

Spatial differences and the impact of the lockdown on well-being in the Netherlands

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Linked to a large-scale French study elaborated and Launched by Lise Bourdeau-Lepage (2020), the 23th March, a Dutch version of the questionnaire was distributed. The aim of the questionnaire is to map spatial differences in the impact of the Dutch lockdown on well-being and lifestyles. Almost 2 000 respondents completed the survey in the period April 13 - May 5. These respondents come from all over the Netherlands: all provinces are well represented and the distribution between urban and rural areas is representative. Due to the method of distribution (*via* Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn), both age and education levels are not representative: relatively many people aged 25-65 and people with a high education level completed the survey (see appendix).

I- Lessons: The more urban, the more adverse the impact

The main conclusion we can draw from the initial analyses is that space, and especially urbanity, matters. On average, well-being has declined across the country, but in the dense urban areas the decline is greater than in the least urban areas. And although no significant differences in well-being between urban and rural areas were experienced before the lockdown, this is the case during the lockdown.

Respondents living in the most urban areas experience a greater decline in exercising, they suffer more from mental health issues and are more often bored than respondents from the rural areas. This has partly to do with the environment and partly with the composition of the population. Respondents living in a single-family house with a garden often have a higher level of life-satisfaction than people with an apartment without a terrace/balcony. In addition, young people, who more often live in the city, suffer more from boredom and health problems. Their life-satisfaction has also deteriorated more than that of the other age groups in our sample.

A look into the future shows that two-thirds of the respondents think that something will change in their way of working after this crisis and 41% expect a change in their environmental awareness.

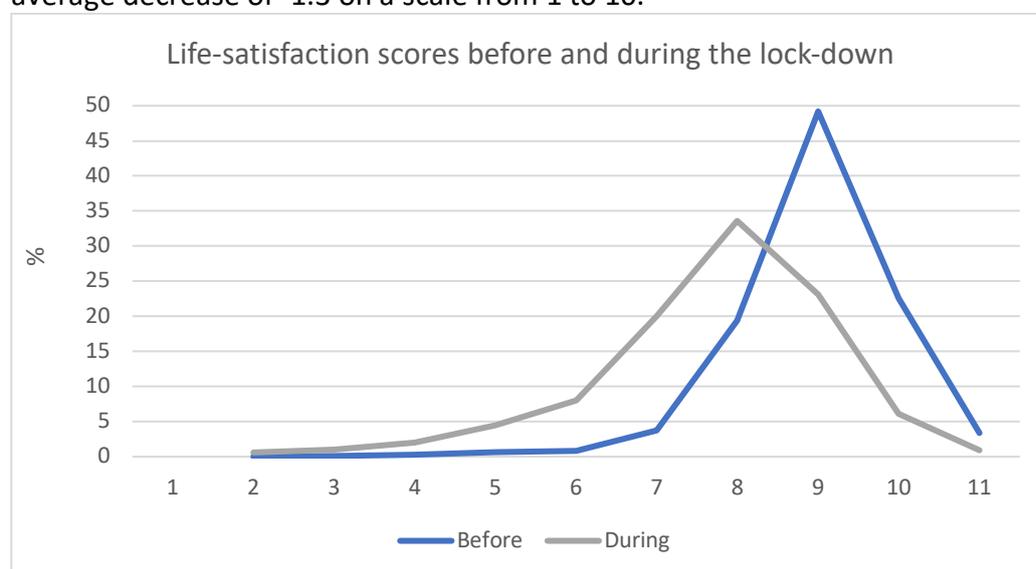
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II- Detailed results

