

***“Statistics in the Wake of Challenges Posed
by Cultural Diversity in a Globalization Context”***

Cultural participation in the Netherlands

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Introduction

Research into participation in culture, media use and leisure pursuits have a long-standing tradition in the Netherlands. First studies in this area were carried out before the Second World War. In the fifties Statistics Netherlands began with national surveys of leisure activities (CBS 1954-66) which examined cultural visits, the amateur arts, reading habits and media use in detail.

Since the seventies the large-scale surveys have been continued by the Social and Cultural Planning Office (SCP) founded in 1973, one of whose main functions is to conduct scientific research into social and cultural trends.

The SCP's researchers make use of two regular surveys in particular. The Additional Services Survey (ADS) started in 1979, since when it has been repeated every four years. The most recent ADS was conducted in 1999. The ADS involves a representative sample of some 15,000 respondents from the Dutch population. All household members aged 6 and over are interviewed. The ADS provides information on four types of cultural participation:

- a) visits to cultural institutions;
- b) artistic activities;
- c) art collecting;
- d) following arts programmes in the media.

The second survey, the Time Use Survey (TUS) has been conducted every five years since 1975, involving a representative sample of some 2,000 to 3,000 respondents aged 12 and over. The most recent TUS was conducted in 2000. The TUS combines a traditional survey with a diary in which the respondents note what they have done and where they have been in a period of a week. It is particularly useful for research into media use. The main areas are:

- reading (books, newspapers, magazines);
- viewing television, video and DVD;
- listening to the radio and recorded music;
- use of computers and the Internet.

The great strength of both these tools, the ADS and the TUS, lies in their longitudinal nature: they enable us to see developments and trends over the past quarter-century. The results of both surveys have also been used to forecast future development in the field of culture (Van den Broek en De Haan 2000).

It goes without saying that these results have important bearing on Dutch cultural policy as well. Therefore I will first present an overview of the main developments in cultural participation and media use and then discuss the significant policy measures.

Visits to cultural institutions

SCP publications distinguish between traditional culture, i.e. theatre, classical music, ballet, mime, museums and art galleries, and popular culture, i.e. pop music, jazz, musicals, cabaret and cinema. In general terms, visits to cultural institutions have risen slightly since the end of the seventies: in 1979 64% of the Dutch population aged 12 and over paid at

least one visit a year to a performance venue, cinema, museum or art gallery; by 1999 the percentage had risen to 71.

Given the social developments that took place during this period—in particular the much higher educational level of the Dutch population—this growth can only be described as modest. In the seventies about 40 percent of 30-year-olds had received secondary or higher education; by the nineties the percentage had risen to 70 (Knulst 1995, pp. 37-38). As research shows a strong correlation between cultural participation—especially in traditional culture—and level of education we might have expected much sharper growth, but this expectation has not been met. One of the reasons is that the amount of leisure time Dutch people tends to go down, especially in the nineties: it fell by some 5 percent from 1975 to 2000 (Van den Broek 2001, p. 46). The shrinking leisure budget is not only the result of increased pressure of work but other developments as well, such as increasing labour market participation of women or growing amount of time spent on education.

People with secondary and higher education have had less leisure time in the last quarter-century than the average Dutch population.

People now engage in a greater variety of activities in their spare time than in the sixties: not only cultural visits and media use but also sports, voluntary work, leisure clubs, excursions, nightlife and so on. (Knulst 1995, p. 47; Van den Broek 2001, p. 47).

With less leisure time being spent on more activities there is less time for cultural visits. The frequency of visits is declining. Most visitors go to a museum, theatre or concert hall only occasionally i.e. no more than a few times a year.

Table 1: Visits to different types of performances and museums, population aged 12 and over, 1979-99 (in percent and index 1999, 1995 = 100)

	1979	1983	1987	1991	1995	1999	index
% of cultural participants	64	66	65	66	67	71	105
Traditional culture	30	38	41	42	40	40	100
theatre:	22	22	21	22	23	24	107
professional theatre	.	12	12	12	13	13	104
classical music:	12	13	14	15	16	15	90
concerts	.	.	12	13	13	13	97
opera, operetta	.	.	5	5	7	5	78
ballet	3	3	4	4	3	3	97
mime	1	1	1	1	1	1	78
museums	25	31	34	35	31	33	106
art galleries	17	17	19	19	18	17	90
Popular culture	51	50	49	50	53	56	107
pop music, jazz, musicals	13	18	19	23	24	25	106
cabaret	12	11	10	10	11	13	125
cinema	45	45	42	42	44	49	110
film clubs	4	5	6	5	5	5	100

Source: De Haan 2001, p. 105.

