FAMILY VALUES IN NETHERLAND

Compiled by: Nenni Kurniawati
Map
About Netherland

- The largest town, Amsterdam, exceeds 740,000 inhabitants (in 2005)
- A concentration of inhabitants in the triangle formed by UTRECHT-AMSTERDAM-ROTTERDAM
- **Location:** Western Europe, bordering Belgium 450 km, Germany 577 km

- **Capital:** Amsterdam
- **Population:** 16,318,199 (July 2004 est.)

- **Ethnic Make-up:** Dutch 83%, other 17% (of which 9% are non-Western origin mainly Turks, Moroccans, Antilleans, Surinamese and Indonesians) (1999 est.)
About the Netherlands

- **Religions:** Roman Catholic 31%, Protestant 21%, Muslim 4.4%, other 3.6%, unaffiliated 40%
- **Language:** Dutch, the official language (spoken by around 90% of the population)
- Around 350,000 people, or 2.2% of the population, speak Frisian as their first language, mainly in the northern province of Friesland, where it is recognised as an official language.
- **Turkish** and **Arabic** are also spoken in the Netherlands, each by over 0.6% of the population.
Buildings
PROVINCE INHABITANTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>Inhabitants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Groningen</td>
<td>574,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friesland</td>
<td>642,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drenthe</td>
<td>482,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overijssel</td>
<td>1,105,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flevoland</td>
<td>360,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gelderland</td>
<td>1,967,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utrecht</td>
<td>1,162,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Holland</td>
<td>2,587,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Holland</td>
<td>3,451,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zeeland</td>
<td>379,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Brabant</td>
<td>2,406,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limburg</td>
<td>1,139,335</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

(Inhabitants per province as of December 2004)
Family Structure

- a married couple with children
- Family: 1. Gezin (nuclear family)
  - 2. Familie (extended family: including all those related to one another biologically and legally (e.g. by marriage)
- The children are raised in safe surroundings
- Parents provided everything children need in the course of becoming an adult
Relationship

- the members of a “gezin” have a looser relationship with the rest of the “familie” compared to most of the other European societies.
- Ties loosen further and faster than in other European societies, especially when a member get married
- the “gezin” has economically been a very independent group
Family’s characteristic

- Problems are discussed and solved together and a home is provided for all by all
- Children are raised exclusively by the parents; other members of the family are not involved
- The Dutch see the family as the foundation of the social structure
- Families tend to be small, often with only one or two children
- Relatively few women work outside the house full-time as compared to many other cultures. The Dutch consider their pet a full member of the “gezin” rather than an animal “just for fun”
- As the society can be characterized as individualistic, many prefer to run a one-person household. The number of children per couple is low.
Celebration

- The most important day: birthday.
- The most valuable presents of the year are received on this occasion, and it is a common custom to invite family and friends to a party.
- Other celebration: graduation, weddings, wedding anniversaries, anniversaries at work.
- The cycle of anniversaries in the Netherlands is 12½ (copper), 25 (silver), 50 (golden) and 60 (diamond).
Daily Routine

- Economic activities: 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. (Monday- Friday)
- A school day: generally ends at 3:00 p.m.
- Dinner: between 5:00 p.m. and 7:30 p.m.
- The evening is spent on a combination of resting, sports and fulfilling obligations for school or work.
- The role of the computer (Internet) and television are quite important.
- The number of families with an Internet connection and the number of television sets per family are among the highest in the world.
- The Netherlands are asleep between 12 midnight and 7:00 a.m.
- Visiting friends or relatives, shopping, sporting, resting and spending time on hobbies are the common things to do.
Children

- Children considered to be “the centre of all activities”
- Child-rearing is a major activity
- Many parents also want their children to be active in sports
- In most families, both parents have a job
- Small children spend several days a week in a day nursery (kinderopvang)
Children

- The government pays a general child allowance to parents which is not income-based
- Allowance ends at when the child reaches the age of 18
Education System

- Children must attend school from their 5th birthday until the end of the year of their 16th birthday.

Obtaining a diploma
- If a child reaches the age of 16 and has not obtained a diploma, they must train for a qualification (kwalificatieplicht).

Truant officers
- The municipality (gemeente) employs school attendance officers (leerplichtambtenaren) to check whether children are going to school.
Exemptions

* Only in exceptional situations can a child be temporarily exempted from compulsory education, e.g. if your profession makes it impossible for you to be free during the school holidays.

* Under other special circumstances, a child may also obtain leave-of-absence from their compulsory education. This is for a maximum of ten days.
Compulsory attendance

* If parents consciously allow their children to miss school, they can be prosecuted. Parents and young people over the age of twelve can be fined, receive a study order (*leerstraf*), or, in extreme circumstances, be jailed. In the case of ‘luxury absence’ (*luxeverzuim*) (extra holiday during school time without permission) there is a very good chance of an official report being made.
Ways of Thinking

- the Netherlands has always had a very open society with a strong focus on international economics
- The set of standards and values is based on the Ten Commandments from the Bible
- The economic circumstances throughout the recent decades and even centuries and the political developments influence the national character as well
- “GOING DUTCH” is an internationally famous expression
Ways of Thinking

- Pragmatism when it comes to economics is a national trademark
- There is a general kind of sense that “everyone should have the same”
- Dutch dislike displays of wealth, as they run counter to their egalitarian beliefs:
  “as soon as you rise above ground level, your head is chopped off”
- Dutch do not boast about their accomplishments or their material possessions
- The differences between classes are not expressed explicitly by showing off material possessions
Ways of Thinking

- In general, the business attitude is very proper; promises made are kept, deadlines met and problems solved in a no-nonsense way.
- Economic benefit drives Dutch businesses.
Personal Relationship

- personal relations as a basis for partnership are less important than in many other cultures
- Personal quarrels are solved as easily as they are started
- Revenge is not a Dutch characteristic; “forgive and forget” is the norm
Social Relations

- In general, the Dutch have many friends. They make friends with their neighbours, colleagues and people they meet through sports activities.
- A bunch of flowers or a box of chocolates is customary.
- The Dutch do drink a lot of coffee; 6 or more cups for an adult a day is no exception, and regard this as a resting point.
Etiquette

- In the Dutch language, there are two forms of the word “you”:
  - “jij” for friends and close acquaintances, or children, and
  - “u” for strangers or people not close to one, and for children towards adults (or toward people in authority).
Polite Gestures

- Dutch people live by the clock; appointments are honoured on time. Being late: impoliteness or lack of interest, an insult.
- The ceremonies of greeting include verbal salutations, shaking hands and/or three (!!!)
- The handshake is the common form of greeting. (firm and swift, accompanied by a smile, and repetition of your name.)
- Shake hands with everyone individually including children.
- Very close friends may greet each other by air kissing near the cheek three times, starting with the left cheek.
- Most Dutch only use first names with family and close friends.
- Wait until invited before moving to a first-name basis.
- Men do not kiss each other; neither do business partners.