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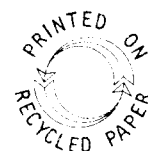
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**ATTITUDES OF THE DUTCH POPULATION
ON ALTERNATIVE LIFE STYLES AND
ENVIRONMENTAL DETERIORATION**

Peter Ester

Institute for Environmental Problems
Free University
Amsterdam



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This paper by Peter Ester was presented at the first meeting of the Alternative Ways of Life sub-project of the GPID Project, Cartigny, 21-24 April 1978.

Geneva, January 1980

Johan Galtung

It is being circulated in a pre-publication form to elicit comments from readers and generate dialogue on the subject at this stage of the research.

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

This paper basically deals with two topics. In Part I some general statistics will be presented on the four human needs-categories Security, Welfare, Identity and Freedom. This will enable us to get a rough impression on some fundamental characteristics of the Dutch life style and its implications. Although these statistics certainly show interesting trends regarding mortality, welfare, morbidity, consumption, energy use, mental illness and so on, they do not reveal, however, the way people actually evaluate their present life style and possible alternatives from their own personal point of view.

Fortunately, we do have more "subjective" data on dominant life styles in the Netherlands, which will be presented in Part II.

These data are based on information gained in a survey research conducted by this author among a random sample of the Dutch population including almost 1,500 respondents.

This sociological survey is characterized by a specific background and research question. On the one hand, we were interested in people's attitudes towards the Dutch New Life Style Movement originated by the Council of Churches. This Movement not only criticizes dominant life styles but also stimulates an alternative way of living, that is, a way of life more consonant with basic human needs, meaning, for instance another outlook and practice with regards to people, nature, time, energy, money, natural resources, consumption or production. On the other hand, we wanted to know the degree of concern, willingness to make sacrifices and commitment of the Dutch population concerning ecological problems, which are closely related to the issue of alternative ways of life. In the following, we shall thus first discuss some general statistics on the Dutch way of life and there-

after our research findings on people's attitudes concerning an alternative, more responsible and less neurotic way of life.

PART I SOME GENERAL STATISTICS ON THE DUTCH LIFE STYLE

Population

Undoubtedly one of the most striking characteristics of Dutch society, compared with other countries, is its relatively high population density. However, one should add that the present situation tends to be somewhat stable, as shown on Table 1.

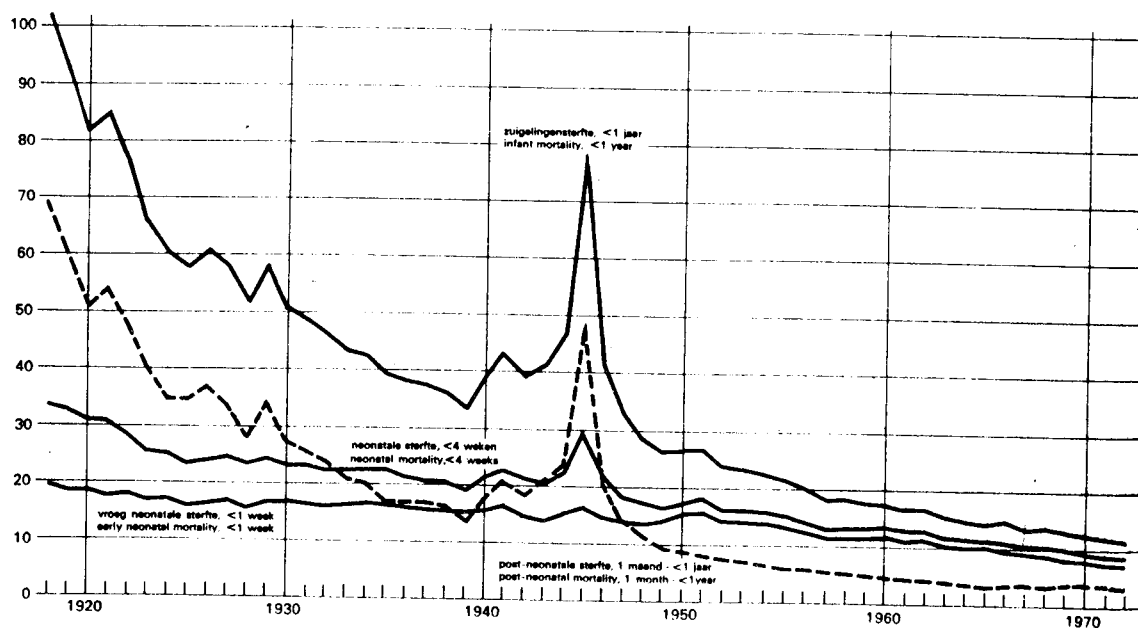
Table 1.	<u>Population and Population Density, 1899-1976</u>	
	<u>total population</u> (in millions)	<u>inhabitants per km²</u>
1899	5,1	154
1909	5,9	180
1920	6,9	211
1930	7,9	244
1940	8,9	271
1950	10,2	315
1960	11,6	344
1970	13,1	389
1976	13,8	409

Source: Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek, 1977.

One can very well imagine that such a high population density produces social problems concerning housing, road-construction, recreation and conservation of nature.

On the other hand, in most European countries, infant mortality has declined drastically since 1900, though the decline is much slower now than some decades ago. Figure 1 gives us information on this positive trend.

Figure 1 Infant Mortality per 1,000 Live Births, 1920-1970

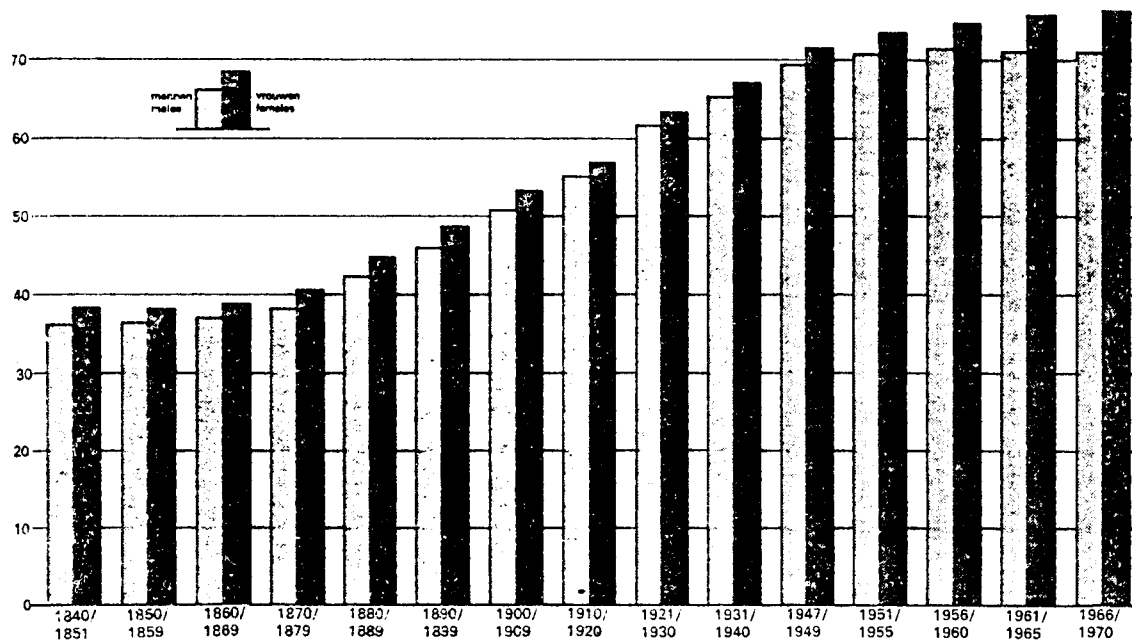


Source: Compendium Gezondheidsstatistiek, 1974.

