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## The Gender Employment Gap in the Dutch Labour Market

van Steen, P.J.M.; Pellenbarg, P.H.

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## THE NETHERLANDS IN MAPS

# THE GENDER EMPLOYMENT GAP IN THE DUTCH LABOUR MARKET

PAUL J.M. VAN STEEN & PIET H. PELLENBARG

*Faculty of Spatial Sciences, University of Groningen, P.O. Box 800, 9700 AV Groningen, the Netherlands.  
E-mails: p.j.m.van.steen@rug.nl & p.h.pellenbarg@rug.nl*

The 2012 series of *The Netherlands in Maps* will highlight spatial variations of different aspects of the Dutch labour market. In a number of ways, the Dutch labour market differs from labour markets elsewhere. For example, in 2010, 77 per cent of working women had a part-time job, as well as 25 per cent of working men; the averages for the EU 27 are 32 per cent (females) and 9 per cent (males) (Eurostat 2011). As a result, labour market participation in the Netherlands is among the highest in Europe: 67.1 per cent (CBS *et al.* 2011). Interestingly, labour force participation varies only slightly between the regions. Some peripheral provinces include pockets of municipalities with participation rates of less than 62 per cent; municipalities around the four largest Randstad Holland cities show high labour market participation rates of up to 80 per cent (CBS *et al.* 2011).

Stronger regional differences can be seen when distinguishing between the labour market participation rates for females and males. The map in this issue visualises the 'gender employment gap', defined here as the ratio between female and male labour market participation, on the level of municipalities (averages for 2008–2010). The resulting 'gender employment gap' ranges from a low gap rate of 0.95 in a few commuter towns, to a high gap rate of 0.56 for the municipality of Urk.

A closer look at the map suggests the strong impact of religion on the gender employment gap, notwithstanding the fact that the Netherlands is one of the most secular countries in Europe. Many municipalities characterised by a high gender gap belong to the Dutch *Bible Belt*: a part of the country dominated by conservative Protestants. As the precise demarcation of the

*Bible Belt* is open to discussion, we have added to the map a definition of the *Bible Belt* based upon the municipalities where the Political Reformed Party (SGP), a right-wing Calvinist party, collected at least 1 per cent of the votes for the national elections in June 2010. (We have neglected the approximately ten municipalities elsewhere in the country with also a notable percentage of SGP voters). In this *Bible Belt* female labour market participation rates are typically much lower than the male participation rates. In Urk, only 46 per cent of the female labour force has a job. The same can be seen in some other, predominantly rural regions in the North and the East of the country. Much smaller gender gaps can be observed in the Western region of Randstad Holland and in and around larger cities elsewhere in the country.

