

Social dialogue in The Netherlands after the crisis

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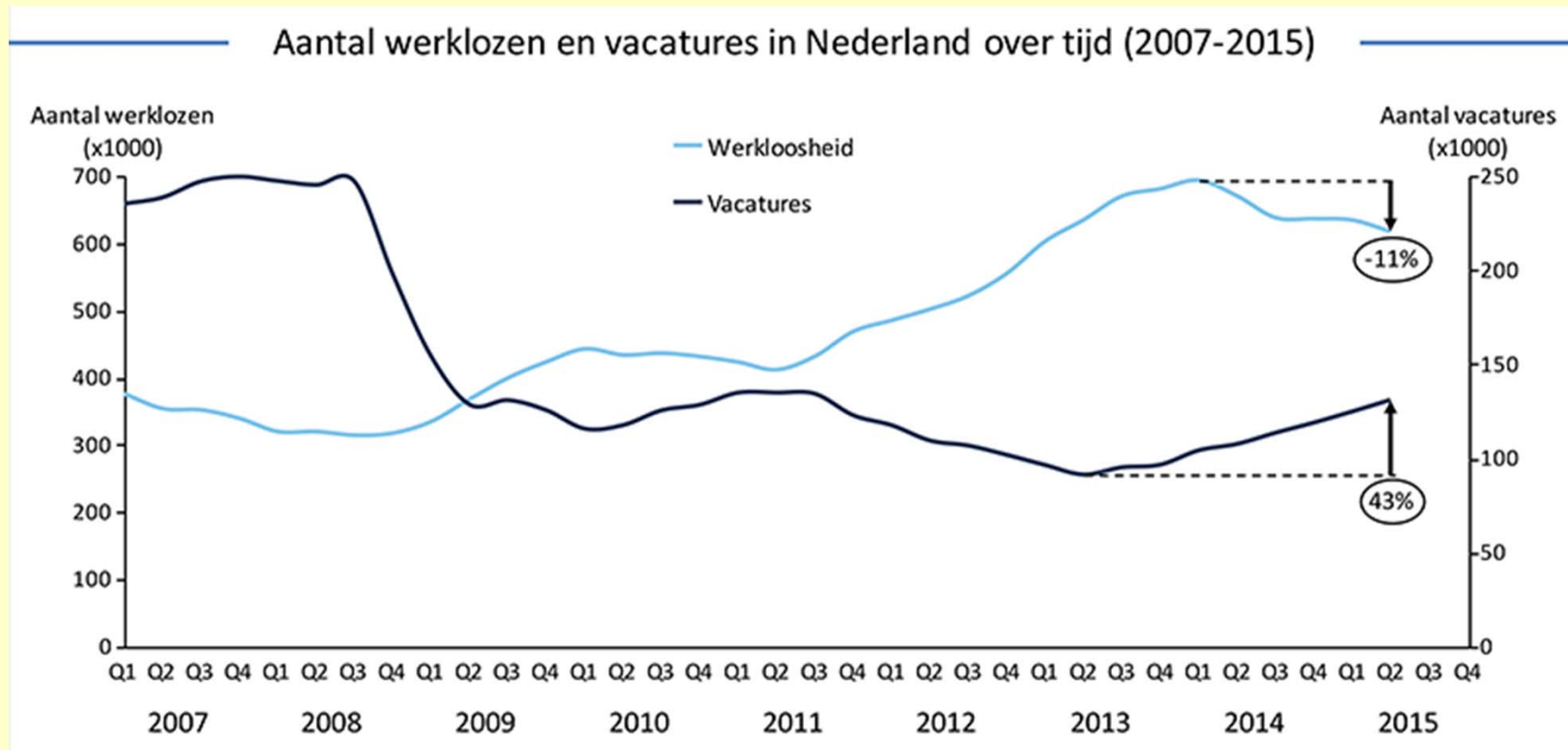
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Institutional setting

- Labour Foundation (bipartite)
- Social and Economic Council (tripartite)
- LF: agreements -> recommendations
- SEC: advisory -> reports
- 'Polder model' (since 1980s), based on power relations between three parties
- Two trends:(1) decentralising/-regulating employment conditions; (2) removing SP's from executive control of labour market/ social security institutions

Labour market developments

- Financial crisis: in 2008 quick drop in vacancies; as from 2011 delayed rise from 5 to almost 8 % unemployment
- Crisis strengthened rise of flexible work; number of permanent contracts declines as from 2010



Political context

- Employers had effectively direct access to political actors
- Crisis -> threat of state deficit and debt > 3 %
- Political instability: fragile political basis of cabinets (2010-12; 2012-now)
- caused: no austerity plan before 2012
- + reason to find support of Social Partners
- Internal problems of union FNV
- Peculiar power complex; result: employers' organizations supported Social Agreement

Agreements after crisis

- **Crisis agreement (Spring 2009):**
 - Short term unemployment scheme
 - Steady development of wages
 - Reopening discussion on pension age
- **Pension Agreement (June 2011):**
 - Gradual raising of pension age
 - Guarantees as to the level of pensions
- **Social Agreement (April 2013; in law 2015):**
 - SP's regain responsibility in unemployment benefit administr.
 - revision of dismissal law
 - reduction of public unemployment benefit duration
 - new measures to make incentives for job-to-job transitions
 - improvement of the legal position of flexible workers

Impact of crisis on social dialogue

- Polder model, stable basis, though dependent on political and economic conjunctural cycles
- Crisis first shifted power to employers
- Crisis strengthened interdependency of parties
- Social Agreement 2013 as result & bone of contention
- Deterioration of relation between social partners
- Although alle parties agree on contribution of s.d. to productivity and well-being
- ‘New Agenda?’

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities & Threats

- S: - stable basis of 'polder'
 - broad support SP's for collective agreements
- W: - fluctuations in interdependency of parties
 - lack of support from EU
- O: - S.D. is way to effect innovation in times of uncertainty
- T: - representativeness (of unions)
 - lack of political support collect. agreements
 - shift of work away from 'employment'