It is interesting to note that post-neonatal mortality declined much more sharply since 1945 than early neonatal mortality and neonatal mortality.

Looking at life expectancy statistics one can easily see especially since 1870, a significant and strong increase in life expectancy. In 1975 mean life expectancy at birth for males was 71.4, for females 77.6. In contrast: in the 1840-1879 period mean life expectancy was less than 40 years.

Table 2. Mean Expectation of Life at Birth, by Sex, 1840-1970



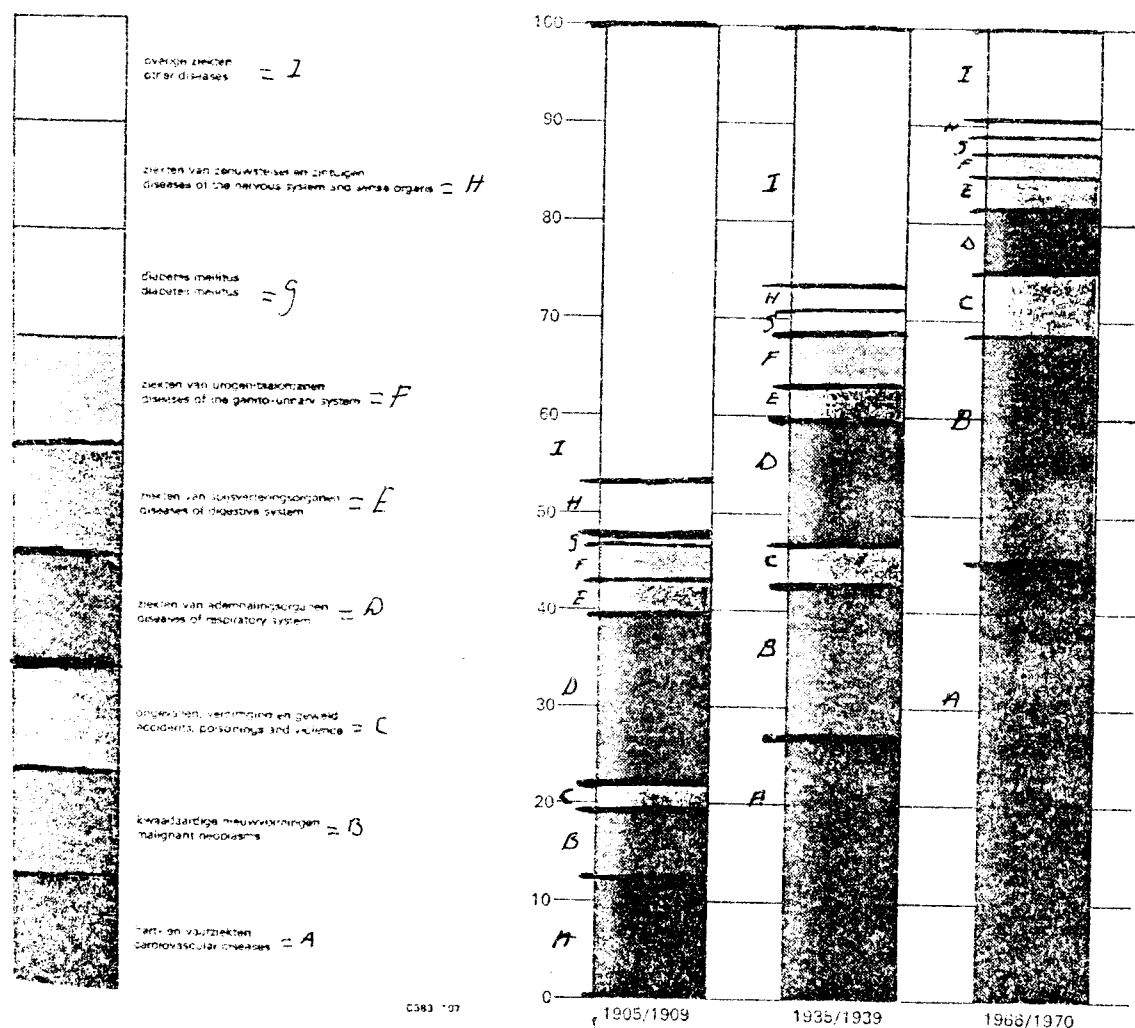
Source: Compendium van de Gezondheidsstatistiek, 1974

However, one should note that no significant increase in mean life expectancy appeared for males after the 1951-1955 period. For females on the other hand there still is a small yearly increase. Thus, generally there seems to be a stagnation in this development.

Causes of Death

Examining patterns of death causes since 1900 one can find some interesting and at the same time alarming trends. This holds especially for typical "overdevelopment diseases" like malignant neoplasms and cardiovascular illnesses.

Figure 2. Patterns of Causes of Death, in three periods
(total mortality in percentages)

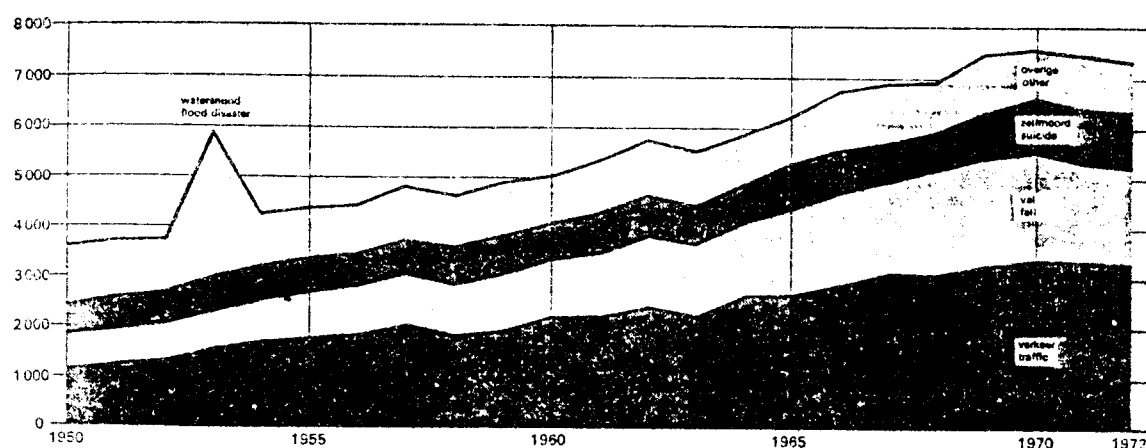


Source: Compendium van de Gezondheidsstatistiek, 1974.

The evident conclusion of Figure 2 is that the main causes of death in Holland today are cardiovascular diseases (more than 40% of all deaths) followed by malignant neoplasms (25%). Cardiovascular diseases, in particular, have increased tremendously since 1905: about 4 times as high today. Whereas death caused by diseases of the respiratory system seems to have decreased sharply since 1905, death due to malignant neoplasms has, as mentioned before, become an important issue.

