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POST-FORDIST WORK: A MAN'S WORLD?

Gender and Working Overtime in the Netherlands

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There is debate about whether the post-Fordist or high-performance work organization can overcome the disadvantages women encounter in traditional gendered organizations. Some authors argue that substituting a performance logic for control by the clock offers opportunities for combining work and family life in a more natural way. Critics respond that these organizational reforms do not address the nonresponsibility of firms for caring duties at a more fundamental level. The authors address this debate through an analysis of overtime work, using data from a survey of 1,114 employees in 30 Dutch organizations. The findings reveal that post-Fordist work is associated with more overtime hours than traditional forms of work and that far from challenging gendered organization, it reproduces and exacerbates the traditional male model of work.

Keywords: *gendered organizations; flexibility; post-Fordist work; working hours*

Women's subordination in the labor market has often been attributed to the gendered nature of organizations (Acker 1990; Britton 2000; Gambles, Lewis, and Rapoport 2006; Rapoport et al. 2002; Swanberg

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2004). The gist of this argument is that their lagging behind is not due to a lack of competence or ambition, nor to overt discrimination, but to the unintended and inescapable effects of daily working practices. These practices are grounded in a male model of work that makes it difficult for women to compete on equal terms. A “separation of spheres,” that is, the public sphere of work and the private sphere of the family, has been identified as one of the pillars of this gendered system (e.g., Haas and Hwang 2007; Rapoport et al. 2002). The design and functioning of work organizations is based on the assumption that workers have no private obligations. The model worker is totally available and dedicated to the firm. In some instances, these expectations can lead to a “long-hours culture” in firms, which disadvantages women in the race for career success (Gambles, Lewis, and Rapoport 2006; Lewis 1997; Rutherford 2001). Thus, a key insight of gender theory is that “a gendered substructure underlies organizing and helps to explain the persistence of male dominance and female disadvantage” (Acker 1998, 197).

Feminist scholars have asserted that a fundamental change in the way of working is required to give women equal chances in the world of work (Acker 1990; Bailyn 1993, 2006; Hochschild 1997; Lewis and Cooper 2005; Rapoport et al. 2002). Lately, it seems that such a change may have become possible due to technological innovations and contemporary management practices. What is called the “post-Fordist” organization breaks with the industrial pattern responsible for the historical shaping of the separate spheres. This concept describes (and often recommends) workplaces that are characterized by greater flexibility—achieved through the use of new technologies in combination with individualized organizational control—and higher levels of autonomy and responsibility for the workforce (Cappelli et al. 1997; DiPrete, Goux, and Maurin 2002). We shall see that some features of this post-Fordist work indeed correspond with features that feminist authors have advocated. Contrasting with this cautious optimism, however, are empirical results that point towards the “time-greedy” nature of the new work arrangements (Gambles, Lewis, and Rapoport 2006; Perlow 1998). Case studies suggest that the time claims of these new workplaces make them even more a “man’s world” than more traditional organizations. In this article, we first examine both sides of the argument. This is followed by a survey-based test of the controversy. The amount of overtime—paid and unpaid—that workers have to perform is the criterion used to judge whether post-Fordism challenges or reproduces the male model of work.

GENDERED ORGANIZATIONS AND POST-FORDISM

The Nonresponsible Firm

In the perspective of gendered organizations, “gender is a foundational element of organizational structure and work life” (Britton 2000, 419). This insight draws attention to organizational practices that create idealized images of work, workers, and success that reflect and reinforce inequity between men and women while appearing gender-neutral. A striking exemplar is the unspoken assumption that dedicated workers can free themselves from private duties, so that nothing needs to interfere with the demands of their jobs. This assumption’s obvious lack of reality, particularly for women, testifies to its ideological nature. As Acker has pointed out, “The concept ‘a job’ is thus implicitly a gendered concept, even though organizational logic presents it as gender neutral. ‘A job’ already contains the gender-based division of labor and the separation between the public and the private sphere” (1990, 149).

Acker developed this insight into a theory of “the privileging and non-responsibility of organizations” (1998, 199). The fact that in Western market economies companies can act as if the caring duties of their workers do not exist gives rise to an unfortunate pattern of work centrality and gender inequality. For markets to render socially optimal outcomes, it is crucial to examine which costs they have to consider (and which not) and on which grounds competition among firms and workers takes place. The upshot of Acker’s argument is that true social interests are not adequately reflected in these rules of the game. The fact that in their daily routines and associated rewards firms ignore the private lives of their employees makes them “nonresponsible” to “the essential social activities of birthing, caring, and even surviving” (1998, 201). Many organizational practices almost by default establish this nonresponsibility for matters of human reproduction (see Coleman 1982). From a broader point of view this is irrational because these organizations clearly depend upon the reproduction economy for their supply of workers and the sale of products. They are saved by the fact that most women still take their responsibilities and bear the burden of a second shift and a secondary career (Crompton, Lewis, and Lyonette 2007; Hochschild 1989).

Acker’s theory implies that organizations will remain gendered as long as the illusion is maintained that employers need have no responsibility for society’s reproductive interests. The doctrine of separate spheres effectively denies women the opportunity to combine work and family life in a natural and optimal way. To this we may add that nonresponsibility also

allows organizations to put socially disruptive time claims upon their workers (women *and* men). The widespread anxiety about the “time squeeze” and “work stress” is the mirror image of the same phenomenon. The amount of overtime organizations extract from their workers can therefore be taken as an indicator for their level of nonresponsibility.

