

# No Merit in Precariat

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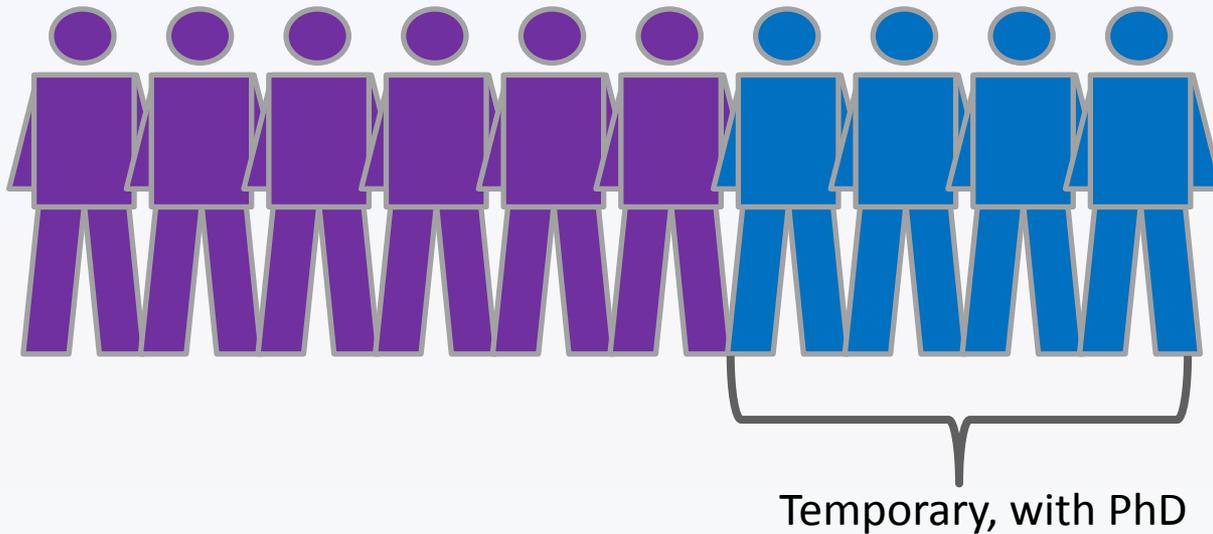
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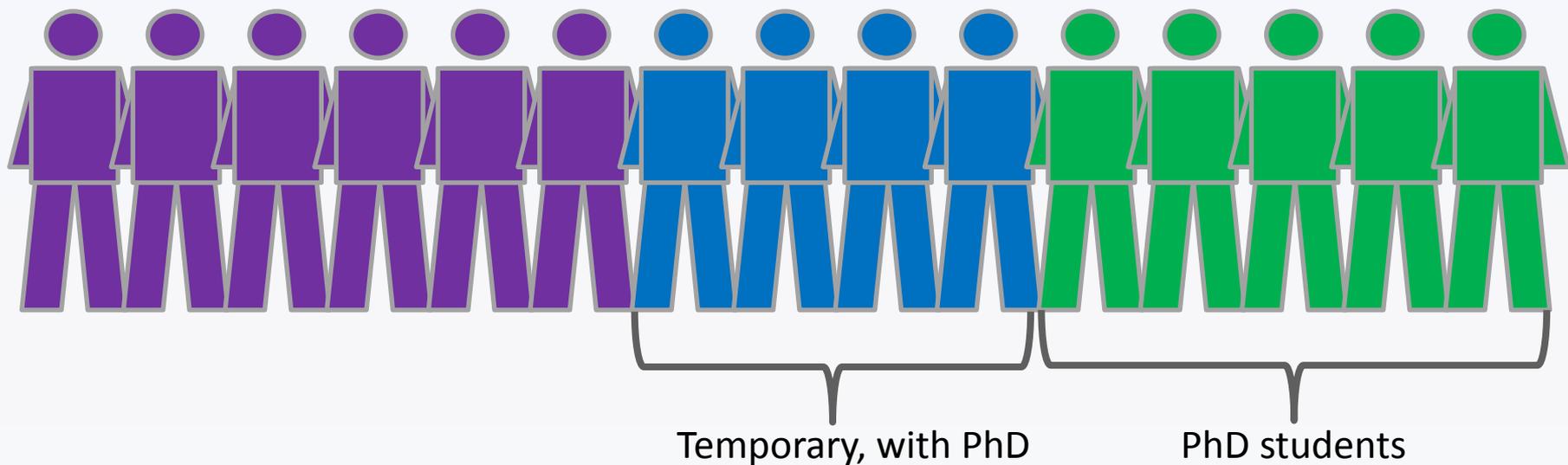
# Academics at Dutch universities



