

## 6. TECHNICAL ANNEX

The Dutch FFS of 1993, NFFS'93, is based on a representative sample of men and women living in the Netherlands and born in the period 1950-1974 (i.e. around 18-42 years of age at interview), regardless of their marital status, country of birth or nationality. Of these 3.1 million men and 3.0 million women in the population on 1 January 1993, approximately 3,700 men and 4,500 women were interviewed in the period February to June 1993. A random sample was taken in two steps. In the first step, according to the number of addresses in proportion to the total number of addresses in the Netherlands, municipalities were drawn from the Geographical Base Register. In the next step, the actual addresses were drawn. At each address persons aged 18-42 years, with a maximum of three, were invited for an interview.

### The sample

The interviews of the NFFS'93 were held face-to-face by experienced interviewers of Statistics Netherlands. All interviewers were women, mostly middle-aged. During instruction meetings the objectives of the survey and potential interview problems were discussed. The interviewers pre-screened the addresses by telephone, so addresses without persons in the 18-42 age range did not need to be visited<sup>8</sup>. Laptop computers, now standard in Statistics Netherlands interview practice, were used for the first time in NFFS'93. The questionnaire was written in BLAISE, a computer language developed by Statistics Netherlands, which has the advantage of automatic routing and built-in controls to prevent inconsistent replies.

### Fieldwork

The sample consisted of 19,998 addresses to be visited by interviewers during the first half of 1993, of which 1,103 could not, for various reasons (no time, illness, not a dwelling unit) be contacted. The response of the remaining 18,895 addresses in NFFS'93 can be evaluated at the address or household level, or at the person level.

### Response

In 39.0 per cent of the households contacted there was no respondent in the age bracket concerned. At addresses where someone was eligible for an interview the response at the household level (at least one person responding) was 48.5 per cent. This response is in line with other recent SN household surveys. In general in the Netherlands the public willingness to participate in surveys is lower than in most other countries. Explicit refusal accounted for 2/3 of the total non-response. In the end 5,599 households were interviewed. Table 6.1 gives the response based on the households which contained at least one candidate.

### Response at the address or household level

**Table 6.1**  
**Response at address level**

|   |              |              |             |             |             |
|---|--------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| At address  |              |              |             |             |             |
| no eligible respondent (*)  | 7363         |              | 39%         |             |             |
| eligible respondent (*)   | 11532        |              | 61%         |             |             |
| response at address   |              | 5599         | 49%         |             |             |
| non-response  |              | 5933         | 52%         |             |             |
| of which :  |              |              |             |             |             |
| refusal   |              |              |             | 3917        | 66%         |
| 3x not at home, did not open the door,<br>language difficulties, illness, holiday<br>not residential, exceptional circumstances,<br>address not found, etc. |              |              |             | 2016        | 34%         |
| <b>Total</b>  | <b>18895</b> | <b>11532</b> | <b>100%</b> | <b>5933</b> | <b>100%</b> |

(\*) with correction in distribution at addresses without contact (3x not at home, etc.)

Each responding household could contain more than one candidate. In 3,191 households there were two eligible candidates (table 6.2). In only 17 of the 5,599 responding households were there more than three eligible candidates. In these households only 3 candidates were selected.

**Table 6.2**  
**Responding households: number of candidates in households  
by number of selected candidates and responding persons**