As Table 1 shows, visits to forms of traditional culture increased until the start of the nineties, after which they declined slightly. Visits to forms of popular culture, on the other

hand, rose during the decade. This, of course, is not to say that most visitors visit only traditional or popular culture: often the two types are combined.

In general people do not show an interest in traditional culture, e.g. classical music, opera or art, until later life. The age at which people start to be interested in traditional culture has risen over the years: in 1995 the turning point—the age at which a person started visiting traditional forms of culture more than the average—was around 40; four years later it had shifted to 45 (SCR 2000, p. 502).

Visitors only interested in traditional culture make up a mere fraction of the Dutch population. This exclusive interest is also largely confined to older people with secondary and higher education. Conversely, the proportion of the population interested exclusively in popular culture rose from one-fifth in 1983 to a quarter in 1999. Particularly striking is the strong advance of popular culture among young people with secondary and higher education.

The majority of the audience for culture consists of ‘omnivores’ who have both traditional and popular forms of culture on their menu and alternate between them. The breakdown of the menu has changed, however. The most far-reaching changes have taken place among young people with secondary and higher education. The portion of traditional culture, which in 1983 was about the same as that of popular culture, was dramatically reduced by 1999. Older people with the same level of education had more popular forms of culture on their menu in 1999 than in 1983. Traditional forms of culture predominate, however.

Table 2: The content of events visited in 1983 and 1999 among the population aged 16 and over (A) and the population with secondary and higher education (B), by age

	A: entire sample		B: secondary, senior secondary vocational, higher vocational and university			
	16 and over		16-39		40 and over	
	1983	1999	1983	1999	1983	1999
Only traditional culture	6%	4%	2%	1%	9%	5%
Only popular culture	20%	25%	15%	26%	8%	10%
Combinations of popular and traditional culture:						
More traditional than popular culture	21%	17%	23%	9%	44%	36%
Equal shares of traditional and popular culture	19%	15%	17%	10%	22%	19%
More popular than traditional culture	29%	36%	42%	53%	16%	30%
No visits	4%	3%	0%	1%	1%	1%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
n	12342	11540	3054	3357	1496	2347

Source: Van Eijck, De Haan and Knulst 2002.

Although young people have grown up in a situation favourable to cultural participation, this has not resulted in greater interest in traditional culture. Young people now stay longer in school and therefore have more opportunity to acquire the required cultural skills. The price of an admission ticket to a museum, theatre or concert hall plays only a very limited role in deciding whether or not to attend a performance, concert or exhibition. And yet these favourable circumstances do not result in increased interest, not even in the long run, when people get older and have passed beyond the childhood and young adulthood phase of life.

Active cultural participation

Almost forty percent of the Dutch population aged 6 and over—just under six million people—pursue artistic hobbies in their leisure time (De Haan, Van den Broek and Breedveld 2001, p. 136). The number of amateur artists has hardly changed since the seventies (see also Van Beek and Knulst 1991, and De Haan and Knulst 1998).

Among the various artistic activities there have been some changes over the years, however. The popularity of textile work, photography, filming and video has clearly declined since the start of the nineties. The classic art forms in the performing arts and visual arts, on the other hand, have remained almost equally popular. In the case of textile work the decline could be related to increased prosperity, which may have reduced the desire to decorate one's home with homemade wall hangings or carpets. It could also be that the rise of new interactive media, in particular the Internet, has made the older audio-visual equipment—cameras, film cameras and video cameras—less attractive. The last round of the ADS in 1999, however, did not ask about hobbies that make use of computers or the Internet, e.g. Web design or computer-aided design.

Table 3: Participation in various amateur arts, people aged 6 and over, 1991 and 1999

	Participants (% of population)			Those who take lessons (% of practitioners)			Those who belong to a club (% of practitioners)		
	1991	1995	1999	1991	1995	1999	1991	1995	1999
Drawing, painting, graphics	20	17	19	18	18	17	7	6	5
Sculpture, clay modelling, pottery, jewellery-making	6	5	6	22	24	19	10	8	4
Textile work, making wall hangings, weaving	14	8	9	18	18	14	8	7	4
Singing	17	13	17	28	29	23	29	27	23
Playing a musical instrument	16	13	15	38	37	32	20	22	19
Theatre, mime, folk dancing, ballet (including jazz and beat ballet)	7	5	7	65	59	45	56	45	35
Photography, filming, video (other than holiday or family snapshots/films)	13	7	9	6	9	8	3	4	5

Source: De Haan, Van den Broek and Breedveld 2001, p. 134.