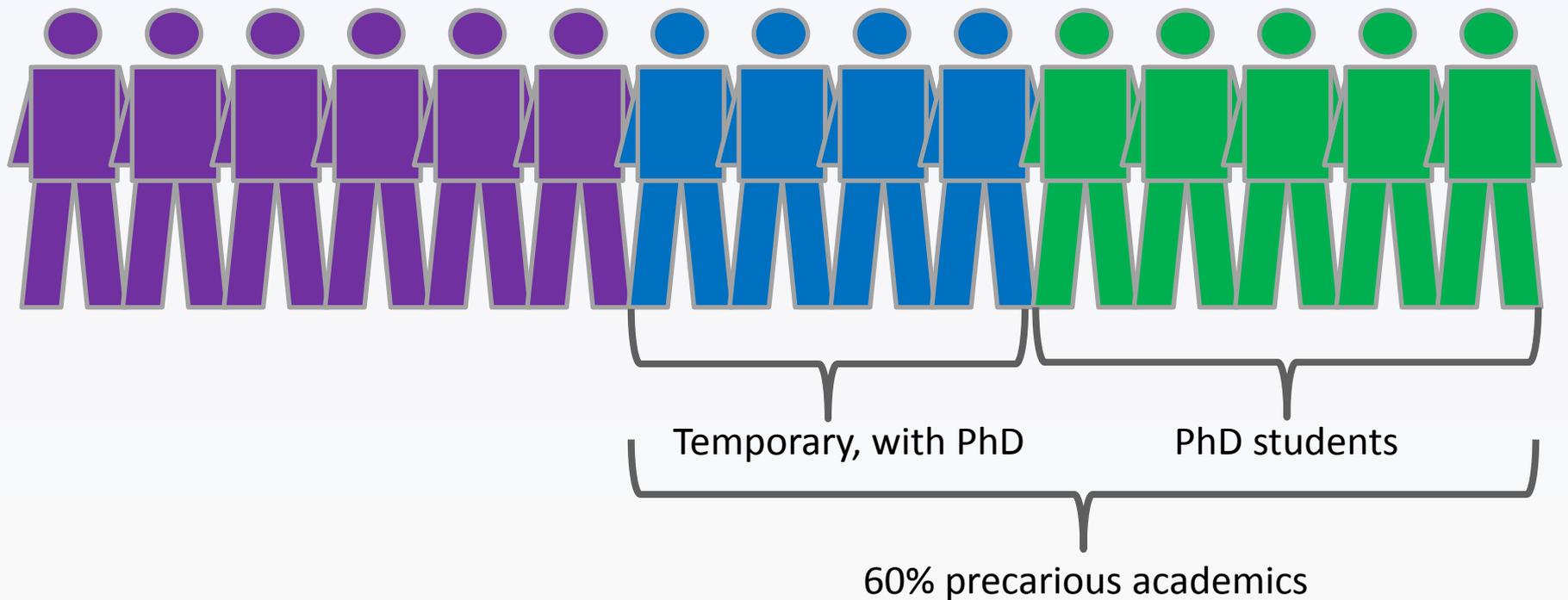
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# Is this a lot?



Dutch universities  
(with PhD)

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Dutch labour  
force, total



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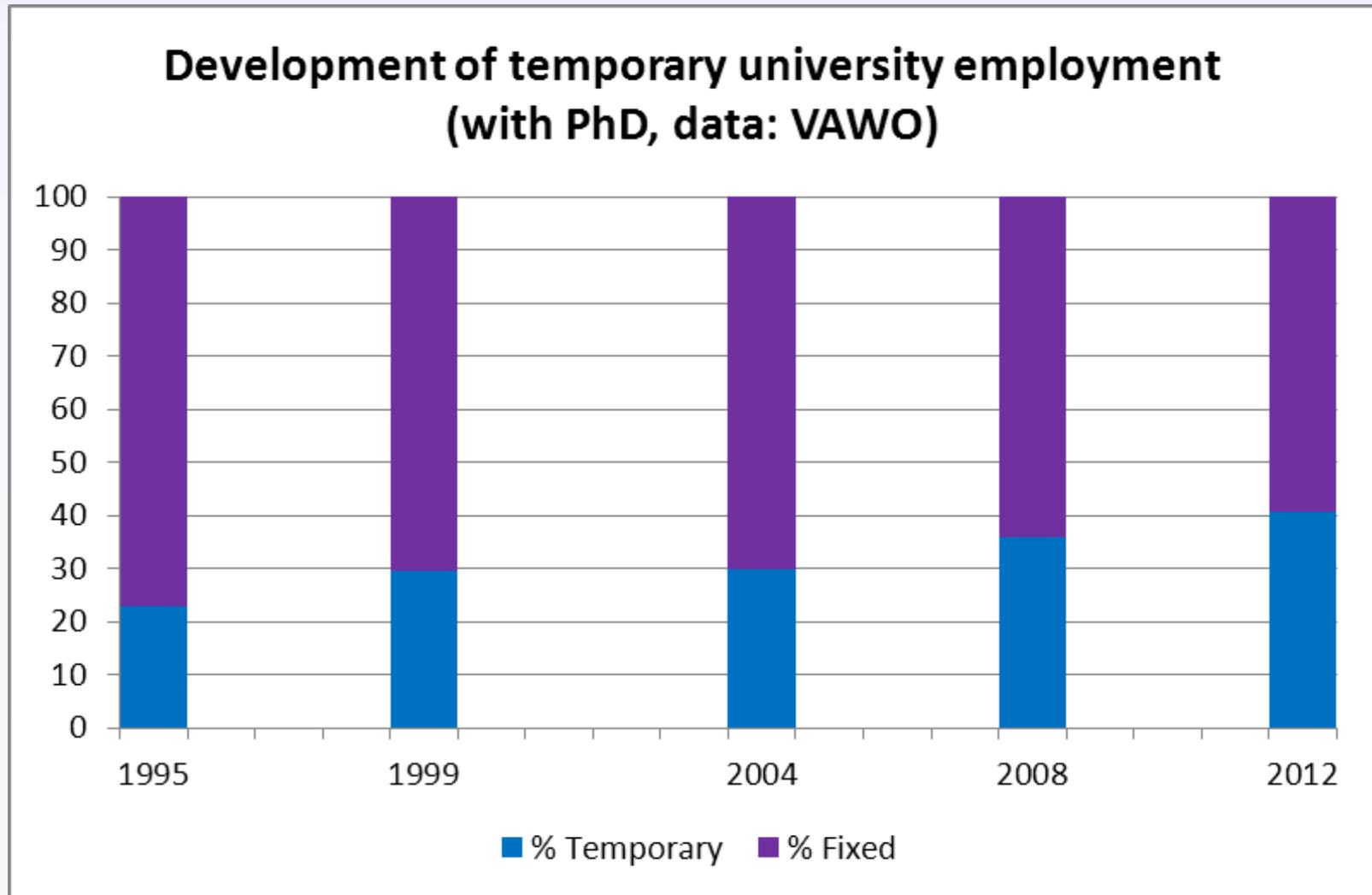


Dutch universities  
(with PhD)



