table B2.6).

Young women less often satisfied with their job...

Around two-thirds of MBO and HBO graduates and roughly three-quarters of university graduates are satisfied with their jobs (Figure 2.3). In all three groups, young women are less satisfied than young men, though the differences are not very large.

Figure 2.3

Share of working recent graduates who are satisfied or very satisfied with their present job)^a, by sex and education level, 2013-2015 (in percentages)^b



a Graduates from a (full-time) MBO programme, (full-time) HBO Bachelor programme or (full-time) university Master's programme who were in paid work and were aged below 30 years at the time of the survey.

b Differences between women and men are not significant for MBO, whereas differences for HBO and university are ($p < 0.05$).

Source: ROA (SIS'13-'15 combined) excluding HBO programmes in fine and performing arts, weighted data; VSNU (wo-Monitor'13)



The differences between women and men are somewhat wider in the commercial sectors than the non-commercial sectors (civil service and non-profit) (for more information on these supplementary analyses, see Appendix B2, Table B2.7).

Supplementary analyses show that the fact that women are generally less satisfied with their jobs than men is related among other things to the fact that women work fewer hours and receive a lower salary (more information on these supplementary analyses can be found in Appendix B2, Table B2.8). It may be that women are more often reluctantly working part-time than men (see also Portegijs et al. 2008), or that they are less satisfied with their job grade/pay scale; unfortunately, the surveys of school-leavers contain no information on this.

... and slightly less optimistic about their career prospects

Around half of MBO and HBO graduates and roughly two-thirds of university graduates are optimistic about the career prospects offered by their present job (Figure 2.4). However, there are wide differences on this point between young women and young men.

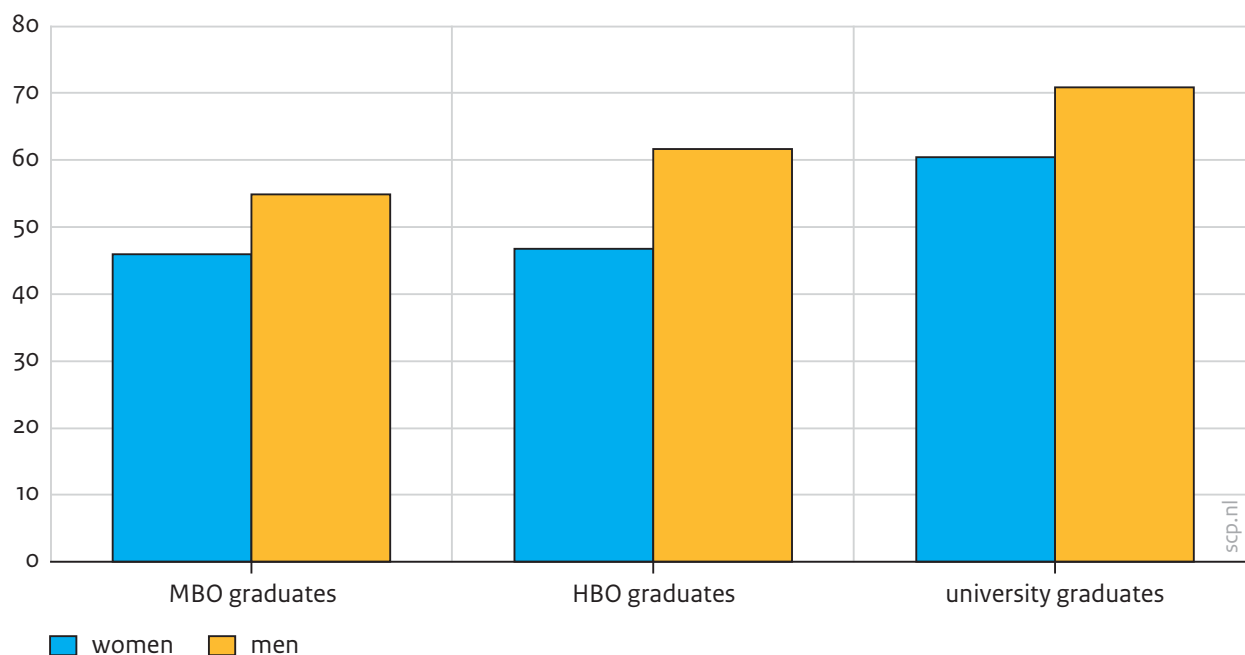
Women are substantially less often optimistic than men across all three graduate groups. To some extent the differences in perceived career prospects are related to the differences noted earlier in the number of hours worked and the salary levels (more information on these supplementary analyses can be found in Appendix B2, Table B2.9). This could indicate that graduates who work part-time (mostly women) assess their career opportunities less positively than those who work full-time. As regards progression to management roles, this is realistic: managers much more often work full-time than part-time (Merens & Dirven 2016).

The differences between women and men are greater in the commercial than the non-commercial sectors. Yet we also see that women in the non-commercial sector (civil service and non-profit) are less optimistic about their career prospects than men (more information on these supplementary analyses can be found in Appendix B2, Table B2.10).



Figure 2.4

Share of working recent graduates who are satisfied or very satisfied with their career prospects^a, by sex and education level, 2013-2015 (in percentages)^b



- a Graduates from a (full-time) MBO programme, (full-time) HBO Bachelor programme or (full-time) university Master's programme who were in paid work and were aged below 30 years at the time of the survey.
- b Differences between women and men are significant ($p < 0.05$).

Source: ROA (SIS'13-'15 combined) excluding HBO programmes in fine and performing arts, weighted data; VSNU (wo-Monitor'13)



3 Young women and men in the Netherlands

How do young women and men fare soon after beginning their careers, when their education is some way behind them and they have been on the labour market for a while? This question is concerned with the labour market position of young women and men with differing education levels at different ages: early twenties, late twenties and early thirties. We looked at the extent of any differences between women and men in terms of key characteristics of the work and their income from employment. The findings are based on data from the Labour Force Survey (EBB) and the Income Statistics from Statistics Netherlands (CBS).

Figure 3.1 presents a general picture of the position of young people aged 18-35 years. A majority (around 60%) of those aged up to 26 years are still in education; those in this age group who are working thus constitute a selection with mainly lower and intermediate education backgrounds. There are virtually no differences in the positions of women and men in the group aged up to 26 years. This is also a phase of life when young people have few responsibilities; they generally live alone or with their parents, usually do not own their own home and do not (yet) have children (Van der Mooren 2015).