Perhaps one could say that existing patterns of death causes reflect dominant life styles, or at least some of their fundamental characteristics. The same may be true for death caused by accidents, poisonings and violence which has also increased since the beginning of this century.

Figure 3. Death from Accidents, Poisonings and Violence, 1950-1972



Source: Compendium van de Gezondheidsstatistiek, 1974.

Figure 3 shows that death caused by falls and traffic accidents has strongly increased since 1950, whereas suicide rates have been relatively stable over time. Especially fatal road-traffic accidents seem to be rather numerous. Table 3 gives more detailed information on this.

Table 3 <u>Death by Road-Traffic Accidents (per 1,000 inhabitants)</u>					
1960	1965	1970	1974	1975	1976
1.80	2.3	2.9	2.3	2.1	2.2

Source: Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek, 1977.

As shown on Table 3 in 1970 death caused by traffic accidents was 60% higher than in 1960. After 1970, however, less people died in such

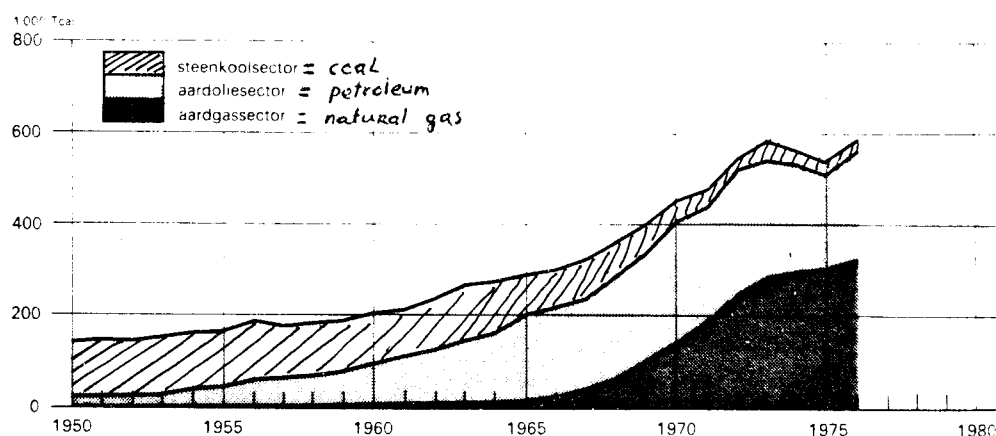
accidents, due, perhaps, to the speed-limitation regulations which were issued at that time.

Consumption and Energy Use

In this section we will present some statistics on consumption and energy use, two typically welfare state-related subjects. In 1965 the total amount of consumptive spending at family level was close to 40,000 million guilders! In 1900, national income per capita in constant prices* (index, 1970 = 100) was 30, in 1950 49 and in 1973 110. Thus national income per capita almost quadrupled since 1900. Let us first have a look at alcohol consumption which, for some people, indicates the degree of social well-being. In 1965 the Dutch consumed an average of 1,89 litres of spirits, 37,2 litres of beer and 3,34 litres of wine. In 1976, the corresponding figures were 2,49 litres of spirits, 93,9 litres of beer and 11,34 litres of wine - a rather impressive increase, one might say. A well-known status symbol which should be mentioned in this context is the automobile. In 1960 about 100,000 cars were sold, in 1976 509,000! By now Holland counts approximately 300 cars per 1,000 inhabitants. Whether these are an indicator of overdevelopment or not, their side-effects certainly are: air pollution, congestion, traffic noise, fatal traffic accidents and waste of energy.

It is clear that a society which strongly reinforces consumption will also be an energy-intensive society. This is quite true for Holland. Looking at gross home energy consumption since 1950 one sees a fast increase, especially of natural gas and petroleum consumption. Coal seems to be less important, but will be important again in the near future, according to the specialists.

Figure 4 Gross Home Consumption of Energy, 1950-1976



Source: Algemene Milieustatistiek, CBS, 1975-1976.

The same pattern holds for electricity consumption, as shown on the following table:

Table 4 Electricity Consumption, at Family Level, 1960-1976

<u>Year</u>	<u>Milliards kWh</u>
1960	2,8
1965	5,0
1970	8,7
1971	9,3
1972	10,0
1973	11,0
1974	11,2
1975	12,4
1976	13,5

Source: Algemene Milieustatistiek, CBS, 1975-1976

In 1976, electricity consumption was almost 5 times as high as in 1960. The small increase in 1974 was caused by the energy crisis which had only a temporary effect, as shown by the increases in 1975 and 1976.

It is widely recognized that environmental pollution is closely related to an energy-intensive and consumption-oriented life style and - as

is well known - many authors have written provocatively about this subject. Although attitudes on environmental deterioration is the central issue of part II, we thought it interesting to present some data here on people's appreciation of their residential environment. Table 5 shows how the Dutch people in general and those living in highly industrialized areas in particular, feel about various environmental qualities.

Table 5 Percentage of Persons Discontented about some Environmental Components, by Residential Area, 1972

Discontented about	Rijnmond	Europoort-Noordzee- Botlek	kanaalgebied	Holland
	%			
air quality	69	75	60	33
water quality	76	-	69	52
drinking-water quality	64	-	31	16
traffic noise	22	-	26	16
industrial noise	16	27,5	13	8
aircraft noise	13	-	19	13

Source: Openbaar Lichaam Rijnmond, 1974

This table is self-explanatory: It is especially in the industrialized areas that people are rather discontented about quality of air, water and drinking-water, whereas exposure to traffic noise, industrial noise and aircraft noise seems less negatively evaluated. Next, it is significant that one third of the Dutch population is discontented with air quality in their residential area and more than 50% with quality of water.

Public Health

Another interesting quality of life indicator could be the number of mentally ill people, at least as reflected by official statistics. We all know, however, that these statistics should be interpreted most carefully.

Table 6 Patients in Mental Hospitals, Total Number at the End of Each Year, 1965-1976

<u>Year</u>	<u>Number of Patients</u>
1965	26,507
1970	26,292
1974	25,240
1975	25,541
1976	24,870

Source: Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek, 1977.

Table 6 shows that the number of patients in mental hospitals has been rather stable over the 1965-1976 period. Although the mean number of patients was more or less the same during this period one should note that the absolute number of patients increased from 11,807 (1965) to 24,769 (1976) while the number of patients being discharged during the period doubled in absolute number: 12,037 (1965) to 25,440 (1976). Possibly, today hospitals are used more "efficiently", since the mean duration of treatment is much lower now than in 1965.

Considering public health issues in relationship with dominant life styles it seems worth paying attention to some statistics on absenteeism from work due to illness.

Table 7 Absenteeism from Work Due to Illness, 1965-1976, by Sex
(in % of number of working days)

	<u>1965</u>	<u>1970</u>	<u>1974</u>	<u>1975</u>	<u>1976</u>
Men	6,4	7,6	8,7	8,5	9,0
Women	5,9	8,4	10,6	10,5	11,0
Total	6,3	7,7	9,0	8,8	9,3

Source: Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek, 1977.

It is clear from the table that absenteeism from work for medical reasons has increased during the 1965-1976 period. This is above all the case for women compared with men. Particularly noteworthy, is the fact that in 1974, almost 14% of all absenteeism was due to psychical problems.

