

The Social State of the Netherlands
(Summary)

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Theo Roes (ed.)



Social and Cultural Planning Office
The Hague, August 2004

Social and Cultural Planning Office

As referred to in Article 9 of Royal Decree no. 175 of 30 March 1973.

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- b. to contribute to the appropriate selection of policy objectives and to provide an assessment of the advantages and disadvantages of the various means of achieving those ends;
- c. to seek information on the way in which interdepartmental policy on social and cultural welfare is implemented with a view to assessing its implementation.

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Social and Cultural Planning Office

Parnassusplein 5

2511 vx Den Haag

Tel. (070) 340 70 00

Fax (070) 340 70 44

Website: <http://www.scp.nl>

E-mail: info@scp.nl

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Foreword

This publication contains an abridged version of *The Social State of the Netherlands 2003* (*De sociale staat van Nederland 2003*), published by the Social and Cultural Planning Office of the Netherlands (SCP). It presents a description and analysis in broad outline of the life situation of the Dutch population and of specific population groups using key figures on aspects such as education, employment, income, health care, leisure time use, social participation, safety and housing. These descriptions include the opinions of citizens themselves. SCP also presents the Life Situation Index; this is a measure which provides an overall picture of the social situation in the Netherlands. Finally, this edition includes a report and analysis of public opinion on politics and the government. The English text contains a number of additional items.

The Social State of the Netherlands 2003 presents a fairly rosy picture of life in the Netherlands, despite a number of concerns in relation to health care, safety and liveability. Progress has been observed on many fronts and groups with a social disadvantage have also benefited from this. However, this English summary appears at a time when the economic downturn has begun to have a real impact on people's lives and the government has made a number of deep spending cuts. The effects of these developments are only partially visible in this report, because the statistics obviously lag behind actual developments. Although the figures are as up-to-date as possible, they generally go no further than 2002. This means that the current situation in some fields differs from that in 2002.

The printed book contains both the results and the key figures. A great deal of background material has been incorporated in the annexes, which can be consulted electronically on the SCP website (www.scp.nl) and on the special website www.socialestaat.nl.

Many SCP staff contributed to *The Social State of the Netherlands 2003*. Theo Roes was the senior editor for the Dutch publication and also wrote this abridged summary for translation into English.

Prof. dr. Paul Schnabel
Director, SCP

Introduction: background to the SSN

The *Social State of the Netherlands (De sociale staat van Nederland)* (SSN) is published every two years and aims to provide an up-to-date (or at least as up-to-date as the available data allow) description of the prevailing social situation in the Netherlands. The essence of the approach is the idea that citizens have access to a range of resources, such as knowledge and income, which make it possible for them to structure their lives as they see fit. They receive more or less help in doing this from their social setting and from the government, which uses social provisions to promote equal opportunities and provide compensation to disadvantaged groups.

Like previous editions, this edition of SSN charts developments across the full spectrum of resources and provisions and the resultant life situation of the population as a whole and of a number of specific groups. The findings mainly cover the period 1990-2002. Where possible, the results are compared with the prevailing policy objectives and are also subjected to international comparison. This creates a number of different reference points to enable the figures to be interpreted and evaluated.

With this arrangement the Social and Cultural Planning Office (SCP) is reflecting the renewed international interest in social monitoring. Following changes in political power and the revival of the economy in the nineties, governments in various countries have strengthened their input in the social field. The fight against poverty and combating social exclusion are important topics. Governments formulate targets in the various fields, and their attainment is closely monitored.

In the context of the implementation of the Maastricht Treaty and the Amsterdam Treaty, the European Union has taken a series of initiatives in the social field in relation to such topics as promotion of the knowledge economy, improvement of living conditions, social security, equal opportunities for men and women and social exclusion. In order to monitor developments in these fields the European Commission has also introduced periodic reports. One example is *The social situation in the European Union*, a publication by Eurostat and the European Commission, to which the SCP contributes (EC 2000). This is a report containing key figures on social developments in the countries of Europe.

The objectives of these kinds of monitoring instruments and also of the SSN may be formulated as follows:

- To provide an overview of the life situation of the population as a whole on the basis of key figures in a number of socially and politically relevant fields;
- To provide systematic information on developments among various groups in society and in the various areas of the Netherlands;
- To provide information on developments over time;

- Based on that information, to identify social problems and disadvantages for political/policy purposes;
- To analyse the backgrounds to and causes and consequences of these problems;
- To provide information on the extent to which the policy objectives are being attained.

The *Social State of the Netherlands* therefore sets out to be more than just a summary of key indicators in a number of selected fields. It seeks to provide added value through the systematic analysis of social developments. SCP has moreover placed the emphasis in this publication on social outcomes. It is not the intention to discuss specific policy topics; this remains the preserve of the *Social and Cultural Report*, the other biannual SCP publication.

The structure of this report is described schematically in Annex 1. Chapter 2 outlines the social context, incorporating elements such as population growth, the economy and the production of subsidised services. These elements help to determine people's opportunities.

People's living conditions are mainly determined by the resources available to them. The distribution of resources is important from a social perspective, because these socio-economic factors are of great significance for the various aspects of people's life situation. Education (chapter 3), labour (chapter 4) and income (chapter 5) each exert a substantial influence. Chapters 6- 11 focus on different aspects of living conditions, such as health, social participation, culture, housing, and so on.

Each chapter reports briefly on the objectives of social policy and the production of social services in the field in question. The developments in the distribution of resources and life situation traced here are compared with these policy objectives. This comparison is somewhat fragmentary, since few quantified policy objectives have been formulated and information on the achievement of those objectives is by no means always available. Despite these limitations, the figures provide an overall impression of the extent to which objectives are being attained. At the very least, it is usually possible to determine whether the development is moving in the right direction.

Chapter 12 presents the Living Conditions Index. This index integrates the indicators on eight domains, each of which is covered in the preceding chapters. Chapter 13 takes a different approach, reporting on satisfaction, public opinion and political attitudes. Concluding remarks are presented in chapter 14. The theme is the contrast between the positive developments in the living conditions of the Dutch people and the level of political dissatisfactions which emerged in the public opinion polls and in the elections in 2002.

The technical explanations and detailed background information have not been included in this report but may be consulted on the SCP website at www.scp.nl or www.socialestaat.nl.

1 Demography and economy

The changes that took place during the period 1990-2002 were influenced predominantly by economic and demographic trends in the second half of the 1990s. Demographic trends have a considerable impact on people's social situation, both qualitatively and quantitatively. Wealth distribution mechanisms ensure that population growth figures work through into people's life situation and have an impact on the burden placed on the available (public) provisions. From a policy perspective, it is not only the numbers as such that are important, but also the underlying demographic processes.

The effects of the economics are evident. However, the recent economic trend-breaks are visible in this report to only a limited extent. At the same time there is a realisation that unfavourable economic circumstances impinge directly on people's labour market position and income and will thus work through into the life situation of the population.

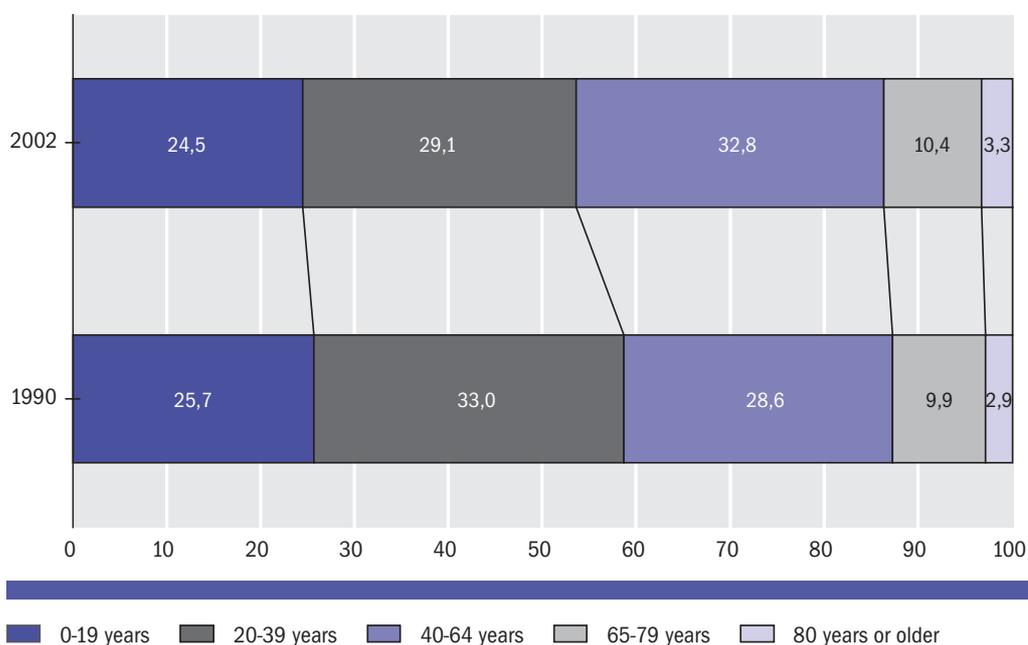
All in all, it is clear that the generally relatively positive developments described in *The Social State of the Netherlands 2003*, which were based on figures from 2001 and partly from 2002, cannot simply be extrapolated without qualification into the (near) future.

Demography

In mid-2003 the Netherlands had a population of 16.2 million. The population has grown by 0.6% per annum since 1990 (roughly 100,000 people per year), a consequence of both the birth surplus and the migration surplus. The number of households has grown even more strongly, by 1.1% per year to almost 6.7 million. The growth rate will decline in the years ahead, however (CBS 2003). The share of members of ethnic minorities in the population increased from 16% in 1995 to 18.5% in 2000. This increase consists almost entirely of non-western ethnic minorities; their share in the population has grown from 7.3% in 1995 to 9.7% in 2002. Half of these originate from Turkey, Surinam, Morocco and the Netherlands Antilles.

One socially important demographic trend is the already widely discussed *ageing* of the population (figure 1.1). The proportion of young people is declining, despite the recent increase in the number of births, while the older age groups are swelling. The growth in the potential labour force came to an end in the mid-1990s, and this undoubtedly helps to explain the tightness of the labour market in recent years. The ageing of the population has recently accelerated, and this has a major impact on people's life situation and on the take-up of provisions. For example, the increased proportion of people aged over 65 not only has consequences for social security and health care, but also for other areas of society, such as the leisure sector. The recent trend whereby older workers continue to work for longer must therefore be seen as a positive development in the light of the demographic pressure from the changing numbers of young and especially older people ('green' and 'grey' pressure).

Figure 1.1 Structure of the population by age in 1990 and 2002 (in percent)



Source: CBS (Statline)

The changes in *household formation* may be the most interesting from a social perspective (table 1.1). Two factors are at work here, namely the shifts within each age group and the increased diversity of cohabitation modes. Demographers talk about the ‘standardisation of lifestyles’ and the emergence of the ‘choice biography’. Although in each age category it is still possible to identify the most commonly occurring household type, changes are already clearly observable over the demographically short period 1990-2002. The proportion of couples with children is falling sharply while the share of single people living alone is increasing, due both to the increase in the number of single young people and to divorce and ageing.

Table 1.1 Shift in cohabitation profile of persons by age-group between 1990 and 2002 (percentage points)

	0-14 yr	15-29 yr	30-44 yr	45-59 yr	60-74 yr	≥ 75 yr
child in a family	0.1	1.8	-0.1	-0.3	0.0	0.0
single person	0.0	1.7	3.0	2.9	1.2	3.9
couple without children	0.0	-2.2	2.4	7.7	6.2	4.9
couple with child(ren)	0.0	-2.3	-6.9	-11.1	-6.3	-0.9
single-parent family	0.0	0.2	1.1	1.1	0.6	2.5
institution	0.2	-0.1	0.1	-0.1	-1.0	-9.0
other	-0.3	1.0	0.4	-0.1	-0.6	-1.4

Source: CBS (StatLine)

In addition to general social trends and government policy, changes such as these in household situations and personal circumstances have a considerable impact on all kinds of aspects of people's life situation. This has prompted greater attention from social scientists and policymakers for people's life course. This attention reveals considerable differences in the burden on individuals in the successive phases of life and concomitantly diverse social needs. The present discussion focuses strongly on the concentration of activities in the busy family phase, the combination of work and care tasks and the labour market participation of older workers. These aspects are also discussed here. The influence of demographic processes is sometimes reduced to 'green' and 'grey' pressure, but the 'life course perspective' is at least as interesting for almost every area of society.

Economy

Real national income was buoyant in the period 1990-2001, and particularly in the second half of this period, rising by an average of 2.5% per annum, up to EUR 360 billion in 2001. 2001 marked a turning point; economic growth slowed and came to a halt in early 2003, and real national income actually moved into the red in 2002 and 2003, with the trend estimated at around -1%. Total disposable income, which in the period 1990-2000 lagged behind the trend in national income with average annual growth of 2%, in fact rose most strongly in 2001, mainly as a result of tax reforms. This growth also came to a halt, however, in 2002. In combination with household dilution, the population growth means that disposable income per household increased by an average of 1% per year over the period as a whole.

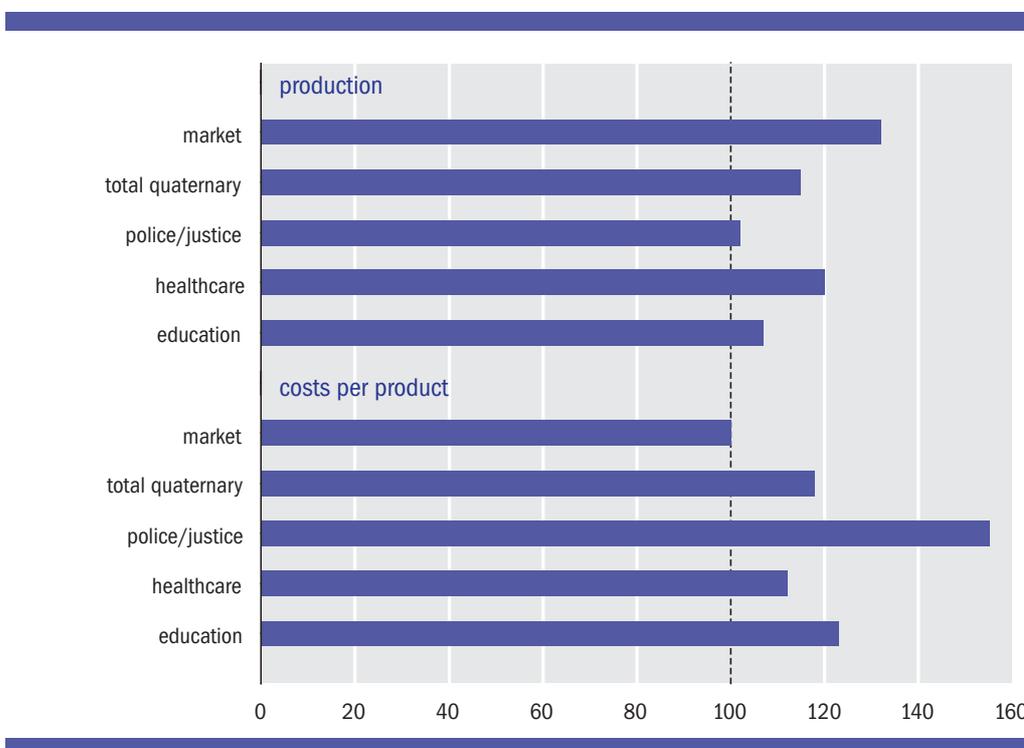
The government exerts a great influence on people's life situation through social security benefits and the provision of public services. The increase in *public spending* was modest in the period 1990-2000, and spending fell from 64% to 53% of net national income. This was primarily a combined effect of strong economic growth and falling spending on interest and social security benefits.

Following reforms of the social security system in the early 1990s, total *gross benefits* remained fairly constant and the government consequently had to spend relatively less on them. From 2000 onwards, however, benefits began to increase again.

The government provides citizens with transfers not only in money but also in kind. The latter include individual services such as health care, education, housing or public transport, which are provided free of charge or at cost. Then there are the collective services such as public safety and public administration. The total costs of these *quaternary provisions* came to EUR 142 billion in 2000, or 43% of national income. EUR 86 billion (61%) of this was funded by the government. The government share in these costs has remained virtually constant in the past decade, at 27% of national income. The remainder comes from revenues or contributions from the users of

these services. This share has increased slightly, partly because of the withdrawal of the government from the housing and public transport sectors.

Figure 1.2 Growth in production and costs of quaternary services in the period 1990-2000 (index: 1990 = 100)



Source: SCP (2002: 91 and 97)

The output of the quaternary sector is measured using physical indicators. These indicators provide as accurate a measure as possible of the performance in terms of service delivery, such as the number of patients treated in the health care system or the number of crimes solved by the police. The volume of services delivered rose by 15% in the period 1990-2000; this growth is mainly attributable to the care sector, where production increased by 20% (figure 1.2). Production in the area of safety showed virtually no increase. Although education production increased, this was depressed by dejuvenation effects. Compared with the private sector, quaternary services have become more expensive; this applies in particular for the police and judicial services.

2 Education

Policy objectives

Individual resources largely determine people's life situation. The first such resource is education. The level of education attained has an increasingly dominant influence on people's lives, primarily because of its impact on their labour market and income position, and secondly because it influences their opinions and values, social opportunities and actual choices.

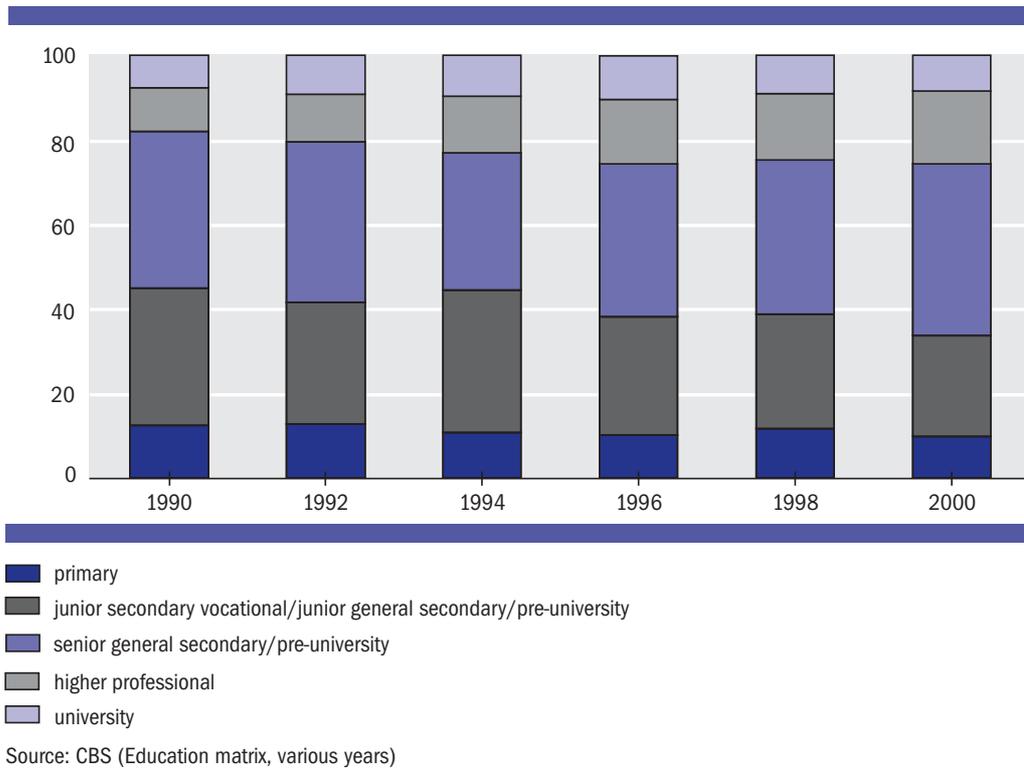
Education is given a high priority in the Coalition Agreement of the present government led by Prime Minister Balkenende. Education policy has long been driven by the desire to create a well-educated population. Young people in initial education must be equipped as adequately as possible for lifelong learning. Everyone must have equal access to education and should not end their educational career without at least an initial qualification. In the early 1990s the 'basic qualification' was introduced in secondary schools (as a minimum, a grade 2 diploma from a senior secondary vocational school or a senior general secondary or pre-university education diploma). Possession of a diploma is regarded as necessary to acquire a good position on the labour market, and that diploma should as a minimum be at the level of someone at the start of a professional career. The policy is aimed at preventing people leaving school prematurely, i.e. without an initial qualification. In 2006 the percentage of early school-leavers must have reduced by 30% compared with 2003 (TK 2002/2003). The government also wishes to combat the phenomenon of drop-out without a diploma.

Although the compulsory school attendance laws guarantee almost 100% participation in primary education, this does not of itself mean that pupils' chances of success are equal. Apart from aptitude, social and ethnic origin are influential factors. In the past the government has developed policy aimed at breaking the correlation between origin and school achievement. What is relatively new is the attention being given in policy to combating educational disadvantage in the preschool phase.

Education level

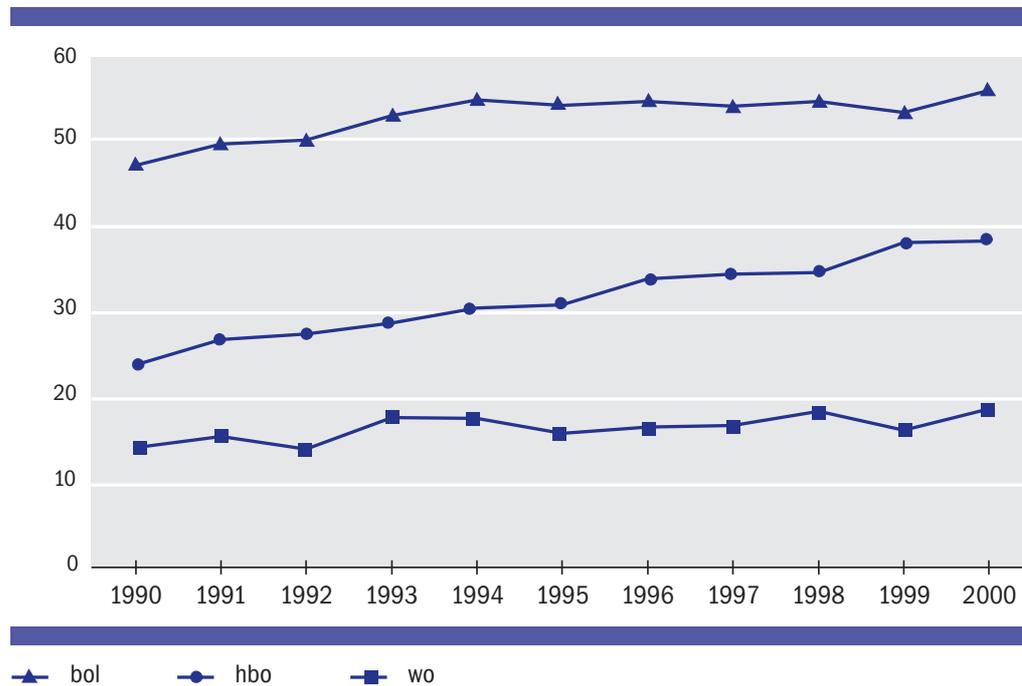
The education level with which students leave full-time education has been increasing gradually for many years, but this increase accelerated in the second half of the 1990s (figure 1.2). Not only is the proportion of graduates of higher professional and university education increasing, but more young people are also leaving full-time education with at least an initial vocational qualification. The Netherlands takes a middle-ranking position in this respect within the European Union.