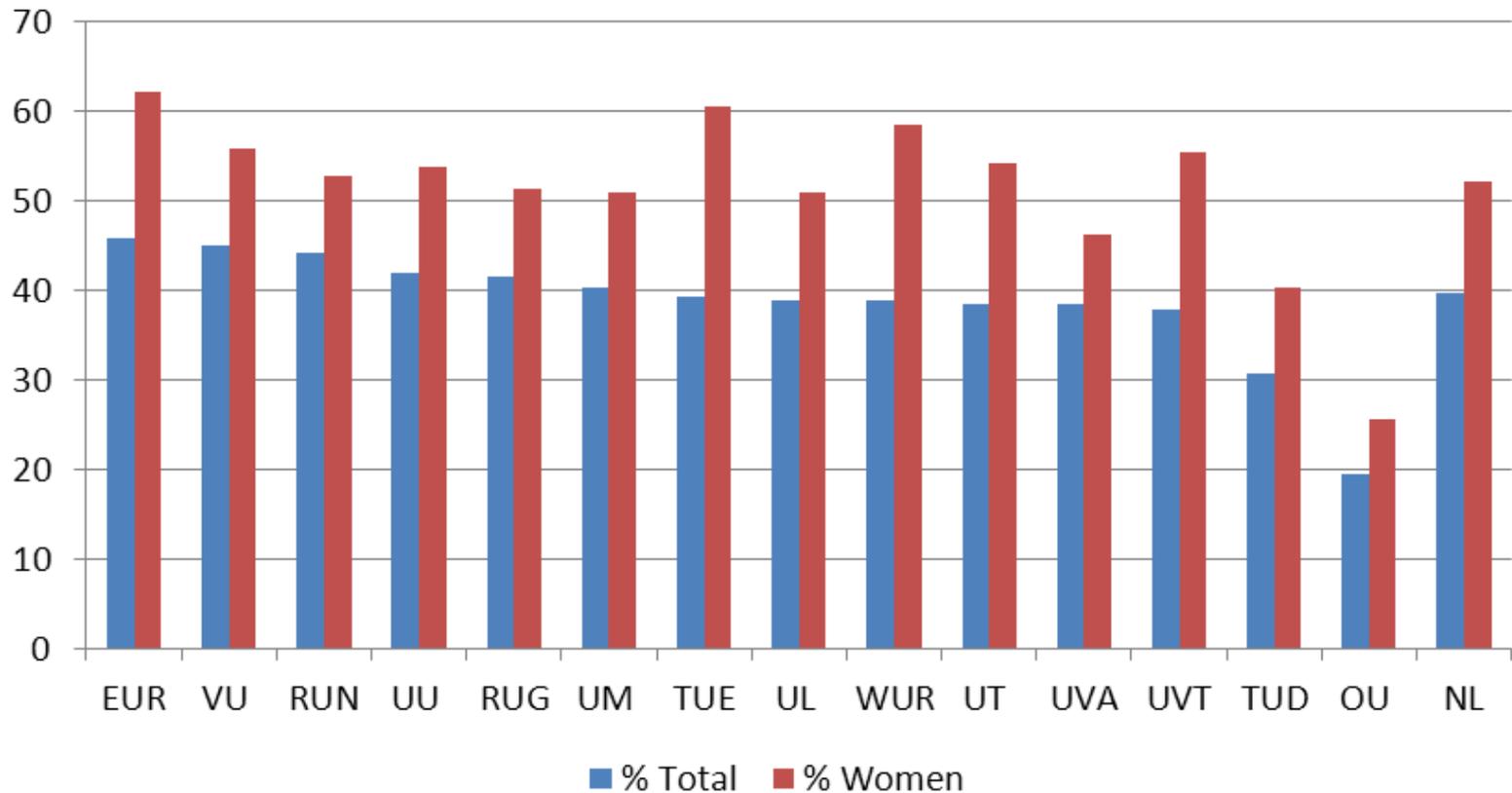
US universities  
(with PhD)