From Clock Time to Task Time

Britton (2000) has argued against treating organizations as inherently gendered since this would imply that no positive change is possible. It would become unimaginable what an “ungendered” organization would look like or how “ungendered” work could be carried out. The assumption of inherently gendered organizations is at odds with the experience that “there are some contexts that are less oppressively gendered than others” (2000, 422).

This is also the point of departure of those authors who seek to relieve women’s burdens and find practical solutions for the work-home imbalance. Their effort is extremely important, not just for women (and men), but also for the opportunity it provides to test our ideas and to sharpen our views. Kurt Lewin’s old adage—“If you want to know how things really are, just try to change them”—is unabatedly relevant for proposals to change work practices in gender-neutral and family-friendly directions. In the past decade much attention has been given to reforms that seek to increase autonomy and flexibility and thereby to allow better integration of work and home. This seems a logical step: If the problem lies in separate spheres, removing the physical barriers between the spheres should bring improvement. Hence, many scholars argue that flexible work arrangements are key to minimizing employee role strain and maximizing productivity and other positive outcomes (Eaton 2003; Sutton and Noe 2005; Swanberg 2004; Van Dyne, Kossek, and Lobel 2007). Preferably, these measures should be accompanied by associated shifts in workplace cultures and practices.

Lotte Bailyn is one of the pioneering scholars who dared to cross the bridge from theory to practice, and to propose measures for work redesign (e.g., Bailyn 1993, 2006; Rapoport et al. 2002). In her 2004 Hughes Award Lecture, she cautiously tries to find her way towards work and career practices that are better suited to the human pace of life. It is worthwhile to cite her course of reasoning at length:

Can careers be successful if we let tasks, rather than the clock, determine what we do? . . . Would it be possible for our career institutions to

accommodate an output-oriented view of work activities—and not require the input of measurable time spent? . . . Work designed around a less rigid, more encompassing sense of time follows a performance logic rather than one of control. Employees' lives are easier, and at the same time, work is more effective. Both time and energy expand. (Bailyn 2004, 1509, 1512)

Bailyn adds that the ensuing flexible work arrangements “also bridge a divide usually not bridged—namely the cultural divide between the private domestic sphere and the public economic sphere, which arose with industrialization” (2004, 1512). The separation of spheres is thus interpreted at a pragmatic level. It is amenable to actions that seek to free labor from the historical chains of office hours and factory walls. In another paper, Bailyn and Harrington put this clearly and succinctly:

Work organized around clock time, rather than task time, is a key contributor to difficulties with work-family integration. . . . It is this conflation of time at work with commitment and competence that creates many of the problems of integrating work with personal life. (2004, 201)

So then, could not work be reformed in such a way that performance and not presence count; that people could decide for themselves how to do the job, including when to do it and how fast to do it; that people could build a reputation for real achievements rather than working late in the office; that people could work at home as well as in the office; that success would become just a matter of meeting targets and deadlines? As it happens, these reforms have long found their way into the defining characteristics of new work concepts, particularly in relation to knowledge work, that have spread across Western economies in the past two decades. These concepts go under the various headings of “post-Fordist” (Amin 1994; DiPrete, Goux, and Maurin 2002), “postindustrial” (Lewis 2003), “post-modern” (Kumar 1995), or “high-performance” (Appelbaum et al. 2000) organizations. The terms are largely congruent with each other, and in this article, we will refer to “post-Fordist” work, indicating workplaces characterized by greater flexibility and autonomy. Organizing work in this way is, on one hand, characterized by much freedom for the employee and by interesting and instructive tasks. The job does not need to be performed at fixed hours and locations, and the employee can decide where and when to work. The other side of the coin is that job security depends more heavily on performance than before, and predictable career paths give way to more uncertain and competitive promotion systems. Employees work in project-teams, and the work is imposed by strict targets and deadlines. Not

attaining these targets can have serious consequences for (social) rewards and may even lead to losing the job. In general, the literature suggests that an important characteristic of the post-Fordist job design is that the responsibility for attaining production goals is further shifted to the worker (Appelbaum et al. 2000; Cappelli et al. 1997; Sennett 1998).

The majority of these characteristics are clearly in the spirit of the appeal to substitute a performance logic for the rigid control by the clock. However, post-Fordist work also includes some features that generally are not on the list of work-and-family authors. For example, post-Fordist and high-performance work stresses learning opportunities and is composed of more challenging tasks, which often means that extent of learning depends on extent of work (cf. Green 2004; Nelen and de Grip 2008). This is already a warning that the outcome for work-and-family life and hence for gender neutrality may not be unequivocally positive.

Acker (1998) is skeptical. Although she acknowledges that organizational restructuring might offer possibilities for shaping organizations to accommodate nonwork aspects of life, she also points out that other outcomes are just as likely, namely, "intensified work, lengthened hours and . . . more pressures on employed women and men" (1998, 197). This skepticism is unsurprising in the light of her theory, since at a deeper level the new work concepts change nothing about the nonresponsibility of organizations. Breaking the mold and blurring the boundaries between work and nonwork may also remove obstacles to new forms of competition, especially time competition between workers. When the working day is no longer restricted by the opening hours of the firm, opportunities for competition on working time increase (Perlow 1998; Rutherford 2001; Schor 1992). This is illustrated by Hochschild's (1997) well-known findings on the innovative, well-intentioned firm that had introduced "Total Quality" work principles (a post-Fordist concept) to get more enriched, more empowered, and more committed employees. The men and women of "Amerco" were drawn into long working days in which work came to replace home as the emotional center of life. This picture is affirmed by subsequent studies that indicate that employees under these new regimes spend longer hours at work than in the more traditional workplaces (Godard 2001; Hyman et al. 2003; Perlow 1999; Ross 2004; White et al. 2003).

