

MMC4302 World
Communication Systems

Karter Thomas

The Netherlands



The Netherlands

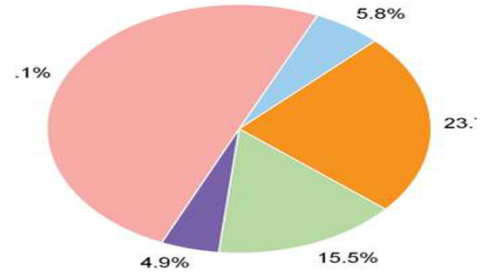
Media System & Culture

Karter Nancy Thomas

Dutch Culture

- Most citizens speak Dutch
- Constitutional Monarchy
- Very tolerant society (religion, general views, practices)
- Tourism
- Bikes

religious affiliation (2015)



Titannica, Inc.



Dutch Culture

The Netherlands is a small European country located between Belgium and Germany. The capital is Amsterdam. Dutch and Frisian are the official languages of the Netherlands. (Amsterdam Info). In the northern part of the country the Frisian dialect is taught and spoken. Most people are encouraged to learn a foreign language, usually English, in addition to their native language during their early-education years. Many Dutch also people know German or French. The Netherlands is a republic with a constitutional monarchy, meaning that the king or queen is established in the constitution. The Dutch use Euros as their currency.

The country is widely tolerant of different viewpoints, and this is present in many aspects of Dutch culture. The Dutch are known for having a carefree attitude which translates into their easygoing day-to-day life. The Dutch are known for

allowing practices such as soft drugs and prostitution, which are taboo in most places in the world. Another general example of the Netherlands' tolerant society is their acceptance of all types of different ideas. In terms of religion, "28% of the population identify as Roman Catholic, 19% identify as Protestant, and 11% identify with some other religion. Nearly half of the population (42%) does not identify with any religion" (CIA World Factbook) (Dutch Religion). The Netherlands was the first country to legalize same-sex marriage. (Britannica).

Tourism is a small but important part of the Netherlands' economy. Tourists enjoy observing the laid-back practices of the Dutch as well as beautiful Dutch art, architecture and flowers. Tulips are an important industry for the Netherlands, and they produce billions of bulbs each year. The Dutch have more tulips than any other country. In addition, tourists also enjoy the beautiful tulips, windmills, canals and scenic bike rides the country has to offer (Traditional Holland).

Another cultural aspect that makes the Dutch unique is their love for riding bikes; cycling is a favored transportation in the Netherlands. In fact, the Netherlands has more bikes than people with "17 million residents and 23 million bikes" (CNN). In the 1960s, cars were starting to be seen as the transportation of the future, but the Dutch people recognized how many lives, especially children, were ending due to motor accidents. That's when fierce activism began to turn the Netherlands, specifically cities like Amsterdam and Utrecht, into the most bike-

friendly places in the world (along with Denmark!). There are several paths made for cycling around the country that are clearly marked with smooth surfaces, separate signs and lights, and plenty of space.

Geographic Features and Occupation over the Years

- Land vulnerable to flooding – The Dutch created defenses to protect their land
- Canals
- Eighty Years' War; the Netherlands war of Independence
- The Kingdom of the Netherlands – Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg
- Independence of Belgium and Luxembourg



Geographic Features and Occupation over the Years

According to National Geographic, “The Dutch have a saying: God made the Earth, but the Dutch made Holland.” This quote holds truth because the North Sea would have flooded the Netherlands, but the Dutch created defenses to protect their land. Overtime, its people have built the famous canals, dams, dikes and pumping stations to hold the sea back. Without these defenses, “65% of the county would be flooded daily.” (National Geographic) The Netherlands has no mountains or borders, which made it difficult to protect itself throughout history. For much of history, the Netherlands was occupied by foreigners. (National Geographic) Early on, the country was ruled by many different groups, eventually leading to the Spanish occupying them. In the late 1500s, the Dutch attempted to overthrow their

Spanish Rulers, but it wasn't until they fought in the Eighty Years' War and gained independence in 1648. During Napoleonic Wars, for 25 years, Belgium, Luxembourg and the Netherlands were one country known as the Kingdom of the Netherlands. Belgium and the Netherlands became independent in 1839 with Luxembourg becoming independent in 1890. (National Geographic).