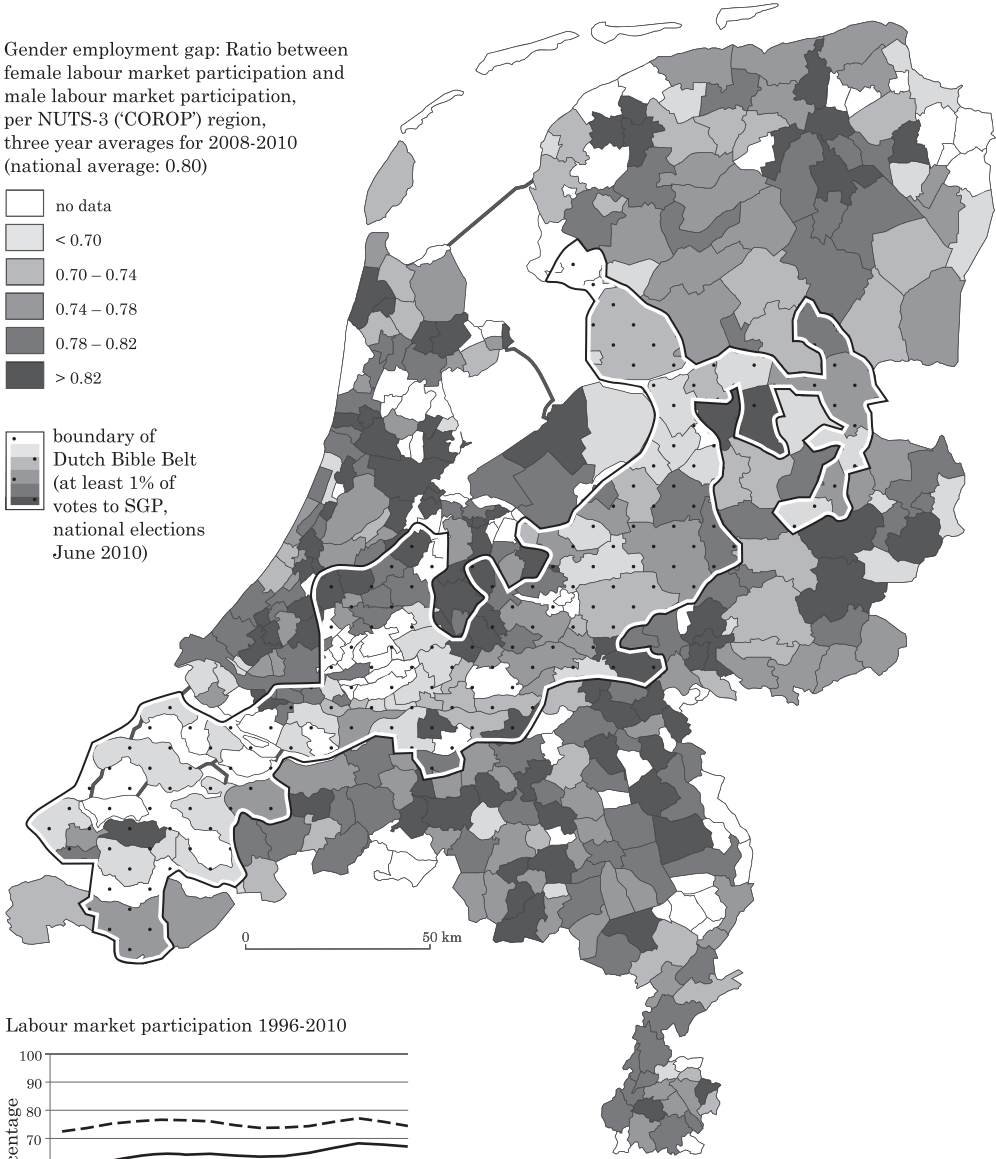
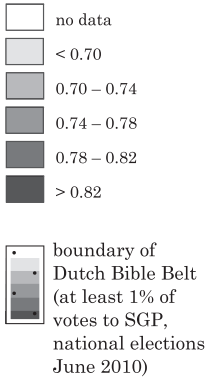
In general, the map reconfirms the findings of Noback (2011) on regional gender employment gaps for the year 2002. She found, for example, the gender employment gap to be smaller in urban areas. This could probably be attributed to the fact that urban labour markets have a higher share of jobs in the service sector, thus enabling more part time job opportunities.

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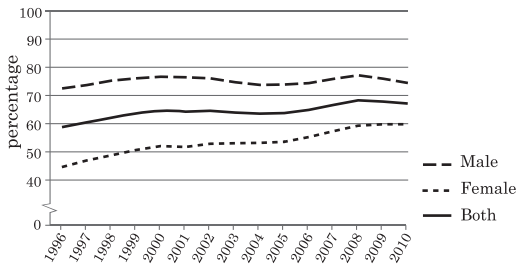
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THE NETHERLANDS IN MAPS  
 Labour Market (Part 1)  
*Gender Employment Gap*

Gender employment gap: Ratio between female labour market participation and male labour market participation, per NUTS-3 ('COROP') region, three year averages for 2008-2010 (national average: 0.80)



Labour market participation 1996-2010



Source: CBS (2011)  
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