More men than women in the 26-30 age group are studying; the reason is that men study for longer than women (Hartgers et al. 2016). Rather more differences between women and men can also be observed in this group than in the youngest group. A smaller proportion of women than men in this age group are in work, and a higher proportion of women than men are not active on the labour market.

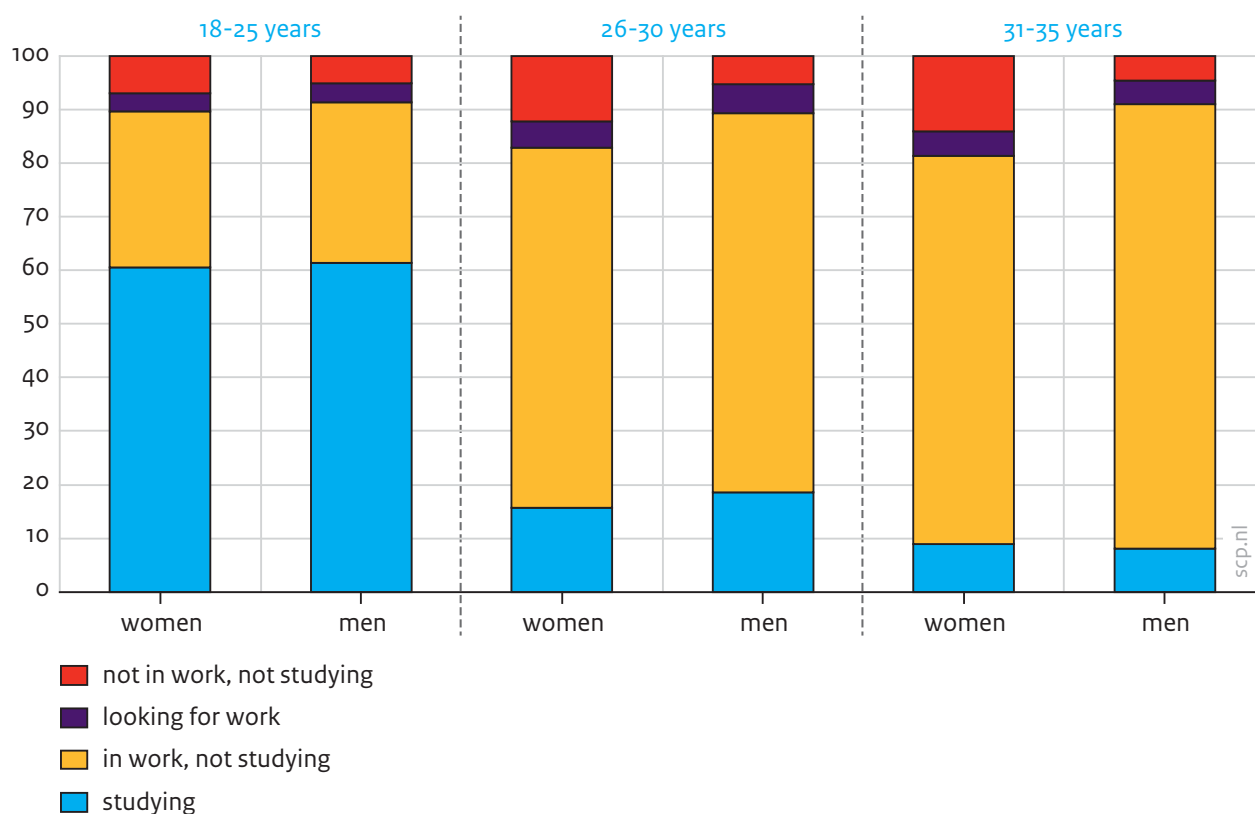
These differences are slightly greater again in the oldest age group (31-35 years), with just over 70% of women and just over 80% of men in work. Just under 15% of women in this group are inactive on the labour market. The percentage of people looking for work (around 5%) is virtually the same for women and men in all age groups.

As age rises youngsters tend to have more responsibilities, such as being in a steady relationship, having a family and owning a home. The tipping point, at which at least half the group go through these transitions, is 27 years for a steady relationship and around 30 years for having children and buying a home (Van der Mooren 2015).

A comparison by origin makes clear that the differences in labour market position between women and men are considerably greater in some groups than others (see Appendix B3, Figure B3.2). There are far more women than men of Moroccan and – to a slightly lesser extent – Turkish origin who are not active on the labour market (around 30%). The gender differences among Dutch natives and people of Surinamese and Antillean origin are relatively small.



Figure 3.1

Position in society^a, by sex and age, 2014 (in percentages)^b

a Working for at least 1 hour per week and excluding pupils/students with student jobs.

b Differences between women and men are significant. ($p < 0.05$).

Source: CBS (EBB'14) SCP treatment; weighted data

Supplementary analyses show that the gender differences in terms of working/not working are to some extent related to phase of life and the type of household to which the person concerned belongs. Women who have a child are less often in work than single women and men with a child. Education level and origin also explain part of the gender differences (see Appendix B3, Table B3.1). Highly educated women are in work almost as often as highly educated men, but the differences are greater among those with an intermediate and – especially – a low education level (see Figure B3.1 and Table B3.1). Moroccan women also work much less frequently than men, even after correcting for education level and household composition. The differences between men and women in the other origin groups are much smaller (after correction), and are roughly the same as those among Dutch natives.