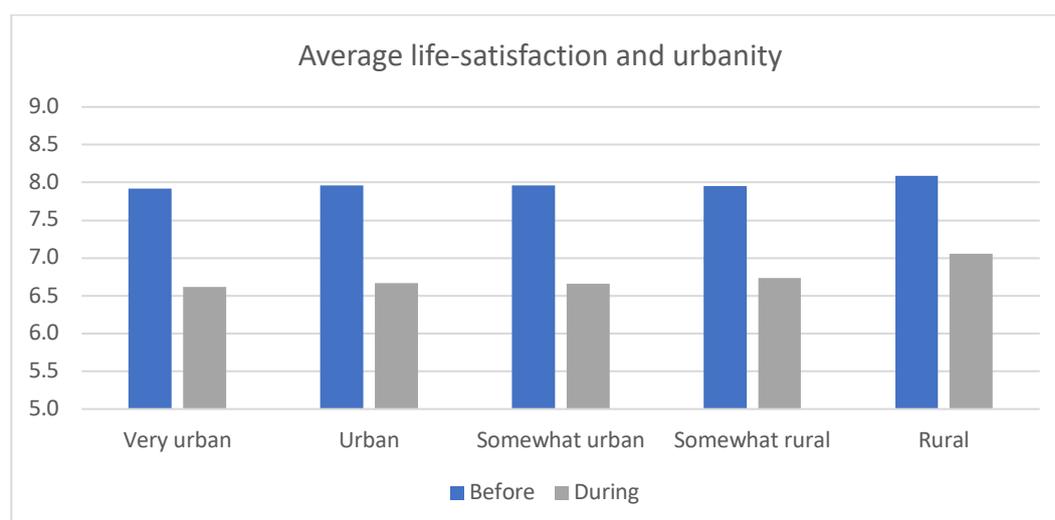
Decrease of life-satisfaction, especially for urban people

On average, well-being has deteriorated sharply. The average decreased from 8.0 to 6.7: an average decrease of -1.3 on a scale from 1 to 10.



Sources: Bourdeau-Lepage L. and van Leeuwen E.S., 2020, *Hoe gaat het nu? Over welzijn en de lockdown*.

Our research shows that there are significant differences during the lockdown between urban and rural areas. During the lockdown, people are significantly happier in the most rural areas (7.1 vs 6.6). This while no significant differences were experienced before the lockdown.



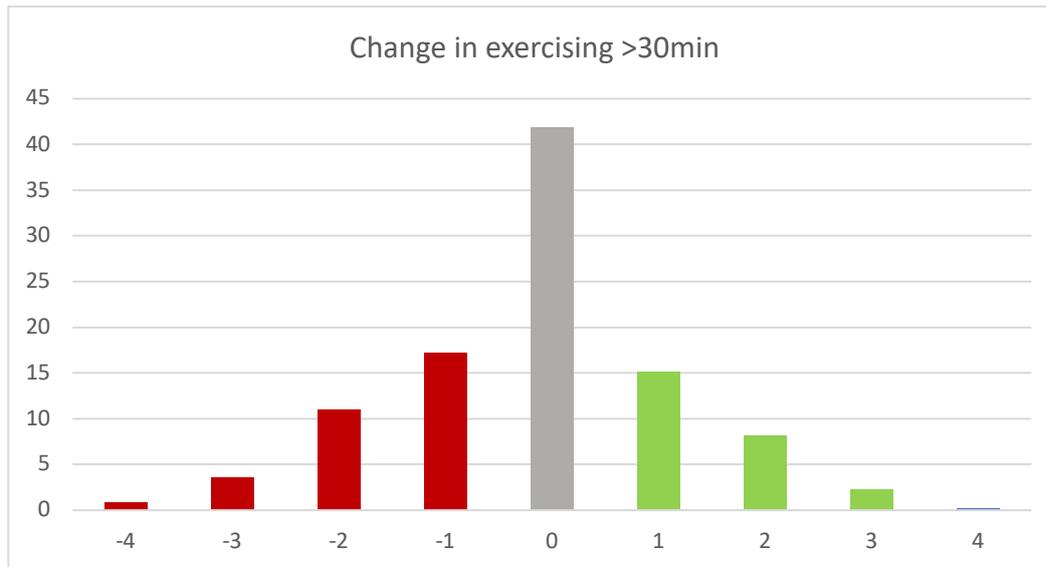
Sources: Bourdeau-Lepage L. and van Leeuwen E.S., 2020, *Hoe gaat het nu? Over welzijn en de lockdown*.