Figure 2.1 Outflow from full time education by level attained, 1990-2000 (in percent)



More and more young people are entering vocational and higher education. Figure 2.2 relates the intake figures to the proportion of young people in the relevant age category. Higher professional education (HBO) has enjoyed a particular increase in student numbers. In 1990 24% of students in the relevant age group entered higher professional education; by 2000 this had risen to 38%.

Figure 2.2 Inflow into vocational training pathway (bol), higher professional (hbo) and university (wo) education, 1990-2000 (in percent of the relevant cohort of young people)



Source: CBS (Education matrix and population statistics, various years) SCP treatment

At senior secondary vocational level (MBO), both the ‘vocational training pathway’ (beroepsopleidende leerweg – BOL) and the ‘block or day-release pathway’ (beroepsbegeleidende leerweg – BBL), which has replaced the old apprenticeship system, are gaining in importance (not in figure).¹ In absolute terms the number of entrants in 1992 was 61,000, rising to over 73,000 in 2000. This increase can be ascribed mainly to a rise in the number of girl entrants, who accounted for 85% of the increase in the last decade (CBS 2000 and 2002).

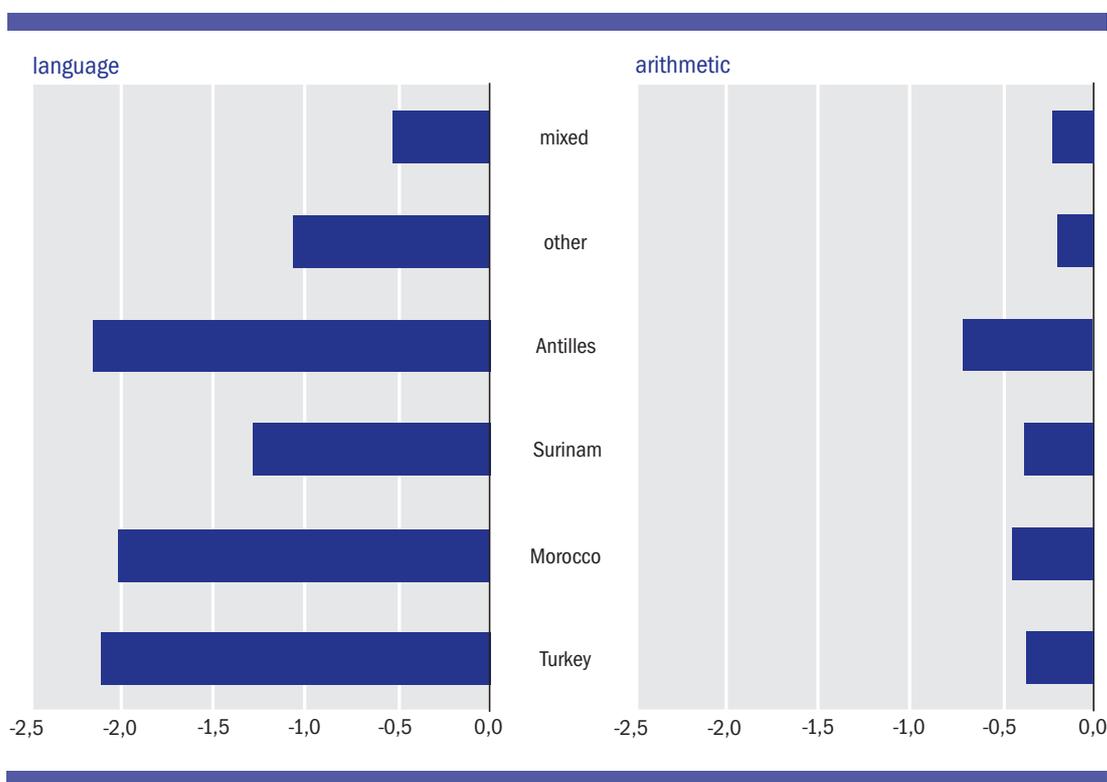
Girls also account for a substantial part of the growth elsewhere in vocational and higher education. As early as the start of the 1990s the number of girl entrants to the ‘vocational training pathway’ outstripped the number of boy entrants. Later in the 1990s the same thing occurred in higher professional education, and at the end of the decade the number of girls entering university also exceeded the number of male entrants. Despite this, there are still wide differences in the sectors of study chosen by boys and girls, and this situation has changed little (SCP 2001b; Portegijs et al. 2002). Girls mainly choose courses in the caring and socio-cultural sphere, while boys tend to favour technical courses. Only economics (higher professional education) and Law (university) show proportional participation by gender.

Educational disadvantage and drop-out

Notwithstanding this positive trends, there are still considerable problems. First of all there is the issue of drop-outs. The government is committed to ensuring that as many young people as possible leave education with at least an initial qualification. This may be a certificate of completion of a basic vocational course (MBO grade 2) or a senior secondary or pre-university diploma (HAVO/VWO). There are indications that many young people – in the government’s view too many – are still leaving school without an initial qualification (premature school-leavers). The percentage of young people leaving full-time education without such an initial qualification has fallen in recent years from 45% to 34%; however, from this perspective it is particularly worrying that a proportion of young people are leaving full-time education with no qualification whatsoever (drop-outs). Although the percentage of drop-outs has fallen from around 16% to below 14%, this downward trend appears to have ground to a halt in the second half of the 1990s. It is worth noting here that these figures include young people with a learning or other disability who leave the education system immediately after completing primary or special school and who consequently have never entered secondary education

A second problem in the Dutch education system are the persistent cases of educational disadvantage related to social background and ethnic origin.

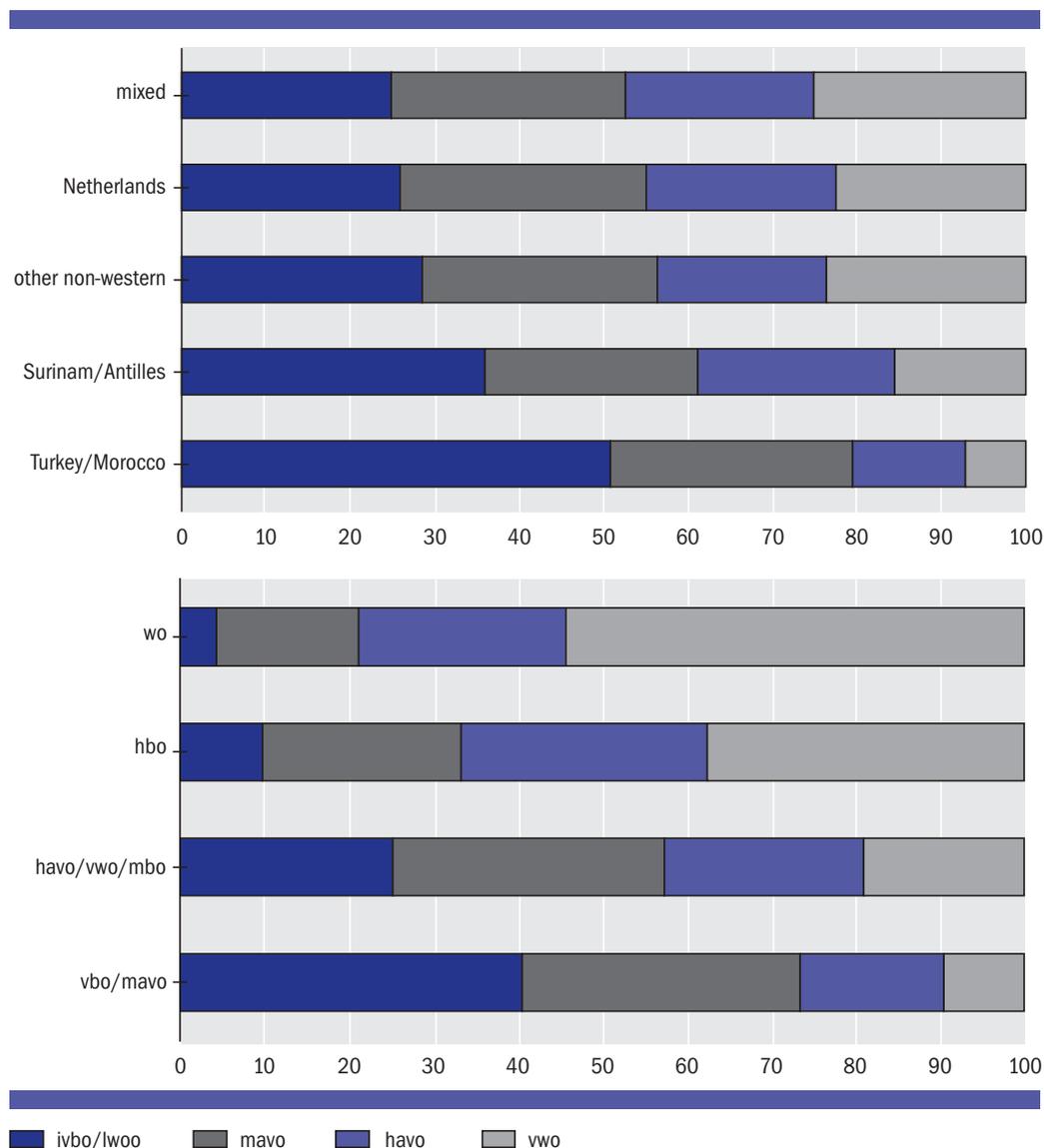
Figure 2.3 Performance of ethnic minority pupils in year 8 compared with the indigenous reference category (in learning years)



Source: ITS/SCO/NWO (Prima'00) SCP treatment; Dagevos et al. (Rapportage Minderheden 2003)

Although progress is being made, there is no escaping the conclusion that ethnic minority primary school pupils still face considerable disadvantages compared with indigenous pupils. The most disadvantaged are pupils of Turkish, Moroccan and Antillean origin (in year 8 they are about two years behind in language subjects and more than six months behind in arithmetic) (figure 2.3). Also striking is the underperformance of indigenous disadvantaged pupils (not shown); children where both parents have attained no more than junior secondary vocational standard – a group which is incidentally shrinking rapidly – perform less well than other indigenous children.

Figure 2.4 Position in year 3 of secondary school^a, by origin^b and by education level of the best educated parent, 2001 and 2002 (in percent)



a (i)vbo = individualised pre-vocational education/ educational support programmes, pre-vocational education and elementary block or day-release pathway; mavo = junior general secondary education + pre-vocational secondary education, mixed and theoretical pathway.

b The category 'mixed' comprises children with one indigenous and one ethnic minority parent.

Source: CBS (VOCL'99) SCP-bewerking; Dagevos et al. (Rapportage Minderheden 2003)

These disadvantages continue into secondary education, as borne out by the positions of pupils in the third year of secondary school (figure 2.4). Pupils from the four major ethnic minority groups are found in (individualised) pre-vocational education ((1)VBO) or educational support programmes (*leerwegondersteunend onderwijs* – LWOO) relatively more frequently than other pupils. In particular they are much less well represented in pre-university education (vwo). The favourable position of children from a mixed background is striking.

Pupils with highly educated parents are found much more frequently in senior general secondary (HAVO) and pre-university (vwo) education, while pupils with poorly educated parents have a much stronger presence at lower educational levels.² Closer analysis shows that the parental education level is (still) a very strong predictor of school choice (see also SCP 2001a), even when allowance is made for the school achievements of children at the end of their primary school careers.

Educational provisions

The slight increase in output (figure 1.2) for education as a whole breaks down into a net increase in the number of pupils in primary school, special schools and higher professional education and falls in secondary education, senior secondary vocational education and university education.³

The average annual growth of 1% in primary education can be ascribed entirely to demographic factors (i.e. an increase in the number of children in the relevant age group (4-12 years)). In addition to this age effect, there is also a (relatively modest) participation effect in special (primary) education. In the 1990s there was a strongly negative demographic effect in senior secondary vocational education, higher professional education and university education, but due to a reduction in the number of 16-24 year-olds as a result of the ageing of society; this effect is (partially) offset by an increase in participation per age group. The increase in participation in higher professional education is so spectacular that the demographic fall averaging 2.5% turns into an equally strong rise.

The staff deployment per pupil increased in primary and secondary schools after 1992 due to the reduction in class sizes in junior classes and structural changes in secondary education. In higher professional education, by contrast, the number of students per lecturer increased. Staffing problems in primary and secondary schools are due in part to this improvement in the teacher/pupil ratio in a period with a tight labour market. The problems were exacerbated by high sickness absenteeism levels. The more structural cause lies in the ageing of teaching staff, which in combination with the tight labour market led to more people leaving than entering the profession. Although the vacancy problems are not high in percentage terms, the consequences are serious. Teaching programmes are being disrupted and some difficult school

types ('black' schools and pre-vocational secondary schools) are suffering extra disadvantage. The changing labour market is now admittedly relieving the most acute problems, but the structural problems remain.

Goal attainment

Education policy has two objectives which are crucial for people's life situation: the initial qualification as a minimum school-leaving standard and the reduction of educational disadvantage. Realisation of the first aim is coming closer. Educational disadvantage is proving more stubborn, but is reducing among ethnic minorities, particularly those of Surinamese extraction. Disadvantaged indigenous pupils, by contrast, are falling further behind. This is probably due to selection effects, because the number of adults with a low educational level is reducing.

3 Employment

Policy objectives

Carrying out paid work not only generates (present and future) income, but also gives people an opportunity to develop cognitively and socially, to give an added dimension to their existence and to acquire social status. This makes the promotion and distribution of employment a crucial element of social policy.

The government's labour market policy is directed towards maximising labour participation. Extra attention is focused on a number of specific groups; for example, the government wishes to increase the labour participation of older people by 0.75 percentage points per year, and to raise the participation of women to 65% by 2010 (compared with 53% in 2001). The government is also committed to improving the labour market position of ethnic minorities. The policy also focuses on improving the quality of work and reducing benefit dependency. To help achieve this, the implementing structure for the social security system has been radically altered and a number of schemes have come into force designed specifically to encourage people to move off benefit.

There was a very sharp rise in *labour market participation* between 1990 and 2002, which saw the gross participation rate increase from 59% to 68% (see table 3.1). The number of benefit claimants also fell steadily. This increased employment translated into a positive trend for household income, particularly for households where the main breadwinner moved off benefit and into work.

Women and older people benefited most from this positive trend; 54% and 37% of these groups, respectively, were in work in 2002. The increase in total gross and net participation was mainly accounted for by older people.

2002 marked a turning point for the labour market: the growth in employment slowed, the number of vacancies shrank and *unemployment* began to climb. The unemployment figures for the months April-June 2003 show how quickly this trend can develop. The unemployment rate rose within the space of one year from 3.9% to 5.4%; 11.6% of young people were unemployed.

Employment

Table 3.1 Key figures on labour market trends, 1990-2002

	1990	1994	1998	2000	2001	2002
working persons ^a (x 1000)	6,327	6,692	7,398	7,731	7,865	7,955
labour force ^b (x 1000)	6,063	6,466	6,957	7,187	7,311	7,444
working labour force (x 1000)	5,644	5,920	6,609	6,917	7,064	7,141
employees	5,016	5,222	5,874	6,117	6,289	6,352
permanent employment contract	–	4,797	5,270	5,588	5,783	5,866
flexible employment contract	–	425	604	530	506	486
self-employed	628	698	734	799	774	789
gross participation ^c (%)	59	62	66	67	68	68
women	44	48	53	55	56	57
55-64-yrs	27	26	30	35	35	38
15-24-yrs	47	45	45	47	49	48
non-western ethnic minorities	–	49	53	54	55	56
net participation ^d (%)	55	57	62	65	65	66
women	39	42	49	52	53	54
55-64-yrs	26	25	29	34	34	37
15-24-yrs	42	39	41	44	45	44
non-western ethnic minorities	–	37	44	48	50	50
vacancies ^e (x 1000)	105	39	123	188	182	135
unemployment (x 1000)	419	547	348	270	248	302
unemployment (%)	7	8	5	4	3	4
women	11	11	7	5	5	5
55-64-yrs	4	4	3	3	2	3
15-24-yrs	10	13	8	7	7	8
non-western ethnic minorities	–	25	16	11	9	10
registered unemployment (x 1000)	358	486	287	188	146	170
long-term (> 1 year)	198	244	155	82	52	–
benefit recipient ^f (x1000)	1,603	1,796	1,591	1,481	1,469	1,517
i/a ratio ^g	82.2	83.2	69.9	66.7	65.6	65.9
index figures (1990 = 100):						
working persons ^a	100	106	117	122	124	126
working labour force	100	107	115	119	121	123
unemployment	100	131	83	64	59	72
registered	100	136	80	53	41	51
long-term (> 1 year)	100	123	78	41	26	–
number of benefit recipients ^f	100	112	99	92	92	95

a Including persons with a working week of less than 12 hours.

b Working people with a job for at least 12 hours per week and job-seekers looking for a job for at least 12 hours per week.¹

c Labour force as a percentage of the total population aged 15-64.

d Working labour force as a percentage of the total population aged 15-64.

e Annual averages, excluding vacancies in the civil service and education.

f Recipients of unemployment, social assistance or disability benefit (incl. people on more than one benefit).

g Number of benefit claimants (in benefit years) as a percentage of the labour volume (in person years).

Source: CBS (a); CBS (1994); CBS (2003b); CPB (1999, 2001, 2003) SCP treatment

1 More precisely, the labour force comprises: (a) persons who work at least 12 hours per week; or (b) persons who have accepted work which will involve them working for at least 12 hours per week; or (c) persons who declare that they are willing to work for at least 12 hours per week, are available to do so and are actively seeking work for at least 12 hours per week.

Table 3.2 Unemployed labour force by age, sex, education level and ethnic group, 2001-2002 (unemployment in percent and absolute figures (x 1000), and changes in percent)

	2001	2002	2001	2002	change
	%	%	absolute (x 1000)	absolute (x 1000)	2001-2002 %
total	3.4	4.1	248	302	+22
15-24 yrs	7.2	8.5	66	78	+18
25-34 yrs	2.8	3.7	56	73	+30
35-44 yrs	3.1	3.5	64	75	+17
45-54 yrs	2.9	3.2	50	58	+16
55-64 yrs	2.3	2.9	13	18	+39
men	2.5	3.4	106	147	+39
15-24 yrs	7.0	9.1	34	44	+29
25-44 yrs	2.0	2.9	47	68	+45
45-64 yrs	1.9	2.3	28	35	+25
women	4.7	5.0	142	155	+9
15-24 yrs	7.8	7.9	34	34	0
25-44 yrs	4.3	4.6	74	80	+8
45-64 yrs	4.2	4.6	35	41	+17
primary education	6.6	7.5	42	43	+2
junior general secondary education	6.0	7.3	30	36	+20
pre-university education	4.0	4.8	41	48	+17
senior general secondary/pre-university education	6.1	5.7	26	24	-8
senior secondary vocational education	2.3	3.0	62	83	+34
higher professional education	2.4	3.0	32	43	+34
university education	2.1	3.5	14	25	+79
indigenous	2.8	3.3	168	205	+22
ethnic minorities	6.4	7.6	79	98	+24
of which non-western minorities	8.7	10.5	49	63	+29
of whom Turks	8	9	9	10	+11
Moroccans	10	10	8	9	+13
Surinamese	6	8	9	12	+33
Antilleans	8	10	4	6	+50
other	11	14	19	26	+37

Source: CBS (a), CBS (2003e)

Unemployment is relatively high among certain groups such as young people, women, non-western ethnic minorities and people with a low education level (table 3.2). It is however striking that the biggest losers on the labour market in 2002 are found in other, somewhat overlapping social categories, such as people with a higher education level (including many young people who fail to find work) and men aged 25-44

(redundancies in the commercial services sector). The (gross) participation rate is increasing among ethnic minorities and older people, but unemployment is rising at the same time. Members of non-western ethnic minorities are increasingly seeking to enter the labour market, but some of them fail to find work partly because of their low education level. Although more older people continue to work or keep themselves (compulsorily) available for work, they still more frequently become unemployed.

