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## REPRESENTATION OF MEN AND WOMEN IN POLITICAL AND SOCIAL DECISION-MAKING IN THE NETHERLANDS

Paper submitted by the Netherlands<sup>1</sup>

### 1 Introduction

Enlarging the share of women in political life and public administration was already an important point of consideration in the first policy document on emancipation policy, *Emancipatie, proces van verandering en groei (Emancipation: process of change and growth)* (TK 1976/1977). And although the approach was to change over the years, it remains one of the main aspects of equal rights policy. Since 1992 the Government has set target figures for the share of women in important positions in politics and public administration. Encouragement is also given for increasing the share of women in other decision-making positions. These are referred to by the term "social decision-making".

From this year on, the Social and Cultural Planning Office and Statistics Netherlands will publish every other year an *Emancipation Monitor*. The representation of men and women in political and social decision-making is one of the themes that will be covered. There has been a lengthy tradition of monitoring in the representation of women in political life and public administration. The selection of positions for consideration in the Emancipation Monitor links up with earlier publications on this subject.

To date, however, there has been no periodic and systematic monitoring of the position of women in social decision-making. The positions to be included in the monitor are therefore first delimited. The following categories will be examined. *In the first place* consideration will be given to the highest executive officers in a company or institution - the Board of Management or Executive Board. *Secondly*, consideration is given to the members of bodies exercising supervision over the company or institution. This body goes under various names in the sectors that were examined. In the Dutch private sector it is generally known as the Supervisory Board (Raad van Commissarissen). That also applies in a part of the non-profit sector, but here too we find such terms as the Board of Supervision or Advisory Council.

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Membership of a Board of Management may be distinguished from that of a Supervisory Board as the former is a salaried position (the incumbent is in fact an employee) while the second concerns subsidiary positions (the individual is not employed by the company or institution). A *third category* of top-level positions examined concerns the three layers directly below the Board of Management. Here the nomenclature varies so widely that the terms 1st, 2nd and 3rd echelon below the Board of Management have been used.

This paper is arranged as follows. To begin with, it is examined to what extent the increased labour force participation of women is reflected in an increase in the proportion of women in senior positions. It is examined to what extent there are differences in the labour market in the thickness of the “glass ceiling” - a metaphor for the many invisible obstacles that prevent women from moving on to influential positions in greater numbers. The paper goes on to consider the various social sectors: the private sector, civil society and, finally, politics and public administration. Public attitudes towards women and decision-making are examined at the end of the paper, which ends with some concluding observations.

Although it is the intention in the *Emancipation Monitor* to draw a distinction wherever possible between various categories of women, this has not been done in this part of the monitor. There are various reasons for this. In the first place the number of individuals in senior positions is small, thus preventing any further breakdown. Secondly, some of the available sources lack further background particulars. Identifying these would require supplementary research, but there would then be a major risk of running into privacy objections.

## **2 The glass ceiling**

Although the proportion of women in the active labour force rose from 37% in 1994 to 39% in 1999, the share of women in the higher and scientific professions rose even more markedly, from 33% to 37%. Given such an increase in the female potential it might be expected that women would also have become more visible at management level. The underrepresentation of women in management is often attributed to the various obstacles that women face in their career development which, as a whole, constitutes the “glass ceiling”.

In 1999 the proportion of women in the “managers in higher and scientific professions” occupational category was 21%, a fairly substantial increase compared to 1994, when the proportion was just 14%. The share of women in management, however, is still not in proportion to the share of women in the higher and scientific professions.

### **2.1 The glass ceiling by branch of industry**

On the basis of this discrepancy between the share of women in higher and scientific professions and the proportion of female managers in higher and scientific professions, a measure has been developed<sup>2</sup> that may be regarded as an indicator for the thickness of the glass ceiling. The maximum value of the

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<sup>2</sup> De Olde and Slinkman, *Het glazen plafond. Een inventarisatie van cijfers, literatuur en onderzoek met betrekking tot de doorstroom van vrouwen naar de top.* (The glass ceiling. A survey of statistics, literature and research relating to the upward mobility of women). The Hague: Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, 1999.

measure is 100, in which case no women at all will be represented at management in these professions. Where the two proportions are the same the value is equal to zero. In principle the measure can also assume a negative value, if women are overrepresented.

In 1994 the value of this measure for the glass ceiling was 54, but in 1999 the thickness of the glass ceiling had fallen to 45. The thickness of the glass ceiling has been calculated for the individual industries, but the small number of women (and sometimes also men) in management positions in the sample limits the possibilities for making a reliable estimate. For 1999 the thickness of the glass ceiling was calculated for three industries. Particularly in health care and welfare, the thickness of the glass ceiling is below average; this also applies in public administration and, to a lesser extent, in education.