It goes without saying that not all amateurs take an equally serious, in-depth approach to their hobbies. Taking lessons and club membership are good indications of the concentration and time devoted to the particular art form. There is a downward trend in both percentages of serious practitioners, those who take lessons and those who belong to a club. Although amateurs are nowadays more inclined to pursue their hobbies in an informal setting, e.g. playing music with a group of friends rather than in a music club, (De Haan 2000), the decline in membership and lessons indicates that the intensity of amateur artistic activities is suffering from increasing pressure of time. This is also true, for that matter, of receptive cultural participation. As already pointed out, mainly occasional visitors populate Dutch theatres, concert halls and museums.

The vast majority of amateurs have traditionally been children and youngsters of school age. Although this age group still makes up the bulk of practitioners, the differences between the various age groups have gradually become smaller due to increasing participation of the elderly: 'the artistic citizen is getting older' (De Haan and Knulst 1998).

Social status, measured by level of education and household income, plays less of a role in the amateur arts than in visits to cultural institutions. While it is true that more people from the higher social strata have artistic hobbies, the differences are smaller. Women (44%), however, are considerably more active than men (34%).

Besides amateur cultural activities we can regard voluntary work in the area of cultural heritage as a form of active cultural participation. This work is by no means as widespread as the amateur arts. Only a few percent of the Dutch population work for museums, heritage sites or archives in their spare time. The majority of the volunteers are well-educated older people (De Haan 1997).

The media

Art and culture through the media

Thanks to the electronic media it is now possible to reach a much larger audience than just visitors to cultural facilities, and the new media have made types of participation possible that did not exist before. Radio, television, audio and video cassettes, compact discs, personal computers, cable and the Internet enable practically everyone in the country to enjoy music, films or drama, writers' discussions and artistic debates without leaving their homes.

Cultural programmes on radio and television are thus heard and seen by far more people than theatre and concert hall performances and museum exhibitions. More than half the population aged 12 and over listened to classical music on CD, television or radio in 1999, for instance, whereas only 15% of the population attended concerts of classical music, operas and operettas. The broadcasting and music industries have succeeded in attracting not only a larger audience but also one that has a broader social span than the performance venues have ever achieved.

Table 4: Art and culture experienced through the electronic media, people aged 12 and over (in percent), 1995-99

	Total percentage of participants		Frequent participants (at least four times a year)		Occasional participants (less than four times a year)	
	1995	1999	1995	1999	1995	1999
Arts programmes on radio or TV	41	35	32	27	10	8
Classical music on radio or TV	32	29	21	20	11	9
Classical music on LP or CD	49	47	35	33	14	14
Cinema films on TV or	77	75	58	55	19	20
Pre-recorded videos	53	62	26	34	27	28

Source: SCR 2000, p. 500.

Interest in traditional forms of culture in the electronic media declined somewhat from 1995 to 1999, owing mainly to decreasing interest among young people. Older people, on the other hand, particularly pensioners, showed more interest in arts programmes and broadcasts and recordings of classical music. Although the quantity of films on television has increased sharply, mainly owing to broadcasts by commercial channels, this has not resulted in more interest. Evidently the market for films on television has been saturated.

Media use

Unlike in the case of the performing arts, when it comes to media use there is not much point in finding out whether people ever watch television, listen to the radio or read newspapers and books: virtually everyone does so during the course of the year. Far more worthwhile is researching the amounts of time people devote to the various media. As already noted, the Dutch TUS keeps track of this time during one week in October. The week in October was selected at the start of the TUS in 1975 because it is an ordinary week with no public holidays or special events. During the week respondents keep a pre-coded diary in which they record a number of activities 24 hours a day in quarter-hour periods.

That most time within the media time budget is devoted to television is not surprising. Television is the predominant medium in Holland as it is in the rest of the industrialised world. What is remarkable is that the amount of time spent watching television has risen only slightly since 1985. Before then Dutch people had only two public channels to watch in their own language (some of them also had a Flemish channel). In the late eighties and the nineties the number of channels increased considerably, mainly thanks to commercial channels. Nowadays there are more than ten Dutch language channels to choose from. The less educated generally watch more television than the better educated, but the differences between the two categories became smaller in the last quarter of the 20th century. Young people spend more time watching commercial channels than public channels. The reverse is true of older people, in particular the over-50s. As is the case throughout the world, the programming of the Dutch commercial channels consists mainly of entertainment, series and films. The public channels, on the other hand, are obliged to observe certain programming rules and devote a lot of their broadcasting time to news, information and culture.