In 1940, the principle of Dutch foreign policy to avoid international conflict was to remain neutral and not pick sides unless attacked. Despite the Netherlands' claim of being "neutral" towards Nazi Germany, Germany invaded the Netherlands and took over. While they occupied the country, the Germans killed anyone who helped the Dutch Jews or resisted the Nazis in any way. Anne Frank, one of the most prominent victims of the Holocaust, hid in a house in Amsterdam for two years from the Germans. The house can be visited by citizens and tourists alike who are interested in learning her story, remembering those who lost their lives and the impact World War 2 had on the country. Canadian forces were given the important and deadly task of liberating the Dutch people from Nazi occupation. "Today, Canada is fondly remembered by the Dutch for ending their oppression under the Nazis" (The Canadian Encyclopedia).



Media System

- Press freedom is highly valued
- Algemeen Nederland Persbureau
- TV & Radio

Article 7 of the Dutch constitution

- (1) No one shall require prior permission to publish thoughts or opinions through the press, without prejudice to the responsibility of every person under the law.
- (2) Rules concerning radio and television shall be laid down by Act of Parliament. There shall be no prior supervision of the content of a radio or television broadcast.
- (3) No one shall be required to submit thoughts or opinions for prior approval in order to disseminate them by means other than those mentioned in the preceding paragraphs, without prejudice to the responsibility of every person under the law. The holding of performances open to persons younger than sixteen years of age may be regulated by Act of Parliament in order to protect good morals.
- (4) The preceding paragraphs do not apply to commercial advertising.

Media System

The Netherlands is ranked #4 in the 2019 World Press Freedom Index. Press freedom is highly valued in this country. Journalists are generally protected by legal framework and most Dutch journalists are a part of the Federation of Journalists (NVJ). (RSF Ranking) There are articles in the Dutch constitution recognizing freedom of the press. Article 6 states that people have the right to freely exercise their religion or life conviction. Article 7 addresses freedom of communications media and press; It states that no one is obligated to seek permission before expressing ideas and guarantees privacy of communications in the form of emails, telephone or telegraph. There are a few exceptions to article 7,

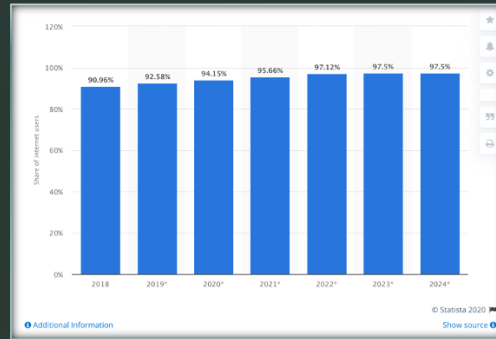
but these articles widely protect the freedom of the Dutch media system. (Press Reference the Netherlands)

The leading national press agency is *Algemeen Nederland Persbureau* (ANP) founded in 1934. ANP used to be owned by the media themselves but is now privately owned. Almost every Dutch media that handles international exchange of news uses ANP. In 2001, a competitor was introduced Novum Nieuws. In 2015, ANP bought Novum. In the Netherlands, “ANP represents the news agencies Agence France-Presse (AFP), Deutsche Presse Agentur (DPA), EFE (Spain) and Belga (Belgium).” (Werkwijze)

In the Netherlands, every province has at least one local public TV channel (there are 12 provinces) and there are three national public TV networks with several stations, each of which have high-audience rates. There are 35 daily newspapers and 49 nondaily newspapers (Press Reference the Netherlands). Many newspapers have an online platform in addition to their physical paper.

Digital Communication

- High internet penetration
- Facebook & WhatsApp are the top social media
- TV & Newspapers
- Radio



Digital Communication

Internet penetration in the Netherlands is very high. In 2020, 94.15% of Dutch are on the internet. According to Statistica, internet penetration is expected to rise to 97.5% by 2024. The graph on this slide displays this information (Statistica). Online media are now the most used by the Dutch, with Facebook being the most used social media. WhatsApp is the second most-used app.