Table 1 Women's share in the labour force by branch of industry and in higher and scientific positions, and the glass ceiling, 1994, 1999

	1994					1999				
	Active labour force					Active labour force				
	Total (x 1000)	Share of wome n (%)	Of which higher and scientific professions		The glass ceiling	Total (x 1000)	Share of wome n (x 1000)	Of which higher and scientific professions		The glass ceiling
		total (x 1000)	Share of wome n (%)				total (x 1000)	Share of wome n (%)		
Agriculture and Fisheries	237	23	.	.	.	200	26	.	.	.
Mining	10	.	.	.	.	9	.	.	.	.
Industry	1 003	19	157	12	.	1 040	21	166	16	.
Energy and water companies	47	14	10	.	.	37	17	9	.	.
Construction	401	7	24	.	.	461	6	37	.	.
Trade	911	40	128	19	.	1 018	42	141	21	.
Hotel and catering industry	169	46	.	.	.	195	50	5	.	.
Transport and communication	387	22	46	15	.	432	25	63	23	.
Financial institutions	213	44	70	26	.	280	45	111	33	.
Business services	542	36	235	22	.	808	37	381	27	.
Public administration	529	30	169	27	.	507	31	194	27	39
Education	386	49	309	46	.	457	53	369	53	42
Healthcare and welfare	755	76	228	58	.	924	77	339	63	27
Culture and other services	227	52	77	42	.	270	50	91	42	.
Domestic service	10	96	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
International NGOs	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
Total	5 920	37	1 487	33	58	6 781	39	1 947	37	45

Source: Statistics Netherlands, Labour Force Survey

## 2.2 The glass ceiling by company size

The thickness of the glass ceiling may be calculated for employees by company size in the same way as done above for individual industries. In large companies and institutions the thickness of the ceiling is equal to the national average of 45. In 1994 too the value of this measure was virtually equal to the national average. In medium-sized businesses the glass ceiling was less thick than among large companies and institutions.

Table 2 Active labour force and share of women in higher and scientific professions and in management and company size

	1994				1999					
	Active labour force				Active labour force					
	Total (x 1000)	Share of wome n (%)	Of which higher and scientific professions	Share total of (x 1000)	The glass ceiling	Total (x 1000)	Share of wom en (%)	Of which higher and scientific professions	Share total of (x 1000)	The glass ceiling
Small businesses (0-9 employees)	1 153	37	239	32	.	1 216	39	286	37	.
Medium-sized businesses (10-99 employees)	1 478	35	329	35	.	1 723	38	395	40	40
Large businesses (100 or more employees)	3 119	37	890	32	59	3 624	41	1 220	36	45
Total	5 920	37	1 487	33	58	6 781	39	1 947	37	45

Source: Statistics Netherlands, Labour Force Survey

## 3 Trade and industry

In general it may be said that there are exceptionally few women in senior positions in trade and industry. In 1999 only 14% of the five largest firms in the Netherlands had a woman on the Board of Management or Supervisory Board. In most cases these were members of the Supervisory Board. Only 12 of the 500 largest companies had a woman on the Board of Management.

The Boards of Management of the 25 largest companies in the Netherlands do not contain a single woman while the top 100 contained just one in 1999. As the number of companies goes up the share of women also rises somewhat: 1% in the top 500 and an estimated 2.5% in the top 5,000. One explanation for the fact that there are more women in senior positions in small businesses is that the latter are more often family businesses. The female family members are better positioned in the company network and so are more readily appointed to management positions. It may be noted that

there is not a single company (among the 500 largest in the Netherlands) with more than one woman on the Board of Management. If we take Boards of Management consisting of just one person, moreover, that individual is never a woman, compared with 92 men in that situation.

The representation of women on Supervisory Boards presents a somewhat brighter picture, although we are still dealing with a small minority. In 1999 roughly one in 12 members of a Supervisory Board in the Top 25 companies was a woman. In contrast to the situation with Boards of Management, the share of women declines if more firms are taken into account (meaning that a greater number of smaller firms are included in the analysis). In the Top 500 fewer than one in 20 have a woman on the Supervisory Board and in the Top 5000 fewer than one in 30. A possible explanation for this is that these firms are not as often in the public eye, with less public and commercial pressure to include women. Supervisory Boards are also less common among smaller firms and are also often smaller in size. The inclusion of a woman would therefore give her relatively high influence. A final possible explanation lies in the fact that smaller firms are often private limited companies (BVs), in which the influence of supervisory directors is comparatively small and female members of the family might be less interested in participation.