Nevertheless Hochschild's (1997) argument has been contested. For example, Berg, Kalleberg, and Appelbaum (2003) report that workers in high-performance contexts perceive their companies to be more helpful in balancing work and family responsibilities than workers in more traditional environments. The argument is that participating in these systems

gives people a greater sense of personal control and efficacy, which has positive effects on their ability to manage the rest of their lives.

Thus, there is controversy and uncertainty about how apparently gender-neutral work redesign turns out in practice. Berg, Kalleberg, and Appelbaum (2003, 173) admit that “there is a paucity of studies that would help to adjudicate between these two competing hypotheses.” Below, we present the results of a multifirm data collection in the Netherlands in which the concept of the post-Fordist workplace was comprehensively measured. We judge its effects by what we consider the most telling indicator of work-family issues and hence gendered practices: working overtime. No other practice is so intrusive into private life, eating away family time for the sake of business. As such, it is possibly the strongest manifestation of the male model of work. As Rutherford (2001, 275) puts it, “At a time when women can offer almost everything that men can in terms of ability, skills and experience, time becomes an important differentiating feature which makes men more suitable than women.” As a factual indicator, overtime has the additional advantage over more subjective measures that it is unlikely to be biased by systematic differences in perception or experience. Berg, Kalleberg, and Appelbaum’s positive account of the “high-commitment” workplace is based on the question, “To what extent would you say your company helps workers to achieve a balance between their work and family responsibilities?” (2003, 179). It cannot be excluded that fostering high commitment itself induces workers to judge their company’s efforts in a favorable light. Alternatively, asking for the experience of work stress or work-life imbalance (two other common measures) is vulnerable to the observation that women generally say their jobs demand more effort than men do (Gorman and Kmec 2007). Compared to these ambiguous indicators, working overtime is a straightforward measure of what a job requires of its occupants. Traditionally, men have undertaken more overtime than women, reflecting the gendered division of labor. If post-Fordist work makes a difference—for better or for worse—it will show up in the amount and division of overtime men and women perform.

Paid and Unpaid Overtime

The shift from clock time to task time has another implication that is important for our subject: It stimulates the use of unpaid overtime. Traditional accounts of differences in working hours between men and women have mainly focused on contracted hours complemented by paid overtime. For wage workers, paid overtime was the habitual form, and its

use was discouraged by the overtime premiums employers had to pay. Paid overtime, however, is mainly restricted to those jobs where the employer can control the pace of work, and this is less the case in the autonomous and flexible post-Fordist settings. In autonomous jobs, the salaried worker has always been more common than the hourly wage worker, and the former is now advancing. In addition, employers only have a real interest in total working time when employees take up expensive space or machinery, and this was more so in the Fordist era of the manufacturing bureaucracies than in the post-Fordist era of flexible workplaces. Together, these circumstances imply that workers are enticed to perform unpaid overtime whenever the work takes more time than was expected or had been agreed (Lewis 2007).

The importance of this fact is acknowledged by Francis Green (2004) in his study on the intensification of work. Green emphasizes that the new forms of work represent an “effort-biased technological change,” meaning that how hard a person works makes more of a difference. The main reason is that work can be more easily done outside regular working hours. In the economist’s language, “Information and communications technologies raise the opportunity cost of not working during time away from the usual workplace” (Green 2004, 716). This implies that the post-Fordist workplace may indeed extend to the kitchen table—the former female territory. Whether this will bring the desired equality may be considered doubtful.

It is clear, then, that to judge the effects of the post-Fordist work design on working time, it is necessary to study the total of paid and unpaid overtime. It is also clear that the optimistic and pessimistic visions are mirror images of the same phenomenon, so there is no need to formulate hypotheses bipartitely. Below, we will conform to the mainstream of the sociological literature and opt for the pessimistic wording. In this literature, the post-Fordist firm has regularly been depicted as “time-greedy,” but the implications for gendered experiences have received less attention.

HYPOTHESES

Post-Fordist Work and Working Overtime

Expanding the hours and places of work, and charging the workers with personal (or team-based) targets and deadlines, are obvious reasons for expecting the post-Fordist organization to lead to longer hours of work. This, however, still leaves us in need of finding a more specific mechanism.

Without that, it remains unclear why workers would not respond by opting for fewer contractual hours and choosing a more manageable package of income and work. If flexibility offers choices (as the optimists say), why not choose for a more balanced life?