# The share is growing

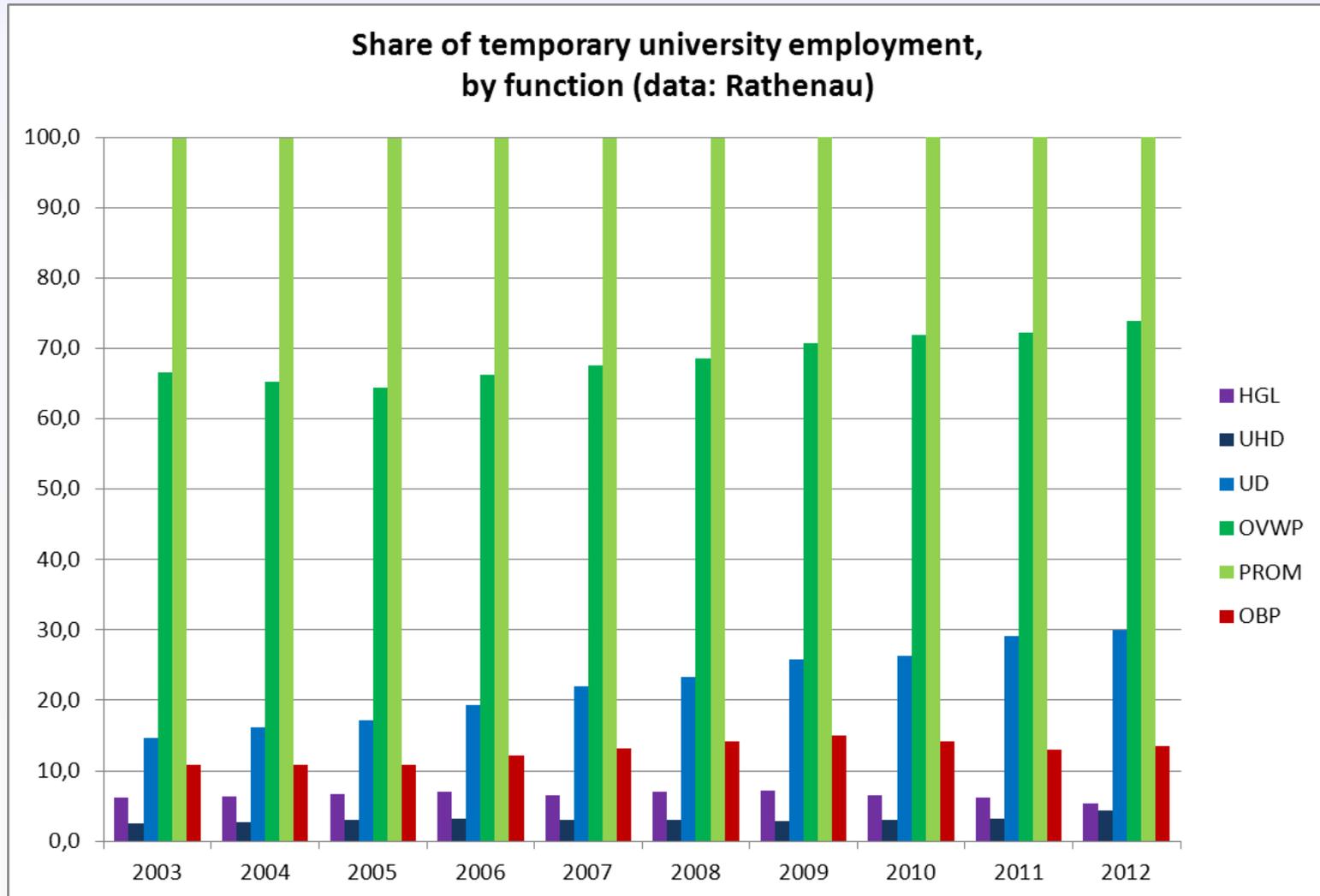


# If you like rankings:

Share of temporary university employment  
(in 2012, with PhD, data: VAWO)



# Who is precarious?



# The academic career



The old model: post-doc, trial period

# The academic career



The old model: post-doc, trial period



Average now: 13 years after PhD

# The academic career



The old model: post-doc, trial period



Average now: 13 years after PhD



Me: 13+5

# The academic career



The old model: post-doc, trial period



Average now: 13 years after PhD



Me: 13+5



Babbage: 25, in the lead for the H.NU competition ([platform-hnu.nl/prijsvraag/](https://platform-hnu.nl/prijsvraag/))

# How is this possible?



Interrupted contracts

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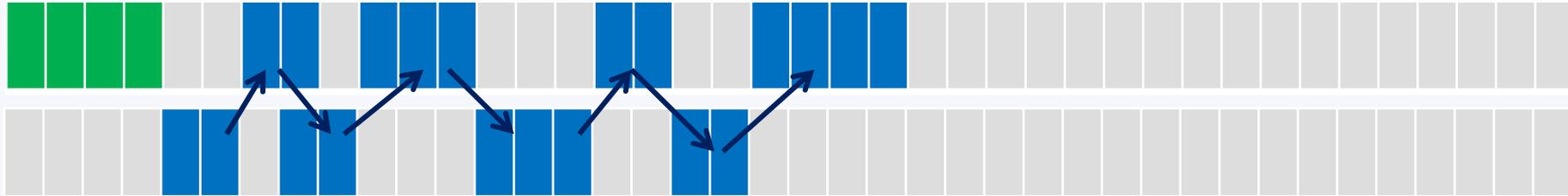


Switch between universities

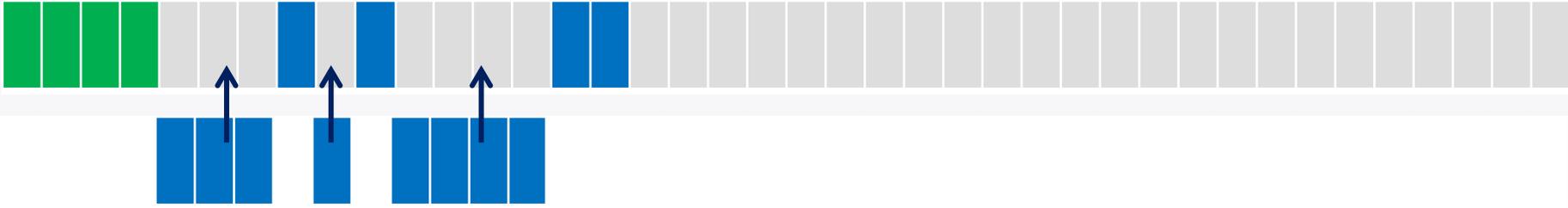
# How is this possible?



Interrupted contracts



Switch between universities



Contracted via academic temping agencies or as self employed (not always entirely kosher)



UvA Jobservice is part of the UvA Holding, but this is a different legal entity from the university. In principle the first contract offered is a Jobservice contract.

The construction is legal, but definitely not in the spirit of the law.

# Is the precariat bad?

For academics:

uncertainty, stress, cynicism, demotivation

very weak negotiation position: precariat gets the left-overs

inferior secondary labour conditions (“keuzemodel”)

For the work:

high turnover undermines quality (especially teaching)

For the university as organisation:

bad work environment, conflicts

unattractive academic careers

# What causes the precariat?

1. Fear of financial obligations:

“If we fire this person, we will be responsible and have to pay!”

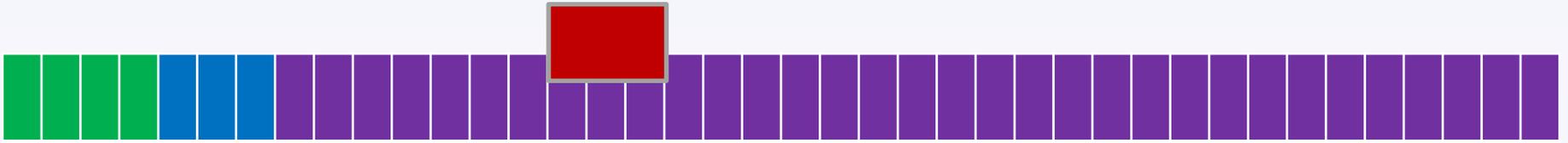
(Yes, that was the idea!)