The share of women in senior positions, has, however, increased somewhat over the past decade. This is particularly evident in the case of Supervisory Boards, where the proportion of women in the 25 largest firms increased from 4.3% in 1992 to 8% in 1999. Among the 100 largest firms the figure in fact more than doubled (from 3.1% to 6.7%).

Table 3 Proportion of women in the Boards of Management and Supervisory Boards in the largest firms, 1992 and 1999

Largest firms <sup>1</sup>	Boards of Management <sup>2</sup>		Supervisory Boards <sup>3</sup>		Echelons below the Board of Management			Total proportion of women in Boards of Management and Supervisory Boards	
	1992	1999	1992	1999	1e	2e	3e	1992	1999
	Top 25 <sup>4</sup>	0	0	4,3	8				2,5
Top 100 <sup>5</sup>	0	0,2	3,1	6,7				1,9	3,8
Top 250 <sup>6</sup>		1,9		4,2	6,2	11,9	25,1		3,3
Top 500 <sup>7</sup>		0,9		4,6					2,8
Top 5000 <sup>8</sup>		2,5		3,1				2,2	2,8

<sup>1</sup> Measured in terms of shareholders= equity.

<sup>2</sup> This refers to the day-to-day managers of a company. (Various terms are used for this body in the Netherlands.)

<sup>3</sup> This concerns the non-executive directors of a company. This body has various names in Dutch, such as Supervisory Board, Advisors to the Board of Management, Board of Control and Board of Supervision, etc.

<sup>4</sup> For 1992 figures are known for 23 of the top 25 companies, and in 1999 for all 25.

<sup>5</sup> For 1992 this concerned 81 firms out of the top 100, and in 1997, 97 firms.

<sup>6</sup> The figures relate to 191 of the 250 largest firms in 2000.

<sup>7</sup> No figures are known for 1992, and in 1999 for 457 firms.

<sup>8</sup> The 1992 figures concern 6,135 firms, and those for 1999 5,238 firms; the figures in italics are estimates.

Source: Elite Research (on the basis of the Financial Economic Lexicon), 2000; SCO (VIB 2000)

Since the available sources only provide insight into a very limited element of the senior ranks of trade and industry (namely Boards of Management and Supervisory Boards) and various echelons beneath the Board of Management may be regarded as important decision-making positions, a separate survey has been conducted to obtain insight in this area. The results are reflected in the line relating to the 250 largest firms. However, the proportion of women in Boards of Management here is higher than that for the Top 100 and the Top 500; this may be related to the fact that these figures were collected very recently (summer 2000).

If we examine the first three echelons beneath the Board of Management there is a notable increase in the proportion of women in decision-making positions, but this only begins to assume any scale in the third echelon below the Board of Management: 25% of the individuals working at this level in the 250 largest firms are female.

Taken as a whole the figures show that the proportion of women in senior positions in trade and industry has clearly increased in recent years, particularly among the 100 largest firms in the Netherlands. The overall growth can be attributed almost entirely to an increase in the number of female commissioners.

A closer examination of the figures for the representation of women in senior positions in the various industries reveals considerable differences. This applies especially to the Supervisory Boards. Construction and engineering firms emerge the most favourably, although it needs to be borne in mind that the numbers are too small to make any firm statements. It is also noteworthy that the situation in manufacturing industry is somewhat better than one might have expected on the basis of the traditional image of the industry as regards emancipation.

Table 4 Proportion of women in Boards of Management and Supervisory Boards of the largest 500 firms per industry (%), 1999

	Number of firms	Boards of Management		Supervisory Boards		Total	
		Number of persons	% women	Number of persons	% women	Total number of persons	% women
Manufacturing and mining	168	531	1.1	574	3.7	1105	2.4
Construction and engineering firms	39	90	0	221	7.7	311	5.5
Trade and hotel and catering industry	141	384	1	408	2.9	792	1.9
Transport, storage and communication	23	80	1.3	104	1.9	184	1.6
Financial services	52	214	0.5	263	6.1	477	3.6
Business services	21	59	3.4	80	1.3	139	2.2

Source: Elite Research (on the basis of the Financial Economic Lexicon), 2000

## 4 Civil society

### 4.1 Non-profit institutions

Non-profit institutions are characterised by their close links with the government as a result of regulations and financing arrangements, combined with a certain degree of autonomy. The non-profit sector in the Netherlands is very extensive. In this edition of the *Emancipation Monitor* only some parts of the non-profit sector are examined: education, the socio-economic sector and health care and welfare.