Our conjecture is that the post-Fordist work design also distorts the choices workers have to make on a daily basis. This explanation is based on goal-framing theory, that is, the idea that social circumstances heavily influence how people make decisions, what they pay attention to, what they include in their decision making and what they fail to consider, and how they evaluate things (Lindenberg 2001, 2006). The organization of work pulls some aspects in the cognitive foreground and pushes other aspects into the cognitive background. This is especially important for small decisions, none of which are important enough to ponder, but the accumulation of which can have dire consequences. The way post-Fordist work is organized is likely to shift the focus of the employee from working a certain number of hours to choices such as just finishing this task before going home, just staying around to receive an important call from abroad, just not leaving an important team meeting now just because contract time is over, and so on. (Vivid examples are to be found in Landers, Rebitzer, and Taylor 1996; Lewis 2003; Perlow 1999.) Over time, all these little decisions add up to a considerable amount of unpaid overtime. The project-based work with individual responsibility embedded in teamwork, linked with high performance standards and deadlines, draws the focus on finishing a project in time and not letting others down. If this mechanism is correct, overtime work is the unintended cumulative result of the small decisions to finish a project, help a teammate, and so on. It is thus not realistic to assume that when employees make the decisions that imply working extra hours, they always (or even often) *frame* the situation as a choice between work and family or leisure time. Although employees may have the autonomy to “choose” the number of working hours, in this perspective the cumulative outcome of their small decisions is likely to deviate from preferred working hours. Elsewhere, we have called this restriction the “new lumpiness” of work (Van Echtelt, Glebbeek, and Lindenberg 2006).

In summary, we expect that the characteristics of the post-Fordist workplace shift the focus of the employee to bringing a task to a good and timely end and demonstrating commitment by prioritizing work over everything else. Based on these arguments, our first hypothesis focuses on the effects of post-Fordist work:

Hypothesis 1: Working overtime is positively associated with post-Fordist work (time-greedy work hypothesis).

The Influence of the Household

If caring duties and work compete, as for instance Acker's theory holds, we should expect a strong influence of household obligations on workers' readiness to work overtime. This corresponds with the general pattern that household obligations are strongly associated with the number of contractual working hours (Plantenga, Schippers, and Siegers 1999; Rubery, Smith, and Fagan 1998). Time claims of the household may also be an important determinant of the extra hours employees spend at work. Although there is evidence that gender relations in the family are changing across Europe, these changes are slow and uneven, both within and across countries (Crompton, Lewis, and Lyonette 2007). Women traditionally more often have the responsibility for household tasks than men, even when both partners have a paid job (Blossfeld and Drobnič 2001; Clarkberg and Moen 2001; Eagly 1987), and this is particularly the case in the Netherlands (Plantenga, Schippers, and Siegers 1999; Van den Broek and Breedveld 2004). Even when partners share family work, men often characterize their contribution as "helping" their wives, without feeling they have the main responsibility (Coltrane 2000). Employees with more domestic responsibilities are likely to be more constrained in their opportunities to indulge the "choice" to work overtime.

Gender theory thus predicts that employees with many household and family responsibilities are less likely to spend additional time at work. Independent of the time-greediness of the workplace, employees with substantial household commitments—mainly women—will work fewer additional hours than those—mainly men—with fewer nonwork demands. Based on this argument, our second hypothesis states,

Hypothesis 2: Household responsibilities are negatively associated with working overtime, which contributes to sex differences in working overtime (household restrictions hypothesis).

The Impact of Post-Fordist Work on Women's Work Patterns

Work and home are competitors for time, but this is not always seen as a legitimate competition. The characteristics of post-Fordist work discussed above encapsulate a male model of work. Commitment is defined in terms of stereotypically male behaviors, especially the willingness not to have home compete for time; to be available for long hours to meet deadlines irrespective of domestic involvements, rather than, for example,

in terms of relationships skills that may be used to get work done in a shorter time (Rapoport et al. 2002). We argued that the traditional male model of work, including the valuing of those who are willing to work extra hours, has been exacerbated by post-Fordist work. The question is then whether post-Fordist work is associated with overtime hours for men and women alike. According to the goal-framing approach, it is likely that the forces of the post-Fordist workplace affect women in the same way as men. As discussed previously, we expect that the more men and women find themselves under the post-Fordist regime, the more they will be focused on bringing projects to a good end, finishing a particular task before an imposed deadline, and so on. In this view, the effect of post-Fordist work characteristics will apply equally to men and women. Moreover, conforming to the time claims of work seems to be a necessity for “survival” under these work circumstances for men and women alike. Therefore, we expect that male and female workers are both subject to the forces of the post-Fordist workplace that push them into working long hours. Thus, we pose the following:

Hypothesis 3: The effect of the post-Fordist workplace on working overtime is equal for men and women (goal-framing hypothesis).

Taking hypotheses 2 and 3 together, we expect that women have more difficulty in conforming to the time claims of post-Fordist work than men. Overall, women might work less overtime than men because of ongoing inequities in unpaid family work, even in workplaces where the number of overtime hours is high. This “resistance” to working long hours may cause them frustration, however, and less recognition and career chances (Perlow 1998).

For women or indeed for men who have substantial family responsibilities, the time claims of post-Fordist work may thus be difficult to accommodate. Consequently, we expect that women have more difficulties in “surviving” in such workplaces and therefore will be less likely to work in these environments. This may be because they avoid, leave, or are excluded from post-Fordist work. We summarize this in the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 4: Post-Fordist workplaces are more often occupied by men than by women, which contributes to sex differences in working overtime (composition hypothesis).