Most people listen to the radio in their cars or while engaged in other activities, particularly domestic. They listen mainly to news and classical or popular music. Listening times have declined continuously since 1975. The biggest decrease was among young people. This may be due to the growing use of the Internet, which provides facilities for downloading and playing music (Huysmans and De Haan 2001, p. 81).

Table 5: Media use: watching television (inc. video, and cable news), listening to the radio (inc. audio), reading, computer use (inc. Internet) as a main activity, population aged 12 and over, 1975-2000 (in percent, hours per week and index 2000, 1995 = 100)

	1975	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	index
Media use (hours per week)	18.5	17.8	19.0	18.8	18.8	18.7	100
watching television	10.2	10.3	12.1	12.0	12.4	12.4	100
listening to the radio	2.2	1.8	1.4	1.2	0.8	0.7	79
reading printed media	6.1	5.7	5.3	5.1	4.6	3.9	86
computer and Internet			0.1	0.5	0.9	1.8	186
Media use: participation (%)	99	100	100	100	99	99	100
watching television	94	96	98	97	96	97	101
listening to the radio	68	60	52	50	41	36	89
reading printed media	96	95	94	91	89	84	94
computer and Internet			4	13	23	45	193
Media use by participants (hours per week)	18.6	17.9	19.0	18.9	18.9	18.8	100
watching television	10.9	10.8	12.4	12.4	12.9	12.7	99
listening to the radio	3.2	3.0	2.7	2.4	2.1	1.8	89
reading printed media	6.4	6.0	5.7	5.6	5.2	4.7	91
computer and Internet			3.5	3.7	4.0	3.9	97

Source: Huysmans and De Haan 2001, p. 77.

Since the first survey in 1975 the amount of time spent on reading has declined. (This is of course concern print media only, as the use of a television or a computer screen also involves a lot of reading.) The biggest decrease has been in book-reading: whereas the Dutch population read books for 1.6 hours a week on average in 1975, by 2000 the figure had almost halved, to 0.9 hours a week. The decline in book reading was first seen among young people, but since 1995 the time older people—aged 35 and over—spend reading books has also declined. Prior research has established that watching television goes partly at the expense of book and newspaper reading (Knulst and Kraaykamp 1996, p. 203). Watching time has not increased over the last five years, however, so it may be that it is “no longer the television but the personal computer connected to the Internet that is eating away at the time spent reading books, newspapers and magazines” (Huysmans and De Haan 2001, p. 87).

The use of personal computers and in particular the Internet has grown exponentially in recent years. In 2001 54 percent of the Dutch population surfed the Web, thus taking third place in the European Union after the Swedes and the Danes (Europeans' 2002, p. 4). Young people aged 12-19 are ahead in the use of PCs and the Internet. From 1995 to 2000 the proportion of the Dutch population using computers and the Internet in their spare time

almost doubled, from 23% to 45%. Given that the total time spent on the media remained constant during that period—19 hours a week—, this has been at the expense of viewing television and reading (Huysmans and De Haan 2001, p. 90). Although there is again a positive link between PC and Internet use and level of education, the differences between the less-educated and the better-educated are smaller than in the case of visits to cultural facilities: they are about as large as those pertaining to amateur artistic activities.

Some cultural pessimists are afraid that people use new media at the expense of social contacts and participation in civil society. They think that computer and Internet users prefer a virtual to actual contact with other people. This anxiety is not backed up by research. Frequent Internet use does not take place at the expense of face-to-face contacts; indeed, it would appear to strengthen social contacts and informal aid to friends and neighbours. Also, the Internet—in the form of e-mail, chat groups and so on—is often used for voluntary work (De Haan, Huysmans and De Hart 2002, p. 87).

Diverging preferences of young and older people

All the research into cultural participation shows a clear correlation between cultural interests—especially interest in traditional culture—and education. All other things remaining equal, the better-educated show more interest than the less well educated. This applies to young and older people alike. Periodic surveys such as the ADS and TUS enable a comparison of different cohorts. We can, for instance, compare cultural participation by people who were young, adult or elderly in the seventies with that by their contemporaries at the start of the 21st century. As we have already seen, the difference between young people and older people has grown constantly over the last 25 years.

A lot of research, mainly conducted by sociologists employed now or formerly by the Social and Cultural Planning Office, has been done in the Netherlands into the increasing differences in cultural participation by young people and older people (Knulst 1989; Knulst and Kraaykamp 1996; De Haan 1997; De Haan and Knulst 1998; SCR 1998; De Haan and Knulst 2000). To explain the divergence Jos de Haan and Wim Knulst elaborated and tested two theories in the last-mentioned study.