#### 4.1.1 Education

From 1993 onwards figures have regularly been published on the proportion of women in education management in primary education, secondary education, vocational education and adult education, higher vocational education and university education. In view of the importance of education for the upbringing of children and the relatively high proportion of women working in this sector, a good deal of attention has always been paid to the representation of women in senior positions in education. The Equal Representation Act (WEV), which came into force in March 1997, is intended to promote the representation of women in management positions.

Table 5 provides an impression of the proportion of women in management positions in the various sectors of education. Taken as a whole, it is clear that - apart from the universities - there has been a moderate increase in the proportion of women in management positions in education. This share continues however to lag well behind the percentage of female teachers (not in table). Only in vocational education and adult education a substantial growth took place in the proportion of women in management.

The publications of the Ministry of Education mention that the increase in most sectors has more or less kept pace with the increase in the percentage of female teachers. The gap between the proportion of women in management and teaching positions may not have grown, but there is no question of any improvement (with the exception of vocational and adult education).

Table 5 Percentage of women in FTEs in management positions in the various education sectors

	1993	1997	1999
Primary Education			
Principal <sup>1</sup>	13	13	14
Deputy Principal <sup>2</sup>	49	44	46
Special Education			
Principal <sup>1</sup>	7	9	10
Deputy Principal <sup>2</sup>	19	20	21
Secondary Education			
Principal <sup>3</sup>	6	7	9
Deputy Principal <sup>2</sup>	11	11	13
Vocational Education and Adult Education			
Job scale 13 and above	14		22
Higher Vocational Education			
Job scale 13 and above	6 <sup>4</sup>	7	11
University Education			
University Boards <sup>5</sup>	10	13	5
Professors	4	5	5

<sup>1</sup> By principal is understood the principal and acting principal.

<sup>2</sup> By deputy principal is understood the deputy and acting deputy principal.

<sup>3</sup> By principal is understood in this context principal, acting principal, chairman and members of the central board.

<sup>4</sup> 1994 figure.

<sup>5</sup> These concern the chairmen of the Executive Board and the University Council, Vice Chancellor and Secretary of the University. The figures relate successively to 1994, 1997 and 1998.

Source: Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, Uitleg No. 5 1999 and No. 6 2000; Ministry of the Interior, Voortgangrapportages Vrouwen in politiek en openbaar bestuur 1992 t/m 1998 (Progress Reports on Women in Politics and Public Administration 1994 B 1998).

#### 4.1.2 Socio-economic sector

As there is no periodic and systematic collection of data in this area on the proportion of women in decision-making positions within the socio-economic sector a survey has been conducted among the best part of a hundred institutions. These are the Regional Employment Offices, the Chambers of Commerce, social security executive agencies (including the Social Insurance Bank), the biggest pension funds, employers associations and trade unions and a number of supervisory bodies. The proportion of women in managerial and supervisory positions has been established.



**Table 6 Proportion of women in decision-making positions in the socio-economic sector in 2000 (%)**

	Supervisory Boards <sup>1</sup>	Boards of Management <sup>2</sup>	1st echelon below Board of Management	2nd echelon below Board of Management	3rd echelon below Board of Management
Total (n=80)	12	14	18	18	22
Employment services (n=13)	20	21	32	.	.
Chamber of Commerce (n=22)	7	3	10	.	.
Social Security agencies (n=16)	10	22	19	.	.
Pension funds (n=18)	13	11	6	.	.
Employers associations and trade unions (n=8)	10	21	33	.	.

<sup>1</sup> This also includes other supervisory and advisory councils.

<sup>2</sup> This also includes executive boards.

. Respondent cell-size too small.

Source: SCP (VIB 2000)

Taken as a whole the proportion of women in senior positions in the socio-economic sector is low. Of the members of Supervisory Boards 12% are women and of Boards of Management 14%. Although the number of female members grows as one drops down the various echelons below the Board of Management, only one in five in the 3rd layer below the Board of Management are women.

As the tables indicate there are considerable differences within the various sectors. In the socio-economic non-profit institutions the employment services emerge best in terms of the proportion of women in senior positions and the Chambers of Commerce the worst. On account of their limited representation in the survey the employers associations and trade unions have been lumped together in the table. The figures presented do however disguise the fact that women more frequently occupy the top jobs in trade unions than in employers' associations.

### **4.1.3 Health care and welfare**

As in the socio-economic sector no periodic and systematic collection of data takes places within the health care and welfare sector. A survey was therefore also conducted in this sector on behalf of the *Emancipation Monitor*. This covered large national institutions in the field of care and welfare with an administrative, supervisory or executive task; the largest general hospitals, mental health institutions and home care organisations; provincial and regional support bodies, (in the welfare sector); large urban welfare institutions; national child-care institutions; and youth-care institutions.