DATA AND METHOD

Data

Data from the Time Competition Survey (Glebbeeck and van der Lippe 2004; Van Echtelt 2007) are used for testing the hypotheses. These data were collected by means of a multistage sample of 1,114 Dutch employees and, where applicable, their partners, from 30 work organizations in the Netherlands. These organizations were selected in a purposive, non-random way. Since gaining access to work organizations is a serious obstacle for social research, we secured the support of a large Dutch consultancy firm. Together we designed a scheme of the kind of organizations we wanted to include in the research. As we needed a sufficient number of post-Fordist workplaces to be able to test our hypotheses, we oversampled knowledge-based organizations (e.g., knowledge industry, financial services, professional services, education, and research) because we expected these workplaces to be present especially in these industries. From the outset, the data set was therefore not meant to be completely representative for the Dutch population. During the months of data collection, we gradually worked our way through a list of about 100 candidate organizations, taking care to maintain balance between industries with every hit or miss. In this way, we essentially applied a quota design in the selection of organizations. Balance was not completely achieved, however, since some targets could not be met (banking and IT being the toughest cases in point). The quota design was also applied in the subsequent stage of the data collection. First, in every organization, two to four “characteristic” occupational groups were selected. Within these groups, the employees were presumed to be homogeneous with regard to their level of autonomy, the extent in which the work has to be done in fixed hours and locations, and conditions of employment. In total, 89 different occupational groups were selected. In each group, a random sample of employees were contacted for being interviewed, until the target for each group was reached. Again, these quota could not be fulfilled for all groups. However, the resulting sample was sufficiently large and varied to allow the testing of the hypotheses. Since the hypotheses are concerned with relationships, not population estimates, we are confident that this database is adequate for our purposes.

Information was given by two groups of respondents—managers and employees. The information on job characteristics and incentive structures, undoubtedly crucial for our analysis, was mainly obtained from the management of these organizations. The management completed written

questionnaires on both the organization in general and on the selected occupational groups in particular. Employees were questioned by both face-to-face interviews and written questionnaires. The hierarchical structure of the data makes it possible to disentangle subjective feelings of time pressure and stress, as expressed by the employee, and objective characteristics of the work measured at the level of the employer. The survey includes information on actual, contractual, and preferred working hours and contains much information on the details of the jobs.

The Netherlands provides an interesting context for testing our hypotheses. Differences in working time (and overtime) between women and men historically have been large in this country. Despite the rapidly growing participation of women in the labor market, women are still likely to work considerably fewer hours than men (Eurostat 2005; Van den Broek and Breedveld 2004). In fact, nowhere has part-time work taken off to such a degree. Economist Freeman (1998) even called the Netherlands "the only part-time economy in the world." Although work stress and work-family conflict also have become issues in the Netherlands, compared to the Anglo-American world it is a relaxed country. The average working week is comparatively short, the Dutch have many holidays, and there is little mention of a long-hours culture for just showing commitment. For these reasons, the Netherlands allows a conservative test for our hypotheses. The post-Fordist work design has been introduced in favorable circumstances. If it indeed holds the promise to bring a balanced work-family life, chances are relatively good in the Netherlands. If, on the contrary, it draws women into a male model of overtime work, then this cannot be attributed to an old-established cultural pattern.

Measures

Overtime

Employees indicated their number of contractual hours per week and the average number of actual weekly working hours (traveling time excluded). The number of overtime hours was defined as the number of working hours carried out over and above contractual hours. Overtime may be paid or unpaid. Nearly 44 percent of the employees in this sample do not work overtime. The maximum number of overtime hours in the sample is 40 hours and the mean is 3.5 hours per week. There are no models available to deal with both the hierarchical structure of the data and a skewed dependent variable as in this study. To correct for the skewness of the dependent variable, we therefore applied the square root, resulting in a variable with a minimum of 0 and a maximum of 6.3.

Post-Fordist Work

We measured the way work is organized at the second level, that is, as a feature of a specific group of employees within an organization. The information was provided by the management of that particular group of employees. In this way, we were able to disentangle objective work characteristics of the employee, measured at the level of the employer, and their effects on individual behavior, that is, overtime, as expressed by the employee. Moreover, by selecting groups within the organization (instead of using data on organizations, industries, or sectors), we were able to obtain detailed information on work characteristics that shape the actual work life of employees.

Eight aspects of job design and the organization of post-Fordist work were distinguished (see Table 1 for an overview). These eight indicators have high internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha is .85), which allowed us to represent the post-Fordist workplace by one single scale in the analysis. The following eight (standardized) indicators were used, each consisting of one or more items.

1. *Autonomy*: The management indicated to what extent employees in the selected group make their own decisions with regard to ten aspects of their work (1 = *others decide*, 5 = *employee decides*). Sample items were "working time," "working speed," and "content of the work" (Cronbach's alpha is .81).
2. *No boundaries*: We measured whether employees (could) perform their work outside the office and the office hours by means of a scale of six (standardized) items (Cronbach's alpha is .83). Three items were answered by the management, and three items were answered by the employee. For the latter, we used the mean per occupational group. Sample items were "Do employees work at the location of the client?" and "I can take my work home."
3. *Personal reputation*: We measured the possibility to build a personal reputation with a scale of seven (standardized) items, answered by the management (Cronbach's alpha is .74). Sample items were "To what extent is it possible for employees to demonstrate their performance within their professional group?" and "In this group employees derive motivation from building a personal reputation."
4. *Personal development*: To measure whether the employee has learning opportunities and the extent to which the work is stimulating and interesting, we applied a five-item scale, answered by the management (Cronbach's alpha is .80). Sample items were "To which extent are employees encouraged

TABLE 1: Number of Items, Sample Sizes, Ranges, Means, and Standard Deviations of (Unstandardized) Variables