Concluding Remarks

Holland is a densely populated country which implies special social problems in numerous fields. As we saw, in spite of increased welfare, some negative trends are clearly visible. Mean life expectancy is more or less stagnating since 1950, though women are still improving somewhat in this respect. Infant mortality has been combatted effectively, but no significant additional progress is to be expected. Death caused by cardiovascular diseases and malignant neoplasms - the so-called "civilization diseases" - has become a burning social issue since 1950, mortality from traffic accidents has increased by 2,200 persons yearly. Only suicide rates have been rather stable over time and the same holds for the "officially" mentally ill. Evidently, Holland is a consumption-oriented and energy-intensive society, more cars are sold than ever before and use of energy has increased tremendously since 1950. Electricity consumption is now five times higher than in 1960. As also shown, many people are discontented with the quality of their environment particularly concerning air, water and exposure to noise. Thus, according to some indications at least, Holland might be conceptualized in terms of an overdeveloped country.

In Part II, let us now analyse how the Dutch evaluate alternative life styles to the dominant way of life in an overdeveloped society such as Holland.

PART II: DUTCH PEOPLE'S ATTITUDES TOWARDS ALTERNATIVE LIFE STYLES

Introduction

In November 1974, the Dutch churches held a conference attended by many laymen and clergy. Participants were churches which are members of the Dutch Council of Churches - including many protestant denominations as well as the Roman Catholic Church. The Council both urged and inspired its members to reflect upon and discuss their present way of life, that is, the way they consume and produce material goods - both quantitatively and qualitatively - as well as the way they behave towards one another and towards nature. It was - and still is - believed that our present prevalent individualistic life style and its macro-economic societal shaping is likely to have disastrous consequences not only for our own psychical and social well-being, but also for nature - due to environmental pollution and exhaustion of scarce raw materials - and the fundamental rights of the Third World countries.

At this conference a resolution was adopted that included the following statements and proposals.

"...The Council of Churches encourages all attempts to frame new life styles, in which a responsibility is expressed for present and future generations. ...in view of the very critical food situation in numerous parts of the world...a revision of the composition of our food consumption as well as a sparing use of minerals and energy are necessary.

...the Council of Churches addresses its member churches, asking them to appeal to their memberships to observe a weekly day of fasting.

This day serves as a symbolic but also practical exercise in a more embracing new life style, focussing on a society in which the rights of the poor will be put first and foremost, both in personal and in societal life.

...the energy and money saved ought to be destined to clear and transparent programmes for renewal of our society, both at the international level and in the immediate neighbourhoods.

...the Council of Churches pronounces itself in favour of a critical testing of the Bible, concerning fundamental issues regarding the social system as well as personal behaviour".

In order to discuss, analyse and to bring about change in the dominant life style a committee was set up, working under the authority of the section for social problems of the Dutch Council of Churches, the so-called "Working Group New Life Styles" (WNL). By forming groups of people within the churches, this WNL stimulated further the process of searching for alternative life styles.

It must be added that the new life-style (NL) movement is not confined to the churches, since it is based upon a number of problems and ideas that have been perceived in a much wider context and often much earlier than 1974. But at that time the theme, it seemed, had been developed well enough within the churches, to lead to the above mentioned resolution. The WNL originated a variety of activities since it came into being of which we shall discuss the most important ones:

A 4-page pamphlet was published at Pentecost 1975, to officially start the process, appealing to people to join or at least sympathize with the NL-movement. This pamphlet was widely distributed among church members. It presented NL not as an "austerity-movement" or an action to reduce meat consumption in the Western countries, but as a much broader concept that involved adopting another outlook and practice regarding people, nature, time, energy, money, natural resources,

consumption, production and so on. This approach was motivated by pointing at the urgent necessity of a more just sharing of this world's resources with both people living now and with future generations who are-or will be - deprived of such a fair share. It was also pointed at the need to break through dehumanizing and alienating aspects of our present society.

A number of brochures--called "injections"-- was published, aiming at further informing the groups that had started as a result of previous appeals. These brochures contained analyses of contemporary life styles and discussed subjects like over-consumption, solidarity with poor countries, the New International Economic Order, distribution of welfare, economic growth, environmental pollution, eating habits, income levelling, energy consumption, responsible stewardship, leisure time, working relations, alienation, communication and the like. These analyses stressed not only the need to change the dominant, primarily individual life style, but also the need to re-define the prevalent structure of society. A leading assumption underlying this approach is that life styles cannot and should not be isolated from the context of societal structures and vice versa. "Responsible stewardship" might be viewed as the binding concept between life styles and societal structures or social systems.

A central activity of the WNL was - and continues to be - to initiate small local groups trying not only to discuss dominant life styles but even more so to advocate and practice alternative life styles, based on the idea of responsible stewardship. Several hundreds of these basic groups have been called into being, some of them functioning rather satisfactory while others experience profound frustrations in changing their life styles. Perhaps the main frustration comes from the little impact - as perceived by the group - changed personal life styles have on restructuring society as such (1). This "it-doesn't-seem-to-help-very-much" perception is, of course, a well-known socio-psychological finding, which uncovers a rather serious obstacle to changing old and persistent life styles in favour of

alternatives (see bibliography, Ester, 1977).

Beside the churches, political parties, trade unions, consumer organizations, pressure groups, opinion leaders, mass media and leading government administrators were contacted to discuss the need for changing irresponsible production and consumption patterns and for promoting future-oriented policies based on solidarity, cooperation, participation and responsible stewardship.

In order to develop a broader and more generalized view on how the Dutch people evaluate the New Life Style Movement, the author conducted a nationwide survey including almost 1,500 interviews. In the following, we shall discuss some general results of this empirical investigation.

Research Plan

Research Object

The findings reported in this study are based upon an empirical, sociological investigation concerning attitudes and actions of the Dutch adult population towards the problem of environmental pollution. We were, among other things, particularly interested in the predictable occurrence of free-rider behaviour, meaning everybody, for instance, wants pollution to be ended but nobody wants to share voluntarily in paying the costs of providing the collective good of a clean environment: giving up a luxurious life style (see bibliography, Olson, 1965, 1971; Ester, 1977; Ester and Leeuw 1978).

The most important theoretical questions to be tested empirically were the following:

what is the degree of environmental concern, verbal commitment, actual environment commitment, perceived environmental powerlessness and the degree of willingness to make environmental sacrifices of the Dutch

adult population?

what kind of relations do exist between certain value patterns - especially religious values and norms - and expressed environmental concern and action of the Dutch people?

what is the level of congruence between expressed environmental concern and displayed environmental action?

Since one might argue that causes of, and solutions for, the problem of environmental degradation are closely related to our dominant Western life styles, characterized by a high rate of consumption and production, complex technology and waste of energy, and given that environmental pollution is a central topic within the NL-movement, we included some questions on new life styles. Thus, this study provides empirical data concerning

the degree of knowledge and affection of the Dutch people with regard to the NL-movement.

the relations between affection with the NL-movement and environmental concern and action of the Dutch adult population.

the role of religious and demographic variables in relationship to the above in the hope that these findings will be useful in the highly necessary discussion on alternative ways of life.