Generally speaking the care and welfare sector compares favourably with the other elements of the non-profit sector. A quarter of the members of Supervisory Boards or Boards of Management are

female. If the sector is broken down we find that most of the women in senior positions are in the national child care institutions, large home care institutions and local welfare umbrella organisations. The large general hospitals and large mental health care institutions emerge the least favourably when it comes to the proportion of women at the top. It is however notable that women are reasonably well represented on the boards of these institutions.

Table 7 Proportion of women in decision-making positions in the care and welfare sector, 2000 (%)

	Supervisory Boards	Boards of Management	1st echelon below Board of Management	2nd echelon below Board of Management	3rd echelon below Board of Management
Total (n=126)	25	25	43	60	89
National care institutions (n=17)	17	16	26	54	60
Large general hospitals (n=16)	24	5	20	.	.
Large mental health care institutions (n=18)	26	6	22	.	.
Large home care institutions (n=19)	31	37	64	79	.
Provincial and regional welfare support organisations (n=11)	27	29	41	.	.
Local welfare umbrella bodies (n=21)	26	35	53	58	.
Child care institutions (n=9)	29	41	84	.	.
Youth care (n=8)	22	33	47	.	.

Source: SCP (VIB 2000)

## 4.2 Non-governmental organisations

The Netherlands has a substantial number of organisations active at national, regional and local level. These organisations exist in all sorts of policy fields and are highly diverse in terms of their objectives. Examples include sporting associations, special interest organisations and charitable bodies, etc. Virtually all these organisations have a board and/or one or more executive officers. The share of women at decision-making level in non-governmental organisations has been examined in two ways. In the first place the share of women performing administrative voluntary work was assessed. Secondly, the proportion of women at decision-making level was established among a select group of non-governmental organisations, namely those with more than 50,000 members and/or donors. These organisations have both voluntary staff (the administration) and a professional staff (directors, the management team, etc).

### 4.2.1 Administrative voluntary work

Of the population aged 18 and over 42% performed voluntary work in 1997. By this is meant that they had indicated in the interview that they had performed voluntary activities in an organised context over the past 12 months. Women account for exactly half those who perform voluntary work. The proportion is however much higher among the volunteers working in schools and in care, while their proportion is fairly small among volunteers in employment offices in particular, as well as youth work and politics.

The proportion of women among the volunteers performing administrative work (in combination or otherwise with executive work) of 39% is lower than the share of women among the volunteers. In each area of voluntary work that was looked at, the proportion of women performing managerial work is lower than the proportion of women among the volunteers. Only in the case of voluntary work in which many women are active - especially voluntary work in schools and in care - is the proportion of women over 50%.

Table 8 Proportion of women in administrative voluntary work, 1997 (%)

	Share of persons performing voluntary work	Share of women among volunteers	Share of volunteers performing administrative work (e.g. in combination with executive work (among all volunteers))	Share of women among the volunteers performing administrative work (combined with executive work or otherwise)
Youth work	5	48	56	38
Schools	9	75	37	61
Care	7	68	32	56
Sporting associations	12	35	42	26
Hobby associations	5	35	48	33
Cultural associations	5	57	45	50
Religious organisations	9	54	40	48
Employment offices	4	24	71	18
Politics	2	44	59	30
Other	3	43	49	37
Total	42	50	38	39

Source: Statistics Netherlands (POLS 1997)

#### 4.2.2 *Non-governmental organisations with at least 50,000 members and/or donors*

If we examine the representation of women within the overall context of the various non-governmental organisations with at least 50,000 members and/or donors, it is evident that the picture is not very bright when it comes to the boards and management; female representation is at much the same level as in the socio-economic non-profit organisations. Of the members of the board 13% are women and of the management committees 16%. As in the case of the other types of organisations investigated, the share of women rises in the echelons below the management committee.

Once again there is major diversity within the overall body of non-governmental organisations. The organisations for international solidarity and the political parties emerge the most favourably when it comes to the proportion of women at the top. Sporting and recreational associations come out poorly: just 10% of the members of the boards and the management committees are women. In the case of organisations in the field of health care and nature of the environment there is a reasonable number of women on the boards, but they remain under represented in the day-to-day management.