	Number of Items		N Level 2	N Level 1	Minimum Value	Maximum Value	Mean	Standard Deviation
Overtime (in hours)	1	89		1,112	0	40	3.5	4.6
Overtime (square root)	1	89		1,112	0	6.3	1.3	1.3
Sex (0 = male, 1 = female)	1			1,111	0	1	0.5	0.5
Post-Fordist work	8	86		1,087	-0.7	1.4	0.0	0.7
Autonomy	10	86		1,087	1.7	5.0	2.9	0.6
No boundaries	6	89		1,114	-1.4	1.7	0.0	0.7
Possibility to build a personal reputation	7	86		1,087	-1.2	1.7	0.0	0.7
Possibility for personal development	5	86		1,087	1.6	4.8	3.4	0.6
Time-dependent performance	1	83		1,067	0	1	0.7	0.5
Work in project-teams	1	85		1,084	1	5	3.1	1.2
Working with strict deadlines	4	86		1,087	1.5	4.5	3.2	0.7
Competitive dismissal procedure	4	85		1,072	1	4	2.4	0.8
Supervisory position	1			1,114	0	1	0.4	0.5
Educational level	1			1,114	1	11	7.9	2.2
Contractual hours	1			1,112	4	40	33.8	6.7
Children under age of 12	1			1,114	0	1	0.4	0.5
Proportion of household tasks	1			1,106	0	1	0.6	0.3
Age	1			1,103	18	63	40.9	9.0
Proportion male employees	1	83		1,026	0	1	0.5	0.3

- to follow courses?" and "To which extent are employees encouraged to accept challenging assignments?" (1 = *almost not*, 5 = *very much*).
5. *Perceptions of time-dependent performance*: This was measured by showing the management in a graph four possible relationships between the number of hours worked (with a maximum of 60 hours a week) and the productivity per hour: (1) a negative relationship (people get tired), (2) no relationship (a flat line), (3) an optimum (a positive relationship, but a decrease after a substantial number of hours), and (4) a linear positive relationship. A linear positive relationship or optimum was coded 1 (for 758 employees within 50 occupational groups), and a negative or no relationship was coded 0 (309 employees within 33 occupational groups).
 6. *Project-teams*: The management was asked to what extent the group works in project-teams (1 = *almost not*, 5 = *very much*).
 7. *Deadlines*: The occurrence of deadlines was measured with a four-item scale (Cronbach's alpha is .77), answered by the management. Sample items were "To what extent do employees work with strict deadlines?" and "To what extent do employees work with personal targets?" (1 = *almost not*, 5 = *very much*).
 8. *Competitive dismissal*: This was measured on a scale of four items (Cronbach's alpha is .78) denoting the consequences of not meeting the standards of relative performance. The items were answered by the employer. Sample items were "A reason for dismissal is: having no career opportunities within the organization" and "A reason for dismissal is: when the employee is not one of the best performers" (1 = *almost not*, 5 = *very much*).

Household Tasks

Two variables that indicate the volume of household tasks were included in the analyses. First, we included whether the employee has children under the age of 12 (0 = no, 1 = yes). Second, we included the percentage of the household tasks (child care included) an employee reports taking care of. This variable ranges from 0 (*the partner takes care of all tasks*) to 100 (*the employee takes care of all tasks, or the employee is living alone*).

Demographics; Sex

Sex was a single item answered by the respondents (0 = male, 1 = female).

Control Variables

We controlled for whether an employee has a supervisory position (0 = no, 1 = yes), because independent of the way in which work is organized, a supervisory position may increase the responsibilities that are imposed on the employee and therefore increase the number of overtime hours. Forty percent of the employees in our sample hold a supervisory position. Second, we controlled for educational level (11 categories, varying from no preliminary education to PhD, MD). Higher-educated employees will work more often in the knowledge-based organization. We are mainly interested in the effects of the way modern, knowledge-based work is organized, independent of the educational level of the employee. By controlling for education, we are able to distinguish between the effect of this individual characteristic and the influence of the circumstances in which the employee works. In our data, more than one-third of the employees hold a university degree, and almost a quarter are educated at the higher vocational level. The high number of higher-educated employees reflects our oversampling of knowledge-based organizations. Third, the number of contractual hours was included for statistical control. In our data, both part-time and full-time jobs are included. The number of contractual hours for women is lower than for men. Finally, we controlled for age because an employee's physical condition may exert an independent influence on working overtime.

Analysis

The study's hypotheses were addressed by performing a series of multiple regression analyses. Because of the hierarchical structure of the data, a normal regression design would lead to estimation errors. Therefore, we employed multilevel techniques (e.g., Snijders and Bosker 1999). For this aim, the software MLwin was used (Goldstein et al. 1998). In these analyses, employees form the level-one units, occupational groups within organizations the level-two units, and organizations the level-three units. We first estimated an empty model (1) that models variation in the intercept. We then entered the predictor variables as fixed effects in the following order: (2) sex, (3) post-Fordist work, (4) the interaction term of sex and post-Fordist work, (5) control variables, and (6) household characteristics. Additionally, we analyzed separate models for women (7) and men (8). All variables were standardized. The resulting estimated parameters in the fixed part can be tested by dividing the regression coefficient by its standard error. When the estimation is based on a large number of cases,

this ratio has approximately a standard normal distribution (see Snijders and Bosker 1999). Because our hypotheses are one-sided, we used one-tailed tests and p -values. To estimate the explained proportion of variation (R^2), we used the measure recommended by Snijders and Bosker (1999, 104).