Young women up to 25 years more often on temporary contracts

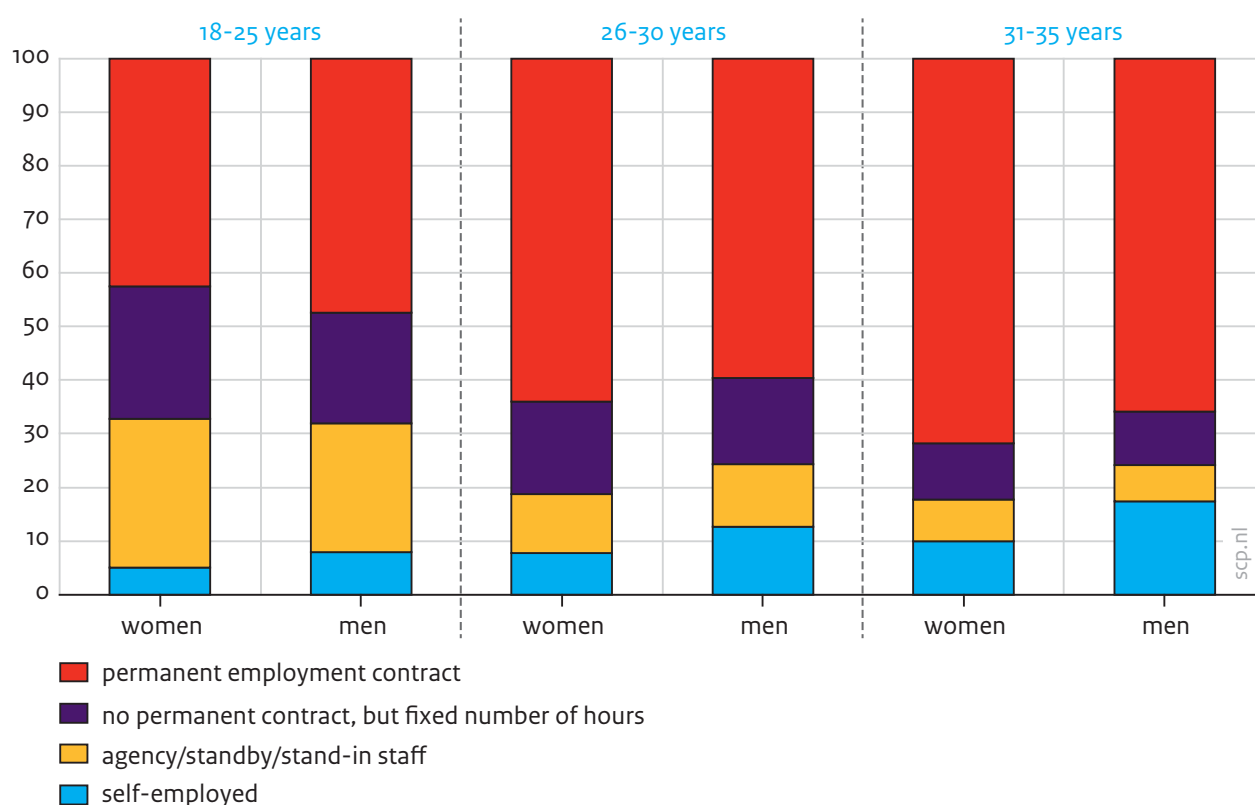
Many young people begin their careers with a temporary or other form of flexible employment contract (Van Echtelt et al. 2016). Women aged up to 25 less often have permanent contracts than men in the same age group (42% versus 47%). They are more often employed on temporary contracts or as agency or standby workers. These



differences are found in all sectors (see Appendix B3, Figure B3.5). The difference in having a permanent contract is greatest in the civil service (34% versus 75%) (not in figure). A relatively high proportion of higher professional education and university graduates in this age group are also on temporary contracts. This could be due to the fact that women complete their studies more quickly than men and there are therefore more highly educated women than men in this age group. By contrast, in the 26-30 and 31-35 age groups, women are more often employed on permanent contracts than men. As in the older labour force, men in this age group are more often self-employed. If we look only at employees (see Appendix B3, Figure B3.3), we find that it is only in the 26-30 age group that women have permanent contracts slightly more often than men. Among 31-35 year-olds, roughly the same proportion of women and men (just under 70%) are on permanent contracts. The gender differences in (not) having a permanent employment contract for the entire group aged 18-35 years cannot be explained by differences in the sectors in which men and women work, but can be explained by differences in education level (see Appendix B3, Table B3.2 and also Figure B3.4).

Figure 3.2

Type of employment contract of those in work^a, by sex and age, 2014 (in percentages)^b



a Working for at least 1 hour per week and excluding pupils/students with student jobs.

b Differences between women and men are significant ($p < 0.05$).

