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### **Variation in the European Union - 2019, Report to the government**

'Variation in the European Union' focuses on the way in which the Member States can continue cooperating in a productive and constructive manner and the degree to which they should or should not strive to achieve uniformity in that cooperation. By accepting variation, the Union can avoid wasting energy on attaining a level of uniformity that is not really necessary. Variation makes it possible to forge credible ties with the democracies of the Member States. It offers scope and flexibility to provide collectively for public safety and security, stability, prosperity and social protection. Accepting variation as a structuring principle reduces tensions and prevents major disparities lurking beneath a show of unity from undermining the credibility of the Union. The book's proposal for the Union's development going forward emphasises variation more than has been the case thus far. Recognising and accepting variation means that differences in needs and in democratically supported convictions are taken seriously. Variation is not a sign of weakness; rather, it avoids wasting energy and political credit to attain a level of uniformity that is not really necessary. Variation can thus be a proactive means of revitalising the relationship between institutions and citizens, and between public tasks and needs.

### **The Fall of the Middle Class. Stability and Vulnerability in the Middle Segment of Society - 2018, Investigation**

This WRR publication provides an insight into the changes that have occurred in the middle segment of Dutch society since the 1970s. The analysis encompasses four aspects: developments affecting people with middle incomes, with intermediate skills and in intermediate occupations, as well as attitudes towards politics and society.

### **For the Sake of Security. The future of flexible workers and the modern organisation of labour - 2017, Investigation**

The number of people who have a permanent job is decreasing while insecurity on the labour market is increasing. In the Netherlands, a growing number of people are working on temporary contracts: the number of self-employed workers is rising and many aspects of the way work is organised are changing. Another trend is hybridisation, resulting in new combinations and hybrid forms of work. At the same time, many stake holders and bodies are worried that flexibilisation is going too far. Returing to the past is not an option and not desirable; there are no easy answers. However, the government, the business community, employers' and employees' organisations and citizens all have an influence on the way we work. The aim should be to organise the flexible labour market in such a way that it is consistent with the economy and society that we want and, at the same time, provide flexible workers with greater security.

### **Big Data and Security Policies: Serving Security, Protecting Freedom - 2017, Policy Brief**

The WRR explores the opportunities and risks associated with the use of (Big) Data analysis by the police and judicial authorities, intelligence and security services and in combating fraud. The WRR breaks down Big Data processes into three phases: collection, analysis and use of data. The present legal frameworks mainly cover the collection and sharing of data, but offer too little protection to citizens. The greatest opportunities and risks of Big Data lie in the phases of data analysis and use, and it is here that a new framework of rules is needed.

### **Towards a Food Policy - 2016, Report to the government**

For years The Netherlands has pursued a successful agricultural policy. However, the world of food has changed and food has become the subject of intense public debate. The issues that are important in the Netherlands cannot be seen separate from global developments. The challenges relate to ecological sustainability, public health and the robustness of the food supply. The WRR explores the consequences of those challenges and the specific vulnerabilities, opportunities and responsibilities they create for the Dutch government and Dutch society. It is time for an explicit food policy; a policy that takes into account the diversity of values in relation to food, the relationship between production and consumption and the changing power relations in the food system. In this report, the Council also highlights the need to invest in the resilience of the food system.

**Long-term commitment for national climate policy in the Netherlands - 2016, Policy brief**

Climate policy for the long term calls for a balance between political commitment and adaptive capacity. This policy brief recommends enhancing the institutional safeguards and long-term perspective in Dutch national climate policy. A Climate Act could legally determine a national emissions budget. A Climate Authority is necessary to ensure consistent implementation in various policy areas and at different levels of administration.

**Migration and Classification: Towards a Multiple Migration Idiom - 2016, summary of Investigation**

The categorisation and labelling commonly used in the Dutch migration debate are outdated. The term ‘allochtonen’, used to describe people with at least one parent born abroad, and the term ‘autochtonen’, used for people whose parents were born in the Netherlands, are no longer appropriate. The same applies to the distinction between ‘western’ and ‘non-western’. Migrants are nowadays so different as regards country of origin and the reason for migration that they can no longer be covered by these single umbrella terms. Furthermore, these labels create a sense of exclusion and subordination.

**Finance and Society: restoring the Balance - 2016, summary of Report to the government**

In ‘Finance and Society: Restoring the Balance’ the WRR advocates structural changes in socioeconomic policy that will strengthen society and make it less dependent on the dynamics of the financial sector. To complement this, the WRR calls for measures to achieve a more robust financial system that actively supports economic development and the resilience of society.