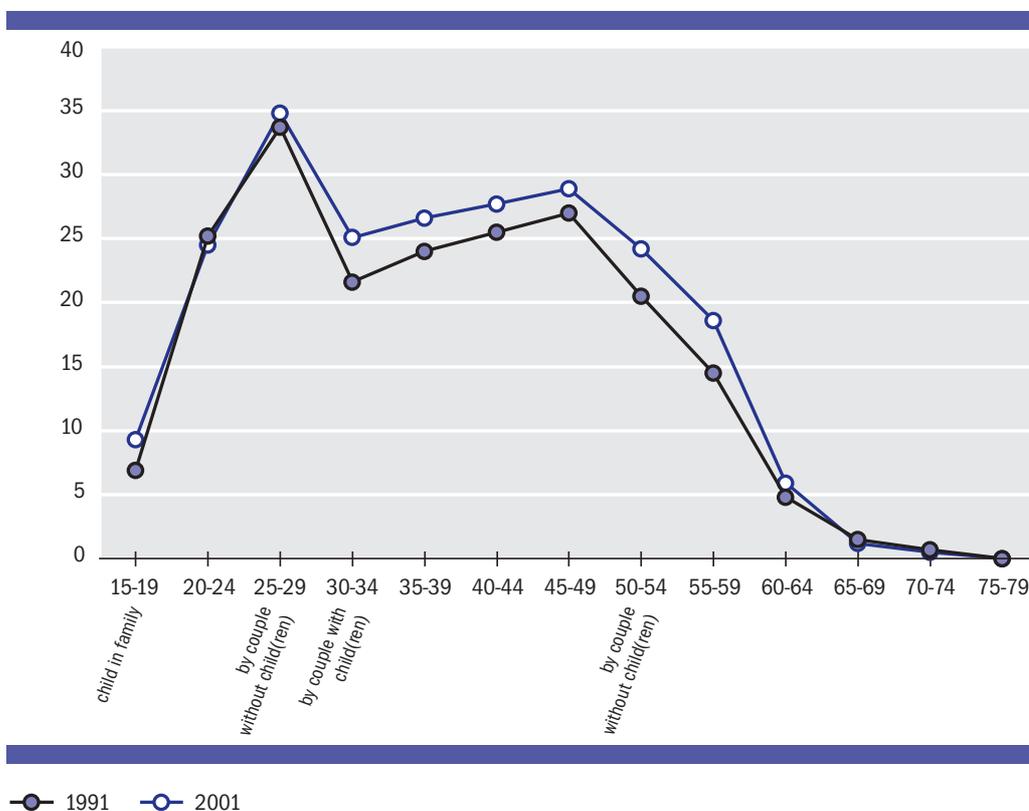
People with a higher education background were hit hard by the economic downturn in 2002 (no figures by education level are available for 2003). The number of unemployed and units of senior secondary vocational and higher professional education increased by 34%, while unemployment among university graduates rose by no less than 79%. The increase in unemployment among higher professional education and university graduates is partly the result of their increased participation in the labour market. Many higher education graduates sought to enter the jobs market, and many of them found work. At the same time, however, the weaker labour market was unable to absorb the increased influx. In addition, the proportion of the increase in unemployment among higher education graduates can probably be attributed to redundancies (e.g. in the ICT sector and other segments of the commercial services sector), which hit university graduates in particular. A sizeable proportion of people with a background in senior secondary vocational education also appear to have become unemployed through redundancy; their gross and net participation increased relatively little, whereas unemployment among this group rose sharply.

Social security benefits

In view of the ageing of the population and concerns about the affordability of the social security system, a good deal of political attention is focused on the ratio between the number of benefit claimants (including the over-65s) – i.e. people who are economically *inactive* – and people who are in work – i.e. economically *active*; this is expressed as the inactivity/activity ratio, or *i/a ratio*. After falling sharply (from 83.2 in 1994 to 65.6 in 2001 (table 3.1)) this ratio deteriorated slightly again in 2002 (65.9), not only because of increasing redundancies and the ageing of the population, but also because of the difficulty of reintegrating benefit recipients and people with an employment disability. At the end of 2001, it proved possible to reintegrate roughly 400,000 of the almost 1.5 million benefit recipients. Each year, no more than a few percent of claimants move off disability benefit because of recovery. And even those who do move off benefit do not all return to work. In addition, a few percent resumed work part-time. In 1998 – one of the better years – people on social assistance benefit had a 15% chance of moving off benefit, while those on unemployment benefit had a chance of 36%; in 2001 these percentages had fallen to 12% and 30%, respectively. Active job-seeking behaviour, encouraged among other things by the statutory duty to seek work, increases the chance of finding a job. Financial incentives appear to play a less important role than is often assumed by policymakers.

Life course

Figure 3.1 Modal profile of the number of working hours per week of persons, by age and position in the household, 1991 en 2001



Source: CBS (EBB'91 and '01) SCP treatment

Looking at employment participation from the life course perspective, two trend-breaks are relevant: the *family dip* and *early retirement*. The transition from a couple without children to a couple with children is still accompanied by a reduction in weekly working hours – by 10 hours per week in 2001 (figure 3.1). Although fewer women than in the past stop working entirely following the birth of their first child, many of them decided to work less, at least temporarily. In addition, young parents are keen to see a further increase in the flexibility of working hours and childcare facilities. Despite a fivefold increase in childcare facilities, demand still outstrips supply, though there are places free on certain days of the week. There are also indications that the demand is softening due to reduced employment participation and sharp price increases.

Despite the increased participation of older people reported above, this begins to fall off sharply after age 50. There is still a long way to go before this trend starts to level off.

Goal attainment

The labour participation rate and benefit dependency moved in the desired direction in the period 1995-2002 under the influence of the strong economy. Women in particular participated more, but so did older people and members of non-western ethnic minorities. There are indications that the specific target groups are falling behind again in the present weak economic situation, and it therefore remains to be seen whether the quantified labour market targets for 2010 will be achieved. Although the number of benefit claimants as a fraction of the labour force fell, the number of people leaving the social security system was limited. Integration into the labour market of people with an employment disability in particular proved difficult, despite the strong demand for labour.

4 Income

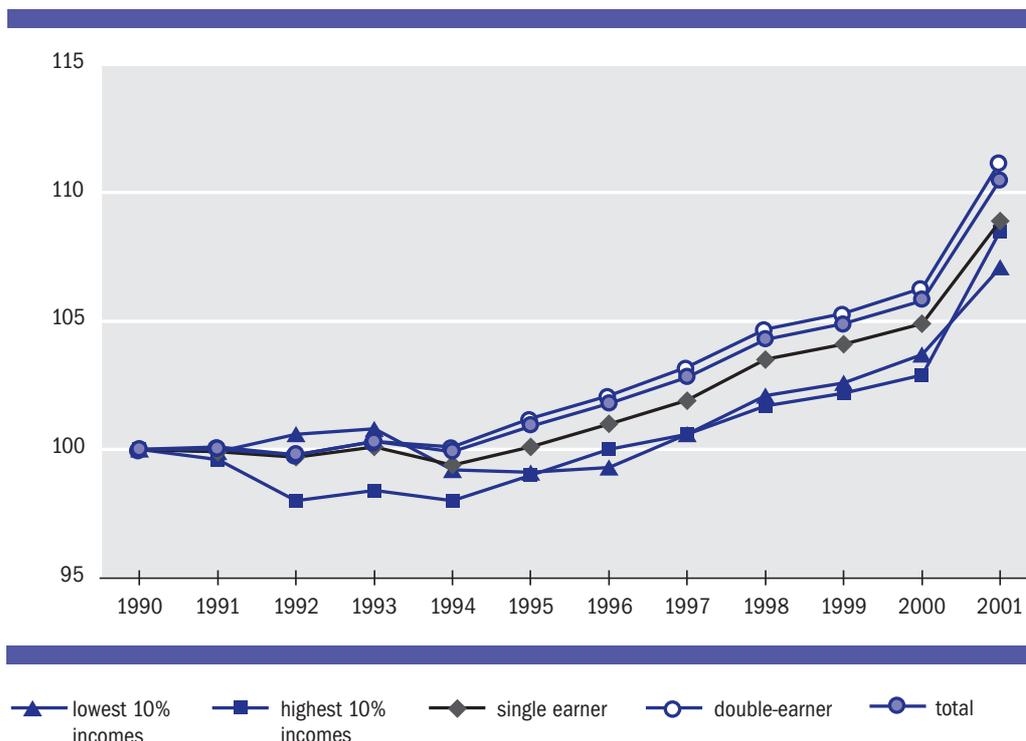
Policy objectives

The importance of income for the material aspects of people's life situation is obvious, but income also enables people to undertake social activities, maintain social networks and acquire social esteem. The government therefore pursues an extensive incomes policy. There are three key elements to this incomes policy: more income for the population, sufficient income for everyone and balanced income development.⁴ The first objective must be achieved primarily through employment policy; the two other objectives form part of the incomes policy in a strict sense. The government does not set actual targets, but instead adopts a 'social policy minimum' income level. In addition the position of vulnerable groups is monitored, for example when measures are taken which increase the burden of tax and social insurance contributions for the public.

Income distribution

Household *disposable income* averaged EUR 15,900 in 1990 and increased to EUR 17,900 in 2001. In the period 1990-1994 this income remained virtually unchanged from the level achieved in 1990, but thereafter it rose steadily up to 2000, when it was almost 6% higher than in 1990. Strikingly, the rise in purchasing power in 2001 was double that of the entire preceding period, at more than 10% more than in 1990. This leap can be ascribed to the reduction in tax and social insurance contributions following the tax reforms introduced in 2001.⁵ Estimates by the Netherlands Bureau for Economic Policy Analysis (CPB) suggest that the sharp rise in 2001 slowed to a modest 0.5% gain in purchasing power in 2002, and in 2003 this turned into a loss of purchasing power of -1.25%. (CPB 2003).

Figure 4.1 Trend in static purchasing power, by income group and earner type, 1990-2001 (index: 1990 = 100)



Source: CBS (Statline)

Things did not turn out equally well for all income groups and earner categories. Thus in 2001 the increase in purchasing power for the group with the 10% highest incomes outstripped that of the lowest 10% income bracket (see figure 4.1).

While the static purchasing power of households increased by an average of 5% in the period 1995-2000, actual purchasing power rose by an average of 8%. Analysis of the figures for the period 1995-2000 shows that this increase was not just a question of a general improvement in purchasing power, but was also a consequence of changes in people's personal circumstances, such as the composition of the household or their labour market position. In the second half of the 1990s there was a sharp rise in labour participation and the number of double-earners, while the number of benefit claimants fell. These factors combined to drive up household incomes. The middle incomes enjoyed the biggest increase in purchasing power, but pensioners and non-western ethnic minority households also did better than average. On the other hand, long-term benefit claimants – a group which is admittedly shrinking – and in particular people on disability benefit, played virtually no part in the increase in prosperity. The purchasing power of self-employed people did not increase at all.

Comparing the incomes of the different groups reveals that there has been virtually no change; there has been almost no increase in *income inequality*. The improved income

situation is also clearly apparent from the decrease in the percentage of households with a low income (111% of the guaranteed minimum income in 2000), which fell from just over 15% in 1995 to around 10% in 2002. This positive income trend is set to be reversed by the deteriorating economic situation.

The *family dip* referred to earlier (chapter 3) is also reflected in the income distribution across the different types of household. Although the average loss of income on the birth of a child (the balance of fewer hours' paid work, child benefit and financial provisions) reduced considerably in the 1990s, these households still lost 25% of their purchasing power in 2000 due to the extra costs of caring for children. The sharp drop in employment participation around age 50 was accompanied by a much less steep fall in purchasing power due to company retirement schemes and of course pensions.

Social benefits

Table 4.1 Benefit dependency of the population aged 15-64 years, 1990-2002 (in percent)

benefit type	relevant category	1990	1995	2000	2002	change 1990-2002 (in percentage points) with respect to	
						relevant population	total population
surviving dependant's pension	population 40-64 yrs	4.4	4.1	2.7	2.5	-1.9	-0.6
incapacity for work	labour force 15-64 yrs	12.8	11.4	11.0	11.0	-1.8	-0.1
ditto, 15-44	labour force 15-44 yrs	4.9	3.7	4.3	4.6	-0.3	0.0
ditto, 45-64	labour force 45-64 yrs	39.2	31.9	26.3	24.4	-14.8	-0.2
illness	labour force 15-64 yrs	5.7	4.6	5.3	5.2	-0.5	0.2
unemployment	labour force 15-64 yrs	4.4	5.2	2.2	2.2	-2.2	-1.1
social assistance	population 15-64 yrs	5.6	5.1	3.7	3.4	-2.1	-2.1
student finance	population 18-24 yrs	32.5	39.1	35.9	34.2	1.7	-1.4
total	population 15-64 yrs	26.6	25.9	21.9	21.5		-5.1

Source: SWZ (benefits) and CBS (population)

The number of *benefit claimants* aged 15-64 fell in absolute terms, but fell particularly sharply as a fraction of the labour force (table 4.1). In 1990 this group accounted for more than a quarter of the population aged between 15 and 64; by 2002 this had fallen nearly to a fifth. This is a result of the smaller number of people going on to unemployment benefit and social assistance benefit, combined with the general increase in employment participation. Despite the unfavourable economic tide, however, the percentage of people moving onto disability benefit fluctuated around 1.5% of the labour force, and the number of people moving off benefit remained

reasonably stable at 3-4% of disability benefit recipients, excluding the temporary effect of the tightening up of the benefit rules in 1994-1996. Recent figures published in July 2003 by Statistics Netherlands (CBS) showed not only that the increase in the number of unemployment benefit recipients has accelerated since 2002, but that the number of people on social assistance benefit increased in the last quarter of 2002 for the first time in five years.

Inequality

Table 4.2 Poor and wealthy households, 1990, 1995 and 2000 (in percent)

	1990	1995	2000
number of households (x 1000) ^a	5,710	6,130	6,550
with a low income ^b	15.0	15.5	11.9
with a low income on average for four years	–	11.5	9.7
with a continuous low income for four years	–	7.8	5.9
single person ≥ 65 years		23	16
single-parent family		36	21
non-western ethnic minority		23	17
benefit claimant		31	31
children ^c		6	4
with a high income ^b	7.9	8.2	10.8
with a high income on average for four years	–	7.7	9.1
with a continuous high income for four years	–	4.5	5.1
employee		5	5
double-earner		6	8
double-earner without children		10	12
children ^c		1	2

a Excluding students and households with incomplete annual incomes.

b Low income in 2000: EUR 9,265 standardised income; high income: three times the amount of the low income (four times modal income as per the Netherlands Euro for Economic Policy Analysis CPB).

c From 0-17 years.

Source: CBS (IPO) SCP treatment

The income landscape in the 1990s remained relatively flat, and the small changes in the distribution of incomes bears very little relation to policy, social, demographic or economic developments. According to some generally used measures of income inequality – the Gini coefficient and the Theil coefficient – there was virtually no movement in the 1990s. On the other hand, the share of households with a low income fell sharply in the second half of the 1990s, from 15.5% in 1995 to 11.9% in 2000 (table 4.2). An income is regarded as low in 2000 if it is less than around 111% of the ‘social policy minimum’ (guaranteed minimum income). This amount is adjusted annually in line with inflation.⁶ Based on improvements in static purchasing power

in the subsequent years, it has been calculated that the share of households with a low income declined by a further 1.8 percentage points to reach 10.1% in 2002 (SCP/CBS 2002: 14). This means that the number of households with a low income has reduced by a third since 1995. At the same time, the increased general prosperity led to a rise in the share of households with a high income, from just over 8% in 1995 to almost 11% in 2000.

The virtually unchanging inequality measures and the figures on the incidence of poverty hide the fact that considerable movements have taken place in the income distribution. The number of households with a consistently low or consistently high income over a period of four years accounts for roughly half the number of households in each of these categories in any given year. This means that the number of households confronted with a low income for four successive years also reduced: from 7.8% in 1995 to 5.9% in 2000. In some population groups this fall was bigger (single-parent families), while in others it was smaller (benefit recipients). The reverse of this coin is the increase in the number of households enjoying a high income for four successive years: this figure rose from 4.5% in 1995 to 5.1% in 2000.

Goal attainment

The objectives of the *incomes policy*, to the extent that these have been clearly defined, do appear to have been more or less achieved in the second half of the 1990s. The distribution of disposable incomes has not become more unequal, while the number of households with a low income has reduced. Typical disadvantaged groups have also benefited. One exception is benefit claimants, and in particular those on disability benefit: in line with the policy intention, their incomes have not increased. It is however uncertain whether these benefit claimants need a financial incentive to start looking for work, as is assumed in the policy.

5 Health

Policy objectives

The general objectives of government health policy, and the welfare policy in so far as it relates to health, are to increase people's healthy life expectancy, prevent premature mortality, reduce socio-economic health differentials, improve the quality of life and the integration and social participation of the disabled and chronically sick (TK 1994/1995; VWS 2001; Delnoij et al. 2002.) The policy seeks both to improve public health and to ensure better care for the sick. The health care system plays a key role in this endeavour. The government sees it as its task to safeguard the quality, accessibility and effectiveness of the health care system (TK 2000/2001, TK 2001/2002).

Life expectancy

Life expectancy began rising again in 1990, going up by 0.5 years for women to 80.6 years and by 1.7 years for men to 75.6 years (table 5.1). Dutch men score well in international comparison, but Dutch women are below the EU average.

Table 5.1 (Healthy) Life expectancy. Life expectancy and healthy life expectancy of 0 and 65 year-olds, 1990-2000 (in years)

	LE		IFL		LWL		LGPH		LGMH	
	m	w	m	w	m	w	m	w	m	w
0 year-olds										
1990	73.9	80.1	55.4	54.2	65.5	66.0	60.3	61.0	65.8	66.0
1995	74.6	80.4	54.7	53.7	65.1	64.6	60.5	61.1	66.5	67.5
2000	75.6	80.6	54.0	51.2	70.2	70.6	61.3	60.8	67.4	68.1
65 year-olds										
1990	14.4	19.0	8.1	8.2	10.1	9.5	9.5	9.9	12.1	14.8
1995	14.7	19.1	7.3	7.4	9.7	8.8	8.6	9.5	12.5	15.5
2000	15.3	19.2	7.3	7.6	12.1	12.8	9.3	9.9	14.0	16.4

LE: life expectancy.

IFL: illness-free life expectancy

LWL: disability-free life expectancy

LGPH: life expectancy in good perceived health

LGMH: life expectancy in good mental health

Source: Perenboom, R.J.M. (2002). Trends in gezonde levensverwachting: Nederland 1983-2000. Leiden: TNO.

On the other hand, the illness-free life expectancy – the expected number of years that a person lives without illness – is falling for both men and women. This is explained by the increasing number of diagnosed illnesses. By contrast, there is a striking increase in the number of years that people may expect to live without disabilities. The number of years in which people can expect good physical and mental health has also increased (table 5.1). The number of people with disabilities has fallen slightly over the last ten years.⁷

Health differences

Table 5.2 Health status (perceived health and physical disabilities) by a number of characteristics, population aged 16 and over, 1991 and 2001 (in percent)

	perceived health (very) good		physical disabilities moderate or severe	
	1991	2001	1991	2001
perceived health (very) good			4	3
moderate or poor			29	28
physical limitations none or slight	83	84		
moderate or severe	34	25		
sex		*	*	*
male	80	82	5	5
female	76	77	13	11
age	*	*	*	*
< 18 years	92	96	2	1
18-24 years	90	90	1	2
35-64 years	75	79	9	6
≥ 65 years	57	59	32	26
education	*	*	*	*
low	72	72	14	13
medium	84	84	5	5
high	87	86	2	3
net household income	*	*	*	*
lowest 25%	65	65	21	19
25%-50%	75	78	11	7
50%-75%	83	86	5	3
highest 25%	86	87	3	4
household type	*		*	
single-person	71	72	21	16
multiple-person with minor children	84	87	5	3
multiple-person without minor children	72	77	12	8
one-parent family	76	75	6	10
total	78	79	9	8

* Significant ($p < 0.05$) after multivariate control for the other social characteristics (sex, age, education, income and household type). Health and limitations are left out of consideration here.

Source: CBS (GEZ'91; POLS'01) SCP treatment

The health differences between men and women and between younger and older people are fairly stable (table 5.2). Nonetheless, older people feel less healthy compared with the other age groups, and women report psychological complaints more often than men. Socio-economic health differences increased slightly in the 1990s, as people with relatively high incomes began feeling healthier. Internationally, however, the differences in the Netherlands appear to be rather smaller than elsewhere in Europe. Members of ethnic minorities perceive their health as being less good, but an objective indicator such as life expectancy does not support this view.

A further finding is that the number of people with moderate or severe disabilities has fallen (from 9% to 8%); this figure is now around the European average. The group of people with disabilities in 2001 feel less healthy than the comparison group in 1990, however. Women, older people, people with a low education level and people in low-income groups are over-represented in this group. It is not entirely clear which is the cause and which the effect here.

Table 5.3 Feelings of well-being of the Dutch population, by age category
Physical and mental well-being by age category, population aged 18-74,
1996-2001 (SF-12 scores)^a

	physical well-being 1996	mental well-being 1996	physical well-being 2001	mental well-being 2001
18-44 years	51.7	51.4	53.3	52.0
45-64 years	47.9	51.4	50.4	52.1
65-74 years	45.2	52.9	47.3	52.2
total	49.4	51.6	51.6	52.0

a Physical well-being SF12-PCS, mental well-being SF12-MCS, standardised to US norm.

Source: Gandek et al. (1998) SCP treatment

The consequences of (poor) health for day-to-day functioning were measured using a questionnaire on physical and mental well-being. This increased between 1996 and 2001, with physical well-being improving more than mental well-being. It is striking that the less robust health of older people has negative consequences for their physical sense of well-being, but less so for their mental well-being. People with moderate and severe disabilities score much lower than average on both dimensions.

Care

Table 5.4 Take-up of medical provisions by a number of background characteristics, 2001 (in percent, presented horizontally)

	GP (in 2 months)	specialist (in 2 months)	hospital (in 1 year)	home care (in 1 year)
sex	*	*	*	*
male	30	15	5	2
female	57	18	7	6
age	*	*	*	*
< 18 years	28	10	3	0
18-34 years	33	12	4	3
35-64 years	37	16	5	2
≥ 65 years	48	30	13	14
education				*
low	39	18	7	6
medium	36	16	5	3
high	33	15	5	2
net household income				*
lowest 25%	44	20	10	9
25%-50%	37	16	6	3
50%-75%	33	16	4	2
highest 25%	34	17	5	1
household type		*		*
single-person	41	21	9	11
multiple-person with minor children	32	12	5	3
multiple-person without minor children	38	19	6	3
one-parent family	39	15	5	3
total	37	16	6	4

* Significant ($p < 0.05$) after multivariate control for the other social characteristics (sex, age, education, income and household type).

Source: CBS (POLS'01) SCP treatment

Table 5.4 shows the take-up of various forms of care according to a number of characteristics of the users of these provisions. Women, older people and single people make relatively frequent use of all forms of care studied. The same broadly applies for people from lower socio-economic groups compared with people from higher categories; people with a low education, low income or on benefit make the most use of almost all forms of care. Dutch citizens of ethnic extraction, especially Turks, visit their GP more often and take more medicines than indigenous citizens (not in table). This higher frequency of GP visits is not reflected in a higher take-up of medical

provisions such as specialists and hospitals. It may be that it is more the result of the somatisation of psychosomatic complaints or of a lack of understanding of diagnosis, therapy or medication, than of a poorer health status (Dagevos 2001). Furthermore, visits to the GP are free of charge for people who have National Health Insurance.