Table 9 Share of women in decision-making positions in large non-governmental organisations, 2000 (%)

	Board <sup>1</sup>	Management <sup>2</sup>	1st echelon below Board	2nd echelon below Board	3rd echelon below Board
total (n=85)	13	16	31	33	51
Health care (n=7)	23	0	35	.	.
International solidarity (n=9)	34	39	48	.	.
Nature and the environment (n=6)	26	0	.	.	.
Political parties (n=8)	32	38	67	.	.
Sport and recreation (n=22)	12	14	26	34	.
Broadcasting (n=8)	30	18	27	.	.

<sup>1</sup> This also includes Supervisory Boards and Boards of Administration, etc.

<sup>2</sup> This also includes Boards of Management.

Source: SCP (VIB 2000)

## 5 Politics and public administration

### 5.1 *Politics*

The share of women in elected bodies rose slightly during the period between the Second World War and the mid 1970s. Their share increased substantially however during the period between the mid 1970s and mid 1980s. In most elected bodies the percentage of women fluctuated around the same level in the 1990s. Only the share of women in the Lower House continued clearly to increase.

Whereas in 1986 only 20% were women, in 1998 the figure had risen to 36%. The fairly constant share of women in the municipal councils of around 22% stands in sharp contrast to these figures. It may also be noted that the percentage of women on water boards executives has clearly risen in recent years, although the figure in 1998 was just 9%. The relatively late start of this catch-up round may presumably be attributed to the fact that the representation of women on such bodies was not placed on the political agenda until comparatively late by the women=s movement.

Table 10 Share of women in politics (%)

	1973/1977 7 <sup>1</sup>	1984/1988 7 <sup>1</sup>	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Members of European Parliament <sup>2</sup>	20	28	28	28	32	32	31	32	29
Members of Upper House <sup>3</sup>	9	23	25	27	28	23	23	22	24
Members of Lower House	14	20	29	29	31	33	33	33	36
Members of the Provincial Councils <sup>4</sup>	12	26	30	30	29	31	31	29	28
Municipal Council Members	10	19	22	22	22	22	22	21	23
Members of Water Board Executives				3	5	6	5	6	9
Ministers	6	14	19	19	29	29	29	29	27
State Secretaries	0	19	25	20	42	42	42	42	36
Queen=s Commissioners	8	0	8	8	8	8	8	8	8
Members of the Provincial Executive <sup>5</sup>	3	22	25	24	25	19	19	23	21
Mayors		4	9	12	13	14	15	16	17
Aldermen	5	13	17	17	18	18	18	18	18
Water Board Chairpersons			2	3	4	2	2	3	3

Unknown.

<sup>1</sup> The percentages in these columns relate to the various measurement years in the relevant period.

<sup>2</sup> After the election of 10 June 1999 the share of women was 36%.

<sup>3</sup> After the election of 25 May 1999 the share of women was 28%.

<sup>4</sup> After the election of 3 March 1999 the share of women was 31%.

<sup>5</sup> After the election of 3 March 1999 the share of women was 26%.

Source: Leijenaar and Van Dam, *Vrouwen en politiek in Nederland* (Compendium politiek en samenleving) (Women and politics in the Netherlands) (Politics and Society Compendium)), 1993; Ministry of the Interior, *Voortgangrapportages Vrouwen in politiek en openbaar bestuur 1992 t/m 1998* (Progress Reports on Women in Politics and Public Administration 1992 B 1998).

The appointment of women to important political positions got under way slowly after the Second World War. It began with the appointment of the first female mayor, G. Smulders-Beliën, in 1946. This was in fact a special situation as she succeeded her husband who had died in German incarceration. Not until the 1960s were more female mayors appointed.

The first female State Secretary, Dr. A. de Waal, was appointed in 1953, followed by the first female minister, Dr. M. Klompé. In 1974 a women was appointed as a Queen=s Commissioner, namely A. P. Schilthuis (Province of Drenthe).

As in the case of elected positions, the most marked increase in the share of women to appointed positions took place before the 1990s. Only the share of female ministers and State Secretaries and female mayor saw any significant growth in the 1990s. The share of female members of the Provincial Executive even fell during this period, although after the elections of 1999 the figure was roughly back to the level of 1992 (26%).

## 5.2 Public administration

Generally speaking the situation as regards the representation of women in public administration is worse than that in politics. With the exception of the prosecution and the judiciary the share of women does not exceed a fifth and is in many cases even below 10%. Furthermore little if any progress was made in the 1990s. Only the external advisory bodies and the magistrature displayed a clear increase.