Research Design

In summer 1977 a random sample of 2532 house-addresses was selected from the general Dutch housing-register in cooperation with the Central Bureau for Statistics. Chance determined which person living at a particular address would be asked for an interview. One thousand four hundred and sixty persons (17 yrs) of this sample were interviewed in September 1977 after being contacted by letter. If corrected for wrong and non-existent addresses this procedure resulted in a response-rate of 61.9% which was lower than previously expected. However, the respondents closely resembled the nation's population demographically, with the exception of lower educational strata which were somewhat underrepresented.

Research Method

Several research instruments were constructed to measure the variables mentioned in this section, using mainly Likert-type scales previously tested in a pilot-study. These scales will be briefly summarized below (see Appendix for frequencies).

Environmental Concern Scale, consisting of 13 items like:

- I don't think we need to bother about environmental pollution
- in my opinion the whole problem of environmental pollution is being exaggerated

mean = 29 (range: 13-65)
KR-20^x = .89 (rather satisfactory)
St. Dev = 11

Willingness to Make Sacrifices Scale, 5 items like:

- as far as I am concerned taxes may be raised in order to reduce environmental pollution
- in my opinion we will have to give up a good deal of luxury to decrease environmental pollution

mean = 16 (range: 5-25)
KR-20 = .78 (satisfactory)
St. Dev = 5

Verbal Commitment Scale, consisting of 10 items, like:

- I will attend protest meetings if they want to build a polluting plant in my neighbourhood
- I would never join a protest demonstration against environmental pollution

mean = 29 (range: 10-1000)
KR-20 = .84 (rather satisfactory)
St. Dev = 9

Perceived Environmental Powerlessness Scale, containing five items like:

- political parties are only interested in my vote and not in my opinion on pollution problems
- people like myself do not have any influence on governmental policy regarding environmental pollution

mean = 16 (range: 5-25)
 KR-20 = .80 (satisfactory)
 St. Dev = 5

Religious Alienation Scale, six items like:

- the Bible teaches me to obey authority and therefore authority relations should not change
- we are not allowed to change our morals because the Bible taught us once and for all what is good and what is wrong.

mean = 22 (range: 6-30)
 KR-20 = .79 (satisfactory)
 St. Dev = 9

x: measure of homogeneity

Knowledge of NL

Only a small fraction of our sample (9%) responded positively to the question "Did you ever hear about the New Life Style Movement?". Even less people were able to indicate correctly the initiator of NL- the Dutch Council of Churches - and its main goals. Thus, until now only a rather small minority of the Dutch population is familiar with NL. It appears that better educated people with higher incomes and social-economic status as well as active church members are best informed about NL.

However, absence of knowledge does not necessarily imply absence of interest for important NL-goals and ideas. This will be analysed in the next section.

Attitudes to NL

We were especially interested in the degree of affection of the Dutch population towards Alternative Life Style-ideas, in order to develop a rough impression of the distribution and evaluation of these ideas. Based on discussions with WNL-members, the most important NL-goals were selected and next the respondents were asked to express their opinion on these goals. Table 1 indicates the percentual distribution of opinions. However, before interpreting Table 1, some methodological remarks should be made. As affection towards NL is a rather heterogeneous concept, containing elements at different levels (abstract versus concrete, radical versus less radical, far-reaching versus less far-reaching consequences) we had some difficulty in selecting valid NL-goals. Therefore, it was predicted that people would respond differently to these clearly multi-level items. Table 1 confirms this prediction.

Table 1. Opinions on NL-goals

	strongly positive	moderately positive	neither positive nor negative	moderately negative	strongly negative	don't know
not letting yourself be seduced into buying all kinds of luxury goods you actually do not need.	58%	22%	6%	6%	6%	1%
consuming energy (gas, oil, coal, electricity) as economically as possible.	69%	23%	4%	1%	2%	1%
reflecting on and discussing, within small groups of people, a more responsible and "frugal" way of life, because some people have a lot while others have little.	26%	30%	19%	11%	9%	5%
levelling income differences between people earning a lot and people earning much less.	38%	29%	11%	11%	9%	1%
making more time for people who need you.	54%	31%	8%	2%	2%	2%
discussing our unhealthy food habits, like eating food containing all kinds of chemicals.	50%	33%	9%	4%	3%	1%
actively helping people who are facing severe difficulties and misunderstanding in our society: migrant workers, prisoners, old people and the unemployed.	43%	32%	13%	5%	3%	2%
actively participating in actions aimed at giving people more power in their working situation.	17%	24%	16%	16%	24%	4%

not only saying society should change but being also actively involved in it.	42%	30%	13%	6%	6%	3%
participating in action groups to combat discrimination and injustice.	27%	23%	19%	11%	16%	4%
discussing within small groups of people on what oneself can do to help people in Third World countries.	29%	31%	16%	9%	10%	5%
asking yourself within small groups of people whether the way you live, spend your money and the way you communicate with other people is right.	24%	33%	17%	11%	9%	6%
noticing when you do your shopping the duration of life of the articles you buy because raw materials are scarce.	57%	24%	8%	5%	4%	2%
thinking about possibilities by means of voting, membership of all kinds of organizations to create a more progressive political climate.	32%	25%	17%	8%	9%	9%

It can be argued that in general the respondents show positive affection towards NL. However, this positive attitude diminishes when the NL-goals are more radically formulated and do have more drastic personal consequences. This applies especially to item 8 and 10. Moreover, it should be added that we are dealing with verbal and not with actual affection. This means people might show behavior which contradicts their verbal affection and preferences. One explanation could be that the personal "costs" involved in changing life styles, when compared with the "rewards" of present life styles, are perceived as being too numerous (see bibliography, Münch, 1972).

For the sake of further analysis an overall affection scale was computed. As for all scales mentioned, selection of items for scale construction is based on a factor-analytical approach (4). This statistical procedure resulted in an NL-Affection Scale containing 11 items - or goals - excluding item 1, 2 and 4 (see Table 1). Table 2 presents

the percentual distribution of scores on this computed scale.

Table 2. NL-Affection Scale

strongly positive affection	28%
moderately positive affection	36%
neither positive nor negative affection	23%
moderately negative affection	9%
strongly negative affection	4%

mean: 27 (range: 11-55) KR-20= .84 St. Dev = 12

Table 2, which as we stated has to be interpreted carefully, shows a decisive positive affection with New Life Style-goals. Only a small minority indicates a negative affection, while almost 25% of the respondents steer a middle course. It is interesting to explore the relations between scores on this affection scale and certain demographic variables like sex, age, education, income and socio-economic status. This will enable us to picture a demographic profile of a person strongly favouring NL-ideas.

The results of this exploration are presented below:

sex

there is no significant difference between sex on affection towards NL.

age

to our surprise there is a very weak - though significant - relation between age and attitudes towards NL. One would expect younger people to be more positive towards NL-goals compared with older people. However, this is hardly the case (Kendall's Tau B = $-.07$, Gamma = $.09$, sign = $.025$).

education

education was measured in a double sense. Educational level of the main income winner of the household the respondent belonged to. Educational level of the respondent if not income winner. We may conclude that the higher a person's education the more positive his NL-attitude (Kendall's Tau B = $.15$, Gamma = $.22$, sign = $.0001$, Kendall's Tau B = $.1$, Gamma = $.29$, sign = $.0001$).

income

again, surprisingly there is no significant relation between income and attitude to NL.

socio-economic status

like education, socio-economic status was measured in a double sense too. There appears to exist a moderately positive relation between

socio-economic status and NL-affection (Kendall's Tau B = .10, Gamma = .14, sign = .025; Kendall's Tau B = .19, Gamma = .26, sign = .0019).