We find no significant differences between provinces. Noord-Brabant, with a longer period of lockdown, does not have a lower average welfare level or a larger average decrease in welfare than the rest of the Netherlands.

People living in an apartment without a balcony or terrace are least happy during the crisis. Young people (aged 18-25) are more affected by the lockdown: their well-being has deteriorated most (from 7.9 to 6.2). The difference with the other age groups is significantly different.

Significant differences between urban and rural areas on practicing sports and exercising

On average, people exercise just a little less during the lockdown period than before. So, 42% sees no change, 26% exercise more often and 32% less often.



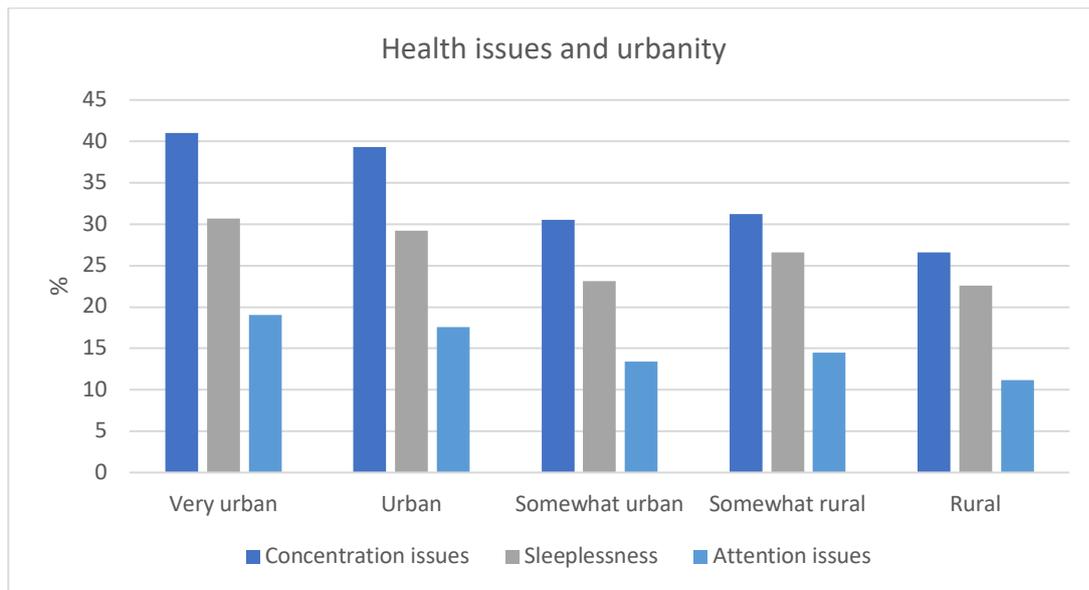
Sources: Bourdeau-Lepage L. and van Leeuwen E.S., 2020, *Hoe gaat het nu? Over welzijn en de lockdown*.

When looking at the differences between groups, we see:

- Before the lockdown, respondents in highly urbanized areas practiced sports / exercised significantly more often for 30 minutes than people in less urban areas and rural areas.
- This has changed significantly during the lockdown: people in very urban areas experience the greatest decline in sports / exercise, while respondents from the most rural areas have started to exercise more on average. During the lockdown, people in urban areas also go outside (briefly) less often (> 15 min) compared to respondents in rural areas.
- However, no differences are found between age groups and between house type and / or having a garden.

Important impact of lockdown of mental health

Based on ten questions about the increase in physical and mental health issues, we can conclude that in particular concentration problems, irritability and fatigue and feelings of sadness have increased. As much as 35-42% of the respondents indicate that they experience this more often during the lockdown.