Informal care

The take-up of care provisions is reflected not only in figures on formal care, but also in the extent of informal care. Recent research suggests that an estimated quarter of the adult population provide voluntary and unpaid help in their daily functioning to 'persons from their social network who – for whatever reason – have fairly serious physical, mental or psychological limitations' (Timmermans 2003). Much of this informal care is provided to older women (65+) with a relatively low education level and income. They fairly frequently suffer serious limitations, have a pronounced need for help and in fact informal care is indispensable for them

The annual volume of informal care is many times the number of hours of formal (home) care received by the respondents to the first study mentioned above. Many people in need of help receive three times as much informal care as 'official' home care. The work of informal carers appears to complement that of professional carers rather than being a substitute for it.

Care provisions

Volume growth of 1.8% per annum was recorded in the care sector in the period 1990-2000. This increase was the result of sharp rises in the provision of medication and medical aids (7.5% per annum), home care (2.6% per year) and mental health care (2.2% per annum), plus a pronounced fall in residential care homes and an average development in other provisions. This net growth can be attributed to developments in the population and to autonomous trends in the take-up of care provisions. The demographic effect ranges between 0.4% and 2.0% per year. The highest demographic growth occurs in residential care homes, nursing homes and home care services, in other words in provisions aimed largely at older people. Low demographic growth characterises provisions whose target group is mostly relatively young (outpatient care services, municipal health services, care for the disabled). Hospitals, medication and medical aids occupy an intermediate position (with a demographic effect of around 1% per annum). The total growth is generally significantly higher than the demographic growth. This applies most strongly for medicines and medical aids, the use of which is rising very strongly. One exception in the other direction is formed by care homes, which based purely on demographic developments would have undergone strong growth, but which in reality show a net average fall of 1.9% per annum as a result of the de-institutionalisation of care.

There was a marked increase in staff deployment in the various types of *care institutions* in the period 1990-2000. This led to the increase in production just referred to, but also to greater staff deployment per nursing day, especially in hospitals and institutions for the mentally disabled. If the numbers of health care professionals are related to the age-specific population development, the medical professions are found to have grown to only a limited extent or even to have shrunk, though sharp rises have occurred in the numbers of disability and home care workers, and in the numbers of physiotherapists.

Capacity and staff shortages have led to *waiting lists* for 'elective care'. The number of people on these waiting lists and the length of time they have to wait are still considerable for almost all types of care. Although the figures for the end of 2002 showed a reduction almost everywhere compared with 2000, the targets agreed by the care institutions⁸ have still by no means been achieved. Particularly worrying are the very long waiting times for residential care (six months to a year), though it should be noted that between 40% and 65% of those on waiting lists in the care sector receive interim care provision. Also striking is the fact that in the care for the disabled, where falling waiting lists had been reported (SCP 2002), the number of people on waiting lists has increased again by 20%. In terms of numbers, most cases involve fairly light forms of care, such as advice and supportive care, but the figures for residential and daycare are also up again. There is no empirically based insight into the causes of this increase. No national records are kept of waiting lists and waiting times for acute medical care, and in fact people do not normally have to wait for such care. The waiting times for all other medical care types are still considerable.

Goal attainment

In accordance with the long-term objectives of *health policy*, average life expectancy has increased, though to a lesser extent among women than men. More diseases are being diagnosed, leading to a reduction in illness-free life expectancy. However, this is not perceived as a problem; people continue to feel roughly as healthy as in the past, and their life expectancy without limitations has increased. On the other hand, socio-economic health differences are tending to increase, despite the large investments to counter them.

6 Culture, media and sport

Policy objectives

The policy approach in the area of leisure time has been one of restraint for several decades. Nevertheless, in practice the government is most definitely involved in various areas of leisure activity. Government policy in the fields of culture, media and sport has a twofold objective: to promote high-quality and varied provisions (supply policy) and to find the public to consume these provisions (demand policy). In addition, government involvement in leisure activity encompasses restrictive measures designed to protect safety and health. These policies have been developed differently in each policy domain. In the field of culture, for example, the government sought to bring about a shift towards a more public-oriented supply in the period 1990-2002, with special attention for the promotion of cultural interest among young people and members of ethnic minorities. The core aims of the policy on sport are to improve the local sports infrastructure and create favourable conditions for sport at the highest level.

Culture

More official theatres have been opened in the Netherlands; between 1996 and 2001 the number rose from 205 to 222. The number of seats expanded from 104,900 to 115,500, while the number of productions remained at around 27,000. The number of 'other events' (hiring out for conferences, parties, etc.) rose from 13,000 to 32,000. Musicals and cabaret were the most likely to perform to full houses (VSCD 2001).

Although the number of museums declined, they put on more exhibitions in the second half of the 1990s; museums are more active in displaying their collections than in the past (table 6.1).

Table 6.1 Museums and exhibitions, theatres and performances, 1990-1999 (in absolute numbers)

	(1990)	(1995)	1997	1999
museums	(679)	(758)	942	902
exhibitions in museums	(1,940)	(1,898)	2,032	2,249
	1989/'90	1993/'94	1997/'98	2001
venues with podium ^a	107	109	124	126
professional performances (x 1000)	47	51	57	—
professional theatre performances (x 1000)	23	23	23	—

a Affiliated to VSCD (Dutch Association of Theatre and Concert Hall Directors).

Source: CBS (StatLine)

Notwithstanding these developments participation in art and culture remained roughly unchanged between 1991 and 2002 (table 6.2). A third of the population aged 12 years and older visit museums each year and a quarter visit the theatre. Some shifts are however occurring in this latter category; in particular (commercial) musicals are attracting more interest at the expense of traditional theatre, cabaret, etc. The fact that museum and theatre visits have remained at roughly the same level is attributable to older people, who have compensated for the declining interest among the younger generation. Despite their high education level, today's young people are less inclined to participate in traditional cultural events than their predecessors.

Table 6.2 Numbers of visitors to museums and theatres, 1990-2001 (in millions)^a

	(1993)	(1995)	1997	1999	2001
museums	(23.0)	(21.9)	20.3	20.7	— ^b
theatres	(14.2)	(16.0)	(14.9)	14.1	15.5

a The brackets in the table refer to definition changes which make comparison of recent and earlier estimates difficult: change in the definition of 'museum' in 1997 and of 'professional theatre' in 1999 (coinciding with a change in the observation period: calendar year instead of season).

b No data available.

Source: CBS (StatLine)

Table 6.3 Proportion of the population visiting museums and theatres, by age and ethnicity, 1991-1999 (in percent)^a

	1991	1995	1999
museums			
population ≥ 12 years	35	31	33
12-17 years	39	38	34
18-34 years	35	27	25
ethnic minorities (Turks, Moroccans, Antilleans, Surinamese)	—	15	12
theatres			
population ≥ 12 years	22	23	22
12-17 years	17	15	14
18-34 years	21	20	19
ethnic minorities (Turks, Moroccans, Antilleans, Surinamese)	—	8	6

a Theatre visits are interpreted here as traditional visits to professional theatres, classical concerts and ballet.

Source: SCP (AVO'91-'99)

This is reflected in the figures; in 1991 39% of 12-17 year-olds and 35% of 18-34 year-olds visited a museum; the figures in 1999 were 34% and 25%, respectively (table 6.3). The lower figures for ethnic minorities remained unchanged in this respect (33% of the total population visited a museum in 1999, while the figure for members of ethnic minorities was 12%). Ethnic minorities thus lag a long way behind, though their participation is certainly not negligible. The interest of the swelling older population in culture prevented a fall in overall cultural activity.

Media

The use of printed *media* fell between 1990 and 2000 from more than five hours to barely four hours of reading per week. Over the same period, computer and Internet use quadrupled. Watching television remained constant at almost 19 hours per week, though there was a considerable shift away from the public broadcasting associations to commercial channels (Huysmans and De Haan 2001); the market share of public broadcasters was barely 38% in 2002. Moreover, it seems that young people are becoming underrepresented among viewers of the public broadcasting associations and people with a high education level overrepresented.

Sport

The number of sports facilities grew in the 1990s (table 6.4), especially covered facilities. There was a slight increase in the number of swimming pools, while the number of open-air sports facilities declined.

Not only did the number of sports facilities change, but also their management status, with a growing number being privately run. This is partly due to privatisation of existing facilities by local authorities, and partly the result of the entry of new providers to the sports market. The share of privately run sports facilities rose from a quarter in 1991 to more than a third in 2000.

Table 6.4 Numbers of sports facilities and share of privately run amenities, 1991-2000
(in absolute figures and percent)

	1991	1994	1997	2000
open-air sports facilities	4,120	4,190	4,090	4,040
% privately run	15	19	18	21
indoor sports facilities	1,772	2,040	2,115	2,210
% privately run	42	49	54	56
swimming pools	730	720	730	760
% privately run	39	45	55	58
total	6,620	6,950	6,935	7,010
% privately run	25	30	32	36

Source: CBS (Statistiek Zwembaden en sportaccommodaties); Goossens and Lucassen (2003)

Table 6.5 Participation in sport and sports club membership, by age and ethnicity, 1991-1999 (in percent)

	1991	1995	1999
participation in sport			
population ≥ 12 years	59	60	61
12-17 years	87	87	87
18-34 years	76	74	75
≥ 65 years	21	23	31
ethnic minorities (Turks, Moroccans, Antilleans, Surinamese)		44	39
membership of sports club			
population ≥ 12 years	34	32	29
12-17 years	70	65	61
18-34 years	45	43	38
≥ 65 years	6	9	10
ethnic minorities (Turks, Moroccans, Antilleans, Surinamese)		22	14

Source: SCP (AVO'91, '95, '99)

The trend in the numbers of sports associations and sport schools also shows a change in the nature of sports available. There are fewer sports clubs: 31,454 in 1990, 30,254 in 1995, 29,899 in 2000 and 28,903 in 2002 (<http://www.rapportage-sport.nl>). On the other hand, the number of privately run sports schools, excluding fitness centres, rose by nearly 50% between 1996 and 2000, from 1,350 to 1,980 (Goossens and Lucassen 2003).

Participation in sport also increased slightly between 1991 and 1999 (from 59% to 61%) (table 6.5). Young people led the way, with more than two-thirds taking part in sport. More than half of all younger members of ethnic minorities take part in sport (not shown). However, the growth in participation comes mainly from older people taking up sporting activities. The percentage of people practising their sport as members of sports clubs is dropping. The figures suggest that the desire to play individual sports in a commercial context is the main driver behind this growth.

The three cultural and sporting activities distinguished here are combined, but a positive correlation is found only between museum visits and watching the public television channels. It also appears that the users of government-supported provisions are increasingly people with a high education level.

Goal attainment

The objectives of the policy focused on the supply and demand for culture have not been quantified, except for the public broadcasting associations, which have a market share of 40%. The supply of culture, both commercial and subsidised, increased further in the 1990s and is also reasonably evenly spread throughout the Netherlands. Spending cuts are likely to lead to a reduction in volume in the coming years. Achievement of the ideal of increasing the social spread of culture did not come any closer in the 1990s. Although promoting cultural participation is one of the key elements in the cultural policy, this participation did not increase. Moreover, there are no signs of increasing cultural participation by young people and ethnic minorities.

The objectives of the media policy have been adopted for both the supply and demand side. The public broadcasting associations are complying with their programming regulations and broadcast more informative and cultural programmes than the commercial broadcasters. The reach of the public broadcasters is declining, especially among young people.

The number of sports facilities is still increasing, mainly due to the growth in privately run facilities. The growth in participation has slowed. Membership of sports clubs is dropping. No data are available on the social objectives assigned to sport in the 1990s – which can be summarised as the promotion of social cohesion. In the light of the creeping privatisation of sport and the shrinking of government budgets for sport, this policy objective will be difficult to achieve.

7 Social and political participation

Policy objectives

Since the early 1990s there has been renewed attention for the notions of *civil society* and *social cohesion*. A link is often made here between social participation and modern citizenship. During the course of the 1990s, civil society received renewed recognition in Dutch political circles and in government policy. In its Coalition Agreement, the present Cabinet states that the goals can only be achieved if citizens themselves participate: 'Through work; through voluntary activities; in associational life; at school and in the residential neighbourhood (...)' (AZ 2003: 1). In recognition of the important contribution that voluntary work makes to the quality of society, 'the creation of conditions for those wishing to accept responsibility under their own free will' had already been defined as a government task (VWS 1999). Voluntary work has gradually come to be seen as a core element in the active involvement of citizens in the civil society.

Membership

Although the figures from different sources are not entirely uniform, it would seem that there was relatively little change in the different forms of social and political participation between 1990 and 2002. The total number of *donators and members* of large social organisations rose in line with the population increase from 15.3 million in 1994 to 15.9 million in 2000. Some shifts can however be detected between types of organisation. Membership of churches and traditional women's organisation continued to fall. Despite decades of secularisation, however, the major churches are still the largest organisations in the societal midfield. New ideological and material interest groups are attracting more members.

Consumer interests and international aid are themes around which large numbers of Dutch people have organised themselves. Trade unions are growing, but the unionisation of employees fell between 1990 and 2001 from 30% to 26%. The changes in the numbers of members/donators do not indicate a dominant trend towards a stronger focus by the public on their own interests. Organisations such as the Dutch Consumer Association (*Consumentenbond*) and the Home Owners' Association (*Vereniging Eigen Huis*) have seen marked growth in membership, but the same also applies for organisations concerned with international solidarity, nature conservation and moral issues such as abortion and euthanasia.

An impression of the membership of social organisations can be obtained from the findings of population surveys. Using data from the Amenities and Services Utilisation Survey (SCP-AVO), table 7.1 shows that trade unions and sports associations are finding particular favour among the adult population. Both in absolute terms and

compared with the increase in the size of the population, there was a slight fall in the membership of social organisations in the 1990s.

Table 7.1 Memberships, 1979-2003, population aged 18 and over (in %)

	1991	1995	1999
political party or political association	6	7	6
employers' or employees' organisation	18	20	22
sports club	31	30	29
hobby club	8	9	8
choral, music or drama society	9	9	9
women's movement or union	7	8	6
youth association, youth club, Scouts	3	5	4
organisation with a specific social object ^a	14	11	9
educational or school association	11	11	9
other type of association or organisation	22	19	19
none of these organisations	34	36	37
member of one	33	34	34
member of two or more	33	30	29
population aged 18 and over (x 1000)	11,689	12,039	12,298
population aged 18 and over (index 1979=100)	117	120	123

a By way of explanation the following were listed in the questionnaire: 'Action groups, Third World shop, Amnesty International, etc.'

Source: Amenities and Services Utilisation Survey (AVO) 1991-1999 (SCP)

Voluntary work

The figures for voluntary work from the various sources also present a varied picture, but taken as a whole there does not appear to be a sharp fall in the number of volunteers. According to most studies, the percentage of volunteers in the population is stable; depending on the question formulation, it is estimated at 30-45%. The number of people doing voluntary work rose slightly in the 1990s according to CBS figures (table 7.2). What does seem to be happening is that volunteers are becoming more selective and devoting less time to voluntary activities.

Table 7.2 Proportion of participants in voluntary work and informal help, population aged 18 years and over (in percent, weighted results)

	1989	2001	index 1989 = 100
active in organised context	42	43	103
active for:			
politics	2	1	53
labour organisation	4	3	69
ideological group	10	9	89
<i>politics, labour and ideological total</i>	14	12	86
sports club	14	13	96
hobby club	9	5	50
cultural association ^a	8	5	54
<i>sports, hobby, culture total</i>	25	21	84
youth work	4	5	114
school ^b	9	9	97
<i>youth work, school total</i>	13	12	98
care, nursing ^c	.	8	.
care, nursing ^d	14	.	.
other organisations	7	6	89
informal help ^e	29	33	116

a Singing, music, drama.

b Parents' committee, school board, working in library, reading help, etc.

c Care for the elderly, childcare, district nursing, visiting the sick, hospital welfare work or assisting in care and support for the terminally ill.

d Help for neighbours, the elderly, the disabled, childcare

e Unpaid help to others outside own household, not in an organisation.

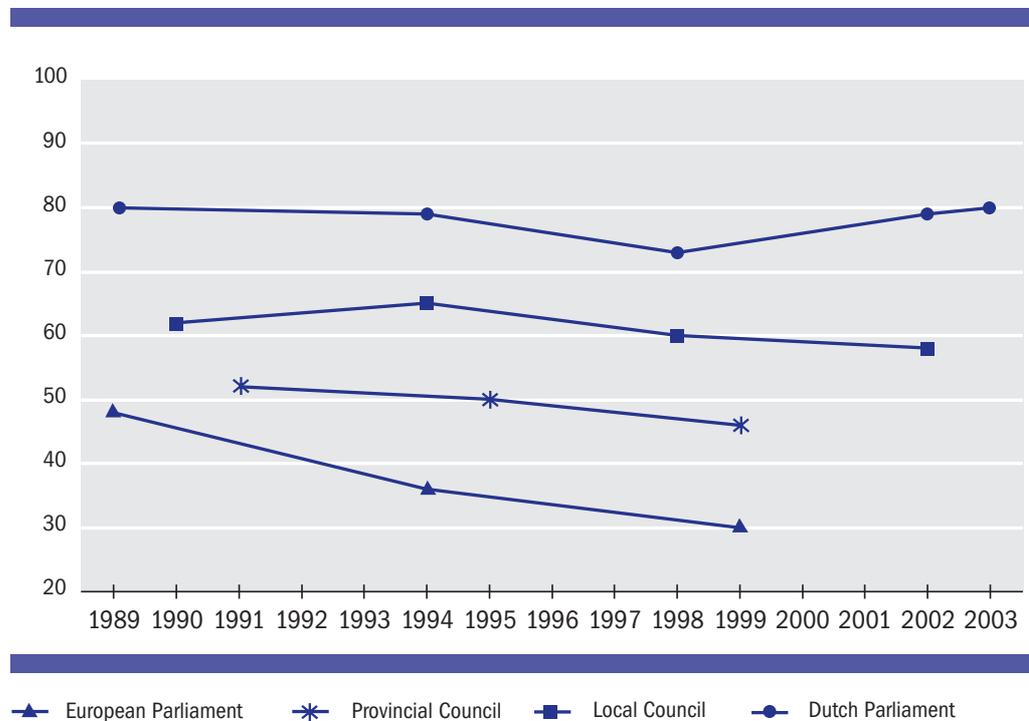
The majority of large organisations have large numbers of donators and passive members; fewer of them have active memberships. The Dutch Consumer Association (650,000 members) and the Dutch motoring and travel association ANWB (3,800,000 members) are striking examples of this. By contrast, churches, sports clubs and hobby clubs not only have lots of members, but also a relatively high percentage who take part in activities organised by their organisation. The two latter categories are organisations in which the pattern of activities is determined largely by volunteers. The majority of volunteers in the sports sector are active; in 2001 they numbered more than half a million. 82% of Dutch sports clubs make use of volunteers (Breedveld et al. 2003) and are able to rely on a more or less fixed percentage of volunteers. A drastic decline in this reservoir of unpaid labour would pose a direct threat to the continued existence of many organisations. Other than sports clubs, youth work and schools are not able to hold on to their volunteers

Despite these changes, social participation in the Netherlands, along with that in Sweden, remains among the highest in Europe. This applies both for memberships and for voluntary work. Also striking is the positive trend in informal care. Research has shown that informal care is given primarily because people are present in the immediate social setting of the caregiver who require such care (Timmermans 2003).

Political participation

Political interest and activities have been rising significantly since 2002. This applies across the board and includes membership of political parties. In an international perspective, political interest in the Netherlands is high, but the Dutch score for party membership is relatively low at 2%; the same applies for trade union membership.

Figure 7.1 Turnout at general elections since 1989 (in percent)



Source: CBS

The most common form of political participation is still participation in elections. Figure 7.1 shows the turnout figures at the four general elections held since 1989. Viewed over a longer period, there appears to be a downward trend since the middle of the 1980s, but in view of the political tensions in the spring of 2002 it was not difficult to predict a higher turnout in the May general elections of that year than four years earlier. The increase was probably lower than most observers had expected, however, and the modest further increase in January 2003 was more surprising.

Table 7.3 Collective action and consultation, population aged 18 years and over, 1991-2002 (in percent)

	1991	1997	2000	2002
during the last two years, has undertaken action with others for an issue of national or international importance	12	11	9	14
during the last two years, has undertaken action with others for an issue of local importance	22	29	26	29
during the last two years, has taken part in a government consultation procedure or has attended a public inquiry	12	14	14	.
would (very) probably try to do something if thought that Parliament was passing an unjust law	40	52	51	55
regularly reads about politics in the Netherlands, e.g. newspaper reports	39	39	36	47
describes own political interest as 'high' or 'normal'	41	45	44	57

Source: SCP (CV'91-'02) verbal surveys, unweighted results

Table 7.3 looks at a number of other political activities. Particularly if intervening years are taken into consideration, it becomes evident that these activities are subject only to fluctuations, not to specific trends. Compared with the 1970s and 80s, the willingness to protest in the period reported here does however appear to be significantly higher. Reading about politics and having an opinion on political interests remained stable for a relatively long period, but in the autumn of 2002, undoubtedly as a result of events earlier that year, were markedly higher than two years previously. Collective actions do appear to be directed more frequently towards local issues than national or international questions.

As stated earlier, education level is a determinant for participation in most social and political activities; generally, people with a low education level are strongly under-represented. Ethnic minority groups lag even further behind, except in activities connected with school and youth work. The correlation with other personal characteristics is weaker. For voluntary work and participation in collective actions gender, education and age are certainly relevant, but the extremes in participation are found among non-workers and workers and churchgoers and non-churchgoers.

Goal attainment

The policy objectives in the field of social and political participation are formulated in qualitative terms and difficult to test. At the heart is membership of political and social organisations and voluntary work. There is currently no evidence of a systematic and steady crumbling of the societal midfield in the Netherlands, though people do appear to invest less time in associations and voluntary activities. However, this general picture hides a number of considerable changes. Organisations created on the basis of

the old societal divisions along political, ideological and religious lines ('pillarisation') are in decline, while any number of new social movements founded in the 1970s and 80s have managed to acquire large numbers of donors and members. In contrast to the traditional organisations, these latter organisations give less priority to activation and training of members. It can also be observed that young people make less effort to collective actions, single-parent families carry out virtually no voluntary work for schools or youth work and that the social activity of members of ethnic minorities in the form of involvement in general organisations is low.