Table 11 Share of women in public administration (%)

	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Council of State	15	17	18	16	16	16	16
Court of Audit	29	29	29	29	17	17	20
Chairpersons of External Advisory Bodies	9	6	10	12	.	17	
Members of External Advisory Bodies <sup>1</sup>	13	14	16	18	16	20	22
Chairpersons of Interdepartmental Committees	5	6	7			6	
Members of Interdepartmental Committees	10	10	10				
Chairpersons of Municipal Cooperative Bodies	7	9	10	10	10	9	9
Chairpersons/Secretaries of leading quangos <sup>2</sup>	6	5	8	6	3	4	4
Judiciary		34	36	35	37	38	38
Prosecution		31	32	35	34	37	38
Senior police officers <sup>3</sup>		1	3	3	3	4	4

Unknown.

<sup>1</sup> Apart from 1996 and 1998 this excludes the chairperson.

<sup>2</sup> Covers the Social and Economic Council (SER), regulatory industrial organisations, Central Employment Service Board, Regional Employment Services, Chambers of Commerce and (until 1996) Industrial Insurance Boards.

<sup>3</sup> As from 1994 covers everyone on scale 14 and above; before then only chiefs and acting chiefs of police and district heads.

<sup>4</sup> Chairmen of the Executive Board and the University Council, Vice Chancellor and Secretary of the University.

Source: Ministry of the Interior, Voortgangsrapportages Vrouwen in politiek en openbaar bestuur 1992 t/m 1998, (Progress Reports on Women in Politics and Public Administration 1992 - 1998), Emancipation Yearbook 1998.

If we look at the top echelons of the civil service the picture becomes even gloomier. Since the appointment in 1991 of the first Secretary-General, H. de Maat-Koolen, at the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment no progress has been made in this area. In the case of other senior civil service positions, progress, stagnation and slippage in the share of women alternate. At national level the number of female Directors-General, for example, varies between 7% and 10%. At provincial level, women have still not been appointed as Court Registrars. The share of women among Municipal Secretaries amounted in 1998 to 5%.

Table 12 Share of women in the senior civil service (%)

	1970	1980	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Secretaries-General	0	0	8	8	10	8	8	8	0
Deputy SGs	5	4		17	22	25	25	23	20
Directors General	0	0		7	8	10	8	7	10
Deputy DGs	1	1		0	0	0	0	4	0
Court Registrars (Provinces)			0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Municipal Secretaries			3	3	3	3	5	6	5
Water Board Secretaries			1	2	1	1	1	2	2

Source: Ministry of the Interior, Voortgangsrapportages Vrouwen in politiek en openbaar bestuur 1992 t/m 1998 (Progress Reports on Women in Politics and Public Administration 1992 - 1998), Leijenaar and Van Dam, Vrouwen en politiek in Nederland (Women in Politics in the Netherlands) (in: Compendium politiek en samenleving), 1993.

Looking at the political system and public administration, it may be concluded that the highest share of women in the 1990s was in politics. This is also where the most progress has been made over the past decade. The top echelon of the civil service comes out worst: women still occupy few positions at this level and no progress appears to be being made.

## 6. Attitudes towards women and decision-making

The need for greater representation by women in decision-making is a policy issue that can count on reasonable support among the Dutch public. Although the statement is somewhat of a generalisation, some 40% of the population agrees with the statement that women generally have too little influence over decision-making on important issues. Many people consider that women still do not have the same opportunities as men to reach the top positions - although this is an opinion more frequently held by women than by men. Over 70% of the population therefore consider it understandable that women= organisations are trying to bring about change.

Opinions tend however to differ concerning the question as to what would be a desirable situation. A sample of the population was given two statements: one on the desirability of a female prime minister and one on there being a greater percentage of women in top jobs in general. The first of these enjoyed little support; most people take a neutral stance. By contrast the second point - doubling the proportion of women in top jobs over the next five years B enjoys greater support, particularly among women. The analyses also indicate that women are more in agreement with the aims and aspirations of emancipation policy than men on virtually all the issues submitted.

Table 13 Attitudes towards women and decision-making (%)

	Men			Women		
	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
Women generally have too little influence over decision-making on important issues <sup>1</sup>	37	32	31	42	30	29
Women nowadays have the same opportunities as men of reaching a top job	37	21	42	25	21	54
It is understandable that women=s organisations should be trying to increase the proportion of women in top jobs	67	22	11	76	20	4
It would be good if the next prime minister were a woman	19	61	20	29	61	10
The share of women in top positions should at least double over the next 5 years	33	47	20	58	33	9
In order to reduce the shortfall of women in decision-making positions, companies should give priority to women in management training	28	29	42	45	31	24
Even if there are only few women at the top of an organisation, preferential policies for women are undesirable	46	29	26	31	37	32

<sup>1</sup> The difference between men and women is not significant for this item but is for the others.