Source: CBS (EBB'14) SCP treatment; weighted data

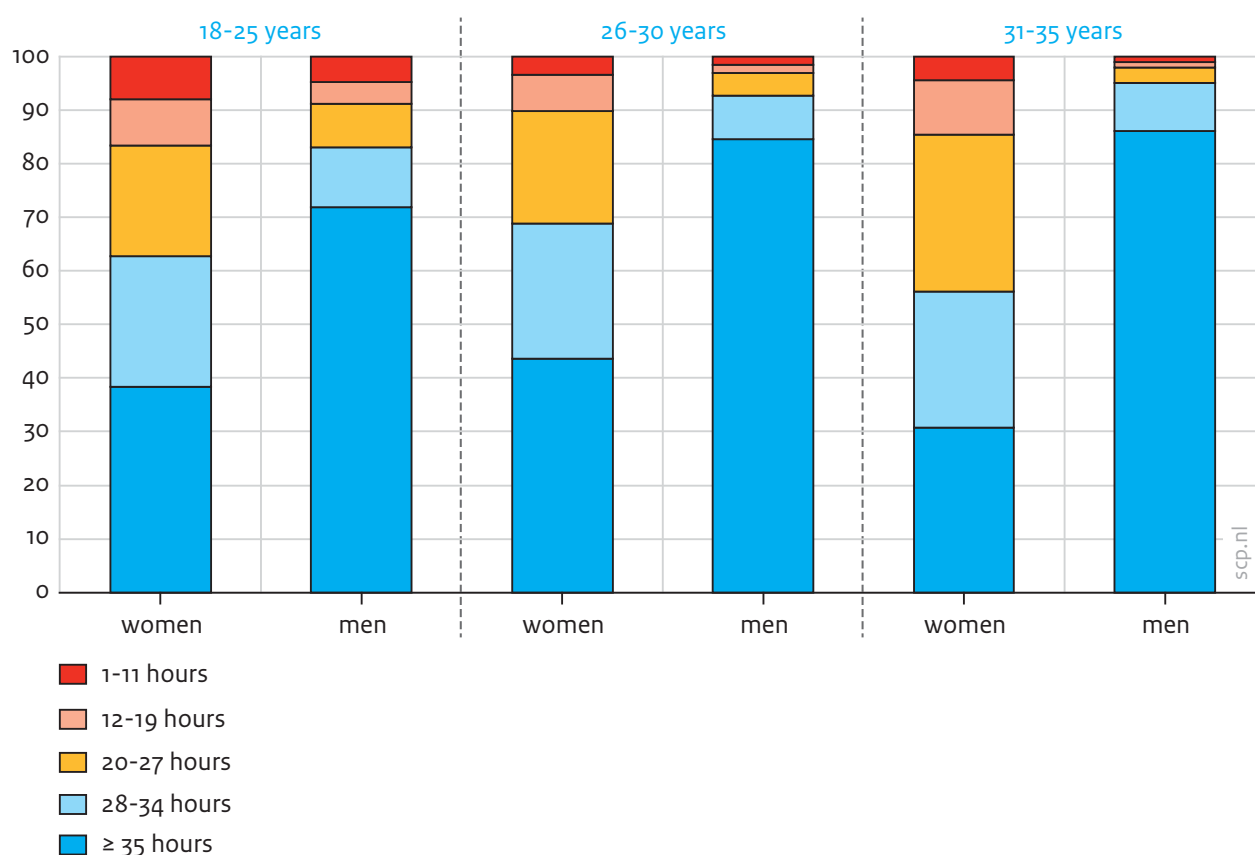


Women much more often work part-time than men

As with school-leavers, working women in the youngest age group less often work full-time than men (just under 40% versus over 70%). The differences are even greater among 26-30 year-olds, and especially 31-35 year-olds. Older women more often work part-time, while the reverse is true for men. A large majority of men in the oldest age group (over 80%) work full-time, compared with 30% of women. Most women working part-time are in medium-sized or large part-time jobs. Women in the oldest age group work an average of 27 hours per week, compared with 38 hours for men (not shown in figure).

Figure 3.3

Weekly working hours of those in work^a, by sex and age, 2014 (in percentages)^b



a Working for at least 1 hour per week and excluding pupils/students with student jobs.

b Differences between women and men are significant ($p < 0.05$).

Source: CBS (EBB'14) SCP treatment; weighted data



Working hours differ not just by sex, but also by sector. In the non-commercial sector (civil service, education and health care) and part of the commercial sector (commerce), part-time jobs are more common than in the rest of the commercial sector (see Appendix B3, Figure B3.6). The gender gap is widest in commerce (see Appendix B3, Figure B3.7). The differences are smaller in the non-commercial sector because men also relatively often work part-time. The gap is narrowest in financial services, where both men and women largely work full-time. It is not clear to what extent women (and men) are reluctant part-time workers, though it is known from earlier research (Portegijs et al. 2008) that young women sometimes work part-time against their wishes because full-time jobs no longer exist in their sector (e.g. home care, childcare).

There are also differences in working hours based on education level (see Appendix B3, Figure B3.8). Women with a higher education level more often work in full-time and large part-time jobs (28-34 hours) than lower-educated women. Men's working hours are virtually unaffected by their education level. The gender gap in working hours is thus narrowest among university graduates and widest among those with a lower or intermediate education background (pre-vocational secondary, junior general secondary, senior secondary vocational, senior general secondary, pre-university). The differences in working hours are also relatively wide among women and men of Moroccan origin and narrow among women and men of Surinamese and Antillean background. Dutch natives and women and men of Turkish origin occupy an intermediate position (see Appendix B3, Figure B3.9).

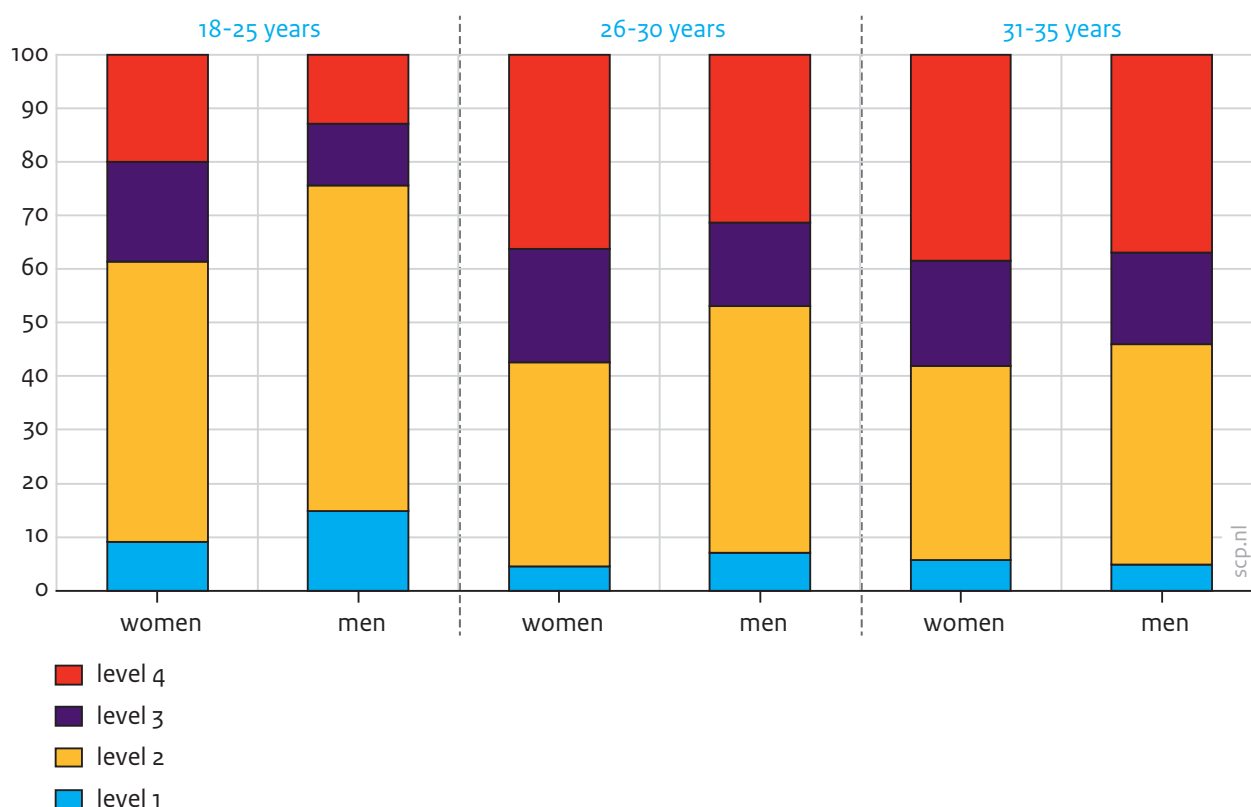
The gender differences in working hours can be explained partly by household composition (mothers work fewer hours than fathers), education level and the sector in which they work. Even after correcting for these characteristics, however, differences in working hours remain between women and men aged under 35 (see Appendix B3, Table B3.3).