8 Mobility

Policy objectives

Mobility is a recognised social need that is influenced by the upscaling and increase in the number and interconnectedness of activities. Moreover, people must have the greatest possible freedom of choice when it comes to transport modality (car, public transport, cycling and walking). The main objective of government policy is to facilitate and regulate the need for mobility; in particular, the capacity and reliability of the road network will have to be improved considerably in the years ahead (TK 2002/2003). The first concrete target is to improve accessibility by car. As a supplement to the measures focusing on vehicle traffic, the accessibility and reliability of public transport will also be improved.

Car ownership

Car ownership continued to grow between 1990 and 2001, from 844 to 952 cars per 1,000 households (table 8.1). Three-quarters of households have at least one car and in the highest income group second car ownership is already 40%. Internationally, however, these figures are not high; in 2000 there were 400 cars per 1,000 inhabitants in the Netherlands, compared with the European average of 470.

Table 8.1 Car ownership 1990-2001

	1990	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
number of cars (x 1,000)	5,118	5,581	5,664	5,810	5,931	6,120	6,343	6,539
cars per 1,000 inhabitants	344	361	366	373	379	388	400	409
cars per 1,000 households	844	863	869	883	891	907	933	952

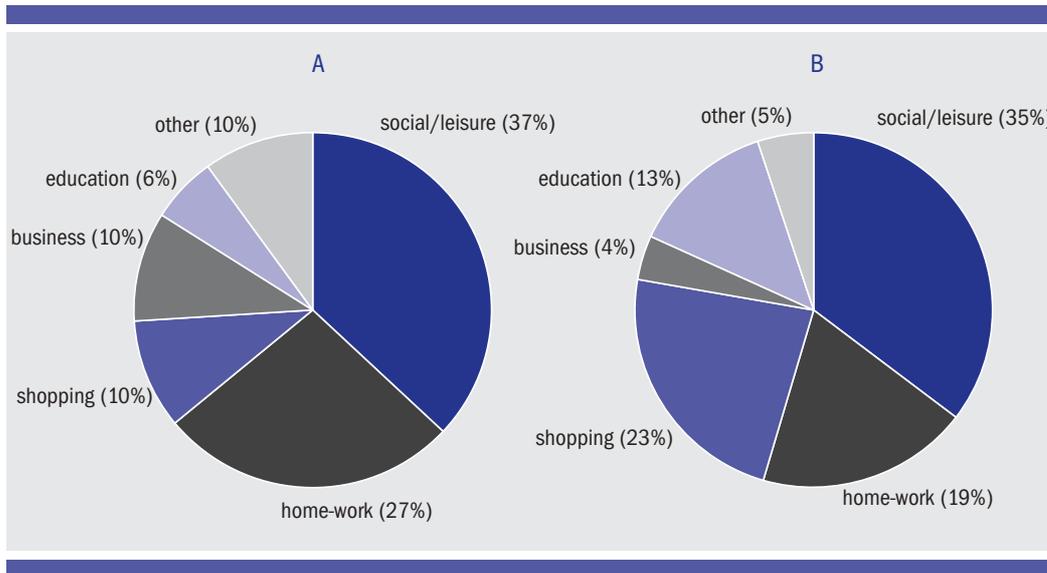
Source: CBS (StatLine) SCP treatment

And yet there are (still) wide differences in car ownership between the different types of household. Household income appears to be the key determinant here. The higher the income, the greater the car ownership: only a third of households with an annual income of EUR 14,000 or less have a car; above EUR 14,000 car ownership rises considerably, from 70% in the category EUR 14,000-20,000 to almost 95% in households with an annual income of more than EUR 27,000. Second car ownership is increasing mainly in households with an income of more than EUR 20,000.⁹

Mobility

Dutch people aged 12 years and over make an average of three journeys per day and spend more than an hour making them. They travel around 35 kilometres per day. Cars account for half of all journeys and roughly three-quarters of the distance covered. Public transport accounts for 5% of the number of journeys and 14% of the distance covered. The rest of the journeys are made by (motor)bike or walking. These figures changed little between 1990 and 2001 (figure 8.1).

Figure 8.1 Distances covered (A) and number of journeys (B) by reason for journey, population aged 12 years and over, 2001



Source: CBS (OVG 2001)

The longest and largest number of journeys are made for social/recreational purposes. Home-work travel comes in a close second in terms of distances and third for the number of journeys. The reverse order applies for shopping trips.

The mobility patterns of the various social categories differ considerably, but are not difficult to deduce from the main activities and lifestyle elements of the groups distinguished. For example, women undertake as many journeys as men, but their journeys often take less time and cover shorter distances. Young and old people undertake fewer journeys than the middle groups, who have to combine lots of activities. Whether or not someone is in paid employment is also relevant. Age and income determine the method of transport to a large extent. Once someone has obtained their driving licence and their income increases, they are quickly inclined to use a car.

The appreciation of the different means of transport varies. Expressed as a score, the car and bicycle received a score of 8 for home-work travel in 1997, the train just under 7 and urban and regional bus services 6.5. Car drivers, cyclists and pedestrians have the most positive view of their own method of transport. Only users of public transport are more positive about the alternative transport modes. The image of public transport is also shown to be negative in more recent research (NFO-Trendbox 2000).

Downsides

Physical journeys are generally a necessary condition for participation in social activities. Mobility contributes to people's prosperity. However, there are several downsides to this. A first issue is the pressure of traffic on motorways and the dwindling accessibility of towns and cities. Travel time losses are occurring which have been calculated to be worth a total of around EUR 1 billion per year in the case of the main road network. Secondly, the local environmental damage is considerable. The social costs can be estimated on the basis of data from Howarth et al. (2001) at EUR 2-3 billion per year.¹⁰ The increased traffic pressure would suggest that the local environmental problem has got worse in recent decades. In reality, however, this proves to be anything but the case; air pollution has in fact gradually reduced and noise nuisance has remained roughly the same (RIVM 2003).

Table 8.2 Recorded numbers of traffic victims and risk of becoming a victim, population aged 12 years and over, 1985-2000

	1985	1990	1995	2000
total number of deaths ^a	1,374	1,307	1,281	1,074
risk of fatal accident ^b	11	9	8	6
12-17 years	14	14	13	9
18-24 years	15	13	11	12
25-39 years	6	6	6	4
40-64 years	8	6	5	4
> 65 years	36	27	25	19
numbers of injuries requiring hospital admission ^a	13,367	12,678	10,984	10,965
risk of hospital admission ^b	107	87	71	68
12-17 years	258	274	204	167
18-24 years	168	153	114	120
25-39 years	63	53	54	56
40-64 years	69	50	45	42
> 65 years	181	153	113	104

a Recorded numbers; the actual numbers are higher (see e.g. Van Kampen 2003).

b Numbers per billion traveller kilometres.

Source: SWOV (2003b) SCP treatment

The third negative consequence is the safety issue. There are around 1,000 road deaths each year in the Netherlands and roughly 11,000 victims of traffic accidents are admitted to hospital. And these are only the officially recorded numbers; the actual number of deaths is around 1,100, and the true number of hospital admissions is more than 18,000 (table 8.2). Then there are the many tens of thousands of people who have to undergo long-term rehabilitation and/or make repeated demands on medical help (Van Kampen 2003). An average of 2,700 accidents take place each day, resulting in three deaths and 50 long-term hospital admissions. On an annual basis the social costs of this exceed EUR 8 billion (SWOV 2003).

Goal attainment

Notwithstanding the tremendous growth in mobility, the main policy goals have not yet been achieved. Evident bottlenecks are identified in this report. Considerable travel time losses occur in road traffic, both on the main road network and on other roads. This is a particular problem for people in work. Accessibility by public transport is also reducing because of train cancellations, delays and lack of capacity as well as cuts in urban and regional bus services. The increasing dependency on the car in rural areas affects households without a car and hits certain social groups in particular, such as young people and the elderly.

9 Crime

Policy objectives

Whether and to what extent people come into contact with crime is a key aspect of their life situation. Crime is therefore high on the political agenda. 'Promoting a safe society' has been a core policy aim for many years, and this aim was reiterated in the policy programme *Naar een veiliger samenleving* ('Towards a safer society') which was published in October 2002: 'Promoting a safer society is one of the central objectives of government policy for the coming four years' (Justitie/BZK 2002: 17).

The present government has formulated safety targets to be achieved within its term of office (a 20-25% reduction in crime by 2006), as well as targets for perceived safety and for intermediary achievements such as the number of police reports drawn up or the availability and public appreciation of the service provided by the police.

Trend in crime

The Dutch population reported (in a survey) around 5.1 million offences according to victim research in 2002. A fifth of these were violent crimes (e.g. assault); more than a third were crimes against property (e.g. burglary and pickpocketing); and almost 40% involved vandalism. Businesses and other organisations reported around 5.6 million offences in 2001 (Visser et al. 2002).¹¹ As with private households, the main offences were burglary, theft and vandalism, though fraud, robbery and computer crime were also reported. 'Victimless' crimes, such as drug dealing, possession of firearms and speeding, naturally fall outside the scope of these surveys.

Figure 9.1 Prevalence of crime based on victim surveys, per 100,000 of the population aged 15 years and over (left) and on police records, per 100,000 of the total population (right), 1992-2002

Figure 9.1a Total crime perceived by the public

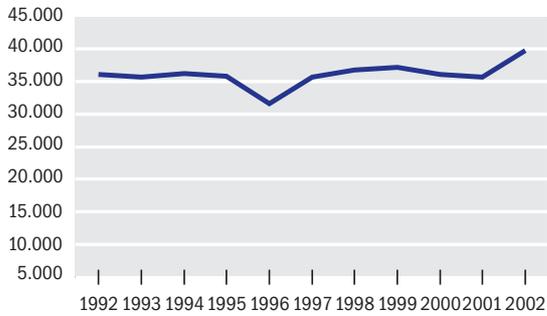


Figure 9.1e Total crime recorded by the police

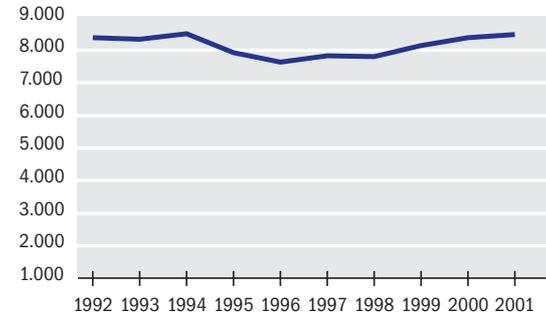


Figure 9.1b Violent crimes perceived by the public

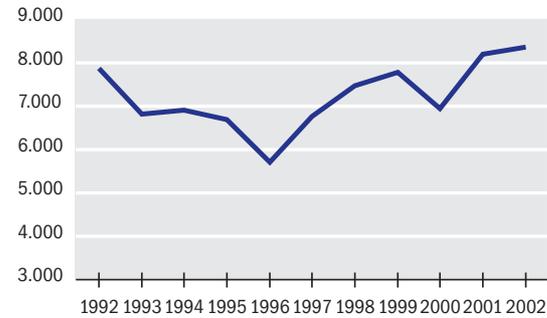


Figure 9.1f Violent crimes recorded by the police

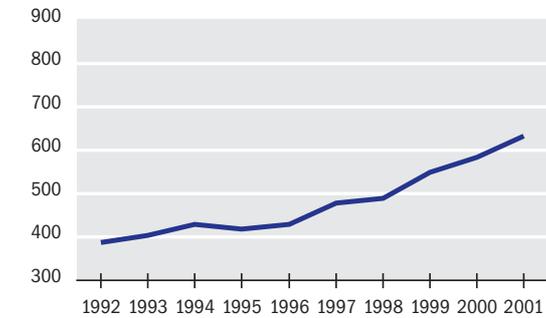


Figure 9.1c Offences against property perceived by the public

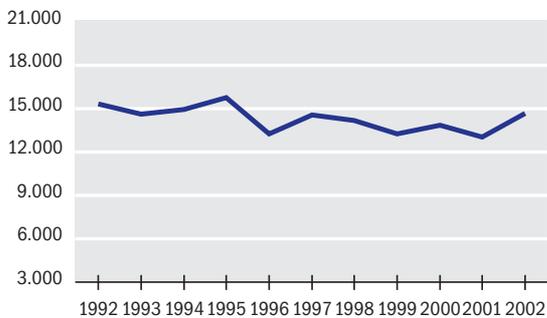


Figure 9.1g Offences against property recorded by the police

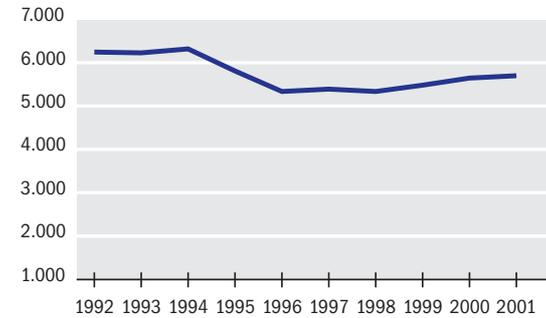


Figure 9.1d Vandalism perceived by the public

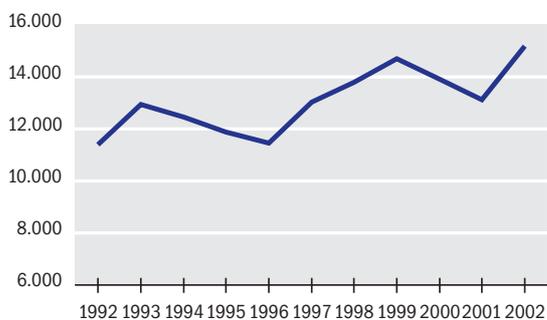
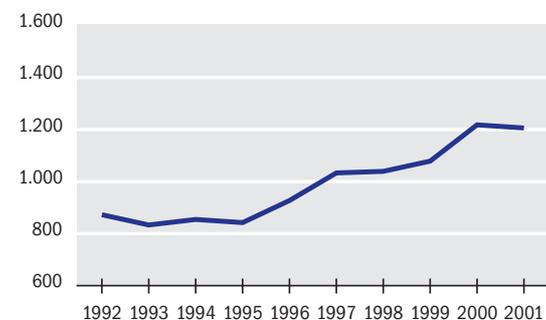


Figure 9.1h Vandalism recorded by the police



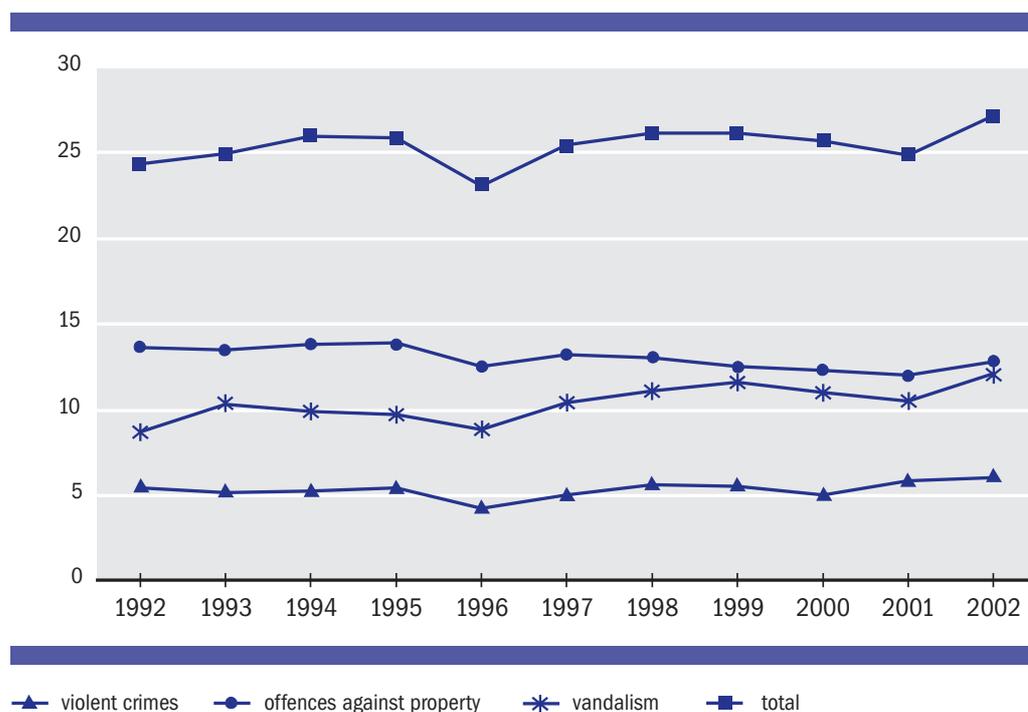
Source: CBS (Survey on legal protection and safety 1992-1996); CBS (POL'S'97-'02); CBS (Politiestatistiek 1990-2001)

The number of *perceived offences* has continued to increase (slightly) since 1992. This appears to be caused mainly by crimes of violence (threats) and vandalism (to cars). The number of thefts has been falling in recent years, but this positive trend has now stagnated.

Police records show the same trends, though they suggest a much stronger increase in crimes of violence and vandalism. The public report only a proportion of offences (1.8 million) to the police. A key reason for reporting offences is to obtain evidence for insurance purposes (see figure 9.1).

The *fear* of becoming a victim of crime has become more widespread. Since 2001 the proportion of the population sometimes feeling unsafe has risen from just over 20% to 25%; around 3% frequently feel unsafe. Fear of crime in the residential setting changes little over time.

Figure 9.2 Share of victims of crime by type of offence, population aged 15 years and over, 1992-2002 (in percent)



Source: CBS (Survey on legal protection and safety 1992-1996); CBS (POLS'97-'02)

From the life situation perspective, it is relevant to know who the victims and the perpetrators are. According to figures from Statistics Netherlands (CBS) (figure 9.2), more than a quarter of the Dutch population aged 12 and over are victims of crime each year, a figure which fluctuates slightly. The trends referred to earlier are also found here. Over 6% of the population were victims of one or more crimes of violence in 2002, and in more than half of these cases threats were involved. In an international perspective, the crime rate in the Netherlands occupies a middle position.

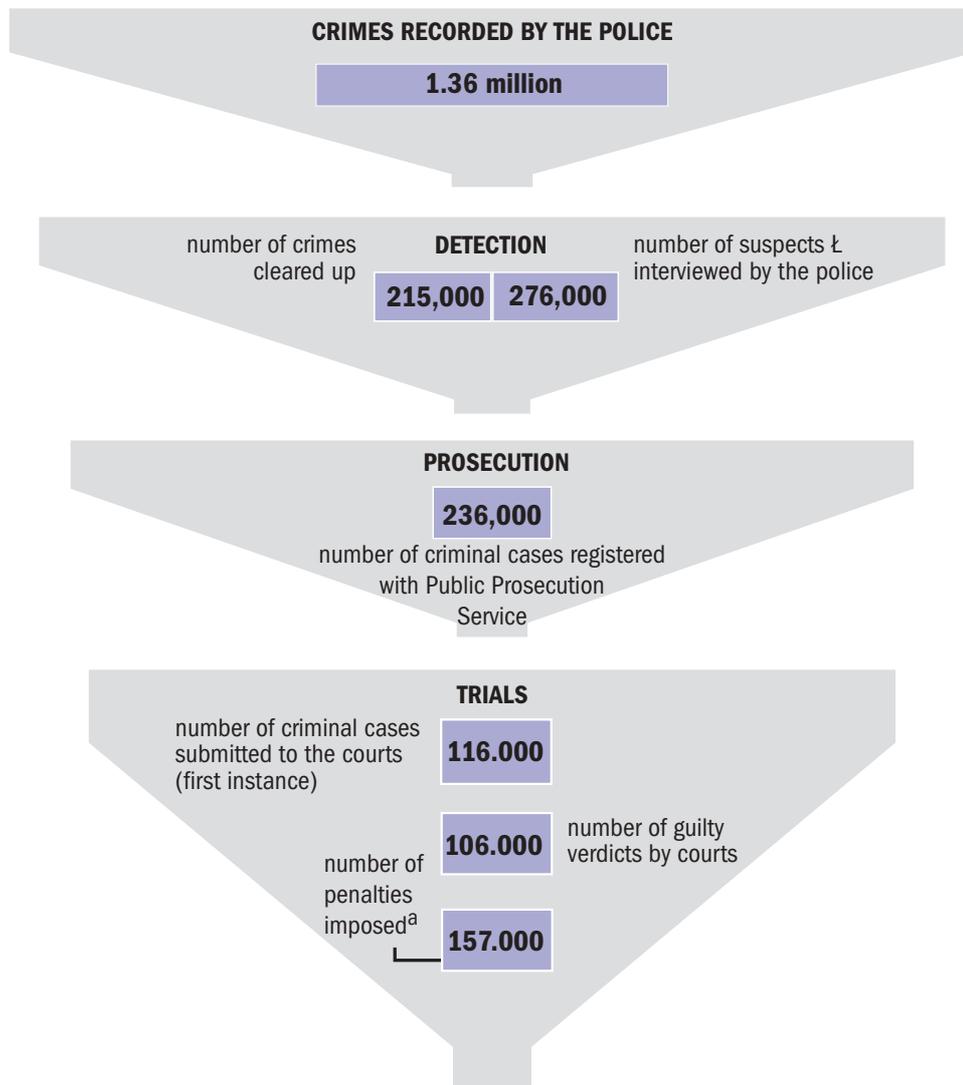
The chance of becoming a victim varies between social categories. These differences can be related to everyday activities, lifestyle elements and situations which offer more or less opportunity for crime. Younger people more often find themselves in high-risk situations and are therefore more often confronted with violence and threats than others. Highly educated people living in towns suffer more burglaries and the chance of becoming a victim of violence is higher in neighbourhoods with a low socio-economic status. Moreover, perpetrators often become victims themselves.

The police themselves reported more than 1.3 million recorded crimes in 2001 (Eggen et al. 2003). These were not only offences reported by private households or businesses and other organisations, but also the result of police investigations. 7% of this total of over 1.3 million recorded offences were crimes of violence; 68% were crimes against property and 14% fell into the category of vandalism and public order offences.