**Exploring the Boundaries of Big Data - 2016, Investigation**

Big Data is making headlines almost every day. Intelligence services are investing in Big Data to combat global terrorism; companies are using it to optimize and personalize their services and the healthcare industry is adopting data analytics to improve delivery of medical care. Are these realistic hopes? What are the potential downsides of using Big Data? This study offers a full and comprehensive account of the different aspects of this phenomenon.

**No Time to Lose: From Reception to Integration of Asylum Migrants - 2016, Policy Brief**

Attention for migrants is currently focused on the problems relating to the local reception of new groups of asylum seekers. At the same time, however, policymakers face a fundamental challenge: how to facilitate the integration into Dutch society of asylum seekers who have been granted a residence permit. This study focuses on the need for an accurate and rapid procedure in which greater attention is devoted to the labour potential of permit holders. Such an approach would enable permit holders to support themselves and begin contributing to society sooner. This in turn will strengthen public support for the government’s asylum policy.

**Mastering the Robot. The Future of Work in the Second Machine Age - 2015, Investigation**

Technology experts, economists and other researchers consider what robotisation and digitisation will mean for the future of work. Some jobs will disappear, new jobs will be created, and the very nature of much of our work will change. But robotisation takes more time and effort than many assume. Government, researchers, employers and employees, and their representative organisations can influence the way in which technology is developed and applied. The robot can be mastered by the development of an inclusive agenda that stresses complementarity between humans and machines and focuses on cocreation, training, the quality of work, and new issues of inequality.

**Revaluing Culture - 2015, Investigation**

Policymakers regularly question the value of culture and increasingly look for answers in culture’s social and economic impact. As a result of this the cultural sector is often expected to meet new targets. The WRR argues that cultural policy should be directed first and foremost towards the ‘culture’ part of cultural policy. Only a strong cultural sector is of enduring value for Dutch society and to achieve this, policymakers must find ways to strengthen the resilience of the cultural sector, so that rapidly changing consumer preferences, buffering the consequences of new funding models and rethinking the relation between creative education and the labour market, can effectively be dealt with.

**FORTHCOMING PUBLICATIONS (2019)****Self reliance and mental capacities**

Society today makes heavy demands on people’s self reliance. People must be on constant high alert in various crucial areas of their lives. It is not just a small group of ‘vulnerable’ individuals, for example those with a low IQ, who have trouble living up to such expectations. Even people with a good education and a favourable position in society can end up feeling overwhelmed, certainly when they are going through a rough patch, for example a divorce, or job loss. That is because demands are being made on non-cognitive capacities, such as the capacity to make a plan, to take action, persist and cope with setbacks. In this report we describe the personality traits underlying these capacities, and the degree to which people possess these capacities. Not all people have the same aptitude for self reliance. The Council recommends that policymakers take a realist approach to the cognitive and non-cognitive capacities of ordinary people.

**Security in an interconnected world. A strategic vision for defence policy**

With this report, the WRR wishes to stimulate the political and public debate about the priorities and capabilities of an intelligent, future-proof security and defence policy for the Netherlands. The reference point for the framework of the actions proposed in this report is the armed forces, but in the Council’s view, development cooperation and foreign policy also need to be strengthened if the Netherlands is to be strategically equipped for the geopolitical situation.

**Money creation**

The creation of money performs an essential if largely invisible function in our economy and society. Moreover, with the transition from the dominance of coins and paper as money to bank deposits as money, the mechanisms through which money is made and controlled have changed fundamentally.

In its study the Netherlands Scientific Council for Government Policy (WRR) looks at the different aspects of money creation and explores the pros and cons of alternative systems of money creation and more limited reforms. The project is the result of a formal request from the Dutch Minister of Finance for an advisory report on the functioning of the monetary system. A motion on this topic was adopted by the Dutch Parliament during a debate on the citizen initiative ‘Our Money’ (‘Ons Geld’). The WRR conducts this research on the basis of scientific literature, insights from abroad and interviews with civil-society parties, the financial sector and those in central banks and the scientific community.

**Health equality and inequality**

For many years there has been variation in health status among different groups of the Dutch population. This is linked to differences in socio-economic factors such as income and education level. Reducing these differences has been a subject of public health policy, both nationally and internationally. The gaps, however, seem to be quite persistent. Moreover, relative differences have been widening recently. The WRR and the Dutch National Institute for Public Health and the Environment (RIVM) are joining forces to study this health inequality. The research project will look at the causes and the effects of differences in health status. What do we know about the extent of these differences and their development? What do we know about the factors that determine health differences? What scope is there to influence those factors? And what does this imply for policy? To what extent could national or local health policies reduce the health differences? And what could be the consequences, if health differences could not be reduced any further? Would this possibly require adjustments in other policy domains such as housing, work and income?