Universities are not decent employers.

# What causes the precariat?

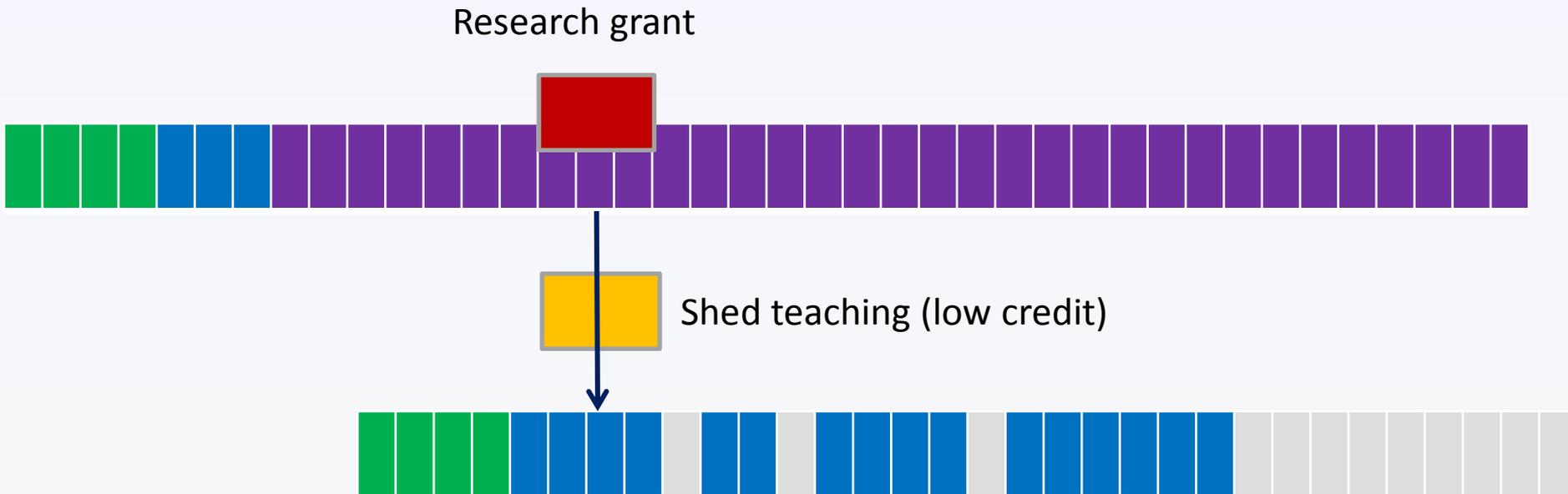
## 2. Contract research

Research grant



# What causes the precariat?

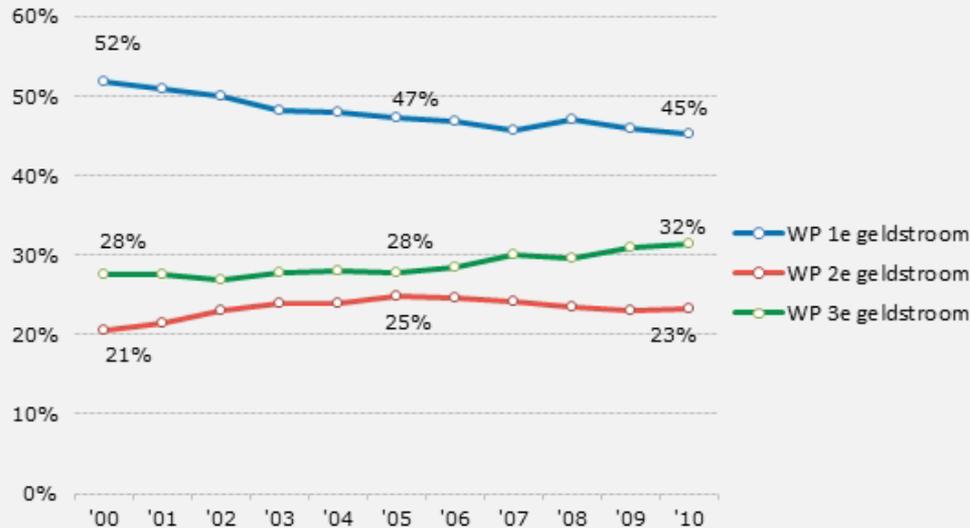
## 2. Contract research



# What causes the precariat?

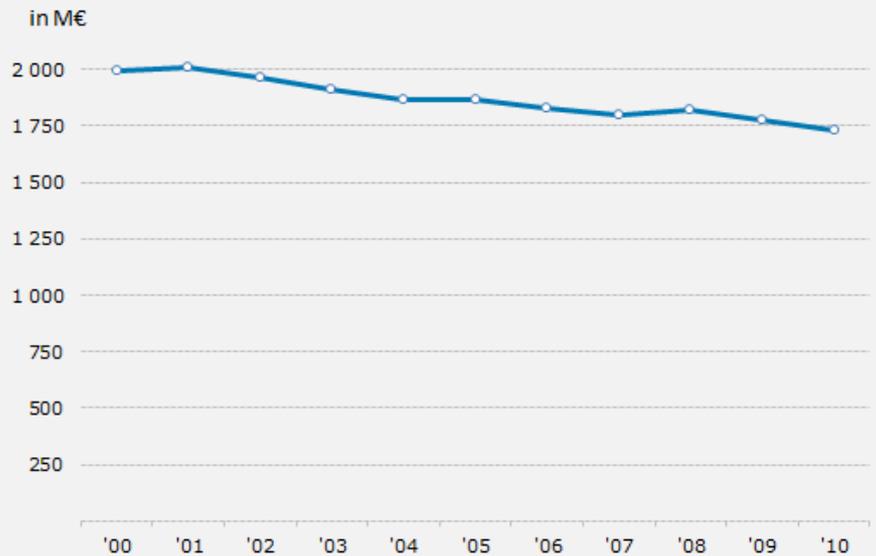
**Ontwikkeling inzet wetenschappelijk personeel (WP) naar geldstromen als percentage van de totale WP inzet**