“The first theory examined seeks the causes in particular characteristics of young people and young adults. According to this phase-of-life hypothesis, life between the ages of roughly 20 and 40 gets in the way of participating in time-intensive leisure activities in particular because of the demanding combination of work and family responsibilities. In the phase of life after 45 the pressure of time gradually decreases.”

“The second possible explanation, the socialisation hypothesis, seeks the causes in a change in the child-rearing climate and child-rearing ideals, the effects of which act through the new birth cohorts. This is based on the supposition that the generations who grew up in the sixties and later are ‘programmed’ differently from previous generations, and this ‘programming’ inhibits the younger generations from developing the skills required for traditional culture” (De Haan and Knulst 2000, p. 200).

The socialisation hypothesis turned out to provide the best explanation for the growing divergence in cultural interest. There is less interest in traditional culture among cohorts born after 1960 than in the generation born before 1960. This applies not only to the arts

and cultural heritage—e.g. museums and historic buildings—but also to media use. Young people spend less of their spare time reading and prefer the commercial television channels to the public channels. This process takes place gradually, in the sense that each younger cohort takes less interest in traditional culture than its predecessors do. This trend is best explained by the socialisation hypothesis, which assumes that “people during the subsequent course of their lives remain faithful to the forms of culture and media they mastered during their youth (the socialisation phase) and then woven into their lifestyles. Receptivity to new forms of culture or media is greatest in each new generation, which does not have to set aside previously acquired cultural habits for them and which eagerly latches onto new forms of consumption which distinguish it from the older generation” (De Haan and Knulst 2000, p. 232).

This process is not confined to the cultural domain. In other areas too —e.g. fashion—innovation takes place on a cohort basis, starting at the bottom of the age pyramid.

The first cohort that shows less interest in traditional culture is the one born around 1960. This is not a coincidence. In the second half of the sixties and the early seventies there was a “cultural revolution” in Dutch society, as there was throughout the industrialised world. This had far-reaching consequences for the child-rearing climate. Parents made less and less use of do’s and don’ts bringing up their children; instead they negotiated with them, with the result that children gained a considerable say in their own upbringing. Under this permissive regime the cultural canon and the associated *Bildungsideal*, the ideal of cultivated man, have lost much of their significance. It was no longer taken for granted, even among the well-to-do, that children would read ‘good’ children’s books, take music lessons or go to the theatre and classical music concerts with their parents. Many critical movements of the era were suspicious of artistic traditions and conventions, which were seen as weapons of the Establishment.

The cultural hierarchy that had previously been unquestioned was further weakened by the rise of ‘youth culture’. The world-wide success of pop groups like the Beatles and the Rolling Stones encouraged young people to find their own way, also in the cultural domain, and to set less and less store by their parents’ aesthetic ideals.

Another important factor was the democratisation of secondary and higher education. Before 1960 secondary school pupils and university students in the Netherlands came mainly from the higher social strata. In the sixties children from the lower and middle classes started moving on to secondary and higher education in large numbers. Due to their background these pupils and students were not usually as familiar with the traditional cultural canon as their predecessors in earlier decades. At the same time radical reforms took place, first in secondary and then in higher education. These—in particular the 1968 Secondary Education Act—changed the system of secondary education and added a large number of new types of schools and courses. In most of these courses, culture education was replaced with a broader set of social studies to provide pupils with the skills considered necessary for the world of work and life in the community. From the end of the sixties to the start of the 21st century only the grammar schools (*Gymnasium* in Dutch) devoted a substantial part of their curriculum to culture with the result that most children who were not initiated into traditional culture in the family had little if any opportunity to explore it at school.

Cultural participation by ethnic minorities

Since its genesis as a sovereign nation in the 16th century the Netherlands always attracted immigrants. People who were persecuted in their own countries on account of their religion, persuasion or ideas sought refuge in the tolerant climate of the Dutch Republic; indeed, the economic and cultural flowering that the country experienced in the 17th century—the Golden Age—was due to a large extent to Flemish refugees, French Huguenots and Spanish and Portuguese Jews.

Until the 1960s the immigrants were mainly people who had been brought up in the Judaeo-Christian tradition, so the difference between the culture in their country of origin and Dutch culture was fairly small. This was also true of the wave of immigrants who came to the country after 1948, when Indonesia became independent. This pattern began to change with the arrival of 'guest workers' in the sixties. These were mainly Muslims and moreover from underdeveloped areas such as Anatolia in Turkey and the Riff mountains of Morocco. They had little if any knowledge of Western culture. Nowadays some 10% of the Dutch population—just under one-and-a-half million people—are non-western immigrants. Turks, Moroccans, Surinamese, and Antilleans make up the biggest groups. On top of this, asylum-seekers have been coming to the Netherlands from all over the world since the eighties. Their numbers are growing rapidly, from 21,000 a year in 1990 reaching a peak of 44,000 in 2000. Most immigrants settle in the big cities in the west of the country. The majority of schoolchildren in cities such as Amsterdam, Rotterdam, The Hague and Utrecht are now, or soon will be, members of ethnic minorities (Statistisch 2002; Allochtonen 1995; Tesser et. al. 1995-2001).