Many people report having committed an offence in surveys. Discussions about the perpetrators of crime, however, generally focus on suspects interviewed by the police. These represent only a (selective) proportion of all delinquents in the Netherlands. In 2001 a total of 276,000 suspects were interviewed (Wang et al. 2003). The police compiled an official report against a select number of suspects (160,000 in 2001). They were mainly men with an average age of 32, though the peak lies around age 18. Figures from CBS show that more and more minors are being interviewed, partly as a result of the increasing attention for juvenile crime on the part of the police and judicial authorities. Members of ethnic minorities are also overrepresented among the suspects. They generally show more serious and violent criminal behaviour than their indigenous counterparts.

Only a limited number of all crimes recorded by the police are cleared up because of suspicions against particular persons. Only where there are sufficient grounds for these suspicions do the police send an official report to the Public Prosecution Service. A further selection process is carried out there, with the result that a number of cases are handled by the Public Prosecution Service itself, while the rest are sent to the courts.

Figure 9.3 Flow chart of the criminal chain, 2001



^a The number of penalties imposed is greater than the number of guilty verdicts because a combination of punishments is often imposed.

Source: CBS

Figure 9.3 shows this selection process in the criminal chain in schematic form. If there are grounds for further action after interviewing a suspect, the case is sent to the Public Prosecution Service. This means that only a proportion of all suspects end up being dealt with by the offices of the Public Prosecution Service. After several consecutive years in which the number of cases registered with the Public Prosecution Service fell, there was a slight increase in 2001 to 236,000 cases (Wang et al. 2003). The fall was due primarily to a decline in the number of criminal cases involving offences against property (in particular simple and aggravated theft); the number of criminal cases involving violent offences rose in the period referred to (in particular

threats and assault). The Public Prosecutor decides what action is to be taken on all cases registered with the Public Prosecution Service. The Officer may drop a case or offer the suspect a transaction. In 2001 nearly 60% of all cases were settled via a transaction, compared with only 26% in 1990. The majority of transactions offered relate to offences against property, traffic offences and economic offences.

Criminal cases that the Public Prosecution Service does not deal with itself are placed before the courts. In 1990 the courts dealt with 89,000 cases in the first instance; since 1995 this figure has fluctuated between 110,000 and 112,000 per year, with a peak in 1999 of 115,000 cases (Wang et al. 2003).¹² The proportion of guilty verdicts handed down by the courts was around 90% in the second half of the 1990s, rising to 95% in the last two years. The proportion of suspects found guilty shows virtually no change by type of offence.

When the courts find a suspect guilty, they generally impose a penalty or non-punitive order. This most commonly takes the form of a prison sentence, fine or community service order. In many cases the court impose a combination of penalties. In 2001 more than 105,000 penalties or non-punitive orders were handed down. More than a quarter involved (partial) non-suspended prison sentences without a fine. The length of the (non-suspended) prison terms imposed increased particularly in the first part of the 1990s and is now falling slightly again. These data provide no indication as to whether punishments are becoming more severe: the changes in the severity of the penalties imposed may for example also be due to the more frequent occurrence of certain offences.

Police capacity

Ensuring public safety is one of the most important tasks of the government. The police play an important role here: they are expected to patrol and supervise the streets, maintain order, provide help to members of the public and detect criminal offences. The police strength has been increased since 1994: the number of people employed in the police service (in FTE) increased by 34% between 1994 and 2001 (from 38,000 to 55,000), or from 268 to 344 per 100,000 inhabitants. These figures include trainees, foot patrol officers and administrative staff. The executive capacity lagged behind the overall police strength, falling from 74% in 1990 to 65% in 2001. To date, it is unclear how police personnel are actually deployed (Algemene Rekenkamer 2003).

The clear-up rate for recorded *crimes* has been falling steadily for several decades, and this trend continued in the 1990s. In 1990, 22% of reported crimes were solved, or at least a suspect was identified. In 2000 the figure had fallen below 15%, though a small increase was observed for the first time in 2001

Goal attainment

Generally speaking, the level of crime has remained reasonably stable in the last decade. The same applies for public perceptions of (lack of) safety. In 2001 and 2002, however, a number of long-term trends appear to have reversed. For example, victim surveys show an increase in crime compared with earlier years. The most sensitive crime trends are still moving in the wrong direction. After a long period of stability, feelings of being unsafe also appear to be increasing. Changes have also taken place within the criminal chain (e.g. higher clear-up rates, more cases being sent to the Public Prosecution Service, more cases dismissed).

In view of the meagre results in clearing up recorded crimes, the organisation of the measures to combat crime, and in particular the development of police capacity are constant themes on the political agenda. Although the number of police officers has increased in recent years, public esteem for the police has fallen on virtually all aspects measured.

Time will tell whether the changes described will prove to be of short duration or whether they mark the beginning of a trend-break. What is clear is that the more intensive policy efforts in this area have so far not led to a reduction in objective and subjective crime levels.

10 Housing

Policy objectives

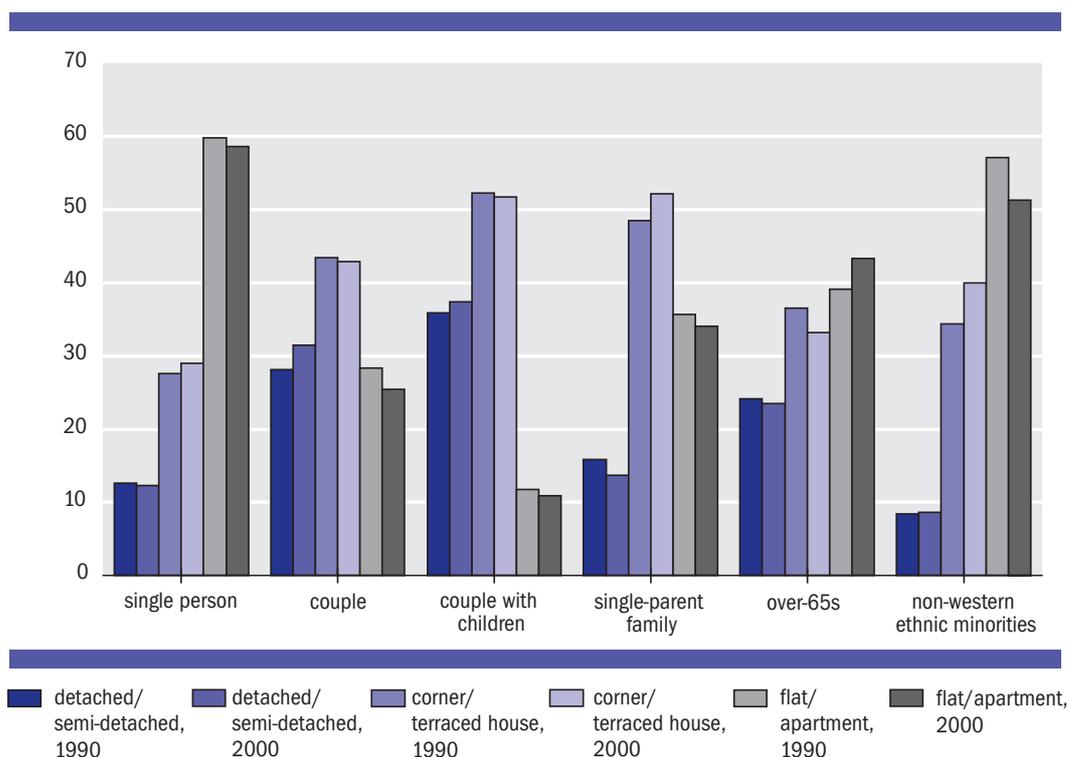
According to the Dutch Constitution, promoting the availability of adequate housing is a task of the government. 'Adequate' refers both to the number of dwellings and to the quality of housing and the residential setting. The most recent policy document on this subject (*Mensen wensen wonen – VROM 2000*) gives the highest priority to promoting better housing quality and more freedom of choice. In order to offer the less well-off greater freedom of choice on the housing market, the aim is to increase the accessibility of the owner-occupied sector for those on relatively low incomes. Owner-occupancy is projected to grow further to 65% by 2010. The policy document is based on optimistic assumptions regarding the development of household incomes and on the expectation that these will lead to greater demand for owner-occupied homes and to considerably better housing quality. This report focuses on the government targets set for the 1990s: ensuring the availability of affordable housing, increasing the level of home ownership and safeguarding the quality of housing and the residential environment.

Housing situation

Almost a third of the Dutch population live in flats or apartments; more than 40% live in single-family, corner or terraced houses and just over a quarter live in detached or semi-detached houses. This situation hardly changed the period 1990-2000. The quality of the Dutch housing stock improved in the 1990s, and households began living more comfortably. Almost one million spacious and well-appointed new homes were built.

A number of shifts took place enabling more single people, single-parent families and members of non-western ethnic minorities to move up from their (simple) flat accommodation to a terraced home (figure 10.1). Although elderly people increasingly moved into flats, these were more frequently than in the past (adapted) apartments at the more luxurious end of the market. Couples in the high income bracket increasingly moved to semi-detached or detached dwellings.

Figure 10.1 Housing type by household characteristics, 1990 and 2000 (in percent)



Source: CBS (WBO'90 and '00)

Home ownership increased from 43% in 1990 to 53% in 2001 – though this figure is still low by international standards (table 10.1). Although the switch from rented accommodation to owner-occupation was made relatively frequently in all population groups, it was mostly middle-income households who bought their own homes. People predominantly move into their first owner-occupied home in the ‘young’ stage of life (couples with and without children); the outflow from the owner-occupied market is thereafter extremely limited and only begins to rise gradually in the empty-nest phase. The sharpest rise in home ownership is found among non-western ethnic minorities, with an increase from 13% to 31% and with Turks and Surinamese figuring particularly prominently.

Table 10.1 Home ownership by income and ethnic group, 1990-2000 (in percent)

	1990	1994	1998	2000
1 st quartile	17	23	24	22
2 nd quartile	25	31	37	39
3 rd quartile	45	55	61	63
4 th quartile	68	74	79	78
indigenous	45	48	54	54
non-western ethnic minority ^a	13	23	29	31

a In 1990 the definition was more limited than in later years.

Source: CBS (WBO'89/'90, '93/'94, '98 en '00)

People's perception of their housing situation was predominantly positive in 2000. 14% of the population are dissatisfied with their home; this is a slight increase compared with 1990 which does not correspond with the improvement in quality that has taken place in the sector. 15% are dissatisfied with their residential setting. It is notable that non-western ethnic minorities are the most dissatisfied on both aspects.

Problems on the housing market have recently reappeared. The number of new homes built has been falling since 1998 and movement up the housing ladder has stagnated. At the same time, the number of people looking for homes has increased. As a result, the static housing shortage is expected to rise from 1.3% in 1998 to 2.7% in 2005. Partly due to this tension on the housing market, prices in the owner-occupied sector have risen so much that they have almost gone beyond the reach of first-time buyers. In the social rented sector the scarcity is translated into waiting times, which in 2001 already averaged 2.6 years for starters and movers. Naturally, there are wide differences in these figures depending on the housing market area concerned.

Goal attainment

In the area of public housing, three targets were set for the 1990s: providing affordable housing; promoting home ownership; and improving the quality of homes and the residential environment. At the end of the 1990s the emphasis shifted away from housing people on low incomes to promoting housing quality for everyone. Although the Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment (VROM) claimed in 1998 that the objectives of the policy for 2000 had already been achieved, question marks can be placed alongside this assertion. Home ownership increased entirely in line with the objective (53% in 2000), though owing to the steep price rises this growth was limited in the low-income groups. The quality of the housing stock also improved, primarily because of the construction of more expensive new developments than in the past; several groups benefited from this. The most important objective, however, namely providing affordable housing, appears to have been squeezed. New entrants to the housing market face long waiting times and, despite the doubling of individual housing benefit, housing costs have increased massively for many households in a relatively short time.

11 Quality of residential setting

Policy objectives

Several local authorities as well as central government have developed policy aimed at improving the quality of the residential environment in specific districts. As part of the urban renewal policy, central government makes available an investment budget to local authorities under certain conditions. Government has also developed a concentrated approach for 50 districts where living quality is poor. The district is the level at which the problems are most tangible and at which concrete plans can be developed most easily in collaboration with other social organisations and citizens.

Index

The lack of quality of the residential environment has a number of dimensions. The first can be described as impoverishment and is based on perception data on rubbish in the streets, dog fouling, graffiti, vandalism, etc. The second dimension concerns *crowding* or density of housing, indicated by the variables high-rise (blocks of flats with more than four storeys), medium-rise (three or four storeys) and number of people per room. The third dimension represents the degree of (noise) nuisance and the fourth the level of amenities in the neighbourhood (in particular GPs and shops). The scores on the different dimensions are added together to produce a single national measure of the quality of the residential environment.¹³

If the average score of the residential neighbourhoods for 1994 is set at 100, the index in 2002 is found to have fallen to 87. This negative trend has taken place in all municipality categories and appears to ensue mainly from the reduced level of provisions and the degeneration perceived by the public. Given the way in which this latter element is measured, the outcome may well reflect public opinion on this point more accurately than the actual situation. The 10% of residential neighbourhoods with the lowest quality in each housing market region (with an average score of -3.54) are predominantly urban. The 10% best neighbourhoods (average score +1.28) are located around the periphery of the (large) cities in the densely populated western region of the country, as well as more sporadically throughout the rest of the country (table 11.1).

Table 11.1 Districts and their inhabitants in the Netherlands, by residential quality and urbanisation, 2002 (in absolute numbers)

	poor residential quality	middle group	high residential quality	total
in the Netherlands	380	3,064	379	3,868
population (x 1000)	2,558	11,500	1,779	15,900
in the G4 ^a	28	200	19	243
population (x 1000)	284	1,714	73	2,024
in the G21 ^b	116	279	24	423
population (x 1000)	885	1,589	104	2,584
in the other municipalities	236	2,585	346	3,202
population (x 1000)	1,388	8,185	1,667	10,674

a The four largest cities in the Netherlands (Amsterdam, Rotterdam, The Hague and Utrecht).

b Other cities with social deprivation, > 100.000 inhabitants.

Source: ABF-research (ABF-monitoren); CBS (Postcoderegister 1997); Netherlands Association of Estate Agents (Nederlandse vereniging van makelaars) (Property transaction data); BZK/Justitie (Politie-monitor 2001); BZK (Politieprestatie-monitor 2002) SCP treatment

Looking at the social profile of the population in the districts with the lowest scores, the distributions are as expected: benefit claimants and members of non-western ethnic minorities are particularly strongly overrepresented. In addition, the figures show that crime is more prevalent in low-quality neighbourhoods and that more residents feel unsafe than elsewhere. It is not surprising that more people than average are dissatisfied in these neighbourhoods about the physical aspects of their residential environment. The social quality of the neighbourhood also more frequently evokes a negative perception, despite the fact that far and away the majority of residents feel at home in their neighbourhoods. The opposite applies for both dimensions in the best-quality neighbourhoods.

Residential neighbourhoods which slipped down the ladder of physical quality between 1994 and 2002 have a relatively high proportion of elderly and single occupants, and there is a slight negative trend in the social status of the resident populations. Residents (justifiably) feel unsafe and are relatively frequently victims of crimes against the person. Most of the neighbourhoods in this category were built in the 1970s and have entered a transitional phase. The profile of the population in neighbourhoods where the physical quality is improving is hardly any different from that of the lowest category, but the social status is increasing slightly. It is notable that residents of these neighbourhoods feel relatively safe. Quite a number of the neighbourhoods in this category are prewar developments which are being restructured.

12 Life Situation Index

Overall picture

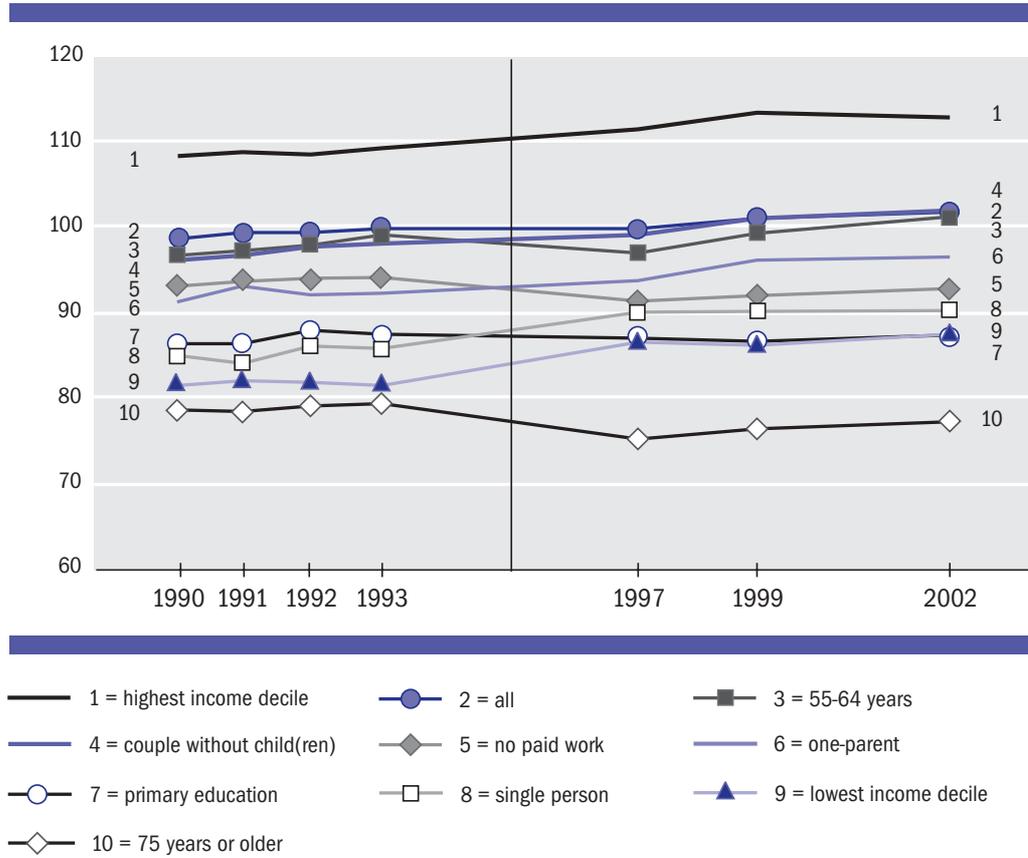
The previous chapters present the life situation of the Dutch population separately for each policy domain. This creates a good picture of developments in those areas and of the relationship between the individual domains. At the same time, however, this method of presentation makes it difficult to obtain an overall picture. The Life Situation Index (see Annex 1) is a measurement instrument which integrates a very large number of aspects of people's living circumstances. Since the data are drawn from a single population survey, relationships can be established empirically.

Positive trend

The index is set at 100 for 1997. As might be expected from the positive trend in resources, the Life Situation Index for the Dutch population rose slightly to 102 in 2002 (figure 12.1). This score is the result of an improvement in material aspects such as housing, ownership of durable consumer goods (more PCs) and (foreign) holidays. On the other hand, there was a slight deterioration in health (more psychological complaints), diversity of sporting activities and leisure time use. After 1999 most of the benefit of the positive trends was enjoyed by a small number of (overlapping) groups which had lagged behind until then, such as older people, people on low incomes, members of ethnic minorities and residents of large cities; these groups enjoyed greater than average material improvements over the period. On the other hand the higher income groups, people in the busy phase of their lives (35-44 age group) and people with a low education level did relatively less well, because they are less socially active, play less sport and have less diverse leisure pursuits. Health complaints play a role in the 35-44 age group (psychosomatic complaints) and among those with a low education level.

The quality of people's life situation depends on their individual characteristics and choices, but also on their social opportunities and perspectives. Key aspects here are education, work and income; these are seen as the most important social resources. A causal relationship is assumed between life situation and these resources: the more resources someone has, the better his or her life situation will be. In addition, the quality of someone's life situation is also affected by aspects which are partly or completely outside the control of government, such as age and household composition.

Figure 12.1 Development in life situation for the Netherlands as a whole and for a selection of social groups, from 1990 (index scores)



The vertical line indicates that changes have taken place in the survey method.

Source: CBS (DLO'90-'93; POLS-SLI'97-'02) SCP treatment

It transpires that having these resources is indeed accompanied by a good life situation. People with a high income have a better life situation than people with a low income. The same applies for people with a high education level and for people in work. If the scores for the different years are compared, it is found that the inequality between the different groups increased in the 1990s and then reduced again between 1999 and 2002. This does not apply for the difference in life situation between the employed and unemployed, which remained the same after 1999.

Table 12.1 Influence of resources and a number of other background characteristics on life situation, 1990-2002 (multivariate Anova analysis, beta coefficients)

	1990	1999	2002
age ^a	0.15	0.26	0.25
income ^b	0.21	0.32	0.30
labour market position ^c	0.04	0.10	0.11
education ^d	0.25	0.27	0.27
household composition ^e	0.28	0.09	0.13
income source ^f	0.12	0.06	0.07
explained variance (in %)	48	57	55

a 18-24 years, 25-34 years, 35-44 years, 45-54 years, 55-64 years, 65-74 years, ≥ 75 years.

b In deciles.

c In 1993: working; not working. From 1997, working people are divided by more or less than 12 hours per week.

d In 1993: (continued) primary education; junior secondary education 'old-style'; junior secondary vocational education; junior general secondary education; third-year pre-university education; senior secondary vocational education, senior general secondary education, pre-university education, higher professional education, university. From 1997, junior secondary vocational education is included as a separate category.

e Single person; couple without children; couple with children; single-parent family.

f In 1993: wages; pension/income from capital; state pension/disability benefit; other social security benefit; other. From 1997: wages; profit; early retirement pension; (state) pension; social security benefit/grant; other.

Source: CBS (DLO'93, POLS-SLI'97-'02) SCP treatment

The resources cited contribute a great deal to the quality of people's life situation, as does their age (see table 12.1). The importance of income, education and age increased steadily through the 1990s, as did the influence of labour market position. To a considerable extent, these characteristics have taken the place of the influence of household composition: in 2002 the type of household to which someone belongs have less impact on their life situation than in 1990 then how old they were and whether or not they were in work (SCP 2001b). Taken together, background characteristics explain more than half the differences in life situation.