Traditional TV viewing in the country has diminished and been replaced by a growing amount of people using streaming services like Netflix and Hulu. However, there are still three groups dominating the traditional national market for television in the Netherlands: NPO, SBS, and RTL. There are 12 channels of the three national TV networks that are “responsible for 80 percent of the market share in the past 25 years” (Media Landscapes Television).

The Netherlands became an all-digital broadcasting system in 2006. All TV sets sold after 2006 are digital and conform to HD standards. There are some newer TVs that are also compatible with 3D. TV is delivered through cable, terrestrial or satellite. TV packages tend to be bundled with other packages like internet and phone services. The majority of TV is in Dutch, but sometimes there are networks provided in English or international programs adapted to the Dutch audience. For example, Nickelodeon which is based in the US has a Dutch version of the network that plays in the Netherlands with a combination of Dutch content subtitled or dubbed. “Most imported shows, with the exception of children shows, are shown in their original language with subtitles. The same applies to news interviews with responses from foreign languages.” (Expatica)

There is newspaper circulation, but readers are decreasing, as seen in a lot of parts of the world. Despite newspapers diminishing, there are still plenty of daily and nondaily papers. In addition, a lot of Dutch people enjoy listening to the radio, especially music channels. Two national radio stations compete on news, public broadcaster Radio 1 and commercial station BNR. According to Media Landscapes, radio is the most trusted medium by citizens.