Young women work at higher occupational levels than men

In addition to whether or not they work on a permanent contract and the number of hours worked, the level of the work performed is an important determinant of someone's position on the labour market. Young women – especially those aged under 30 – work (slightly) more often than men at the higher occupational levels (3 and 4). Men are much more often employed at level 2. This is a surprising finding, because within the working population as a whole, fewer women than men are employed at level 4, and roughly the same proportions as men at the lower levels (Dirven & Portegijs 2016).



Figure 3.4

Occupational level of those in work^a, by sex and age, 2014 (in percentages)^b

a Working for at least 1 hour per week and excluding pupils/students with student jobs.

b Differences between women and men are significant ($p < 0.05$).

Source: CBS (EBB'14) SCP treatment; weighted data

The higher occupational level of women aged under 35 can be ascribed chiefly to their higher education level. After correcting for education level, sector and working hours, the differences in occupational level between women and men in this age group disappear (see Appendix B3, Table B3.4).

Women under 30 earn as much as or more than men per hour

Young women aged up to 25 years earn slightly less (per year) than men. The difference is greater among 25-29 year-olds, with women earning €22,000 per year and men €27,000, and widens substantially in the 30-34 age group: €26,000 versus €37,000 per annum (see Appendix B3, Figure B3.10).

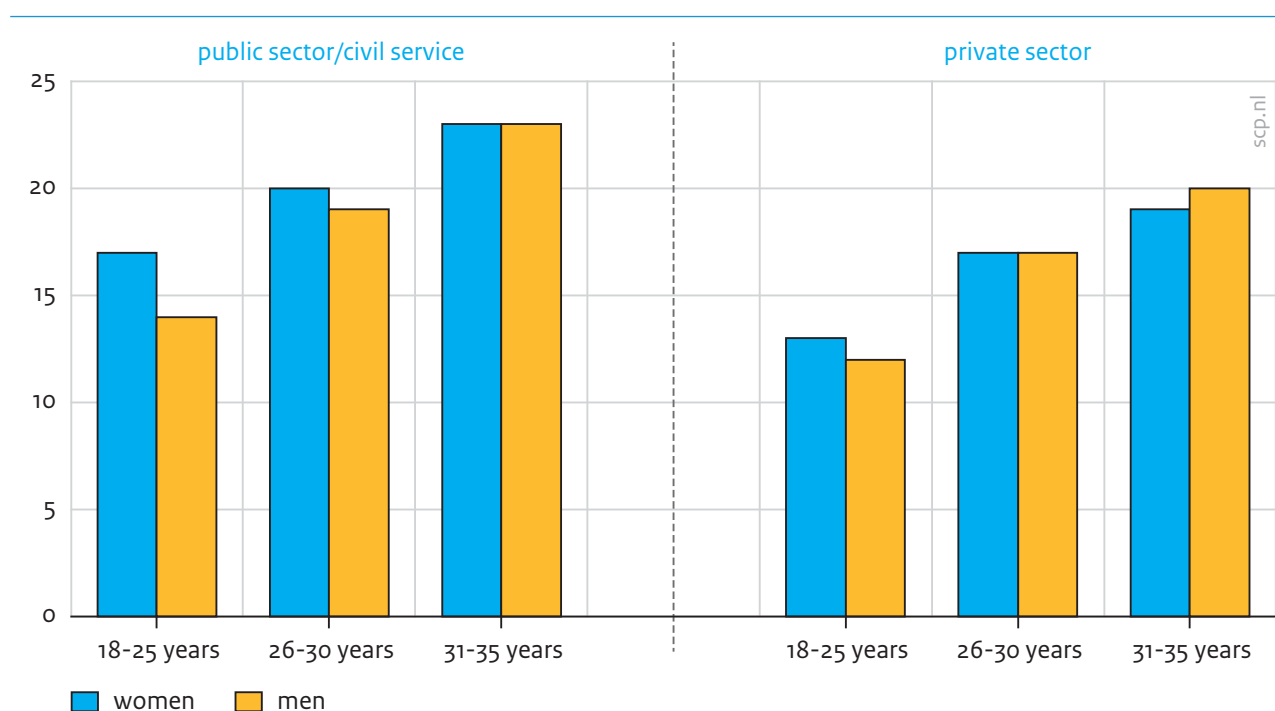
If we look at hourly income (Figure 3.5), a different picture emerges. Women aged up to 31 working in the civil service earn more per hour than men. Above this age, the hourly pay rates of women and men are the same. The hourly pay of women aged up to 25 is also higher in the private sector. In the 26-31 age group, women and men working in the private sector receive the same hourly pay, while in the oldest age group, men earn more than women. Across the whole group aged 18-35 years, women in the civil service earn an average of 7% more per hour than men, and in the private sector 2% less than men.



After correcting for characteristics (such as education level, sector of employment, occupational level, etc.) for the entire group aged 18-35 years, the hourly pay differentials between women and men in the civil service disappear (see Appendix B3, Table B3.5). In the private sector, the hourly pay rate of women, after correction for the same characteristics is 4% below that of men (see Appendix B3, Table B3.6). The fact that the hourly pay gap in favour of women in the civil service disappears after correction and turns even more negative in the private sector indicates that young women compare positively with men on key characteristics such as education level. The fact that young women in the private sector earn less per hour than men in practice could suggest pay discrimination. The hourly pay of women across the labour force as a whole is *lower* than that of men. Approximately half these differentials can be explained by differences in characteristics (Muller et al. 2016).

