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The Police, Changing Security Arrangements and Late Modernity: The Case of The Netherlands

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During the last fifteen years remarkable changes occurred in policing and security arrangements in The Netherlands. These changes are closely related to the shift to late modern society. For many Dutch citizens today safety problems should be the highest priority of the government. Feelings of unease about crime often result from general insecurities related to life in late modern society. On the one hand citizens expect the government and especially the police to solve the problems of crime and disorder, if necessary with harsh measures. On the other hand, however, both the government and the police are confronted with a loss of legitimacy. Five developments in public safety policy and policing in The Netherlands must be understood as answers to these developments: in organizational and managerial arrangements, in relations between the state and other agencies, extra-judicial measures and attention to victims, new technologies of prevention and surveillance and a harsher, stricter policy. These developments, however, create new problems and tensions.

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