|                                    | Household by number of candidates |       |       |       |       |       |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
|                                    | Total                             | one   | two   | three | four  | five  |
| <b>a. Absolute numbers</b>         |                                   |       |       |       |       |       |
| Total number of households         | 5599                              | 2259  | 3191  | 132   | 15    | 2     |
| one                                | 2265                              | 2259  | 6     | -     | -     | -     |
| number of respondents in household |                                   |       |       |       |       |       |
| one                                | 2265                              | 2259  | 6     | -     | -     | -     |
| two                                | 3186                              | -     | 3185  | 1     | -     | -     |
| number of respondents in household |                                   |       |       |       |       |       |
| one                                | 736                               | -     | 735   | 1     | -     | -     |
| two                                | 2450                              | -     | 2450  | -     | -     | -     |
| three                              | 148                               | -     | -     | 131   | 15    | 2     |
| number of respondents in household |                                   |       |       |       |       |       |
| one                                | 42                                | -     | -     | 34    | 6     | 2     |
| two                                | 40                                | -     | -     | 35    | 5     | -     |
| three                              | 66                                | -     | -     | 62    | 4     | -     |
| <b>b. Relative numbers</b>         |                                   |       |       |       |       |       |
| Total number of households         | 100.0                             | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| one                                | 40.5                              | 100.0 | 0.2   | -     | -     | -     |
| number of respondents in household |                                   |       |       |       |       |       |
| one                                | 40.5                              | 100.0 | 0.2   | -     | -     | -     |
| two                                | 56.9                              | -     | 99.8  | 0.8   | -     | -     |
| number of respondents in household |                                   |       |       |       |       |       |
| one                                | 13.1                              | -     | 23.0  | 0.8   | -     | -     |
| two                                | 43.8                              | -     | 76.8  | -     | -     | -     |
| three                              | 2.6                               | -     | -     | 99.2  | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| number of respondents in household |                                   |       |       |       |       |       |
| one                                | 0.8                               | -     | -     | 25.8  | 40.0  | 100.0 |
| two                                | 0.7                               | -     | -     | 26.5  | 33.3  | -     |
| three                              | 1.2                               | -     | -     | 47.0  | 26.7  | -     |

Response decreased with the number of eligible candidates. Of the 3,191 households with two candidates, 76.8 per cent (2,450) of the households responded completely. In the case of households with 3 candidates (132), only 47.0 per cent (62) responded completely. Per household, on average, 1.57 respondents were interviewed.

The 5,599 responding households resulted in 9,102 candidates, 90.3 per cent of whom agreed to an interview. Some selectivity in the response became visible. Among other things, men participated less than women. Moreover, when a household consisted of more than one person, men and children participated less. Older men refused more often than younger men, while among women the younger ones refused more often. One explanation for this is that among men mainly the heads of households refuse to respond (they are often older). In table 6.3 the information on person-level response is presented in more detail.

### Response at the person level and selectivity in response

**Table 6.3**  
Persons in responding households: response by sex, position in the household, age and marital status

|                 | Absolute numbers |          |              | Relative numbers |          |              |
|-----------------|------------------|----------|--------------|------------------|----------|--------------|
|                 | Total            | response | non response | Total            | response | non response |
| <b>Total</b>    | 9,102            | 8,221    | 881          | 100.0            | 90.3     | 9.7          |
| <b>man</b>      | 4,419            | 3,705    | 714          | 100.0            | 83.8     | 16.2         |
| single          | 578              | 578      | -            | 100.0            | 100.0    | -            |
| head            | 2,979            | 2,402    | 577          | 100.0            | 80.6     | 19.3         |
| partner of head | 6                | 5        | 1            | 100.0            | 83.3     | 16.7         |
| child           | 811              | 692      | 119          | 100.0            | 85.3     | 14.6         |
| other           | 45               | 28       | 17           | 100.0            | 62.2     | 37.8         |
| <20             | 226              | 195      | 31           | 100.0            | 86.3     | 13.7         |
| 20-24           | 751              | 654      | 97           | 100.0            | 87.1     | 12.9         |
| 25-29           | 871              | 747      | 124          | 100.0            | 85.8     | 14.2         |
| 30-34           | 1,005            | 831      | 174          | 100.0            | 82.7     | 17.3         |
| 35-39           | 949              | 786      | 163          | 100.0            | 82.8     | 17.2         |
| >=40            | 617              | 492      | 125          | 100.0            | 79.7     | 20.2         |
| married         | 2,343            | 1,872    | 471          | 100.0            | 79.9     | 20.1         |
| divorced        | 137              | 118      | 19           | 100.0            | 86.1     | 13.9         |
| widowed         | 3                | 3        | -            | 100.0            | 100.0    | -            |
| never married   | 1,936            | 1,712    | 224          | 100.0            | 88.4     | 11.6         |
| <b>woman</b>    | 4,683            | 4,516    | 167          | 100.0            | 96.4     | 3.6          |
| single          | 481              | 480      | 1            | 100.0            | 99.8     | 0.2          |
| head            | 208              | 206      | 2            | 100.0            | 99.0     | 1.0          |
| wife            | 2,754            | 2,687    | 67           | 100.0            | 97.6     | 2.4          |
| partner of head | 634              | 611      | 23           | 100.0            | 96.4     | 3.6          |
| child           | 559              | 500      | 59           | 100.0            | 89.4     | 10.6         |
| other           | 47               | 32       | 15           | 100.0            | 68.1     | 31.9         |
| <20             | 241              | 218      | 23           | 100.0            | 90.5     | 9.5          |
| 20-24           | 840              | 797      | 43           | 100.0            | 94.9     | 5.1          |
| 25-29           | 949              | 913      | 36           | 100.0            | 96.2     | 3.8          |
| 30-34           | 1,056            | 1,030    | 26           | 100.0            | 97.5     | 2.5          |
| 35-39           | 965              | 943      | 22           | 100.0            | 97.7     | 2.3          |
| >=40            | 632              | 615      | 17           | 100.0            | 97.3     | 2.7          |
| married         | 2,779            | 2,710    | 69           | 100.0            | 97.5     | 2.4          |
| divorced        | 196              | 191      | 5            | 100.0            | 97.4     | 2.6          |
| widowed         | 19               | 17       | 2            | 100.0            | 89.5     | 10.5         |
| never married   | 1,689            | 1,598    | 91           | 100.0            | 94.6     | 5.4          |