RESULTS

Table 2 presents the results of the multilevel regression analysis. First, Table 2 shows that working overtime is clearly influenced by sex ($\beta = -.21$, $t = 0.03$, $p < .01$). In our sample, 69 percent of men work overtime versus 42 percent of women. Women who work overtime spend on average 4.9 additional hours at work, while men who work overtime spend on average 6.9 extra hours. The likelihood of working overtime is thus higher for men than for women, and additionally men work more overtime hours than their female counterparts.

Hypothesis 1 (time-greedy work hypothesis) was tested by regressing overtime on the post-Fordist workplace. Hypothesis 1 is supported: Working under the regime of post-Fordist work is clearly associated with overtime ($\beta = .38$, $t = 0.05$, $p < .01$). It is important to note that this influence of the post-Fordist work on overtime is quite substantial, even after controlling for relevant work and individual characteristics, such as supervisory position and educational level.

Hypothesis 2 (household restrictions hypothesis) was examined by regressing overtime on household obligations, that is, having children under the age of 12 and the percentage of household tasks for which an employee is responsible (model 6 of Table 2). Hypothesis 2 was supported—for both men and women, household responsibilities are negatively associated with working overtime. However, for men, having children appears not to have a significant influence on overtime (model 8 of Table 2). Additionally, we applied an independent-samples t -test to examine sex differences in household responsibilities. Men on average report taking care of 41 percent of the household tasks, while the average reported share for women is 76 percent, a difference that is highly significant ($t = -20$, $p < .01$). A Sobel Mediation Test (Krull and MacKinnon 1999; Preacher and Leonardelli 2001) revealed that inequality in the proportion of household tasks contributes significantly to sex differences in overtime (not in the table). Table 2 also indicates the decrease in the effect of sex on overtime when household characteristics are added to the

TABLE 2: Multilevel Regression Model with Working Overtime as the Dependent Variable and Work and Household Characteristics as Independent Variables: Standardized Effects (Standard Errors)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7. Women	8. Men
Constant	.01 (.07)	.02 (.06)	.01 (.04)	.01 (.04)	.01 (.04)	.01 (.04)	.00 (.05)	.02 (.05)
Sex (0 = male, 1 = female)		-.21 (.03)**	-.19 (.03)**	-.19 (.03)**	-.14 (.03)**	-.11 (.03)**		
Post-Fordist work			.38 (.05)**	.38 (.05)**	.25 (.05)**	.25 (.05)**	.35 (.06)**	.19 (.06)**
Supervisory position					.17 (.03)**	.16 (.03)**	.22 (.04)**	.14 (.04)**
Education level					.16 (.03)**	.16 (.03)**	.17 (.05)**	.18 (.05)**
Number of contractual hours					.11 (.03)**	.08 (.03)**	.05 (.05)**	.11 (.04)**
Children under the age of 12						-.08 (.03)**	-.13 (.04)**	-.06 (.04)
Percentage of household tasks						-.11 (.03)**	-.09 (.04)**	-.11 (.04)**
Age							.06 (.04)	.02 (.04)
Post-Fordist Work × Sex				.01 (.03)		.03 (.03)		
Variance level three	.03 (.05)	.01 (.04)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.02)	.00 (.00)
Variance level two	.29 (.07)	.22 (.06)	.09 (.03)	.09 (.03)	.06 (.02)	.06 (.02)	.06 (.03)	.07 (.03)
Variance level one	.69 (.03)	.67 (.03)	.67 (.03)	.67 (.03)	.63 (.03)	.62 (.03)	.63 (.04)	.73 (.05)
R ²		.10	.24	.24	.31	.32	.34	.20

NOTE: N model 1–6: level 3 = 30, level 2 = 86, level 1 = 1,065. N model 7: level 3 = 30, level 2 = 75, level 1 = 510. N model 8: level 3 = 29, level 2 = 73, level 1 = 555.

** $p < .05$. *** $p < .01$ (one-tailed).

model ($\beta = -.14$ in model 5 to $\beta = -.11$ in model 6), which shows that household obligations restrict women's opportunities for working overtime.

Hypothesis 3 (goal-framing hypothesis) was investigated by analyzing the effect of the post-Fordist workplace for women and men separately (models 7 and 8 of Table 2). The hypothesis was supported by the data: Post-Fordist work is positively associated with working overtime for both women ($\beta = .35, p < .01$) and men ($\beta = .19, p < .01$). Still, the effect of sex does not disappear when we control for the post-Fordist organization (model 3). This persistent effect may be caused by the traditional organizations in the sample, in which the familiar sex differences in working overtime still exist. If this reasoning is correct, we would expect the gap between men and women in overtime hours to decrease as post-Fordism increases. The larger coefficient for women than for men in models 7 and 8 is consistent with this idea. The slope of the regression line is steeper for women than for men, indicating that the post-Fordist way of working offers less room for women to continue their traditional practice of evading overtime. To gain more certainty about the goal-framing hypothesis, we nevertheless performed an additional test. In model 4, we added the interaction term of sex and post-Fordist work to the regression model. The interaction term reveals whether the effect of post-Fordist work on overtime is different for men and women. It appears that sex does not moderate this relationship, which means that, as predicted, the effect of post-Fordist work on overtime does not differ significantly between men and women.