Figure 3.5

Average hourly pay of employees^a aged 18-35 years, by sector, sex and age, 2014 (in euro's)



a Working for at least 4 hours per week and excluding pupils/students with student jobs.

Source: CBS (BRP'14; EBB'14; SWL'14), data supplied at the request of scp

...but are less often economically independent

Economic independence is a key aim of Dutch emancipation policy (TK 2012/2013). This is defined as earning an income (from employment) that is at least equal to the amount of social assistance benefit for a single person, currently around €920 per month.

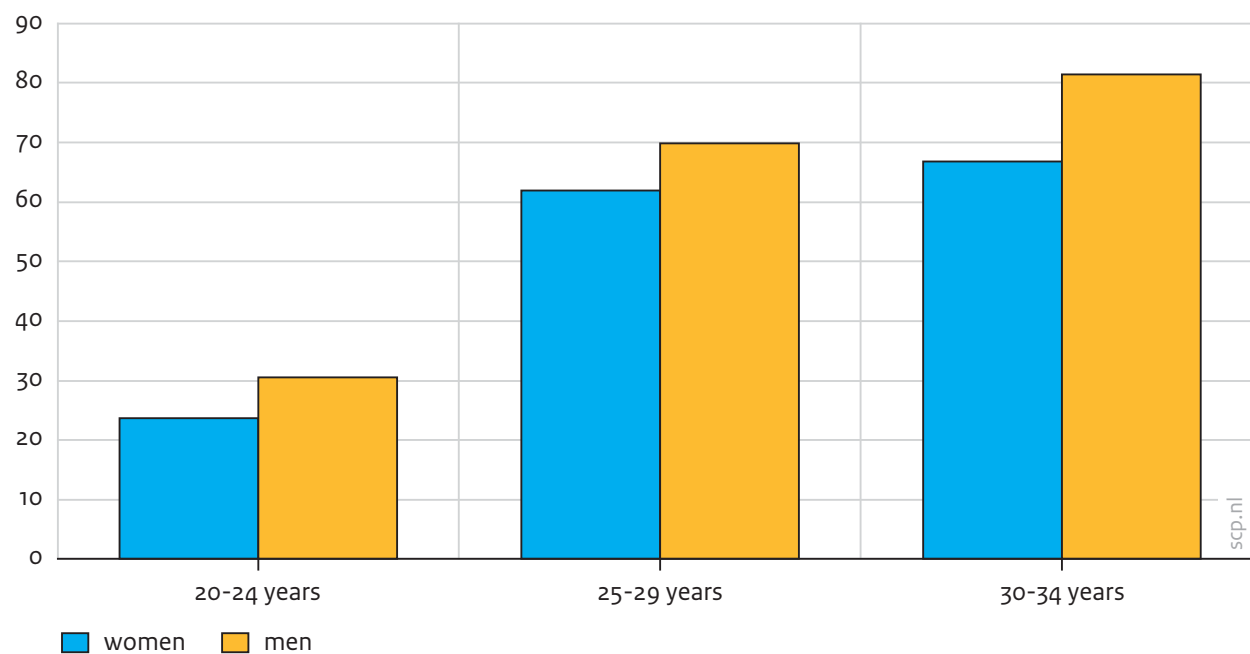
Young women are less often economically independent than men, with the differential being greatest in the age group 30-34 years (66% versus 82%). Differences in working hours, which are greater among 30-34 year-olds than among those in their twenties,



provide the main explanation for differentials in economic independence between young women and men (Loog 2014).

Figure 3.6

Economic independence of persons aged 20-34 years, by sex and age, 2014^a (in percentages)



a Provisional figures.

Source: CBS StatLine 2016a



4 Young women and men in Europe

How are young people faring elsewhere in Europe? The percentage of young women in paid work is lower than that of young men in virtually all European countries (Figure 4.1; see also Appendix B.4, Table B4.1). On average, just under 69% of all young women in Europe are in paid employment, compared with almost 80% of all young men. The gap between young women and men is narrowest in Cyprus, Portugal, Belgium and Sweden, and widest in Croatia, Slovakia and Hungary. The Netherlands is in the ‘middle group’. Regionally, the differences in Northern and Southern Europe are smaller than in Western Europe, but are greatest in Eastern Europe. (More information on these findings may be found in Appendix B4, Table B4.2).