Some of the characteristics of the responding population in the NFFS'93 could be compared with integral population statistics or with results of other surveys. Based on these comparisons, the results were weighted on the person level. The weighting procedure

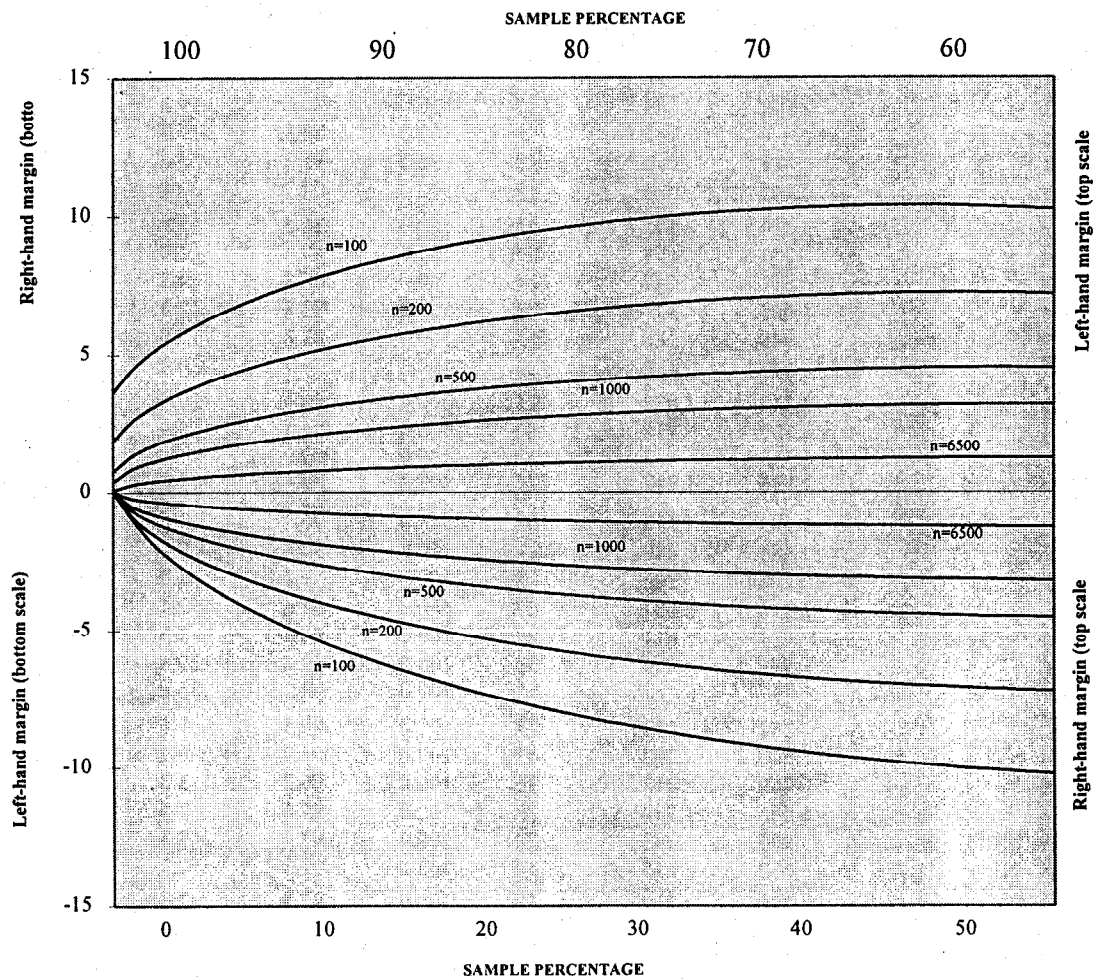
### Weighting

was carried out separately for men and women. Background variables in the weighting procedure were year of birth, marital status, household position, nationality, number of inhabitants per municipality and - only for women - the number of live born children. Individual weights varied between .16 and 4.90.

## Confidence intervals

In addition to non-response and other effects not caused by sample errors, deviations related to the sampling method may occur. When interpreting numbers (n) and percentages (p) from sample surveys, it should always be taken into account that the sample may not be an exact representation of the population from which it is drawn. Confidence intervals should therefore be taken into account. These intervals, or margins, are calculated on the basis of a one-step random sample. The 95 per cent confidence intervals for various values of n and p can be read from figure 6.1, where n is the sample size and p the percentage observed in the sample. For example, if  $p=10$  and  $n=100$ , then the "true" value can, with 95 per cent certainty, be expected to lie between  $10+7.6=17.6$  and  $10-5.1=4.9$ .

Figure 6.1  
95 per cent confidence intervals



## FOOTNOTES

(1) Most of these themes contain questions which are more or less comparable with those of other FFS' s coordinated by the PAU. The latter keeps track of the number of countries with comparable information on each particular research theme through an Excel database containing, for each variable, the corresponding variable names, if any, from all national FFS questionnaires for which back-translations in one of the UN/ECE languages have been provided. If variables are only partially implemented, this is indicated by the PAU.

(2) The household information is based on information on the position of the respondent. The information is representative because the FFS results are weighted on person level. The household position was one of the background variables in the weighting procedure (see also Chapter 6).