The largest difference in overtime between men and women was hypothesized to be the result of composition of the workforce (hypothesis 4). This hypothesis was examined via an independent-samples *t*-test. On the standardized scale for the post-Fordist work, the average score of women was $-.29$ and for men $.26$, a highly significant difference ($t = 9.4, p < .001$). This means that men work more often under the regime of the post-Fordist workplace than women. Additionally, bivariate correlations indicate that women work less under *all* aspects of the post-Fordist workplace; for example, they work less often with strict deadlines and less often in project-teams. This can also be seen in Table 2, where the effect of sex on overtime decreases when post-Fordist work is added to the model ($\beta = -.21$ in model 2 and $\beta = -.19$ in model 3). A Sobel Mediation Test was used to examine the mediating effect of post-Fordism on sex differences in overtime. The hypothesis was supported: Working under the regime of the post-Fordist workplace mediates the effect of sex on overtime and therefore contributes significantly to sex differences in working overtime.

To allow for the difference between within-group and between-group regression (Snijders and Bosker 1999), we additionally included group (level-two) means for educational level, supervisory position, and number of contractual hours in the analysis (not reported). These effects appeared not to be significant. This means, for example, that an employee with a given educational level does not work more overtime if he or she is in a group with a higher educational level; that is, we may conclude that the within- and between-group regression coefficients of these variables do not differ. Additionally, we added group means for having children under the age of 12, the percentage of household tasks, and the number of female employees (not reported). We found a (weak) significant effect for group means of household tasks ($\beta = -.19, p < .05$) and the percentage of women ($\beta = -.13, p < .05$). This means that a high average of household obligations in the examined group reduces the number of overtime hours of an employee. Likewise, the higher the number of women within the examined group, the lower the number of hours an employee works. Both results seem to indicate that social pressures and expectations also play a role, irrespective of the regime under which an employee works.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

When a firm produces commodities but in the process jeopardizes the environment, society's welfare is jeopardized. This is well understood. Economists call this an externality and, thus, a market failure. It may be removed by levying taxes or by strict regulations if the damage is severe.

When a firm produces commodities but in the process jeopardizes human upbringing and reproduction, society's welfare is also jeopardized. This is less well understood. The main reason probably is that the collective good features of reproduction are obscured by the fact that for a large part the collective good is privately produced. Women still opt for having kids and raising families and pay the price in terms of a stressful life or a marginal career. However, the question is how long they will continue to do so. Birth rates in many advanced countries have reached an all-time low, especially among the better-educated segment of the population. In some European countries, governments have reintroduced birth premiums or considered large-scale immigration to sustain population levels and provide care for the elderly. In this context, the "nonresponsibility" of work organizations for the social lives of employees may at last be fundamentally questioned.

The problem is to find out what it takes to change this situation. Some gender theorists have set their hopes on organizational measures like an exclusive focus on the needs of the job (instead of face time at the office) and flexible boundaries between work and home. Such measures might even serve the “dual agenda” of meeting the needs of businesses and employees at the same time (Rapoport et al. 2002). These measures correspond, as this article notes, with ongoing trends towards work redesign that are labeled “post-Fordist,” “postindustrial,” or “high-performance” in the organizations literature. The intended features may not match totally, but a shift from clock time to task time entails its own logic that we believe is reasonably captured in our account of post-Fordist work. Among social scientists, a controversy has arisen about how this transformation will turn out for work and family life and for women’s chances in the labor market.

In this article, we have judged this controversy from the viewpoint of working overtime in a wide range of organizational settings in the Netherlands. Working overtime, paid and unpaid, is the crucial indicator for the time claims of jobs. Our results can be summarized as follows: (1) Post-Fordist work boosts the male model of work and thus exacerbates the time-greediness of work. (2) Work in the household is time-greedy as well, so employees with substantial household duties—mostly women—are less likely to work overtime. (3) Men and women are equally subject to the time-greedy forces of the post-Fordist workplace. (4) Since women have more difficulty in accommodating these time claims, they are less likely to work in post-Fordist contexts.

Our results thus confirm the skepticism of Acker and Hochschild rather than the optimism of Appelbaum and Bailyn. This is not to say, however, that the latter views are of no importance. New technology and work designs *can* make organizations less gendered by bridging the gap between the public and private spheres. Changes in the direction of more flexible work practices may still be the key to achieving a better work-life integration. Well-intended and potentially beneficial reforms are, however, always introduced in existing reality. This means that they are brought into existing organizational cultures based on gendered assumptions on what it takes to be a competent and committed worker. And they are situated in an economy of competitive firms that bear no responsibility for human reproduction. In these contexts, increased flexibility runs the risk of unleashing competitive forces instead of easing the tensions of family and work. As long as work organizations (and many of their male employees) can afford not to care for care, there can be no level playing field for women.

Acker has rightly identified this as the basic problem of gendered organizations. It is therefore not the superficial features of the boundary between work and home, but the underlying structures of time competition, that have to be addressed to gain equal opportunities for women. Obviously this is what working-time laws and parental leave schemes in many countries (including the Netherlands) seek to bring about. However, reducing (unpaid) overtime in the post-Fordist workplace is not easily achieved. Flexibility, new technologies, and the opportunities to work beyond contracted hours (e.g., take work home) seem to have made work more time-greedy than before. In addition, as goal-framing theory suggests, the post-Fordist way of organizing shifts the focus of the employee (male and female) from working a certain number of hours to bringing a project to a good end, no matter how long this takes. Our results have shown that this subtle but persistent pressure is as substantial for women as it is for men.

Not finding work that is “responsible,” women seek to escape from the predicaments of the post-Fordist organization. At least, this is what our results suggest in the Netherlands. Women in our sample are less likely than men to work in the “man’s world” of autonomy, targets, deadlines, project-teams, and so on. This may be their best option to secure an acceptable life, but it will perpetuate the reality of strongly gendered organizations.

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