Cumulation

To determine whether the group of people confronted with a cumulation of disadvantage is becoming larger or smaller, and individual social disadvantage index was compiled. This index comprises the three resources referred to and is the sum of the three variables 'not in paid work', 'having an income below the low-income threshold' and 'having a low education level'. As few people who are older than 65 are still working, the index for this group comprises only the last two resources.¹⁴

Table 12.2 Accumulation of disadvantage with respect to the resources income, education, labour market (in percent and average life situation)

	in %			average life situation		
	1997	1999	2002	1997	1999	2002
persons < 65 years						
no disadvantage	42	45	50	109	109	109
maximum disadvantage	9	8	6	87	86	87
<i>difference in life situation</i>				22	23	22
persons ≥ 65 years						
no disadvantage	24	27	28	93	96	97
disadvantage	36	32	25	77	77	77
<i>difference in life situation</i>				16	19	20

Source: CBS (POLS-SLI'97-'02) SCP treatment

After 1997 the percentage of people confronted with maximum disadvantage declined and the percentage of people with no disadvantage in any of the domains distinguished increased (see table 12.2).

There are wide differences in the life situation of people in a disadvantaged position and those who are not. Between 1999 and 2002 this difference reduced for persons aged under 65, but increased for older people. Older people in a disadvantaged position lost ground especially in terms of leisure time use, voluntary work, social isolation and health complaints (higher VÖEG-score (average number of health complaints)).

There is also a correlation between the frequency of *social contacts* and people's life situation. Such contacts not only reduce the risk of feelings of loneliness – one of the elements in the index – but affect all aspects of the life situation. A high number of social contacts suggests a close-knit social network, which can be regarded as an additional resource. The autonomous influence of the physical environment appears to be minimal according to this study.

Life situation, contentment and happiness

The counterpart to objective data, which are the central plank of *The Social State of the Netherlands*, are people's subjective perceptions of life situation, elements of their life situation or life as a whole (see Annex 1). There is growing public and political attention for the views of citizens both concerning their own situation and regarding the actions of the government. By asking people how happy they are, it is possible to obtain an overall picture of their general feelings of well-being.

Table 12.3: Average life situation by general feelings of happiness and perceived health

	percentage in 2002	1997	1999	2002
happiness				
very happy	21	105	106	107
happy	67	101	102	102
not happy/not unhappy	9	90	92	91
not very happy/unhappy	3	80	84	82
subjective health				
very good	21	106	107	108
good	56	102	103	104
reasonable	19	90	92	93
sometimes good, sometimes poor ^a	4	90	90	87
poor ^b	0	81	84	78

a In 2002: poor

b In 2002: very poor

NB: As a result of these changes in the response categories, more people in 2002 report that they are doing 'reasonably' than in earlier years. Fewer than 0.5% describe their health as 'very poor' in 2002, compared with around 3% stated in earlier years that their health was poor (this category scored 4% in 2002).

Source: CBS (POLS-SLI 2002), SCP treatment

The vast majority (88%) of the Dutch population claimed to be happy and content in 2002, a high score by international standards (table 12.3). People's perception of their personal life situation is of greater significance here than their opinion of society as a whole. The relationship between a person's objective life situation and their subjective appreciation of that life situation is made complex by the psychological mechanisms involved. Yet there is a correlation in the expected direction between general feelings of happiness and subjective health status on the one hand and the Life Situation Index on the other. This applies both for people's life situation as a whole and for individual aspects of it. Closer analysis, however, shows that happiness ultimately correlates mainly with personal characteristics (such as a positive self-image) and personal relationships.

13 Political opinions

The Dutch social and political climate in the period 2001-2002 was characterised by unrest. On top of this, the economy deteriorated. Consumer confidence fell substantially between 2002 and 2003 (CBS 2003). A number of notable events took place, including acts of international terrorism and a political assassination within the Netherlands, with serious political consequences. Although not all these developments and incidents have a bearing on people's views on government policy, it is plausible to imagine that a climate of social unrest increases people's demands of the government, because the population seeks greater protection against perceived risks.

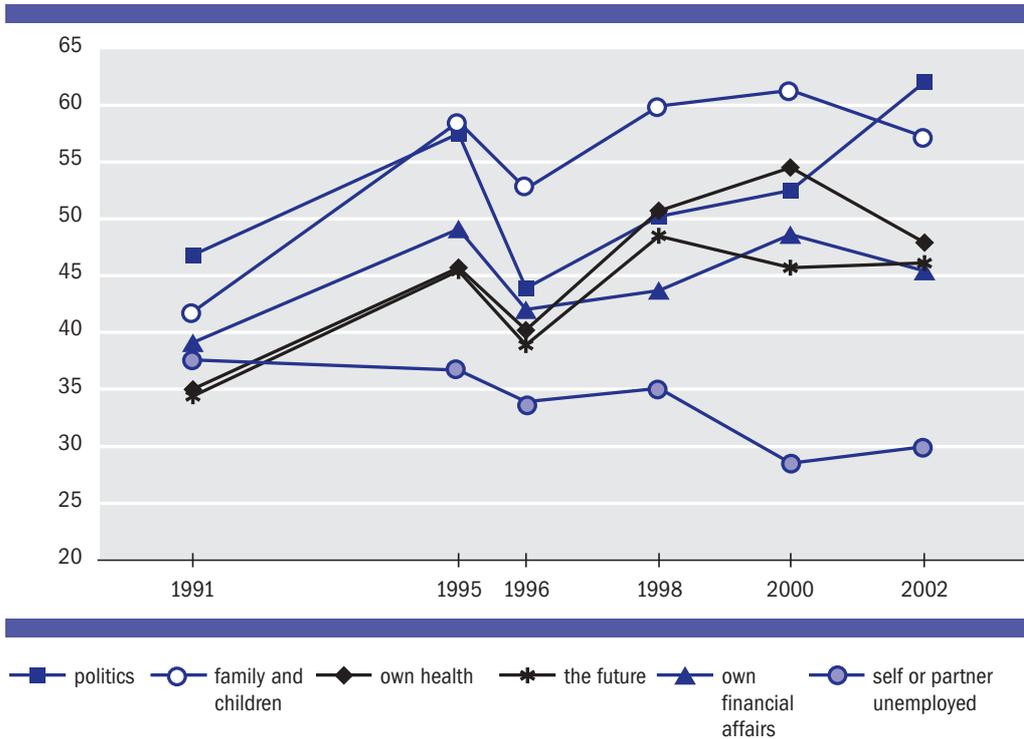
Table 13.1 Involvement (= degree to which affected) by shocking events, 2002 (in percent)

	very affected	affected	not affected	not at all affected	made no impression	total
11 September 2001	24	56	16	3	1	100
the murder of Pim Fortuyn	23	50	21	5	1	100
the fire in a bar in Volendam	20	56	19	4	1	100
the firework disaster in Enschede	17	59	19	4	1	100
the foot and mouth crisis	16	45	30	7	2	100
the incidence of BSE (Creutzfeldt-Jakob)	13	45	34	7	2	100
the Netherlands Institute for War Documentation (NIOD) report on Srebrenica	8	36	42	11	3	100

Source: SCP (CV'02)

In 2002, respondents reported on how involved they felt in important incidents in recent years (table 13.1). Half the population (51%) displayed a low level of involvement. These respondents report that they do not feel highly involved in any single event. The other half showed a high degree of engagement: 18% report very strong involvement with one incident; 13% do this for two events and 19% give this answer for three or more of the possibilities. The level of engagement of 31% can be described as moderate, while 19% are very involved. Many people felt affected by the terrorist assault on the Twin Towers on 11 September 2001, the murder in the Netherlands of Pim Fortuyn (the popular leader of a new rightwing political party) on 6 May 2002, the fire in a bar in the Dutch village of Volendam (20 deaths and many injured) on New Year's Eve 2001, and the firework disaster in the Dutch town of Enschede on 13 May 2000 (residential neighbourhood destroyed, with 22 deaths and many injured).

Figure 13.1 Share of the population with concerns about certain topics, 1991-2002 (in percent)



Source: SCP (CV'91-'02)

Has the climate of economic downturn, coupled with high-profile events, made people more concerned about society in general and about their own personal situation in particular? According to figure 13.1 a number of concerns increased generally between 1991 and 2002, but particularly in the first half of this period. The sudden drop in 1996 is difficult to explain. It is striking that between 2000 and 2002 – a period in which Dutch society was wracked by a number of deep shocks – the level of concerns remained the same or even fell. One area where concerns increased was politics, from 53% to 62%. The political situation was thus the most important of the concerns investigated in 2002. Apart from this, the incidents included in table 13.1 appear not to have had a negative effect on people's opinions regarding the risks in their personal situation.

Expectations with regard to the government

A majority of the Dutch remained of the opinion in the 1990s that the government should have more money for public provisions. More than two-thirds of those interviewed in 2002 held this view. An economic slump generally leads to the view among the public that the government should economise. Between 2000 and 2002, however, this was not the case, because in this period, too, the views do not change. This represents a difference compared with earlier periods of economic weakness.

The influence of the stagnating economy can be observed in terms of the level of social security benefits. In the second half of the 1990s more and more respondents felt that the employee insurances (unemployment benefit, disability benefit, etc) were adequate, the same trend is found with regard to national insurance schemes (not in table). Support for the social security system remains high; two-thirds of respondents are satisfied with it and those who are not would like to see benefits increased.

Table 13.2 What people consider important in politics, 1992-2002 (in percent)^a

	1992	1995	1998	2000	2002
fighting crime	56	57	63	63	56
maintaining order	45	50	59	58	58
maintaining the level of social security	46	50	53	55	54
maintaining a stable economy	52	49	50	50	54
protecting freedom of expression	42	45	46	43	47
making society less impersonal	31	33	44	44	43
combating unemployment	52	50	35	25	30
combating environmental pollution	53	41	32	33	24
promoting strong economic growth	29	28	21	21	23
making the influence of ideas on society more important than money	21	20	23	25	23
combating price rises	29	26	20	25	32
increasing consultation at work and in housing	15	16	18	19	17
increasing the say of the citizen	16	16	16	18	18
good reception of immigrants	10	11	10	11	10
enhancing the urban and rural landscape	6	5	7	8	7
strengthening the armed forces	4	4	4	3	5

a The percentages relate to the first five rankings on a scale of 1-16; 1 = most important and 16= least important.

Source: SCP (CV'92-'02)

The top five political priorities in recent years have also undergone little change. Maintaining public order and combating crime were still at the top in 2002, as in previous years. The same applies for the maintenance of the social security system and a stable economy. Freedom of speech has also remained an important item. A sixth item can be added to this list: a society in which personal relationships are given greater freedom than at present (table 13.2). Of the other objectives, combating unemployment and inflation are gaining in importance. The fact that these two items moved ahead in 2002 is of course related to economic developments at the time. The importance attached to a good environment declined further between 2000 and 2002.

Satisfaction with governmental policies

The question is of course how public appreciation of the government's actions has developed, and in particular with regard to the policy in the priority areas.

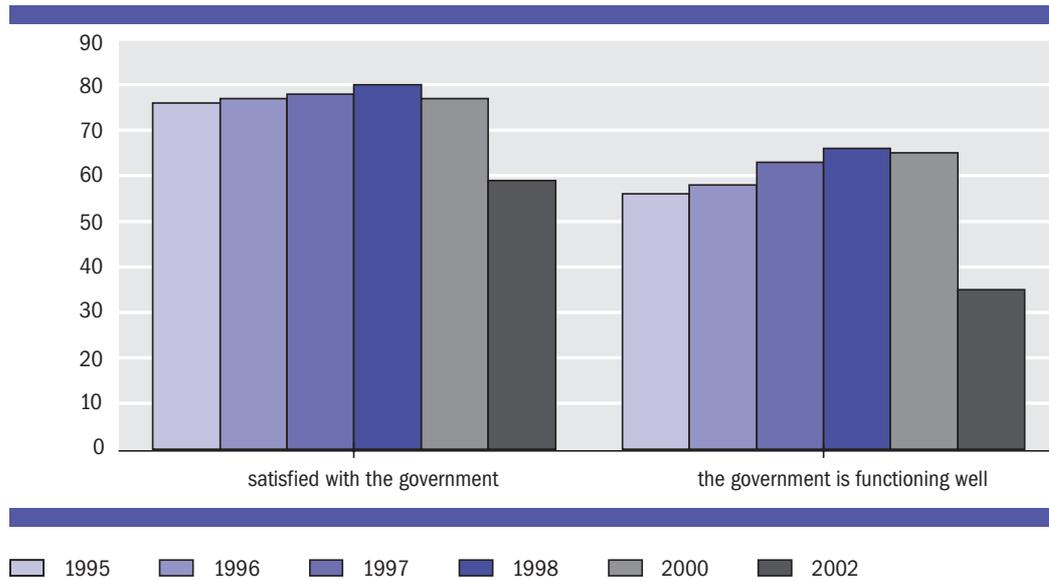
Table 13.3 Share of the population regarding the policy as adequate or better, and awarding a score of 7-10, 1995-2002 (in percent)

	1995	1997	1998	2000	2002
basic provisions					
employment	20	40	54	62	31
social security	35	35	36	40	34
living costs	30	32	37	31	14
quality of life in large cities	24	26	23	26	17
maintaining order	22	20	17	21	13
care: elderly, hospitals	27	19	17	13	17
education					
general education	46	45	41	35	31
vocational education	47	48	48	40	35
culture and other					
leisure time: sport	45	47	43	44	39
environment	33	32	34	38	28
reception of foreigners	38	34	30	36	24
culture: concerts, theatre	41	39	42	36	34
childcare			30	31	

Source: SCP (CV'95-'02)

Public opinion on a range of important aspects of government policy took a decidedly negative turn in 2002 (table 13.3). The number of people awarding a score of 7 or more out of 10 for policy is especially low when it comes to health care and maintaining public order (17% and 13%, respectively). Public opinions on the policy on education, liveability and the environment have also become more negative. New though not surprising in a period of economic stagnation is the sharply lower appreciation of government efforts to combat inflation, promote employment and sustain the social security system. It is primarily people on low incomes who are dissatisfied on these aspects. The picture shows very little change in the areas of culture and leisure time. The dissatisfaction must be generally interpreted as a desire for more effective policy: the more negative public opinion is on certain policy domains, the more people feel that the government has done too little. This applies to a lesser extent for the policy on health care, for which the figure was already extremely low in 2000.

Figure 13.2 General satisfaction with the government, 1995-2002 (in percent)



Source: SCP (CV'95-'02)

The negative trends are also reflected in the general opinion on the functioning of public services and in the degree of satisfaction with the government (figure 13.2). The statement that the public services function well is supported by only a third of respondents at the end of 2002, compared with two-thirds in 2000. Satisfaction with the government has also fallen sharply, though a majority are still satisfied (down from 77% to 59%). The break in the steadily rising appreciation of the government and public authorities probably took place at the end of 2000 (SCP 2001b: figure 12.8). The minimal reduction in generic support which was found then can be linked to the public dissatisfaction that was already present concerning specific issues such as health care, liveability, safety and education. The economic downturn also led to negative opinions on the government's economic policy, so that in 2002 the opinions on the government were still positive on balance, while this was no longer the case for public services as a whole.

Naturally, these political opinions vary according to the political affinities of the respondents. However, the differences between the different political categories were smaller in 2000 than in 2002. The general public opinion on the functioning of public services is less influenced than satisfaction with the government by political affinity. In both cases, personal characteristics have little significance.

14 Social and political situation

The general picture of Dutch society which emerges from the foregoing sections is one of steady progress up to 2002. The positive developments highlighted in *The Social State of the Netherlands 2001 (De sociale staat van Nederland 2001)* (SCP 2001b) are found to an even greater extent up to 2002. The distribution of individual resources has improved. The education level of the population has increased, the labour participation rate has risen sharply and incomes have increased accordingly. However, a trend-break occurred in areas of employment and income in 2002, the consequences of which only became fully apparent in 2003.

These positive trends shaped the development of people's life situation. In most areas that development was a positive one. The strongest improvement was in material living conditions, in areas such as housing, holidays, consumer durables and mobility. Less progress was achieved in the areas of sport and leisure activities. There was also a slight increase in the number of psychosomatic disorders between 1999 and 2002. There was a small rise in the level of socially sensitive violent crime. The Life Situation Index reflects this progress (figure 12.1); the Index rose from 100 in 1997 to 102 in 2002. In addition, the increased wealth also reached the traditional disadvantaged groups, such as the elderly and members of ethnic minorities.

In line with these positive developments the Report shows that, individually, the Dutch are happy and satisfied people. A sizeable group (42%) in 2002 had held the opinion since 1999 that they had progressed in their own lives. Young people were more inclined to hold this view than older people. People's subjective perception of their own living situation is generally positive, a fact that is confirmed by the individual chapters in this report. In areas which are very important for people's living situation – health, employment, education and income – there is a high level of satisfaction. The situation is less clear when it comes to housing and residential environment; despite the improved quality of housing, people's satisfaction with their home has not increased. In both cases, however, the group of dissatisfied households is small (roughly 15%).

There is a certain discrepancy between these positive developments in life situation and the positive perception of them on the one hand, and the increase in social and political dissatisfaction on the other. This discontent manifested itself in the poor outcome of the election for the incumbent Cabinet and the more negative public opinion of politicians and the government. The question is how this discrepancy should be interpreted and which factors have played a role in it.

In the first place, a number of special circumstances can be cited in seeking to explain this discrepancy. During the 2002 general election the established parties, and in particular the government parties, lost voters to a new radical political party, whose political leader was murdered during the election campaign. This party chose as its platform a few politically sensitive issues and succeeded in mobilising voters, especially those with a 'law and order mentality' and with little tolerance of minorities (Dekker, Lampert and Spangenberg 2004). The economic downturn which began in 2002 appears to be a second significant factor. It led to more negative sentiment in general and in particular to reduced support for the government's economic policies. A third situational factor relates to the disasters cited earlier, which occurred in the period 2000-2002 and which put pressure on the functioning of the government. Every political analyst agrees that the unimaginable – by Dutch standards – political shifts that took place at the elections in May 2002 had everything to do with these disasters and the way in which government and politicians responded to them.

A second cluster of factors relates to the achievements of the government and public opinion regarding those achievements. The reversal in what had since the middle of the 1990s been increasing appreciation of the government and politicians probably took place as early as 2000 (figure 13.3). The minimal reduction in generic support observed in that year can be linked to the public dissatisfaction that existed even then regarding the policy on education, health care, liveability and safety. Partly as a result of the economic stagnation, government policy received a low score in even more domains in 2002. The question is where this dissatisfaction comes from. One possible explanation could lie in the quality of service delivery. However, in 2002 the vast majority of citizens considered quaternary services such as healthcare, education and community services to be of good quality. The views were even more positive where the respondent was a user of the services in question. A similar large majority also had positive opinions on housing and residential environment. The social security benefits agencies and the police scored less well, but opinions regarding these institutions were no more negative than in earlier observations (SCR 2002).

Notwithstanding these positive opinions, many citizens feel that the quality of service has declined in recent years. The performance of the government and quaternary service-providers in the various domains as presented in the SSN 2003 also provides grounds for criticism. Examples include healthcare waiting lists, school dropout, road congestion and delays in public transport, the 'new housing shortage', increasing crime (including violent crime), and declining liveability of urban neighbourhoods. In addition, a number of these problems are closely related to the presence of members of non-western ethnic minorities who are not well integrated into Dutch society and who since the terrorist attacks in New York and Washington have acquired an extra political 'charge'. These problems potentially affect every person in the Netherlands, but in reality it is the socially disadvantaged groups and residents of deprived inner-city

areas who bear the brunt. Politicians fall over themselves to promise improvements, but consistently fail to deliver in the short term. These *dissatisfiers* (Schnabel 2003) overshadow the positive developments, partly because the public have become used to things which do go well. The media feed the social debate as well as the political process, which subsequently develops its own dynamic. In a period of electoral conflict, criticism is of course rapidly translated into political and administrative failure, leading to a decline in the general appreciation of government and politics. Politicians are virtually powerless to stem this process. The Cabinet in office and, more generally, the government apparatus as a whole consequently do not receive the credit from the public that they might expect given the positive development in the living situation of the Dutch population.

If the second complex of factors suggests in terms of political system theory that there is a lack of specific support for elements of government policy, a deeper explanation of the political unrest is to be found according to political analysts in the political system itself. Many analyses point to issues such as inadequate responsiveness of politicians – politicians need to listen to the people more – the great distance separating citizens and administration, people's distrust of politicians and political parties, and more generally the inadequate representation of people's interests. This publication contains a number of findings on political opinions and behaviour which shed some light on this issue.

A very general indication of dissatisfaction with the political system is the degree of satisfaction with the functioning of democratic institutions. In the Netherlands, this satisfaction has been high for decades, including internationally (SCP 2002: table 5.1). Compared with the situation in most other European countries, there is generally wide trust in the Netherlands in parliament, the government and government institutions. Some qualification is however called for here, not only because this trust has recently declined, but also because it is not exceptionally high in comparison with the trust enjoyed by other public institutions. The media (radio, television and the press) scored better, not just in the Netherlands but everywhere in Europe. Moreover, the trust in political parties is exceptionally low, albeit to a slightly lesser extent in the Netherlands than elsewhere.

Other indicators are political interest and participation. Although there was reduced party political interest, socially selective participation in politics and declining turnouts at elections, there were no obvious indications of dysfunction in the political system. The figures on political participation, political self-confidence and political cynicism fluctuated within relatively narrow margins in the 1990s. They suggest that up to the year 2000 the gulf between public and politicians had not widened. The increased willingness of people to protest might be interpreted not as a sign of such a gulf, but rather as an indication of the increased self-awareness of (well educated) citizens.

Citizens do not allow themselves to be trampled upon, especially in relation to issues that are close to them. In 2002 there was some resurgence of political interest and voters turned out in greater numbers at elections. The simultaneous increase in political cynicism suggests that this interest was motivated by negative factors. As these dissatisfied persons were offered a radical political alternative in the shape of Pim Fortuyn, they did not leave the political arena and as a result they put pressure on the established political order. In early 2003 this dissatisfaction, which was in fact not exceptional seen in the long term, appeared to have ebbed away again.

A third group of indicators for the dysfunction of the political system concerns the question of political priorities. A gulf between society and politicians could arise if the political elite and politically active citizens have priorities which do not correspond with the ideas of different, large sections of the population. However, the available data suggest that there are no significant differences between the political agenda of participants and those of non-participants, although non-participants have become more cynical about politics; they want citizens to have more direct influence and hold more extreme political views (SCP 2003, table 7.13). This is a potential source of diffuse dissatisfaction, which can be mobilised for concrete political aims.