It goes without saying that major efforts are needed to assimilate immigrants into Dutch society. As traditional and popular forms of culture are an important aspect of social life in the Netherlands, familiarity with Western culture is conducive to the social functioning of immigrants.

The ADS shows that ethnic minorities are underrepresented among visitors of cultural institutions: this is particularly true of Turks and Moroccans, to a lesser extent of immigrants from the former Dutch colony of Surinam and the Netherlands Antilles which are still a part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands (De Haan and Knulst 2000, p. 43). This situation is due mainly to their inadequate command of Dutch and low level of education. If we take educational level into account, the difference disappears: better-educated immigrants do not visit performance venues or museums any less than their native Dutch contemporaries. For this reason alone it is gratifying to note that the educational level of immigrants is rising: far more second and third-generation youngsters—those who were born or have grown up in the Netherlands—are in secondary and higher education than their parents or grandparents (Tesser and Iedema 2001).

When it comes to amateur artistic activities the differences are smaller: whereas 40% of the native Dutch population are active participants, the percentage among immigrants is 36 (De Haan, Van den Broek and Breedveld 2001, p. 136).

Increasing interest in Western culture does not go at the expense of interest in the culture of the country of origin: even better educated immigrants retain this interest (Campbell, Reinsch and Driessen 1994; Rijpma and Roques 2000). Their 'exotic' cultures are manifested particularly in the large number of events and festivals that have been staged in

virtually all the larger towns and cities in the Netherlands since the end of the eighties. These are attended not only by immigrants but also by the native Dutch population, thus enriching the country's cultural life.

International comparison

Like the Netherlands, most Member States of the European Union conduct research into cultural participation, but the design, methods and periodicity of the surveys and the questions they ask differ considerably. The Task Force is therefore making attempts, under the auspices of Eurostat, to harmonise research into cultural participation, in particular on Participation in Cultural Activities (Report 2001). It was the Task Force that devised the questionnaire for the Eurobarometer survey into cultural participation conducted in autumn 2001 in all fifteen Member States. The Eurobarometer involved a limited sample of approx. 1,000 respondents in each country. To date only an Executive Summary has been published (Europeans' 2002) with tables on a country-by-country basis (Eurobarometer 2002). The tables show that the Dutch are ahead in the use of personal computers and the Internet. In other areas, e.g. visits to the performing arts and museums, reading of books, newspapers and magazines and amateur artistic activities the Netherlands rank somewhere in the middle.

On some points the findings of the Eurobarometer differ substantially from those of the national surveys. The influence of various background variables such as education level, age and gender has not been analysed yet. Eurostat therefore plans to carry out a more detailed analysis of the Eurobarometer.

Andries van den Broek and Jos de Haan have already done an analysis of this kind based on national surveys in nine European countries. In all the countries studied there is a correspondence between level of education and cultural participation. The less educated show less interest in both the traditional forms of culture and the form of popular culture par excellence, pop concerts. This inequality in cultural interest seems to be a universal law (SCR 2000, p. 543). The question, then, is whether cultural policy as such can do much to change the inequality. Educational policy—encouraging as many young people as possible to go on to secondary and higher education—is much more effective in this regard.

On the other hand, the waning interest of young people in traditional culture seems to be confined mainly to the Netherlands. This is remarkable because the developments affecting this have taken place not only here but also in all the industrialised countries, cf. the rebellious sixties and the rise of youth culture and lifestyle. It may be that upbringing and/or education in other European countries provides a stronger counterbalance to these socio-cultural developments than they do in Holland.

It is also possible, however, that the differences found are due to the design of the national surveys and the questions they asked. Analysis of the Eurobarometer findings could provide an initial indication of this, but only an initial indication, as the sample was too small to enable the differences to be analysed in depth. Eurostat has plans to include questions on cultural participation in a large-scale Adult Education Survey that is to be launched within the next few years. Not until we have the results of this will we have a clear picture of the trends in cultural participation by young people—as well as adults and the elderly, of course—in various European countries.