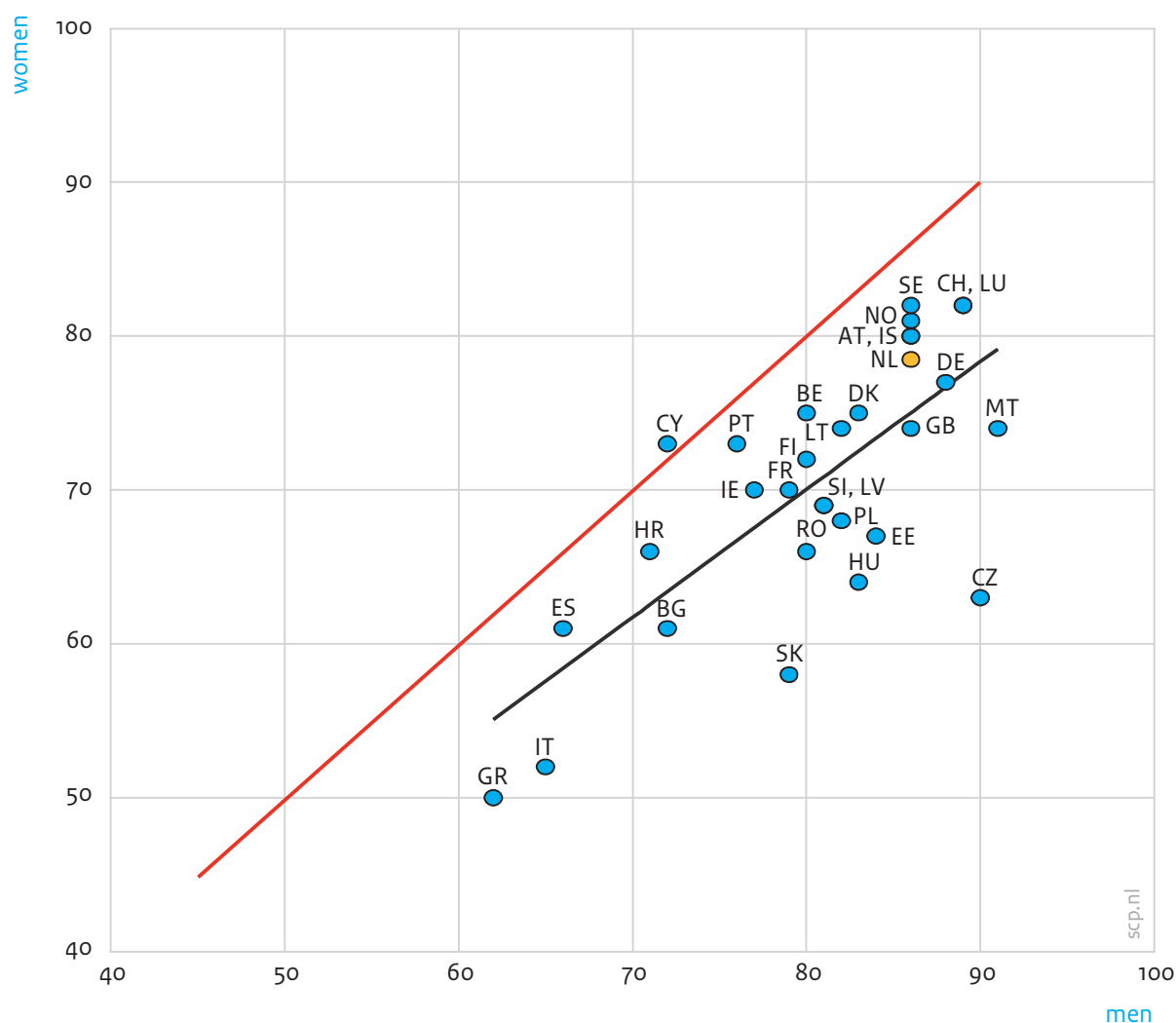
Supplementary analyses were used to look at different age groups. In around half of all countries, the share of women in paid work is lower than that of men already in the youngest age group (20-25 years). In some two-thirds of countries, this difference increases in the older age groups (26-35 years). (More information on these findings may be found in Appendix B4, Table B4.3).

The differential in paid work between young women and men in Europe, but also the wide variation, has also emerged in earlier research (Plantenga et al. 2013). Young women are more often inactive on the labour market than men, including immediately after leaving education.



Figure 4.1

Shares of young women and men in paid work in EU countries, age 20-35 years^a, 2014 (in percentages)^b



- | | | |
|---------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| AT = Austria | FR = France | LV = Latvia |
| BE = Belgium | GB = Great Britain | MT = Malta |
| BG = Bulgaria | GR = Greece | NL = Netherlands |
| CH = Switzerland | HR = Croatia | NO = Norway |
| CY = Cyprus | HU = Hungary | PL = Poland |
| CZ = Czech Republic | IE = Ireland | PT = Portugal |
| DE = Germany | IS = Iceland | RO = Romania |
| DK = Denmark | IT = Italy | SE = Sweden |
| EE = Estonia | LT = Lithuania | SI = Slovenia |
| ES = Spain | LU = Luxembourg | SK = Slovakia |
| FI = Finland | | |

a Paid work = at least 1 hour per week. Share calculated based on the population of young women and men with and without work, including those not active on the labour market and unemployed persons, but excluding those in education.

b Differences between men and women are significant for all countries ($p < 0.05$) except Cyprus. The red line shows the situation if women and men were in paid work to an equal extent. For percentages per country, see Appendix B4, Table B4.1.

Source: Eurostat'14 (EU LFS), SCP treatment, weighted data



Young women in virtually all European countries work fewer hours than young men (Figure 4.2; see also Appendix B4, Table B4.4). Young women in Europe work an average of just over 35 hours per week, while men work 39 hours. The differences between young women and men are greatest in the Netherlands, followed by Switzerland and Great Britain, and are smallest in Bulgaria, Lithuania and Romania. Regionally, the differences are greatest in Western Europe, followed by Southern Europe and Northern Europe. The differences are smallest in Eastern Europe. (More information on these findings may be found in Appendix B4, Table B4.5).