The main conclusion of this exploration must be that it is hardly possible to portray a clear demographic profile of a person who either strongly favours, or disfavours NL. Perhaps such a profile is possible in terms of NL-related variables, like the attitude scales introduced in section 2c. Table 3 presents the relationships between NL-affection and the attitude scales with regards to environmental pollution.

Table 3. Relationship Between Attitudes Towards NL and Environmental Pollution

	<u>Attitude Towards NL</u>		
	Kendall's Tau B	Gamma	Sign
Environmental Concern	.26	.35	.001
Willingness to Make Sacrifices	.29	.39	.001
Verbal Commitment	.35	.46	.001
Perceived Environmental Powerlessness	-.17	-.23	.001

This Table reveals some very interesting relationships. The more positive a person's attitude towards New Life Styles-ideas, the more he is concerned about environmental degradation and the more he is willing to make direct, personal, material sacrifices in order to reduce the pollution problem. These relations are highly significant and rather strong. However, the strongest relation exists between NL-affection and verbal environmental commitment. The stronger his/her NL-affection, the more a person is willing to engage in all kinds of activities aimed at combatting the pollution problem. Finally, persons having a positive attitude towards NL feel less powerless to fight environmental pollution than persons having a more negative attitude. Again, it appears that environmental concern and related variables are closely connected with the expressed need for alternative life styles.

In our introductory remarks we mentioned the religious background of the New Life Styles Movement in the Netherlands. For this reason we will now explore the relationship between religious affiliation and affection towards NL. According to our data, there hardly exists a difference between the affection of church and non-church members. Moreover, variables like going to church, donations to church, ecclesiastical identification do not result in statistically significant, different evaluations of NL-ideas. On the other hand, there seems to be a weak but significant negative relation between religious alienation (see section 2c) and affection with NL (Kendall's Tau B = .08, Gamma = .10, sign = .003).

It is also noteworthy that religiously alienated persons are objecting more to the biblical legitimation of the NL-Movement than non-alienated persons (Kendall's Tau B = -.15, Gamma = -.20, sign = .001).

It is plausible then, to conclude that Alternative Life Styles-ideas as such do not have a special appeal to church-affiliated persons, compared with non-church members.

In this context three other variables will be analysed: degree of religious and political progressiveness and what could be called "horizon of responsibility". By this variable we mean whether people solidarize with, and feel responsible for, problems of people in other countries and parts of our world or just bother with their own problems and their own direct neighbourhood. Table 4 shows the relations between these variables and attitude to NL.

Table 4. Religious and Political Progressiveness, Horizon of Responsibility and Affection with NL

	<u>Affection with NL</u>		
	Kendall's Tau B	Gamma	Sign
Political progressiveness	.14	.24	.0001
Religious progressiveness	.10	.17	.0005
Horizon of responsibility	.30	.45	.0001

Table 4 indicates a moderately positive relation between political and religious progressiveness and affection with NL. However, a much stronger positive relation exists between horizon of responsibility and affection towards NL. Thus the more a person feels he has to be solidary with people in other countries, the more he favours NL.

So far we have been concerned with verbal affection towards NL. The next section will present data on the question whether or not people would join the New Life Styles Movement.

Willingness to Join the NL-Movement

The respondents were asked whether they would participate, if a local NL-group was to originate in their neighborhood, dealing with questions of when and how to practise alternative ways of life (see Table 1).

Table 5. Verbal Commitment to NL

I would directly join the NL-group	3 %
Perhaps I would join the NL-group	31 %
Probably I would not join the NL-group	20 %
I certainly would not join the NL-group	35 %
I don't know	12 %

Table 5 indicates that one third would be willing to consider participation in a local group discussing and searching for new life styles, where as another third would certainly not join. Only a small minority would certainly join such a NL-group. This Table already shows something of a possible difference between verbal affection and verbal commitment. Table 6 presents a cross tabulation of these two variables which might make this incongruence more clear.

Table 6. Verbal Affection and Verbal Commitment

Verbal Commitment	Verbal Affection					
	strongly positive	positive	neither positive nor negative	negative	strongly negative	
I would directly join	27	7	3	0	0	37
perhaps I would join	216	157	55	12	3	443
probably I would not join	74	134	64	14	9	295
I certainly would not join	68	157	158	79	31	493
	385	455	280	105	43	1268

Kendall's Tau B = .38
 Gamma = .53
 Sign = .0001

Although there is a strong positive relation between verbal affection and verbal commitment, it should be noticed that 40% of persons strongly favouring, and almost 65% of persons moderately favouring NL would probably or certainly not join a NL-group. Thus, it seems verbal affection is a necessary, but not a sufficient condition for verbal commitment.

As with verbal affection, we now explore the relationship between verbal commitment and demographic variables.

sex

no significant difference exists between sexes' verbal commitment.

age

contrary to verbal affection there is a significant (.0001) negative relation between age and verbal commitment (Kendall's Tau B = -.17, Gamma = -.24). Thus, the younger a person the more likely he/she is to consider participation in a NL-group.

education

the reader will recall the two measurements of education. The relation proves a moderately positive one (Kendall's Tau B = .14, Gamma = .20, Sign = .0001; Kendall's Tau B = .12, Gamma = .19, Sign = .0006).

income

surprisingly, there is a very weak positive relation between income and willingness to join a NL-group (Kendall's Tau B = .05, Gamma = .07, Sign = .025).

socio-economic status

contrary to what one might expect, no significant relation exists between socio-economic status and verbal commitment.

We may conclude that with the exception of age and education, it is difficult to characterize NL-committed persons in terms of demographic variables.

Next, we will explore the relationship between verbal commitment and the attitude scales concerning environmental pollution.

Table 7 indicates that the more verbally committed a person is to NL, the more he/she is concerned about environmental pollution, the more he/she is willing to make sacrifices in order to reduce pollution, the more he/she is willing to engage in anti-pollution activities and the less powerless he/she feels to combat environmental pollution.

Table 7. Verbal Commitment and Attitudes towards Environmental Pollution

	Verbal Commitment to NL		
	Kendall's Tau B	Gamma	Sign
Environmental Concern	.22	.31	.0001
Willingness to Make Sacrifices	.25	.34	.0001
Verbal Environmental Commitment	.33	.46	.0001
Perceived Environmental Powerlessness	-.14	-.20	.0001

Roughly the same pattern occurs as we saw in the case of verbal affection with NL.

Turning to religious affiliation, there appears to be no significant difference in verbal commitment between church and non-church members. The same holds for ecclesiastical identification. However, people going frequently to church and persons being active in it, are slightly more willing to join a NL-group. To our surprise no significant relation exists between religious alienation and verbal commitment. Actually, a significant negative relationship was expected. Thus, we may conclude that verbal commitment to NL is difficult to characterize unambiguously in terms of variables concerning religion.

It might be interesting to analyse whether this is also true when taking into account perceived horizon of responsibility and religious and political progressiveness.