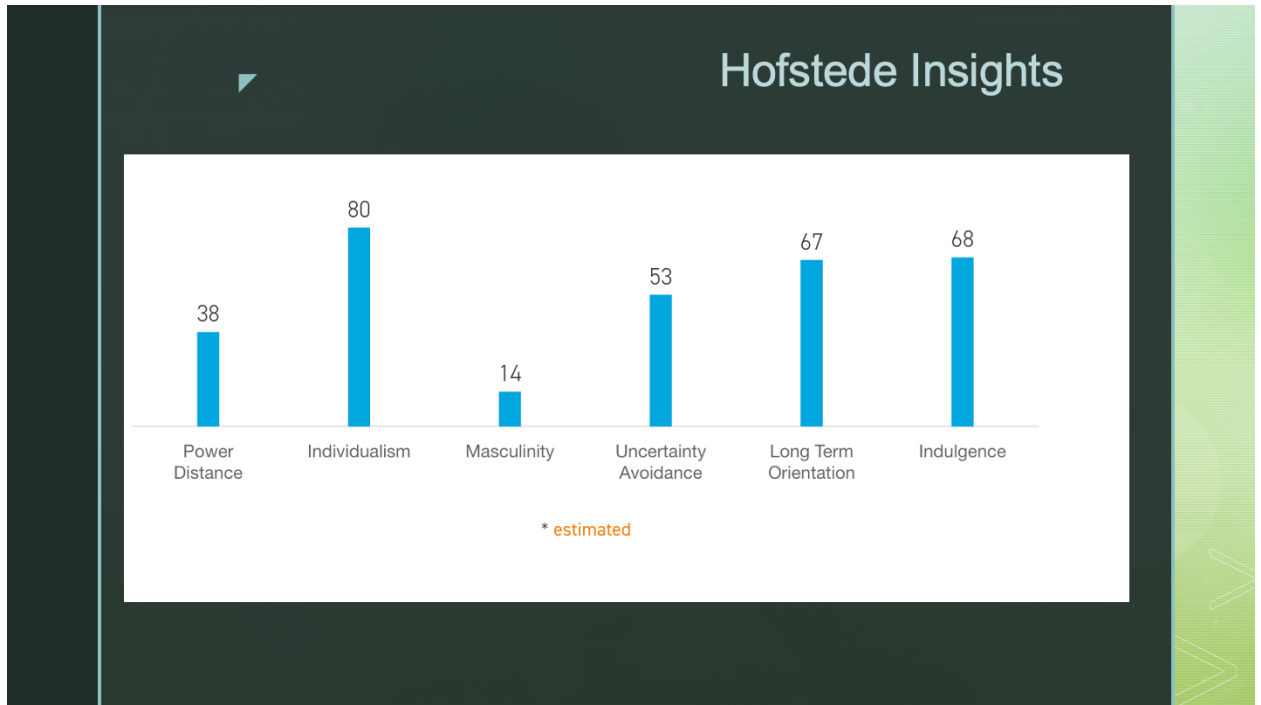
Media System Comparison

In order to truly understand the Netherlands and its unique system, I decided to compare the country to its two neighbors Belgium and Germany. I learned that Belgium is made up of three main parts that speak different languages and have different types of people, therefore making it difficult to speak to a “unified Belgian media market” (Media Landscapes Belgium). This is different than the Netherlands where the majority of its people speak the same language. The Netherlands and Belgium also have constitutional monarchies whereas Germany functions as a republic.

Press freedom is worsening in Belgium. They went from being ranked #7 in to #9 in the World Press Freedom Index. Belgium only has one major news agency

Belga News Agency. On the other hand, Germany is “among the countries with the highest amount of press agencies in its own language.” (Media Landscapes Germany). There is a main internationally active news agency called the *Duetsche Presseagentur* (DPA) in Germany, and most newspapers are affiliated with this agency which means the DPA is one of the most important sources of news. Belgium, Germany and the Netherlands all share the idea of having one main media system that dominates their country.

The Netherlands ranks the highest for people with access to the internet. In Belgium, the internet penetration rate is 87.9% whereas Germany is at 89.6%. The most popular media platforms are Google and Facebook in Belgium. In Germany, the most popular social media platforms are Facebook, Youtube and Whatsapp. Germany is more similar to the Netherlands in terms of social media usage due to Facebook and Whatsapp being among the most popular apps.



Hofstede Insights

Hofstede Insights provide us with analytical data that examines cultural norms. Hofstede tests the power distance, individualism, masculinity, uncertainty avoidance, long term orientation and indulgence features in a culture and scales the results.

Power distance analyzes how people in societies deal with power balance or how people in lower positions accept those in higher ones. The Netherlands has a low power distance score which reflects its equal-minded culture. There tends to be an empowering society.

Next, Hofstede looks at individualism. Does the society look at themselves in terms of “I” or “We?” The Netherlands has a very high score of 80 which means

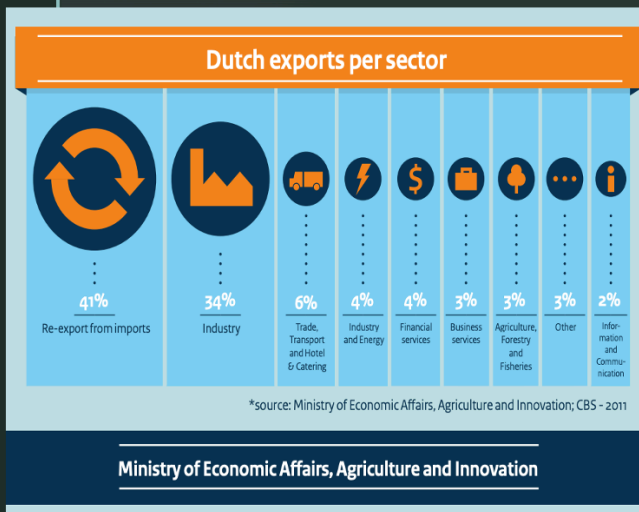
there is a desire for a “loosely-knit social framework in which people care for themselves and their immediate family members only.”

Hofstede categorizes a country in terms of its masculinity – need for competition, driven by success – or its femininity – willingness to work together, caring for others, quality of life. The Netherlands is a feminine society with a low score of 14, meaning that people find the life/work balance to be important. The Dutch are also known for being excellent negotiators and having long discussions until everyone’s needs are fulfilled.

The uncertainty avoidance is a dimension that considers how a society copes with the unknown. The Netherlands scores a 53, so they are about halfway between being a carefree society and one that has emotional needs for rules.

The dimension of long-term orientation describes how societies maintain links to its past while managing current and future conflicts. The Netherlands scores high at 67 and thus has an adaptive orientation that shifts with the times and does not mind straying from tradition.