Although the available data do not as yet suggest a permanent gulf between citizens and politicians, nor a crisis in the Western democratic model, there are some groups which have a different position in the political system. The scientific literature, as well as various SCP studies of political attitudes and behaviour in the last quarter of the 20th century, present a picture in which the trends can vary considerably between the different age and educational categories. For example, people with a low education level consistently show higher dissatisfaction levels than the better educated. Political indifference has fallen sharply among both well-educated and poorly educated older people, whereas it has remained stable among highly educated younger people but increased among young people with a low education level, who show greater dissatisfaction than their better-educated peers (SCP 2002 pp. 228-234). The various subcategories also show varying political behaviour in combination with specific political attitudes. Thus, for example, only a small percentage of politically interested people with a low education level do not vote, while among those with no political interest almost half do not bother to vote (Dekker 2002). The political dissatisfaction or indifference of these people can be seen as an expression of a general social dissatisfaction which has increased in the last few years. This general dissatisfaction is most pronounced among people with a low education level, people without paid employment and older people. The reason for this could be that large segments of these categories feel uncertain in present-day society (Elchardus 2003).

In addition to these developments in specific segments of the Dutch population, there are general changes taking place within the politico-administrative system which are of importance for the relationship between government and governed. In the first place, political involvement appears to be taking on a different form as a result of changes in civil society and increased individual autonomy. The erosion of the old social order which was structured along ideological lines ('pillarisation') has separated politics from society and removed hitherto fixed elector loyalties. People's actions are no longer directed by social class or ideological conviction, but primarily by their own interests or at most a specific public interest (single-issue movements). Beyond this, people restrict themselves to the role of critical or approving observers (SCP 1996). Traditional party-political activism is making way for non-institutionalised political participation and new forms of social engagement outside the established organs of civil society. Only a small group of highly educated people still appear to choose traditional politics as a means of acquiring social influence. The rest of the population observe via the media and become active only when they consider it genuinely necessary. In such an 'observers' democracy' there is virtually no exchange of political views and interests are weighed against each other less carefully. This brings closer the danger of a gulf between the political elite and the public (De Beus 2001; Dekker and Hooghe 2003).

The same structural changes which are taking place in civil society are also creating problems for the organisation of the national government. The ties between (central) government and organised social interests have become less political and more pragmatic. The professionalisation of the protection of interests and the autonomous independent stance of (implementing) social organisations play a key role here. In addition, central government has hived off or privatised a number of implementing services due to the unmanageability of the central organisation and the complexity of implementation. Any number of tasks have also been transferred to other authorities, including the EU. As a result of all these changes, central government is having to operate within a network of organisations, as just one of the parties which makes policy in a range of changing collaborative structures. This 'relocation of politics' (Bovens 2002) could provide a positive impulse to bridge the distance between citizens and government. At the same time, it is very difficult in practice to devise administrative arrangements in which responsibilities are clearly defined, in which verifiable and unambiguous targets are laid down and which provide for effective enforcement. The complex and untransparent structures also do nothing to invite citizens to play an active part. If problems, and perhaps calamities occur, however, both citizens and public opinion hold central government and national politicians liable: they have after all at the very least retained a certain responsibility for the system. The 'relocation of politics' thus produces the paradoxical situation that politicians, and in particular central government, have fewer opportunities to govern, but are ultimately held liable more often. This too frustrates the relationship between citizens and government.

The different approaches mentioned above in an attempt to explain the discrepancy between people's welfare and their political dissatisfactions, proffer complementary interpretations. Which theory holds true is uncertain. The external situational factors and the lack of governmental output on specific problems were probably decisive in 2002, because the political turmoil faded away after a year. Nevertheless, the changes in the social order will produce more political uncertainty in the future.

Annex 1

Framework for monitoring

Concept of life-situation

The *Social State of the Netherlands* (SSN) is a monitor centring around the life situation of the citizen. In terms of designating the content, the concept of “life situation” is neutral. Related terms are living standard, quality of life, welfare, liveability, social exclusion and social cohesion. Many countries and international organisations have developed their own standards and have constructed specific measures in order to objectify these concepts. In addition individual social scientists and research groups are in the process of developing theoretical frameworks and constructing specific measures for these kinds of broad and diffuse concepts (Hagerty et al. 2000).

The multitude of monitoring instruments and indicators sets based on them may be classified along two axes. One axis relates to the question as to whether the monitoring system in question is concerned with objective characteristics or with experiential aspects and satisfaction levels. The other axis concerns the object of monitoring: these may be individuals or collectivities (municipalities, countries, etc.). In the Dutch and international literature the most important discussions concern the following methodological questions: is the individual or the collectivity central; does the monitor record objective or subjective phenomena; and how can the range and level be standardised (Berger-Schmitt and Noll 2000).

The question of collectivity versus individual depends primarily on the objective of the monitoring instrument. Life situation research within countries is usually concerned with individuals; comparative research at the level of countries or other units, such as municipalities, tends rather to relate to systemic features of the units in question (e.g. national income, political regime and level of provision, etc.). Such systemic features are however also relevant as background information for the interpretation of data on citizens' life situation. The other questions are more fundamental in nature.

The objectifying approach is based on the concept of living standard. This is defined as access to resources that are capable of influencing a person's own living conditions. Examples include income, education and social networks, which can be employed in the various domains of life in order to make social progress. At issue therefore are indicators for objectively determining factors that are decisive for a person's living conditions. This approach is heavily slanted towards monitoring in the interests of social policy. The Scandinavian countries in particular follow this approach (Vogel 1995). The argumentation is twofold. The subjective perception of living conditions and certainly the satisfaction levels are affected by personal levels of aspiration or by

personal characteristics. This means that there is no good basis for comparison of groups or for determining developments over time. In addition the preference for an objectively determinable life situation is prompted by the policy-oriented nature of the monitoring systems: the provision of information on phenomena that can be influenced by means of policy and feeding the public debate on social progress.

Ranged against this is the approach based on people's needs, especially satisfaction and people's happiness in general and/or satisfactions concerning the various aspects of their life situation, such as satisfaction with family and friends, health, work and education, etc. These types of factors determine the extent to which a life situation can be designated as good. This approach was developed in the United States in the 1960s, but found major resonance in the Netherlands in the 1970s when the concept of welfare – as the counterpart of prosperity – was introduced as a policy concept. Veenhoven developed this approach further for international comparative research in the form of an index for happy life expectancy. He defined the concept of the (evident) liveability in various countries as the extent to which people lead long lives and are happy and healthy (Veenhoven 1996). In addition he related the satisfaction scores to macrodata on countries, such as the legal system, freedom and material prosperity.

The final important questions concern the scope of the monitor and the way in which a particular outcome is labelled good or bad. Life situation is a multidimensional concept. Most monitoring systems include indicators for a number of life domains, such as health, housing, the availability of consumer goods, nature of leisure activities and nature of social relations. The choice of domains is prompted by policy considerations or is based on empirical research. In practice this is dealt with pragmatically. Most monitoring systems cover a number of important domains, such as family and friends, welfare and health, material prosperity, productive employment, personal safety and participation in local society (Hagerty et al. 2000, p. 40). If a single composite measure of life situation has to be constructed the question of course arises as to the weight to be assigned to the various domains. This may be based on a theoretical framework, political priorities, individual preferences of the respondents or statistical criteria – a method employed by SCP in the construction of the Life Situation Index (chapter 12).

The level problem – i.e. where does the boundary between positive and negative values lie? – may also be approached in various ways. Generally, however, minimum norms that have been determined politically or in policy terms, apply in certain domains. These may then be taken as the starting point.

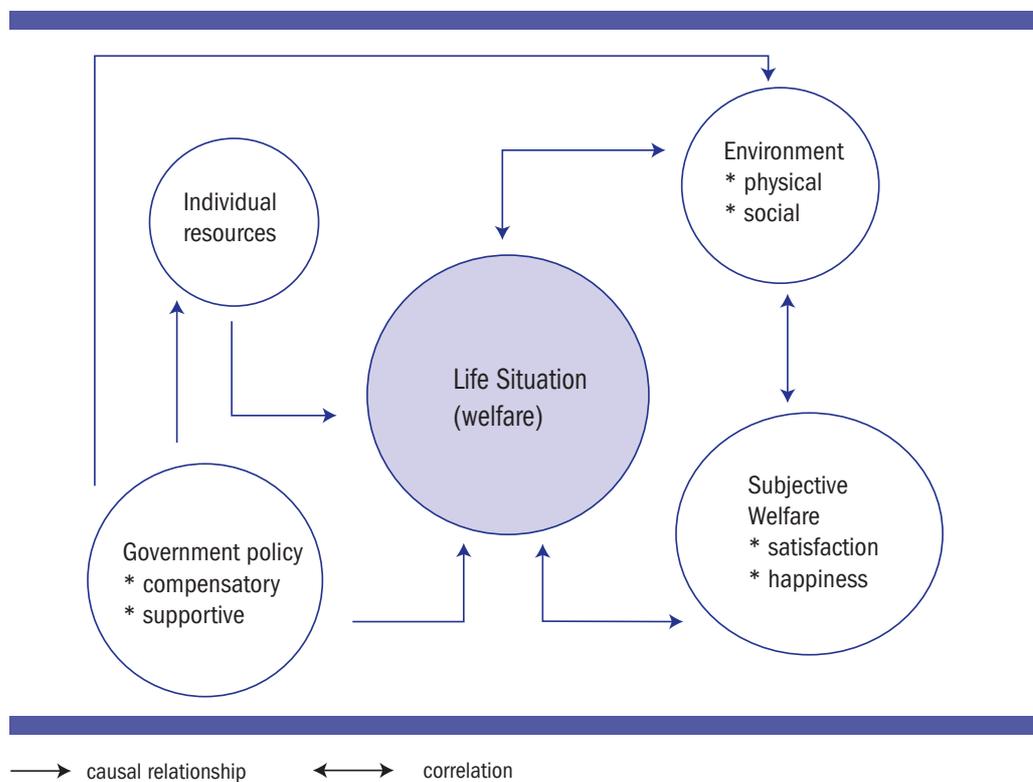
It should also be noted that monitors tend in particular to generate interesting information if it is possible for the results of various groups or the results over time to be compared. In that case it is sufficient to use relative measures. Needless to say it will then be necessary for reliable and valid data to be available for a number of years.

Model

It is against the background of these considerations that SCP has compiled the SSN, thereby fleshing out the concept of life situation. A broad approach has been adopted, under which the various types of data are presented as an interrelated whole. The SSN is based on the causal model shown in figure A.1.

As noted, the life situation of the citizen and the quality of the latter's existence have been taken as the central themes. This approach embraces the following domains: health, leisure activities, possession of consumer durables, social participation, residential situation and security. A number of indicators have been selected for each cluster. These aspects of the life situation are discussed in the various chapters of the SSN and are also presented in the overarching measure: the Life Situation Index.

Figure A.1 Model for life situation



Citizens have individual resources to help them achieve a good life situation. In present-day society the main resources are education, employment and income. To these might be added an indicator such as self-reliance, but no data are available on this. Age – especially old age – is however relevant for the extent to which people are generally self-reliant. The household situation provides an indication of the extent to which people will receive support in the event of problems. Finally, ethnic and/or cultural origin is also an indicator for the availability of social resources.

The causal model is based on a causal relationship between resources and life situation: the more resources at a person's disposal, the greater the chance of a good life situation. The government, which is concerned with the creation of equal opportunities, exercises influence over the availability of such resources. It redistributes income and helps citizens to acquire social resources through public provision. The government therefore plays a supporting role in helping prevent social disadvantage. Where the social process and personal choices according to the norms of the community result in disadvantage, the government will compensate for this as far as possible.

In line with the Scandinavian approach, the reporting in the SSN concentrates both on the resources and the situation in the aforementioned domains. As such the SSN largely presents *primary output or situational indicators*. The resources and life situation of individuals and households are identified on the basis of objective indicators. This in turn enables favourable or unfavourable trends to be identified, while the observed situation can be compared against the desired situation, developments over time can be followed and the situation of different groups and regions can be compared.

The social and physical settings are also important conditions for the life situation of the individual citizen. Socio-scientific research reveals the physical and social environment to be an autonomous factor affecting the life situation of the citizen either directly or indirectly. In the chapter on the quality of the residential setting, the SSN therefore reports on a number of physical characteristics of that setting and on the correlations between physical quality and social characteristics, such as the level of satisfaction of local residents, crime and population structure.

Something different from the *actual situation* in which people find themselves is the way that people rate their life situation (or elements in it) and the extent to which people are more or less happy. Where data are available, each chapter therefore establishes the relationship between the (objectively measured) life situation and the subjective assessments of it. This then casts a more detailed light on the objectified results. An objectively good situation will not always be recognised as such by public opinion or the individual him or herself, for example because of high expectations. Knowledge of such perceptions is not just important for the political process in the narrow sense – the acquisition of public support for a particular policy – but is also relevant for the process of formulating social goals.

The (causal) relationships presented in figure A.1 are not all identified for each domain. Where relevant, a relationship is established in each chapter between age, household situation, education, labour market position and income on the one hand and, and the results in a particular domain on the other. The Life Situation Index is included in chapter 12 and provides a means of exploring the correlations more systematically.

As may be deduced from the above, the SSN concentrates on the life situation of the individual citizen. Little attention is devoted in this report to the collectivity of Dutch society and its institutional characteristics. These are reported on in the *Social and Cultural Report* (SCR).

Choice of indicators

Although this causal model provides a certain frame of reference for ordering and selecting from the numerous possible topics, it does not help greatly in the practical choice of aspects/sub-aspects and associated indicators – i.e. the composition of data – that best represent the situation in a particular field. In this regard empirical research, drawing as it does on popular opinion concerning what is important for the standard of living and welfare of citizens, provides a guide for determining what is usable and for making a selection. The SCP has a solid tradition in reporting on social trends and life situation. The choice of concrete indicators for the SSN is accordingly based to a significant extent on previously conducted empirical research. In addition the SCP has been guided by the report *Kerngegevens leefsituatie* ('Key life situation data') from Statistics Netherlands (CBS), which, with the aid of experts, surveys key indicators of the life situation in the Netherlands (CBS 2000).

In addition prevailing political and policy considerations have played a role in the selection. These must be discounted in the system of indicators if the SSN is to fulfil an identifying and policy-evaluating function. The important political subjects can be derived from the Government Coalition Agreement of the second administration under Prime Minister Wim Kok. In this Agreement and in the numerous policy documents published since then, social cohesion/social participation is formulated as the leading policy principle: "The strength of society is determined by the extent to which citizens and population groups are willing and able to participate in economic and social relations. ... this does not apply, or only inadequately so, for too many Dutch people and others living in the country. Owing to lack of education, inadequate labour productivity or poor health they are unable to meet the ever-increasing demands and find themselves sidelined. ... it is the core task of the government to prevent or eliminate this kind of disadvantage." (TK 1997-1998). Subjects tackled by the administration in this regard include the social problems in the major cities, the disadvantaged position of minorities, the less good (financial) position of the elderly and vulnerable young people. These are subjects that are given a place in the SSN, but more by way of specific elaboration in a particular domain than as a separate topic.

In addition there are long-term specific goals in the various policy areas. These also served as a guide in the selection of indicators. The main objectives of government policy have therefore been briefly formulated in the introductions to the various chapters, while the concluding remarks contain summary information on the extent to which goals have been achieved.

The third consideration in the selection of indicators relates to the agreements reached on social policy in the context of the Maastricht and Amsterdam Treaties. The EU and the member states have undertaken to promote employment, to improve working and living conditions, to provide social security, to develop human capital and to combat social exclusion. Following the decision taken at the EU Summit on employment in November 1997, Eurostat has developed a set of indicators in collaboration with the statistics offices of the European countries in order to monitor developments in these fields. The fields in question and the indicators that have been developed were where possible taken into consideration when deciding on the arrangement of the SSN (Eurostat).

Finally, a number of practical considerations played a role in the determination of the domains, aspects and indicators. Needless to say, the availability of relevant research data is of decisive importance. In particular there is a need for databases with information on a large number of life situation aspects. For the SSN, the SCP is able to draw on the results of a number of large longitudinal surveys, such as the Periodic Life Situation Survey (POLS) by Statistics Netherlands, the Housing Needs Survey carried out jointly by Statistics Netherlands (CBS) and the Dutch Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment (VROM), the SCP's Amenities and Services Utilisation Survey (AVO) and the SCP's Cultural Changes survey (CV). In addition data have been drawn from numerous other CBS statistics. Finally the time-horizon of the report had to be determined. The period 1990-2000/2002 was selected; this period is long enough for there to be various points of measurement in the different fields and for changes to be observable. The description and analysis of the long-term social developments will be undertaken in the SCR.

As previously noted, the scores for the various indicators have where relevant – and where data are available – been broken down in each of these chapters by sex, age, education, household income, social/labour market position, type of household and, finally, degree of urbanisation (i.e. the four largest cities (G4), the 21 next largest towns and cities (G21) and other Netherlands municipalities). These links are generally analysed on a multivariate basis in order to identify mutual overlap and correlation. The reporting on social categories makes it possible to look at the objectives of government policies linked to specific groups.

Summarising the social state of the Netherlands: the Life Situation Index

The Life Situation Index enables us to explore the relationships of the social model (between the life situation domains and with other individual characteristics) more systematically, because all data stem from a single source. For example, the Index makes it possible to determine that an improvement in one domain together with a decline in another can lead to a better (or worse) life situation overall.

The Index combines indicators on eight domains. Most of these domains are also covered in separate chapters of the SSN: housing, health, social participation, leisure activity, sport, mobility, holidays and consumer durables.

There are several possibilities for integrating the indicators into a single index, for example consulting experts or using political priorities. Another method is to count the trends in a relatively simple way, using pluses and minuses in each domain or taking the sum of the percentage changes for each indicator. For example, in a given year 25% of people own a car and 30% participate in an organisation. In the next year of measurement, 50% own a car and 35% participate in an organisation. A combined index will rise from 100 to 115 in this case $[100 + ((50-25) + (35-30)/2)]$.

Yet another option is to start off by defining minimum needs. The extent to which these are met is then a percentage of the minimum. This method is used for example by the UNDP for its Human Development Index (United Nations Development Programme, 1998).

As there is no all-embracing theory available for combining the indicators, a different solution was adopted here. The starting point is the common dimension of the indicators, which all contribute positively or negatively to people's life situation. This is not a measured concept, so regression coefficients cannot be used, for example.

Since we are interested in good and bad, in deprivation and well-being, a single indicator which correlates more closely with the others should be given a greater weight. Furthermore, the result has to be an individually based index as we are not only interested in developments in the country as a whole, but for different groups in society as well. It was decided to construct the index statistically and allow the statistical program accord different weights to the indicators. Nonlinear canonical correlation analysis was used to construct the index. This is actually a variation on principal component analysis and calculates the weights so as to maximise the sum of the item-total correlations. Other advantages are that the clusters can be defined not only theoretically, but also in the analysis; it does not even matter if one cluster has far more indicators than another. Secondly, weights are accorded not only to the indicators, but also to the categories of indicators, enabling these to be compared as well, while indicators do not have to be measured at interval level. What the composite index on life situation tells us about the social state of the Netherlands, is reported in chapter 12.

Notes

- 1 The BBL is a 'block or day-release pathway' within senior secondary vocational education (MBO) but, unlike the 'vocational training pathway' (BOL) is geared mainly (over 50%) to practical vocational training. The BBL is comparable with the old apprenticeship system.
- 2 The VOCL figures on parents with only elementary education are unreliable and have therefore been left out of the figure.
- 3 The Dutch schools are nearly wholly subsidized by government.
- 4 See the various Social Memoranda published by the Dutch Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment.
- 5 The condition often imposed when radical system changes are introduced is that 'no-one' must see a reduction in purchasing power.
- 6 The low income was set in the past by CBS at EUR 7,260 for a single person based on 1990 prices. An equivalence factor are used to calculate this amount for other household types; it is then adjusted annually for inflation.
- 7 There is a remarkably rapid fall between 1995 and 1997, which deserves further investigation. Several explanations are possible. The four coincides with a change in sampling methods by CBS in 1997. Perenboom et al (2002) suggest that the 1996 Medical Aids Scheme makes it easier to obtain medical aids, which partly compensate for the limitations in people's mobility.
- 8 These targets ('Treeknormen') set norms for the period within which 80% of clients must have been given an appointment, indication and treatment, and also for the maximum period within which everyone must actually have been helped.
- 9 This probably has to do with the fact that the higher income category consists mainly of double income households, in which often each working member of the household has their own car. Based on the data used here (OVG), this assumption was not tested, however.
- 10 This estimate merely offers an indication. The amount of EUR 2-3 billion is made up of two components. First there is the reduction in value of dwellings, in so far as this can be deduced from road traffic-related noise nuisance (EUR 0.9 billion on an annual basis). Secondly, there is the health hazard caused by the emission of fine particles (PM10) (approx. EUR 2.3 billion per year, 40% of which is traffic-related). The negative effects of external safety have not been included in these amounts, and nor have the consequences of other emissions such as NOX or CO2. The total amount is therefore likely to lie somewhere in between EUR 2 and 3 billion.
- 11 Given the data collection method used, it is possible that in the survey of businesses and other organisations offences are reported by employees of those businesses and organisations which are also reported in the survey of private households. This is particularly relevant for small companies. In practice, however, the number of offences reported twice is likely to be small.
- 12 The total of the number of settlements by the Public prosecution Service and the number of cases handled by the courts is less than the total number of cases registered with the Public prosecution Service. This is because individual criminal cases may be combined by the Public Prosecution Service for submission to the courts.

- 13 The physical quality of the residential environment is analysed into several dimensions (factors) using principal component analysis. These dimensions are impoverishment, crowding, nuisance and amenities. These dimensions can be seen as compound variables. The research units (here postcode areas or districts) are given scores on these variables. The scores on the four compound variables are then added up to produce a single total score.
- 14 The social disadvantage index was first presented in 1999 (SCP 1999). More precisely, it includes the following indicators: no work or work for less than 12 hours per week; income of less than EUR 10,092 and education level lower than junior general secondary or the third year of pre-university education. As the index is a sum, the score can vary from 0 (no disadvantage) to 3 (maximum disadvantage). The score for older people ranges from 0 to 2. As the data are available only from 1997, nothing can be said about developments before that time.

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