Bron: KUOZ, VSNU



**Ontwikkeling rijksbijdrage (1ste geldstroom) onderzoek in miljoenen euro's**

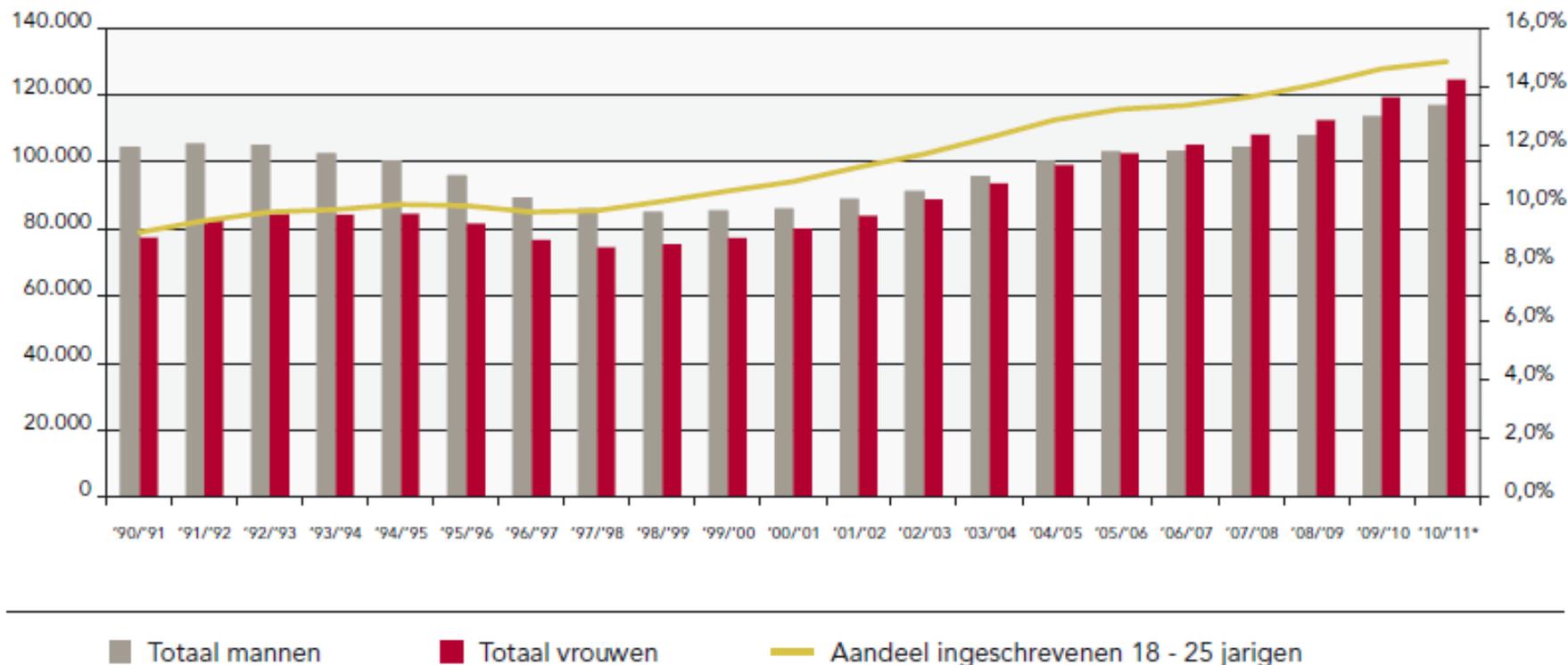
Bron: Rijksbijdragebrieven OCW en EZ



VSNU, Feiten en cijfers, [http://www.vsnul.nl/f\\_c\\_onderzoeksfinanciering.html](http://www.vsnul.nl/f_c_onderzoeksfinanciering.html)

Increased contract research, shrinking first money stream: the money is going soft!

**Figuur 1** Aantal ingeschreven studenten, totaal (x1), naar geslacht en als percentage van de leeftijdsgroep 18-25 jarigen