Lastly, Hofstede measures indulgence and how much people in a society control their desires and impulses. In the Netherlands, the score is high at 68, and this reflects how Dutch people generally recognize appreciating impulses as enjoying life. They tend to possess a positive attitude. (Hofstede Insights Netherlands)



World-Systems Theory

- Core nation
- Strong world presence
- Highly regulated mixed economy
- Trade

World-Systems Theory

During this course, we learned about the world-systems theory and how countries are divided into a three-level hierarchy: core, semi-periphery and periphery nations depending on certain factors. According to this theory, the Netherlands is a core nation. Core nations “dominate and exploit the peripheral countries for labor and raw material.” (World Systems Theory Study Lesson). They are strong in power and do not depend on other countries. “The first core region was located in northwestern Europe and made up of England, France, and Holland.” In this way, the Netherlands has a very strong world presence and influence.

The Netherlands has a highly regulated mixed economy. The Netherlands has “traditionally been a significant participant in such fields as transportation, resource extraction, and heavy industry” (Britannica). The Netherlands is known for its great agricultural production, particularly of the dairy industry, exporting products such as butter, cheese and condensed milk. The Netherlands usually conducts trade with other countries in Europe and in North America. $\frac{3}{4}$ of Dutch exports and $\frac{1}{2}$ of the country’s imports directly go to member states of the EU (Britannica).

According to the World Integrated Trade Solution (WITS), The Netherlands mainly shares exports with Germany, Belgium, the UK, France, the US, and Italy whereas they mainly receive imports from China, Germany, Belgium, the US, the UK, and Russia. The Netherlands mainly shares machinery and transport equipment, chemicals, mineral fuels; food live and livestock, and manufactured goods. (Trading Economics Netherlands)

➤ Digital Advertising

- The Ad industry took off during the 1990s in the Netherlands
- General Data Protection Regulation
- Dutch Data Protection Authority
 - Advertising Code Authority



Digital Advertising

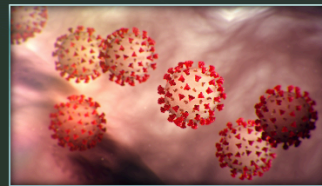
The history of modern mass advertising in the Netherlands begins around 1850, but most growth occurred during the 1950s, '60s and '70s. At the turn of the 21st century, there were over 1,300 ad agencies in the country. Some of the most successful ad agencies are a part of The Dutch Association of Communication Agencies (VEA) has approx. 115 members who represent over 75% of the actual turnover of all Dutch agencies. The first personalized ad was said to be in 1975 by *Reader's Digest (Het Beste Uit Reader's Digest)* introducing a man's Opel line. It was sent out to 350,000 subscribers and included a coupon for the line. (Media Entertainment Netherlands)

During the 1990s, the ad industry in the Netherlands grew quicker than ever. Now, the growth is slowing but people, nonetheless, are still interacting with online advertising (PWC Netherlands). Internet advertising often brings up issues of privacy for consumers. In the Netherlands, these concerns have been addressed by the EU's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) which was the first in a global trend of privacy and protection regarding personal data collected online. The Dutch Data Protection Authority (DPA) announced its first violation policy in July 2019 where it issued a fine. (Media Entertainment Netherlands)

The Dutch also have a committee that governs advertising across multiple platforms. The Dutch Advertising Code Authority has created the Dutch Advertising Code that highlights several rules for digital advertising and commercial messages. The main rule is that advertising that makes misleading claims is not allowed. (Advertising Business Gov) (Media Entertainment Netherlands)