Source: SCP (Emop2000)

This leads to the question as to what should be done to enlarge the proportion of women in the decision-making process. Preferential policies and positive action - instruments that were previously on the Emancipation Policy agenda - have largely been dropped, partly in response to the extensive negative publicity surrounding a number of specific appointments. Negative attitudes are not however universal: both among men and - somewhat more strongly - among women, a substantial body of people support some form or other of affirmative action.

Attitudes differ not just between men and women but also between other population categories (not shown in the table). People with higher education are for example more inclined to support an increase in the share of women in decision-making than are the less well educated. Older generations more frequently consider that women have too little influence than younger generations and that something needs to be done about this. Table 6.14 provides a survey of certain intergenerational differences. It is however open to question as to how the finding that older generations are somewhat more radical and militant should be interpreted. On the one hand this may be related to the fact that the younger generation has grown up in a society in which sex-inequality is less pronounced; on the other hand this could equally well be an age-effect where the more extensive life-experience of older people underpins the differences.



Table 14 Percentage of respondents of various generations who agree with the following statements (%)

	1990 generation <sup>1</sup>	Lost generation <sup>2</sup>	Protest generation <sup>3</sup>	Pre-war generation <sup>4</sup>
Women generally have too little influence over decision-making on important issues	29	29	42	50
Women nowadays have the same opportunities as men of reaching a top job <sup>5</sup>	39	31	34	28
It is understandable that women=s organisations should be trying to increase the proportion of women in top jobs	63	63	71	82
The share of women in top positions should at least double over the next 5 years	34	42	47	45

<sup>1</sup> Born after 31 December 1971

<sup>2</sup> Born between 1955 and 1972

<sup>3</sup> Born between 1940 and 1955

<sup>4</sup> Born before 1940

<sup>5</sup> The difference between the generations is not significant for this item but is for the others.

Source: SCP (Emop2000)

## 7 Concluding remarks

In general it may be said that there has been an increase in the proportion of women in senior managerial and decision-making positions. In 1999 21% of the managers in higher and scientific professions were female, compared with just 14% in 1994. In sectors with high rates of female employment women are more frequently in the senior positions, although only in the education sector is the share of women in higher and academic occupations as high as the total proportion of women employed in that sector.

The focus in this paper has been on a selection of positions that may be regarded as top jobs. This has covered a number of social sectors: trade and industry, non-governmental organisations, the political system and public administration. Although there are clear differences between these sectors, it may be noted to begin with that the share of women at the top remains exceptionally small.

As far as the position of women is concerned trade and industry compares the least favourably. In the 100 largest firms in the Netherlands, 4% of the members of a Supervisory Board or Board of Management are female. This is, however, an improvement on the situation in 1992, when the figure was just 2%. This increase is due in particular to a growth in the number of female supervisory directors and much less to a growth in the number of female company directors. In addition the figures on the share of women in the first (and subsequent) layers beneath the Board of Management indicate that the potential of women in a position to move on to the actual top level provides reasons for hope for the future. Here too, however, their share still remains substantially lower than that of men. Without targeted efforts, therefore, the increase in the number of women at top levels will presumably be a sluggish process.

With respect to civil society, the representation of women in top positions has been examined in a number of sectors. This reveals that the position of women in healthcare and welfare organisations emerges the most favourably: 25% of the members of a Board of Management and of the supervisory bodies in this sector are female. The socio-economic institutions in the non-profit sector, education sector and non-governmental organisations with at least 50,000 members and/or donors occupy an intermediate position in comparison with the care and welfare sector on the one hand and trade and industry on the other. Within the overall education sector, universities continue to have the doubtful honour of scoring worst when it comes to the representation of women at the top.

The political system and public administration exhibit a mixed picture. In terms of emancipation the political system is doing well. In particular there is a substantial percentage of women in the Lower House and among the state secretaries (over a third). The growth in the share of women in elected bodies largely took place before the 1990s; during that decade the proportion of women hovered around the same level. In the case of mayors there appears to be a fairly constant increase in the proportion of women. In 1998 one in six mayors was female. As far as the Civil Service is concerned the situation - with the exception of the prosecution and the judiciary - is less favourable and there are few signs of progress.

All in all the findings indicate that the share of women in political and social decision-making remains small. Although some progress appears to be taking place in certain sectors, in others a plateau has been reached or the situation has even gone into reverse. Greater policy efforts therefore appear required. Opinion polls indicate that the issue can also count on widespread public support. Although opinions differ about what the role of the government can or should be, a majority of the population - contrary to popular belief - supports some form or other of positive action.