Table 8. Political and Religious Progressiveness, Horizon of Responsibility and Verbal Commitment to NL

	Verbal Commitment to NL		
	Kendall's Tau B	Gamma	Sign
Political progressiveness	.05	.10	.02
religious progressiveness	.15	.25	.0001
horizon of responsibility	.18	.28	.0001

Table 8 shows positive and highly significant relations between verbal commitment to NL and religious progressiveness and perceived horizon of responsibility. Political progressiveness however does not lead to much differentiation in verbal commitment.

Ecological Behaviour

So far we developed an empirically based impression on the way the Dutch adult population evaluates NL, its willingness to join the NL-movement as well as an impression of its opinions on environmental pollution, its willingness to make sacrifices, its verbal ecological commitment and its perceived environmental powerlessness. This means we were primarily dealing with attitudes, not with actual behaviour. We now will present empirical data on relevant ecological actions.

As with affection towards NL, ecological or environmental behaviour is a clearly heterogeneous concept, a melting pot of different kinds of actions. Therefore, selection of environmental actions for research purposes inevitably implies subjectiveness. In the following, a distinction is made between primarily individual and primarily social actions. Individual ecological behaviour points, for instance, to consumption behaviour and energy use, whereas social ecological behaviour deals with engagement in collective action. Table 9

presents frequencies of some ecological actions. It might be argued that most of the actions selected are positively or negatively associated with an ecologically conscious life style.

Table 9. Ecological Behaviour

	that's what I often do	that's what I sometimes do	that's what I never do	not appli- cable
actively assisting in establishing exhibitions on environmental protection	2 %	5 %	94 %	
travelling by public transport and not by car	20 %	27 %	40 %	13 %
engaging in actions against polluting waste discharge by industries	3 %	8 %	89 %	
removing litter left by other people	22 %	41 %	36 %	
taking electric power consump- tion as a criterion when buying electrical equipment	43 %	23 %	33 %	
financially supporting envi- ronmental organizations	15 %	26 %	58 %	
using plastic bags	44 %	44 %	11 %	
attending protest demon- strations against planning of traffic roads in natural areas	2 %	5 %	92 %	
participating in actions against polluting plants	3 %	7 %	89 %	
putting garbage in cartons and not in plastic bags	10 %	14 %	49 %	27 %
being as economical as possible with energy (gas, electricity, oil, coal)	55 %	28 %	17 %	
purchasing plastic articles	22 %	58 %	15 %	6 %
buying spray cans	10 %	46 %	38 %	5 %
buying phosphate-containing detergents	37 %	20 %	25 %	17 %

buying fruit and vegetables not treated with chemicals	16 %	19 %	52 %	13 %
buying chlorine	20 %	48 %	19 %	13 %

Although Table 9 lists a rather arbitrary and subjective set of actions, it appears that ecologically conscious behaviour hardly finds acceptance in our sample. Pro-ecology behaviour is the exception rather than the rule.

Special attention should be paid to the fact that only a small fraction of the respondents mentioned engagement in collective action. Individual ecological behaviour, primarily based on economical motives, is more frequently expressed (5, 11). But generally spoken, ecologically conscious behaviour is incidentally rather than broadly accepted. However, it could hold that environmentally concerned people are more engaged in pro-ecology behaviour than less concerned persons. In order to analyse whether environmental attitudes might differentiate this "pattern of disengagement" cross-tabulations between attitudes and behaviour have been computed. Table 10 presents these tabulations including the relationships between environmental behaviour and affection towards and commitments to NL.

Table 10. Ecological Attitudes and Ecological Actions

		Environmental Concern Scale	Willingness to Make Sacrifices Scale	Verbal Commitment Scale	Perceived Environmental Powerlessness Scale	Affection with NL-Scale	Verbal Commitment to NL
actively assisting in establishing exhibitions on environmental protection	Kendall's Tau B						
	Gamma Sign	N.S.	.06 .21 .0036	.12 .38 .0001	N.S.	.06 .19 .0105	N.S.
travelling by public transport and not by car	Kendall's Tau B						
	Gamma Sign	.10 .15 .0001	.05 .07 .0146	.15 .21 .0001	-.05 -.07 .0193	.12 .18 .0001	.13 .19 .0001
engaging in actions against polluting waste discharge by industries	Kendall's Tau B						
	Gamma Sign	.11 .31 .0001	.14 .36 .0001	.21 .54 .0001	-.08 -.20 .0005	.16 .44 .0001	.13 .35 .0001
removing litter left in the open by other people	Kendall's Tau B						
	Gamma Sign	.15 .21 .0001	.15 .20 .0001	.18 .26 .0001	-.05 -.07 .0126	.13 .19 .0001	.13 .19 .0001
taking electrical power consumption as a criterion when buying electrical equipment	Kendall's Tau B						
	Gamma Sign	.07 .11 .0017	.10 .14 .0001	.16 .23 .0001		.11 .16 .0001	.08 .12 .0011
financially supporting environmental organizations	Kendall's Tau B						
	Gamma Sign	.14 .22 .0001	.18 .27 .0001	.20 .30 .0001	-.10 -.15 .0001	.15 .24 .0001	.16 .25 .0001
using plastic bags	Kendall's Tau B						
	Gamma Sign	N.S.	-.04 -.06 .0379	-.05 -.07 .0197	N.S.	-.05 -.08 .0148	N.S.
attending protest demonstrations against planning of traffic roads in natural areas	Kendall's Tau B						
	Gamma Sign	.10 .33 .0001	.11 .34 .0001	.22 .63 .0001	-.07 -.21 .0016	.13 .40 .0001	.17 .52 .0001
participating in actions against polluting plants	Kendall's Tau B						
	Gamma Sign	.05 .15 .0145	.08 .20 .0005	.20 .52 .0001		.12 .34 .0001	.11 .32 .0001
putting garbage in cartons and not in plastic bags	Kendall's Tau B						
	Gamma Sign	.06 .10 .0139	.10 .16 .0001	.07 .11 .0056	-.05 -.09 .0224	.07 .12 .0037	.08 .12 .0112

being as economical as possible with energy, (gas, oil, electricity, coal)	Kendall's Tau B	.10	.11	.12	.12	.11
	Gamma	.16	.16	.18	.19	.18
	Sign	.0001	.0001	.0001	.0001	.0001
purchasing plastic articles	Kendall's Tau B	N.S.	N.S.	N.S.	N.S.	-.05
	Gamma					-.08
	Sign					.0369
buying spray cans	Kendall's Tau B	-.13	-.14	-.06	-.09	-.10
	Gamma	-.19	-.20	-.09	-.14	-.15
	Sign	.0001	.0001	.0001	.0001	.0001
buying phosphate-containing detergents	Kendall's Tau B	-.07	-.07	.06	.09	-.10
	Gamma	-.10	-.09	.09	.12	-.15
	Sign	.0049	.0036	.0059	.0003	.0001
buying fruit and vegetables not treated with chemicals	Kendall's Tau B	N.S.	.07	.09	N.S.	.10
	Gamma		.11	.13	N.S.	.15
	Sign		.0013	.0002		.0003
buying chlorine	Kendall's Tau B	N.S.	N.S.	N.S.	.08	-.06
	Gamma				.11	-.07
	Sign				.0008	.0410
						.0131

Looking at Table 10, the following conclusions can be drawn. First, in general the relations between attitudes and expressed behaviour are as theoretically expected. The more a person is concerned about pollution, the more he/she is willing to make personal sacrifices and to engage in ecological action; the less powerless he/she feels, the more this person is likely to express ecologically conscious behaviour. The same holds for affection towards and commitment to NL. Second, it should be added at once that the statistical relations, although mostly significant, are rather or even very weak, especially when individual ecological behaviour is considered such as buying chlorine, fruit and vegetables not treated with chemicals, spray cans, phosphate-containing detergents, putting garbage in cartons, travelling by public transport, minding consumption of electrical current or using plastic bags.