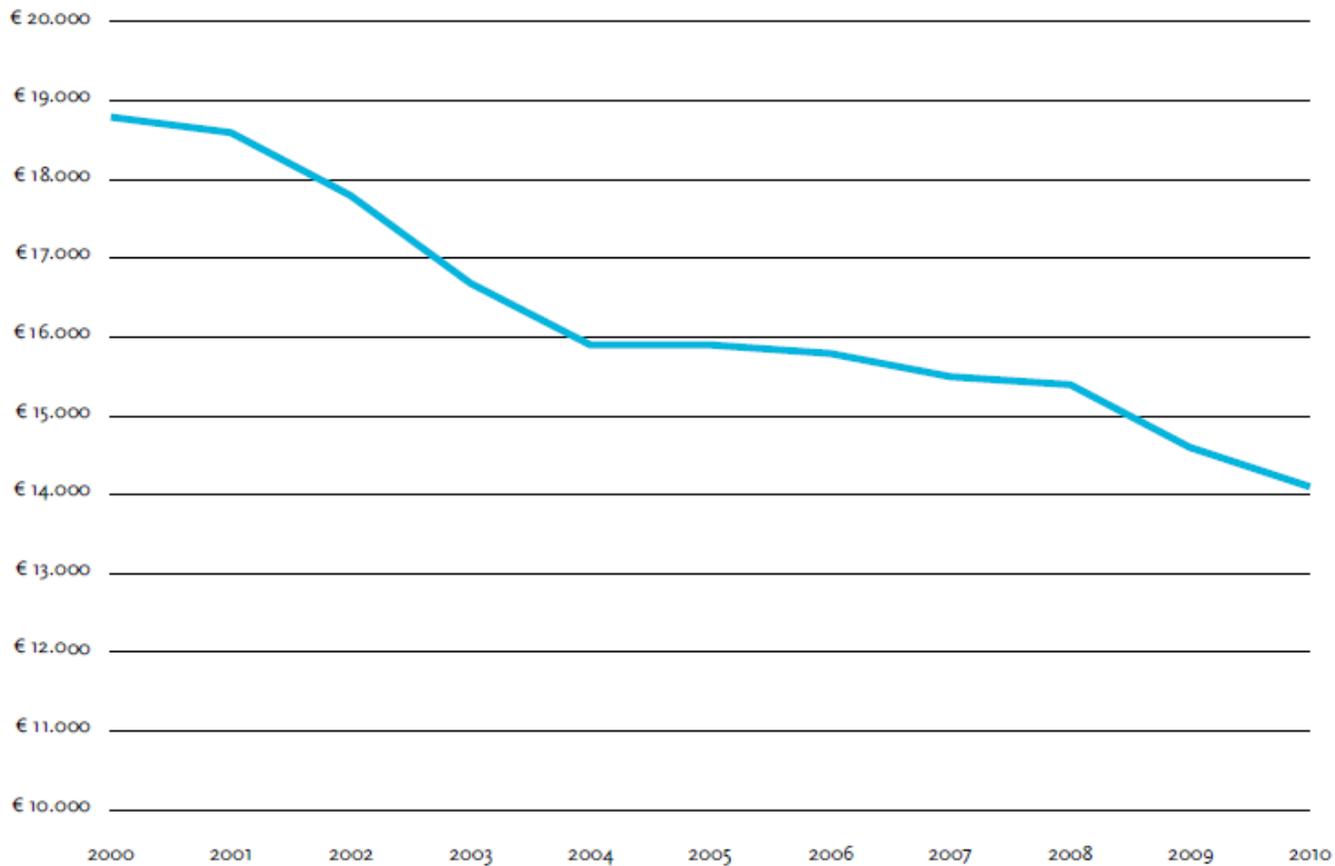
Bron: CBS/Statline

\* voorlopige cijfers

**Rathenau Instituut**

The number of students has grown to 250.000

Figuur 2.6: Rijksbijdrage (1<sup>e</sup> geldstroom) per student, 2000-2010

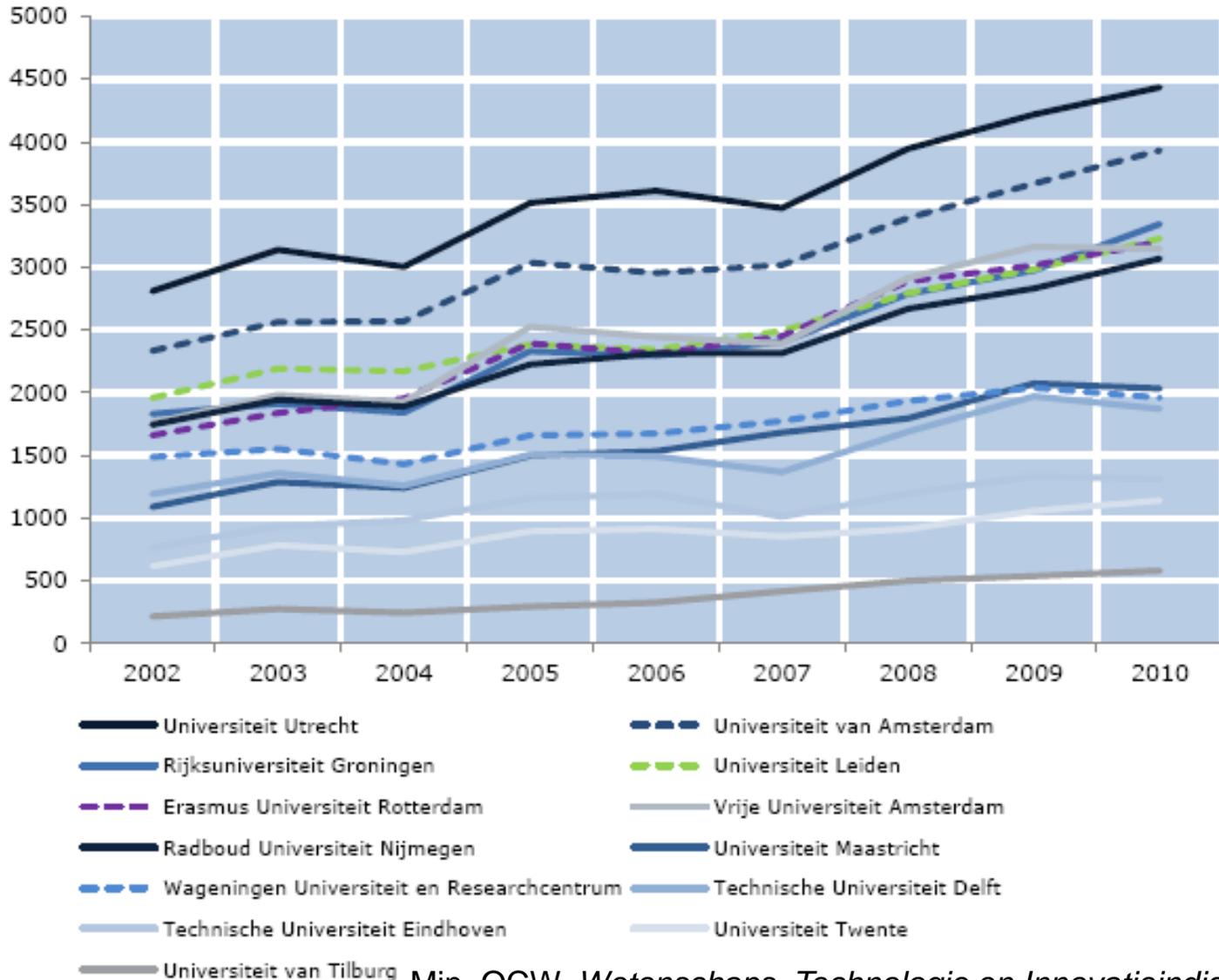


Bron: Rijksbijdragebrieven OCW en EZ. Bron studenten: 1cHO; VSNU/CBS

Toelichting: dit is exclusief collegegelden, inclusief inflatiecorrectie. Prijspeil 2011.