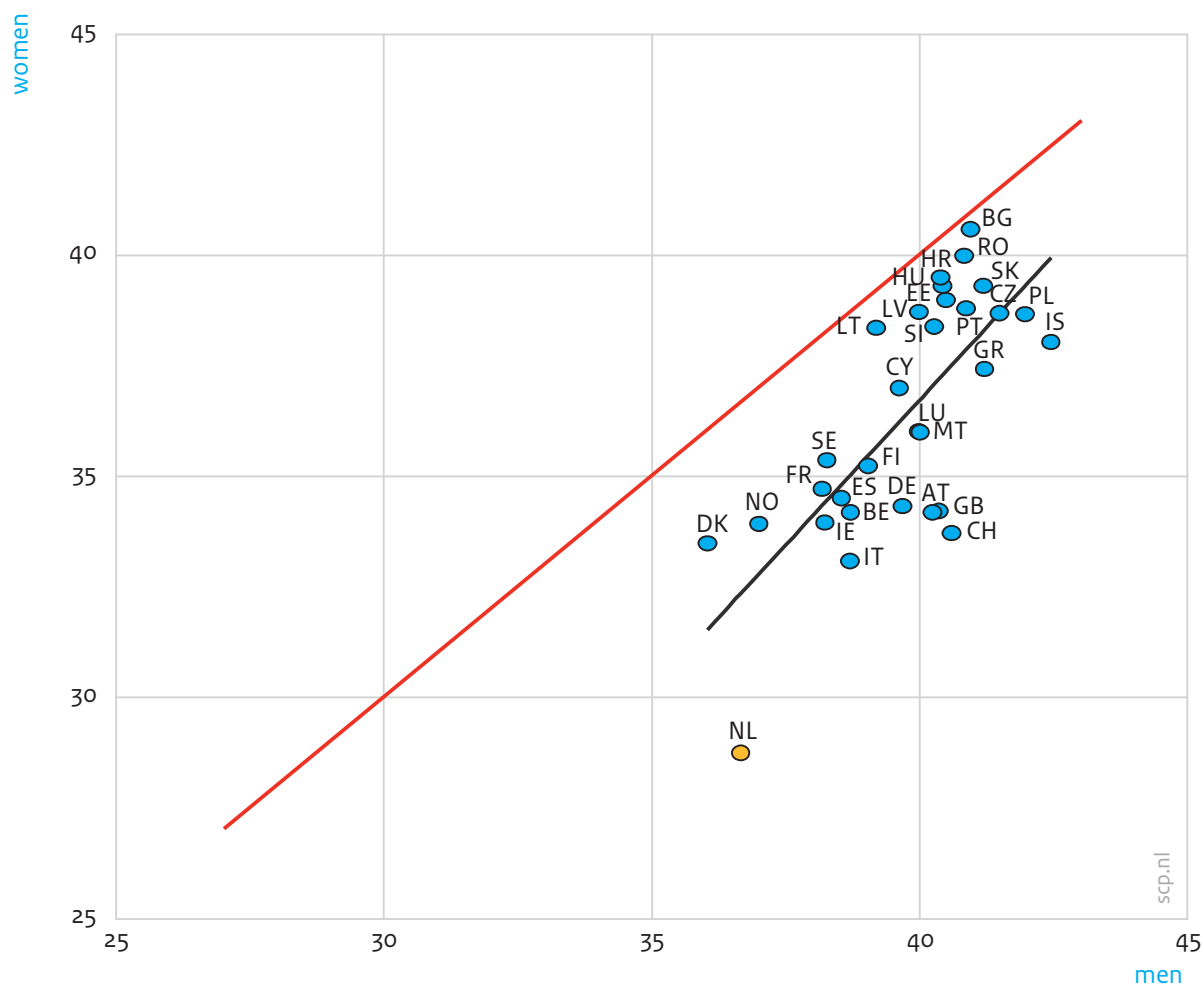
Supplementary analyses were used to look at different age groups. In the vast majority of countries (around eight out of ten), women work fewer hours than men, including those in the youngest age group (20-25 years). In around half of all countries, this difference increases in the older age groups (26-35 years). (More information on these findings may be found in Appendix B4, Table B4.6).

Earlier European research has shown that women more often work part-time than young men, not just when young, but also in their first job after leaving education (Plantenga et al. 2013). As in the Netherlands, working part-time is strongly associated with motherhood and a low education level.



Figure 4.2

Weekly working hours (number of hours) of young women and men (20-35 years) in paid work^a, 2014
(average)^b



- | | | |
|---------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| AT = Austria | FR = France | LV = Latvia |
| BE = Belgium | GB = Great Britain | MT = Malta |
| BG = Bulgaria | GR = Greece | NL = Netherlands |
| CH = Switzerland | HR = Croatia | NO = Norway |
| CY = Cyprus | HU = Hungary | PL = Poland |
| CZ = Czech Republic | IE = Ireland | PT = Portugal |
| DE = Germany | IS = Iceland | RO = Romania |
| DK = Denmark | IT = Italy | SE = Sweden |
| EE = Estonia | LT = Lithuania | SI = Slovenia |
| ES = Spain | LU = Luxembourg | SK = Slovakia |
| FI = Finland | | |

a Averages were calculated for young women and men in paid work (for at least 1 hour per week).

b Differences between men and women are significant for all countries ($p < 0.05$) except Bulgaria. The red line shows the situation if women and men worked the same number of hours. For average number per country, see Appendix B4, Table B4.4.

Source: Eurostat'14 (EU LFS), SCP treatment, weighted data



5 Conclusions

Most of the differences in the labour market position of young women and men occur at the start of their careers. Some of the differences are greater in the older age groups, while others are then smaller or disappear altogether.

Differences in labour market participation and working hours greatest in the older age groups

After completing their education, young women and men appear to find it equally easy to enter the labour market; there is little or no difference in the percentage who are in work. However, shortly after leaving education, young women do more often work part-time than young men. The reason for this is not clear; it may be that young women work mainly in jobs and sectors where it is not possible to work full-time, or they may have different preferences from men. Young women are less satisfied with their jobs at the start of their careers than young men, and they are also less optimistic about their career prospects. This may be connected to the fact that they are working fewer hours than they would like. As we move through to the older age groups, we see that the differences between the shares of working women and men increase. Men in the older age groups are more often in work than women, not because of a lower unemployment rate but because some women are no longer active on the labour market. The differences in working hours are also greater in the older age groups. Having children plays a role in both observed differences.

Some gender differences occur only in the youngest group

It is notable that women in the youngest group of workers (18-25 years) more often work on temporary or other forms of flexible employment contract than their male counterparts; in the older age groups, this difference has virtually disappeared. In other respects, the youngest group of women are in a better position than men, more often working at higher occupational levels and earning more per hour. Both the fact that the youngest group of women more often begin working on temporary employment contracts and their higher occupational level and hourly pay are (partly) related to their higher education level.

Young women are less economically independent than men

Despite the higher occupational level and (sometimes) hourly pay, young women overall earn less per year than men and are less often economically independent. The difference is greatest in the oldest age group. The frequency with which women work part-time, in particular, ultimately results in a lower income and less economic independence for young women compared with their male counterparts. The differential in working hours is thus not only the most notable difference, but also the biggest determinant of the differing financial positions of young women and men.



Young women and men elsewhere in Europe also differ

The picture presented for the Netherlands in this regard broadly corresponds with that in other European countries. The share of young working women is lower than that of young men in virtually all European countries, and the gap widens further in the older age groups. In addition, young women in virtually all European countries work fewer hours than young men. This differential in working hours is greatest in the Netherlands, followed by other Western-European countries such as Switzerland and Great Britain. As in the Netherlands, these differences can already be observed in the youngest age groups, and increase with age.

Finally

The findings presented in this publication constitute a snapshot. The differences between the age groups described in this report provide no certainty about the age at which young women and men undergo changes in their employment and income position. For example, we do not know whether women and men who are aged between 20 and 25 will behave in the same way on the labour market in ten years' time as those who are currently aged 30-35 do now. In the next study we will look in more depth at the transitions that young women and men go through and at the explanations and mechanisms underlying the differences in the position of young women and men found in this study.



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