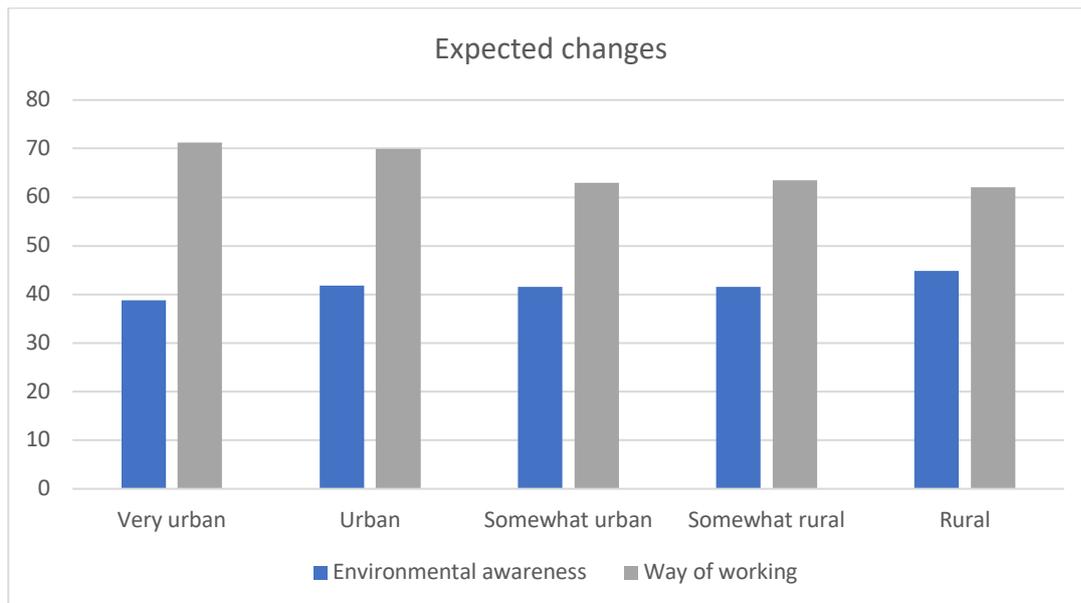


Sources: Bourdeau-Lepage L. and E. van Leeuwen E., 2020, *Hoe gaat het nu? Over welzijn en de lockdown*.

- We don't see any significant differences between provinces, but a difference between city and country. Respondents in the (very) urban areas report significantly more health problems (in number) compared to respondents from the most rural areas.
- Younger people (n = 137) experience significantly more physical and psychological problems due to the lockdown than all other age groups. They also experience significantly more boredom. The elderly (n = 138) experience the least problems.
- People in a house / apartment without a garden or balcony experience more complaints.

And the future?

Finally, we also asked how the respondents expect the current crisis to change their behavior in the future. Two thirds of the respondents expect that something will change in their way of life and their way of working, only 41% that something will change in their environmental awareness.



Bron: Bourdeau-Lepage L. and van Leeuwen E.S., 2020, *Hoe gaat het nu? Over welzijn en de lockdown*.

The more urban, the more people expect their way of working to change. The more rural, the more people expect their environmental awareness to change (not significant). Young people in particular expect that the crisis will change their way of life, not necessarily their way of working. We do not find any differences between types of houses.

Next steps

The next step in this research will be to estimate statistical models to better understand the impact of urbanity on well-being and health during the lock-down, while controlling for relevant (individual) factors. Furthermore, we will look at the open question answers to add qualitative insights. Finally, we will compare these Dutch results to the French and wider European results.

Bibliography

- Bourdeau-Lepage L., 2020, *Le confinement et ses effets sur le quotidien*, Lyon (France), https://www.researchgate.net/publication/340917664_Le_confinement_et_ses_effets_sur_le_quotidien_Premiers_resultats_bruts_des_2e_3e_semaines_de_confinement_en_France
- Bourdeau-Lepage L. and van Leeuwen E.S., 2020, *Hoe gaat het nu? Over welzijn en de lockdown*, University of Lyon and Wageningen University, 13th April.

Appendices: representativeness of the dataset

Distributions in our dataset are compared to the actual distributions, obtained from Dutch Statistics (CBS).