(3) A partner is someone with whom the respondent has an intimate relationship, whether within a marriage or not, and with whom the respondent lives in the same household. In the Dutch FFS partnerships are not restricted to heterosexual partnerships. However, among the respondents the percentage of homosexual partnerships is relatively low. Formal and informal partnerships are distinguished by using information on the marital status of the respondent in combination with her/his information about the presence of a partner. For instance, if the respondent is single and lives with a partner (of the opposite or the same sex), she or he will be classified as "single with partner". Children refer to all biological, step, foster or adopted children who are single (an extra restriction compared with the PAU standard), regardless of age.

(4) The term "non-marital cohabitation" is used for partnerships involving co-residence without marriage, including homosexual partnerships (although these make up less than 1 per cent). Where a "non-marital cohabitation" is followed by a marriage with the same partner, then this cohabitation will be referred to as "pre-marital cohabitation". A "pre-marital cohabitation" together with an ensuing marriage counts as one single partnership.

(5) The problem of intermingling various effects plays a part in this analysis. For example, people who married at a young age had no or hardly any time to cohabit before they married. For those who are older now, cohabiting while they were young was not an option (period effect). For this reason, partnership dissolution can also be depicted by duration-specific intensities, not only between marriages and consensual unions, but also between marriages with and without pre-marital cohabitation. However, these results (Appendix, tables 10 and 11, b-d) will not be discussed.

(6) The Dutch FFS questionnaire uses the terms "do you think you will have...", or, "do you expect...", rather than "do you want any (more) children", as stipulated in the FFS model questionnaire.

(7) The items presented in this section are not identical to those in other FFS Standard Country Reports, but they are to some extent related.

(8) Since the first months of 1993 were peak times for Statistics Netherlands interviewers, logistic problems forced SN to pre-screen sample addresses by telephone for the presence of appropriate candidates (the method of pre-screening reduced the number of visits from around 30,000 to 10,000). The difference in response between addresses screened by telephone and those not screened only amounts to some 0.5 per cent. This means that the influence of pre-screening is small.