Table 6: Cultural participation, percentages of the 15-75 age bracket that visited a museum, theatre, classical or pop concert in the past 12 months, with differentiation for young people and the less-educated(a) and, where possible, deviation from the national average in 9 European countries, in the 1990s

	Classical concert			Pop concert		
	all	young	less educated	all	young	less educated
Netherlands (1995)	16	-8	-7	25	+13	-13
Other Western Europe						
Belgium ^b (1998)	31	+15	-17	27	+32	-8
France (1997)	9	-3	-4	16	.	.
Great-Britain ^c (1991)	13	-6	-4	18	+28	-3
Northern Europe						
Denmark (1993)	16
Finland (1991)	11	-1	-8	12	+25	-4
Southern Europe						
Italy (1995)	10	0	-5	19	+20	-7
Spain ^d (1990)	7	+1	4	10	+7	-3
Average for all countries	14	0	-7	18	+21	-6

	Museum attendance			Theatre performance		
	all	young	less-educated	all	young	less-educated
Netherlands (1995)	31	-5	-14	27	-2	-12
Other Western Europe						
Belgium ^b (1998)	48	+2	-15	49	+1	-17
France (1997)	32	+7	-8	15	+8	-5
Great-Britain ^c (1991)	32	0	-7	39	-4	-8
Northern Europe						
Denmark (1993)	55	.	.	26	.	.
Finland ^e (1991)	43	+6	-9	38	-2	-8
Southern Europe						
Italy (1995)	29	+6	-11	18	+2	-10
Spain ^d (1990)	28	+13	.	14	+4	-8
Average for all countries	37	+4	-11	28	+1	-10

- a. Young people 15-24 age bracket, less-educated: bottom tertile;
- b. Flanders only, population 16-75;
- c. Great Britain instead of United Kingdom: question was not "did you visit in the past 12 months" but "do you visit occasionally at the moment";
- d. Art museum not included;
- e. Population of 18 and over.

Source: SCP 2000, supplemented with data from Cultural Statistics in the EU (2000). Les pratiques culturelles des Français (1997) and Arts Council of Great Britain (1991).

Cultural participation and policy

Before discussing policy measures aimed at enhancing cultural participation, a short outline of the system of cultural policy in the Netherlands is probably useful for the reader.

Central, local and provincial government in the Netherlands together spend about 2 billion euros a year on culture. The municipalities account for 58% of this and central government (the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science) 32%. The remaining 10% are provided by the provinces (Cultuurbeleid 2002).

Although the Ministry is not the principal source of funding for culture, it is the Ministry—or to be more precise the State Secretary for Education, Culture and Science—that mainly decides cultural policy in the Netherlands. This is because the Ministry subsidises the main national troupes, museums and other cultural institutions. All subsidies are awarded for a four-year period. They are allocated on the basis of a four-year plan known as the Cultural Policy Document. The drafting of each new Cultural Policy Document starts with the publication of a Discussion Paper setting out the principles of cultural policy for the next four years. The State Secretary submits the Paper to Parliament and the main advisory body, the Council for Culture. After the Council has made recommendations on the Paper and it has been debated in Parliament, and if necessary amended, all cultural institutions in the Netherlands have the opportunity to submit subsidy applications for the next Cultural Policy Document period. Professional experts selected by the Council for Culture appraise these. Quality is the main criterion. As it is inconceivable under the Dutch system that a politician and his or her civil servants should judge the content and quality of art or culture, the Council's opinion is the decisive factor. The State Secretary must have compelling reasons if he or she wishes to set a recommendation concerning an orchestra, a theatre company or a museum aside. The process results in the publication of the Cultural Policy Document, which sets out the allocation of subsidies for the next four years. The Document must also be debated and approved by Parliament, of course.

The main aims of cultural policy have remained practically unchanged over the years. Government policy is to enhance the quality and variety of culture available and to encourage cultural participation by the Dutch population.

The first two goals are much easier to achieve than the third one: if the government subsidises a wide range of outstanding cultural activities it helps to enhance the quality and diversity of culture in the Netherlands.

Subsidies, however, have only an indirect effect on cultural participation by making admission tickets cheaper. About 85% of the expenses of theatre companies and 70% of the expenses of art museums are covered by subsidies (Principles 1999, pp. 73-74).

Apart from this generic measure we can broadly identify three types of policy on participation: policy on particular target groups, cultural education and the Cultural Outreach Action Plan.

Policy on target groups is aimed mainly at young people and ethnic minorities. In addition to the Cultureel Jongeren Paspoort, a discount card which entitles young people to substantial reductions on the price of theatre and concert tickets, since 2001 all secondary school pupils in the country have been issued with culture vouchers to the value of €23 enabling them to attend performing arts events free of charge. Most Dutch museums provide admission to young people under the age of 18 free of charge.