Thus, although the relations found as such are not in contradiction with theoretical expectations, one has to conclude that different ecological attitudes and evaluations of NL hardly lead to pronounced differentiation in actual individual behaviour.

It is further interesting to notice that relationships between attitudes and engagement in collective action are somewhat stronger. This holds especially for verbal ecological commitment and collective action.

But the general conclusion must nevertheless be that ecological attitudes influence actual ecological behaviour only to a small extent. One could suppose that absence of an ecologically conscious life style is due to the fact that people feel they are neither responsible for environmental degradation nor consider themselves able to reduce environmental pollution, by merely practising the actions listed on Tables 9 and 10. When asking, however, who was primarily to blame for environmental degradation, 47 % responded that it is the people themselves, whereas 35% pointed at industry. Moreover, 88% of the respondents gave as their opinion that people themselves are doing much too

little to combat environmental pollution.

As for the personal actions, the respondents were asked whether they thought it would help to practice the ecologically conscious actions mentioned in Table 9 and 10 in order to combat environmental pollution. It turned out that a majority responded positively.

Thus, it seems we are dealing with free-rider behaviour: most people verbally favour a more ecologically conscious life style but do not translate this attitude into their actual behaviour. This incongruence means a serious obstacle and challenge to advocates of alternative life styles.

Concluding Remarks

It would be a severe simplification to suggest that the analysis presented in this paper necessarily leads to pessimism about possibilities of establishing alternative, ecologically conscious life styles. Above all it appeared that as far as Holland is concerned, people evaluate alternative life styles positively, they are worried about environmental pollution, quite willing to make personal sacrifices and to engage in ecologically relevant behaviour. The point is, however, that they fail to translate their opinions and attitudes in consonant behaviour.

What is needed, then, is a useful theory explaining this discrepancy. Let us bring forward some elements of such a theory.

As long as society itself and especially the political system refrain from ecologically conscious policies and do not advocate the need for alternative life styles, people do not have a coercive incentive to change their own life styles. Therefore, we should urge governments and political parties to reflect and criticize their own policies in terms of a meta-economic cost-benefit analysis. As long as governmental policies are not based on fundamental human needs and rights, as described by Galtung and Wemegah, one can hardly expect people to

change their dominant life styles.

It seems plausible to assume that people are resistant to changing their individual life styles because they feel the expected costs of personal behaviour modification are simply too high. It must be added that gradually and sometimes unperceivedly, we are getting used to certain pleasant aspects of our dominant life styles such as luxury, consumption or welfare, and curiously even to unpleasant and destructive aspects like threatening wars and exhaustion of raw materials.

One way to change individual cost-benefit analysis of alternative ways of life might be to diminish the perceived costs by pointing to what one gets back in return, for instance: a less neurotic way of life, characterized by solidarity, cooperation, responsibility, affection, self-expression, social transparency, partnership with nature, absence of violence, well-being and creativity. To sum up: a life style being consonant with basic human needs, the idea that alternative life styles primarily mean giving up pleasant things and practising mediaeval austerity must be strongly opposed.

A third consideration is that for lack of knowledge people probably do not know what ecologically conscious behaviour and alternative life styles actually mean. On face value, this seems a rather plausible assumption. There are two obvious solutions to this problem. The first solution simply is to provide people with unambiguous information on ecological behaviour and alternative life styles, containing practical lines of action. Mass media, education, opinion leaders and churches could play an important role in this search for alternative life styles, not forgetting our well-paid scientists. Second, one could think of initiating small local groups, like the ones in Holland, actually and visibly practising alternative ways of life, starting from the principle of responsible stewardship. One could hope that such basic groups set an example and debouch into a radiation effect.

A question that easily arises in this context concerns "sacrifices" the Dutch people would have to make, or certain changes that would have to take place, in order to reduce environmental deterioration.

Predictable and plausible answers to this question probably point to the necessity of selective consumption, recycling, non-littering, ecologically responsible recreation, willingness to acquire and apply ecological knowledge, selective use of energy (notably electricity) and water, insulating houses, buying durable products, refraining from using plastics and chemicals, travelling by public transport and so on. Of course, such actions are necessary and should be promoted from an ecological point of view.

However, this is only part of the story. For one might doubt whether these individual, ecologically conscious actions are effective unless accompanied by governmental and industrial ecologically justified policies.

Ecologically desirable and responsible behaviour should not be analysed exclusively at a micro-level (citizens), but also, at a macro-level (societal structures). It would be an untenable, one-sided view to blame only individual persons for environmental deterioration and having them make all the sacrifices. Environmental pollution is mainly caused, directly or indirectly, by chemical industry, technology, prevailing economical growth perspectives, industrialization, physical planning and the like.

Since we are presently confronted with highly important questions in the field of macro-political choices concerning energy supply (nuclear energy?), selective economical growth, large scale, spatial planning and transport, ecologically conscious behaviour, especially nowadays, means critical analysis and engagement in political and economic decision procedures.

It can be argued that governmental environmental policy in the Netherlands is characterized by opportunism, pleasing antagonistic interests and lacking long term views (ecology is getting out of fashion!) Therefore one might say that ecologically conscious and concerned behaviour implied above all abstaining from free-rider behaviour and apathy, and engaging in creative thinking and in collective action with regard to political decisions considering our natural environment. One could think, for instance of voting behaviour, of being active in political parties or pressure groups and of participation in decision-making processes. Thus, ideally ecologically conscious behaviour implies both individual behaviour modification and participation in collective action.

Nevertheless all these efforts will be in vain if not inspired by what Roger Garaudy has called "une foi militante et créatrice pour laquelle le réel n'est pas seulement ce qui est, mais tous les possibles d'un avenir qui apparaît toujours impossible à qui n'a pas la puissance de l'espoir".

Appendix

This appendix contains frequencies of the scales mentioned in this paper.

1. Environmental Concern Scale

strongly positive	37%
moderately positive	29%
neither positive nor negative	25%
moderately negative	8%
strongly negative	2%

2. Willingness to Make Sacrifices Scale

strongly positive	13%
moderately positive	28%
neither positive nor negative	29%
moderately negative	17%
strongly negative	12%

3. Verbal Environmental Commitment Scale

strongly positive	9%
moderately positive	24%
neither positive nor negative	32%
moderately negative	23%
strongly negative	12%

4. Perceived Environmental Powerlessness Scale

strongly agree	17%
moderately agree	20%
neither agree nor disagree	31%
moderately disagree	21%
strongly disagree	10%

5. Religious Alienation Scale

strongly alienated	9%
moderately alienated	22%
neither alienated nor de-alienated	29%
moderately de-alienated	21%
strongly de-alienated	19%

Notes

1. This appeared from an inquiry among existing NL-groups in Holland initiated by the WNL in summer 1976.
2. This pilot-study was based on a quota sample of 155 respondents.
3. All tables in this study contain rounded off percentages.
4. Varimax rotation with Kaiser normalization.

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