More students, more money? The contribution per student drops!  
(with huge differences between natural/medical/rest)

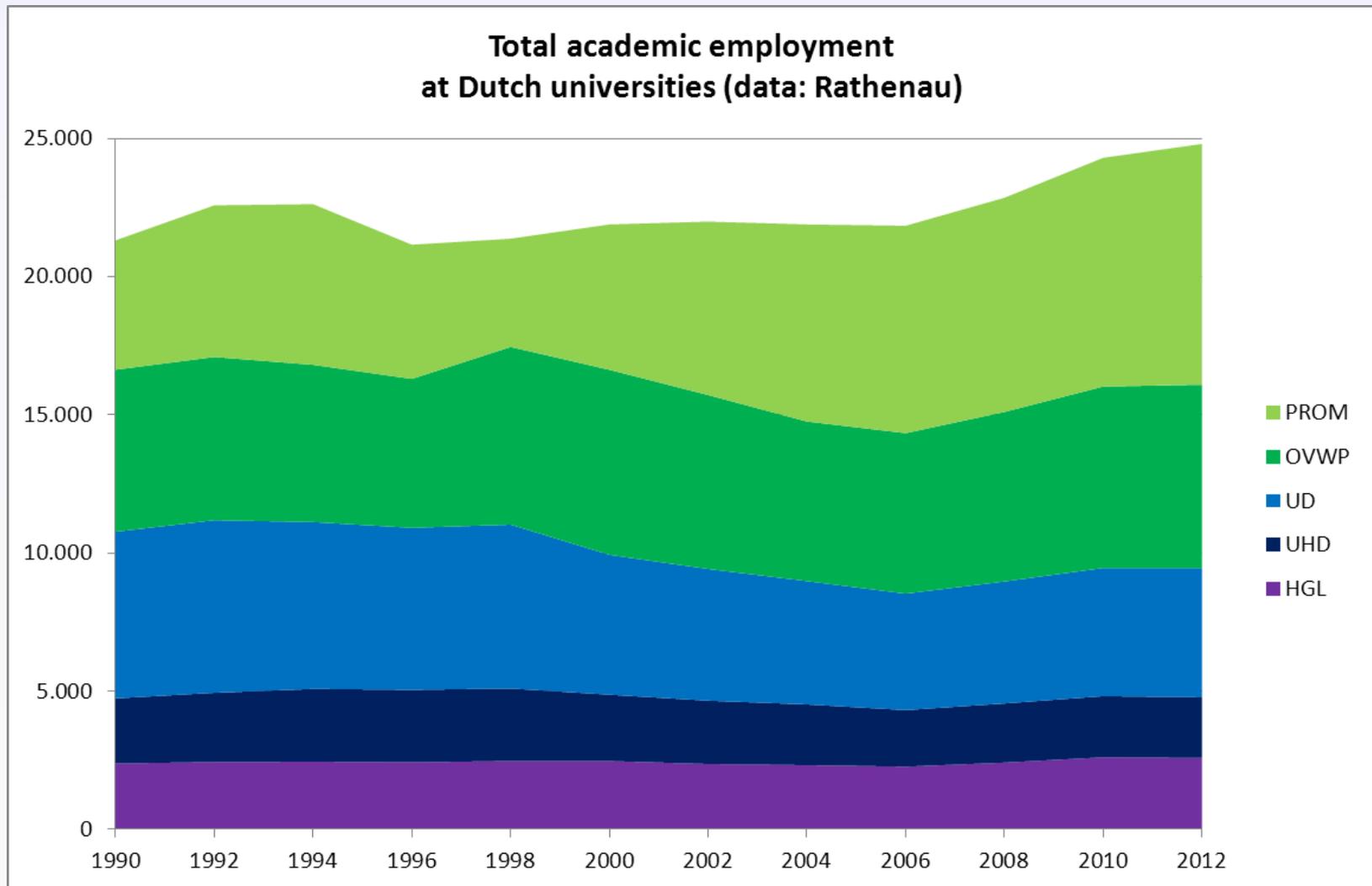
Figuur 35: Trends in publicatie-output per universiteit (2002-2010)



Min. OCW, Wetenschaps, Technologie en Innovatieindatoren 2011.

The 'output' (papers) grows and grows.

# Who produces this 'output'?



# What causes the precariat?

## 3. “Efficiency”

10 years: + 50% students, + 50% output on a very tight budget

The precariat is cheap labour.

The academic management has the better negotiation position:

- over-production of PhDs
- universities have become increasingly hierarchical
- decisions at a distance: the boss made me do it!

# What causes the precariat?

## 4. Accumulation

- University performance as a sports competition: rankings
- Reverence of “excellence” and super-stars, winner takes all

(But who keeps the “top” afloat?)

# What causes the precariat?

Super stars have “earning capacity”:

UvA UHD political science: 800.000 Euro

VU prof. movement sciences: 800.000 Euro

VU prof. medical sciences: 1.000.000 Euro

The professor gets rewarded with tenure  
for generating temporary employment.

# What causes the precariat?

## 5. Lack of counter-power

Unions have failed to change the trend through legal action

Complaints and individual action fail

And we all continue to collaborate

Flexible office space  
Theology and Philosophy  
Free University Amsterdam



DOE IETS