Current Events

- Van Gogh painting stolen
- Coronavirus



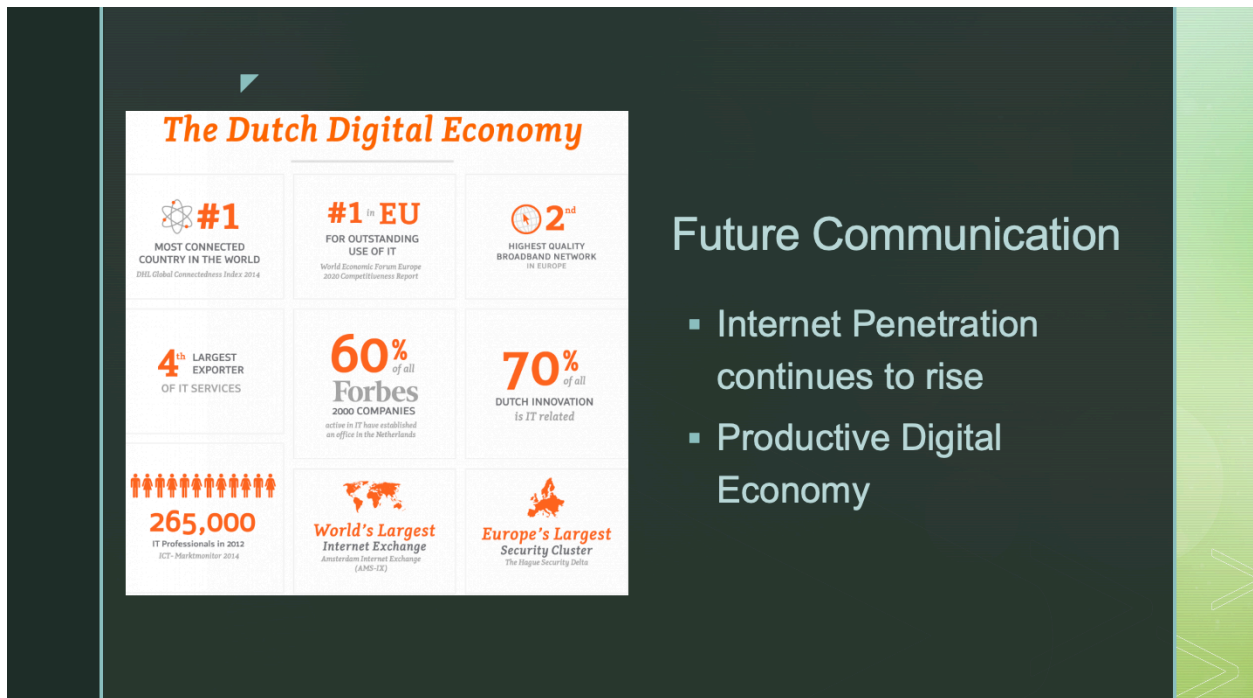
Current Events

Recently, a painting by Dutch artist Van Gogh was stolen from a museum near Amsterdam. Christopher F. Schuetze is the journalist who wrote this story for the European section of the New York Times. Schuetze mainly covers German news but is very familiar with the Netherlands, as he lived there before Germany.

Schuetze reported that the painting *The Parsonage Garden at Nuenen in Spring* was stolen overnight from a small museum around 3a.m. When police arrived, the thief had already left. The journalist interviewed the museum's director over the telephone who stated that she was extremely angry and sad over losing the painting. (The New York Times)

In recent decades, the Netherlands have experienced various Van Gogh painting thefts. There have been 28 total paintings stolen. However, each painting was recovered despite being stolen by 6 separate thieves. It is thought that several pieces of important, stolen art tend to resurface. (The Art Newspaper) There is hope that *The Parsonage Garden at Nuenen in Spring* will turn-up like the rest.

There is speculation that, due to the coronavirus, the thief recognized the vulnerability of the museum. According to the New York Times, museums in the Netherlands had closed March 13th due to the outbreak (The New York Times). The coronavirus has currently taken the lives of 2,248 Dutch people (worldometer). The virus is impacting the world and making its impact on the Netherlands.



The Future of Digital Communication in the Netherlands

I think that the Netherlands is heading in a good direction for their future in digital communication. It's very impressive that the country is in the top 5 for freedom of the press, and I think the Netherlands will successfully raise their position. There is a clear goal in the Netherlands to have media be transparent, and I think they will continue to provide balanced and respected content.

In addition, I expect the internet penetration rate will continue to grow. As more people go online, digital advertising, mobile subscriptions, and data regulation will continue to increase. Overall, their future seems bright and they seem to be up to date with the current digital age.



Discussion Question

What can the Netherlands specifically do to increase their World Press Freedom Index score? What important steps need to be taken in order to establish an improved media system for the Dutch people?

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