



The Netherlands Institute for Social Research | SCP
Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau

Social and Cultural Developments

The state of the Netherlands

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Based on Verbeek-Oudijk, Hardus, van den Broek and
Reijnders (eds.).

Social and Cultural Developments. The state of the
Netherlands 2023.





New social report: Social and cultural Developments in the Netherlands

Goal: offer integral (domain crossing) social and societal knowledge to improve policies and the budget-cycle.

First edition offers:

- The social and societal state of the Netherlands
- Challenges for the future
- Call to include social and societal impact when developing and carrying out policy
- Recommendations on directions to do so





The state of the Netherlands

High quality of society(1)

- The quality of life is on average high, as is social cohesion, trust in others and trust in institutions
- A majority of 76% feels connected with Dutch society, 83% feels at home and social trust is stable (and even slightly rising).



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High quality of society (2)

- Most people in the Netherlands have sufficient possibilities to participate in society and most people can and are willing to do so.
- People see possibilities to contribute to important societal transitions – like the energy transition. Lots of local initiatives arise..



The State of the Netherlands

But there is also persistent structural inequality

- Substantial disparities between groups of people
- both in resources and in opinions and views on own life, others and society

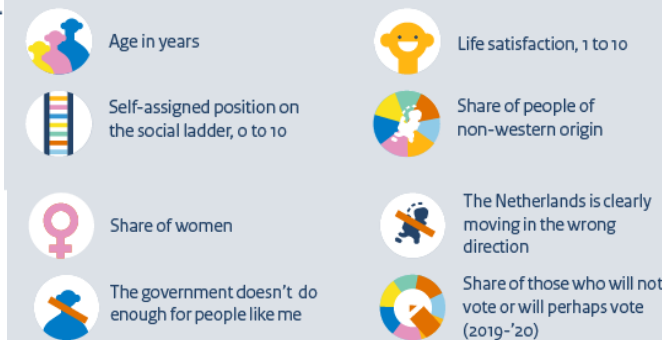
Share of seven social classes in adult population*

Social class profiles

*The sum total of the seven classes comprises 13.6 million persons aged 18 and older



Key to symbols (averages and percentages)



Over-represented political parties in social class voting intentions

- VVD = Conservative Liberals;
- D66 = Social Liberals;
- GroenLinks = Green-Left;
- PvdA = Labour Party;
- CDA = Christian Democrats;
- 50+ = Elderly Party;
- PVV = Freedom Party;
- SP = Socialist Party;
- DENK = Minority Rights Party

Link to a preprint of an article on this research:
[SocArXiv Papers | A contemporary class structure: Capital disparities in the Netherlands \(osf.io\)](https://doi.org/10.31235/osf.io/zunqs)

DOI:
<https://doi.org/10.31235/osf.io/zunqs>



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At the same time: trust in politics is low

- Satisfaction with democracy and trust in politics is low, compared to the past 20 years (40-50 % says to trust politics)
- People worry about the effectiveness of policies. 55% of the Dutch think that government is unable to solve the problems in society.



(policy)context: what is needed?

- At the same time there are limitation in financial resources, the working population and what people can do. **Choices have to be made** – these shape future Dutch society.
- Choices are needed with a vision from a comprehensive **wellbeing** (beyond gdp) point of view
- It is essential to give **societal impact of policy a serious role** and adopt a broad policy perspective.
- This means developing policies **across domains and policy silos (departments)**



What is needed?

- Make choices from a wellbeing (beyond gdp) point of view
 - This asks for integral and comprehensive consideration of social, economic and ecological aspects.
 - This asks for additional efforts within the whole range of government.

Policymakers must have sight on all consequences of policies and must be able to make choices based on that information.

Knowledge institutes and research agencies must deliver timely and coherent knowledge to policymakers



What is needed?

- The establishment of minimum standards

what are the lower limits for both people and society at large ? For instance when it comes to financial resources, housing or health

- Clarity about the roles, responsibilities, tasks and expectations.

what can be expected from government, citizens and the private sector?

what can be expected from society and what from people themselves when it comes to secure the minimum standards ?



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Example: Living together in variety

- › Formulating societal goals is supportive for elaborating the ambition of government to strengthen social cohesion.
- › Opportunities for policies can be found at places where people meet like education, work and housing.

Examples:

- › *Revaluation of vocational education*
- › *Combining the social and physical when (re) developing neighborhoods to create spaces to meet*
- › *Combating exclusion and discrimination*



Example: Be able to participate meaningful and full

- › When formulating societal goals, think about the **tension between what is asked of people and what they want themselves**.
- › Provide people with **adequate resources**: not only good education, but also enough money, good health(care), adequate housing and livable neighborhoods.

Examples:

- › *Financiële prikkels én ontwikkelmogelijkheden, autonomie, flexibiliteit en zingeving.*
- › *Steun vanuit de werkgever of een leraar, maar ook de aanwezigheid en toegankelijkheid van ondersteunende voorzieningen op het gebied van mantelzorg en kinderopvang.*
- › *Voorkom structurele uitsluiting op basis van achtergrond.*