Different initiatives are being taken to encourage cultural participation by ethnic minorities. These include policy measures aimed at supporting artists from these minorities, fostering co-operation between Dutch and immigrant artists and promoting good practices. All subsidised institutions are encouraged to make more allowance for the cultural diversity of the Dutch population in their programming and PR, so as to extend their reach among the 'new' Dutch. The Netherlands Museum Association has developed Intercultural Museum Programmes, which have introduced more colours into the presentations and public of the Dutch museums. When new members are appointed to the boards of cultural institutions there is positive discrimination in favour of candidates from ethnic minorities. This, then, is another way of trying to achieve greater diversity.

As already noted, culture and art remained on the margins of Dutch education until the nineties. This unsatisfactory situation has now been substantially improved in both primary and secondary schools, both of which now devote quite a lot of attention to art and culture, working together with cultural institutions such as theatre companies, orchestras and museums. The vast majority of these institutions has partnerships with schools in their town or region and has developed special educational programmes. A new subject, Cultural and Arts Studies, has been introduced in secondary schools. This does not only consist of lessons about the arts and culture: pupils are required to visit at least ten cultural events (performances, concerts and exhibitions). Research shows that this subject has a positive effect on pupils' interest in traditional culture. This also applies to pupils from ethnic minorities, who show at least as much interest in this culture as their native Dutch classmates (Ganzeboom and Haanstra 2001, 2002).

An important feature of the current Cultural Policy Document, Culture as Confrontation, is the Cultural Outreach Action Plan, the aim of which is to involve more people in culture, especially new audiences such as immigrants and the young. The term 'culture' is taken in the broad sense here, covering not only traditional culture such as the performing arts and museums but also popular culture such as pop music. The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, the provinces and the municipalities have reached agreements and instituted programmes for the 2001-04 period, which the Ministry is to fund to the tune of 31 million euros a year. The municipalities and provinces are contributing just fewer than 14 million euros a year. It goes without saying that the culture covered by the plan is not confined to traditional cultural venues such as theatres and concert halls; on the contrary, performances and other events are to take place in less 'posh' places such as community centres, cafes and the open air. Targeted publicity campaigns will attempt to interest new audiences in the programmes. To find out what effect the Action Plan is having, the Ministry has initiated a detailed survey in collaboration with the Association of Netherlands Municipalities and the Interprovincial Consultative Council.

Towards a democracy of culture

Our present-day attitude to the arts derives to a large extent from 19th-century notions, in particular those of Romanticism, in which the artist is seen as a genius, elevated above ordinary mortals. Artists' creations are of a quasi-sacramental nature, which is why the public is expected to show due reverence towards them, e.g. when attending a concert or play or visiting a museum. It is important to point out that this attitude to the arts did not become commonplace until the 19th century. The present-day rules of conduct in a concert hall—wearing appropriate dress, refraining from eating, drinking and smoking, not

applauding until the piece has finished—did not come into force until then (Smithuysen 2001). Before that time people had a much more informal and relaxed attitude to the arts.

Trends in cultural participation, at least insofar as we can identify them from research in the Netherlands, indicate that this solemn attitude is changing. Visits to the arts and other forms of traditional culture are increasingly losing their exceptional, festive nature and are more often taking place in combination or alternation with other leisure pursuits and out-of-house entertainment. Even frequent visitors who confined themselves mainly to traditional culture in the sixties and seventies started playing more sport, watching television more often or visiting amusement parks at the end of the 20th century. Conversely, people who spend most of their leisure time on non-cultural pursuits are occasionally going to a performance venue or museum (Van den Broek, Knulst and Breedveld 1999, pp. 34-35). The visiting conventions are beginning to wear off: by no means everyone, at least in Holland, goes to a performance or concert in his or her Sunday best: Dutch theatres and concert halls are populated mainly by people in jeans and other leisure wear.

Not only the performing arts but also other art forms are increasingly making up an integral part of daily life, one that is almost taken for granted. At one time it was only the nobility, the wealthy bourgeoisie and the churches that could afford an architect. Nowadays architects shape our towns and villages—from centres to suburbs. Artists have designed virtually all the objects we use in our daily lives. They have a major influence on – for instance – broadcasting, advertising, food packaging, or the interior design of shops, offices and other public areas.

The pedestal upon which Romanticism placed art and culture, then, is crumbling, but this certainly does not mean that art and culture have lost their influence. On the contrary, in present-day life they have become much more important, substantially determining the quality of life.

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