

Preface

In the early 2000s, when we contacted the American academic Harriet Presser about this project and the possibility of studying the impact of nonstandard working times in the Netherlands she reacted with immediate enthusiasm and a personal visit. Harriet Presser's work on the 24-h economy and its impact on family life had inspired our thinking and work throughout the years before and after our meeting. Harriet was supportive and gave detailed comments and reactions from the inception phase of the project to virtually its completion. In May of 2012, we sadly lost Harriet Presser, but even when she was very ill, she continued to comment on the chapters within this book.

When Harriet visited the Netherlands, where both of the authors were working at the time, her first question was, "What do all of these Dutch women actually do with all of their time?" She was referring to the high levels of part-time work of the Dutch female labor market and relatively moderate levels of fertility. Moreover, as her international comparative research on the prevalence of nonstandard work schedules has indicated, contrary to expectations, there is a high prevalence of nonstandard schedule work in the Netherlands, which she could not really explain. Although we would need to write another book to actually answer her question, in addition to describing and explaining the phenomenon of nonstandard schedule work in the Netherlands, the current book also focuses on the stark cross-national differences between the US and the Netherlands and the impact of employment regulations, national cultural constellations, and working times on families.

We are likewise indebted to the forward thinking of the leaders and developers of the NWO-funded NKPS project, led by Pearl Dykstra, who dared to introduce qualitative mini-panels to accompany the quantitative survey data of the NKPS. We thank them for granting the money to carry out this project, which allowed us to adopt a highly innovative research design that used both advanced quantitative analyses combined with a qualitative sample of individuals across the Netherlands who were employed in nonstandard schedules. These narratives complimented our quantitative work and provided better interpretation of some of our results or

coefficients that could go beyond devising theoretical mechanisms ourselves. Moreover, the interviews were carried out three years after the first wave of data collection of the quantitative study, making it longitudinal in nature.

Finally, we would also like to thank Springer and specifically, Regine Reincke, Natalie Rieborn, and Mireille van Kan for their interest and enthusiasm with this book and project. Special thanks go to Riley Taiji for the help in proof reading the manuscript.

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Out of Time

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Schedules for Family Cohesion

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