# PEARL DYKSTRA



***Pearl Dykstra*** **is a Dutch social scientist and Professor Emerita of Empirical Sociology at Erasmus University Rotterdam, internationally recognised for her research on intergenerational family relationships, aging societies, and loneliness.**

## ACADEMIC AND PROFESSIONAL CAREER

Born in Sarnia, Canada, in 1956, Dykstra studied psychology at the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam and the University of Toronto before completing a PhD in social psychology at the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam in 1990, with a dissertation on the importance of primary relationships for older adults' well-being. She subsequently worked as a senior scientist at the Netherlands Interdisciplinary Demographic Institute and held a chair in Kinship Demography at Utrecht University. In 2009 she was appointed Professor of Empirical Sociology at Erasmus University Rotterdam, where she later directed research for the Department of Public Administration and Sociology and led the societal-preparedness strand of the Pandemic & Disaster Preparedness Centre.

Her scholarship has reshaped how researchers understand family ties across generations. She has shown that support and conflict between parents and children often coexist rather than oppose one another, argued for studying young and old together, and highlighted overlooked groups such as the childless and never-married. A recurring theme in her work is how welfare policy—rather than culture alone—shapes who provides family care, including her influential reframing of the "sandwich generation" to account for four-generation families.

Dykstra has led major research infrastructures and advisory bodies. From 2002 to 2014 she directed the Netherlands Kinship Panel Study, and she is a consortium member of the Generations and Gender Programme. She also served as Scientific Director of ODISSEI, the Dutch open-data infrastructure for the social sciences, and as Deputy Chair of the European Commission's Group of Chief Scientific Advisors, and has sat on NWO's Social Sciences and Humanities board since 2016. She is an elected member of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences, a fellow of the Gerontological Society of America and Academia Europaea, and was appointed Officer in the Order of Orange-Nassau in 2024.

## AWARDS AND HONORS

**2004** Elected member, Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW)
**2005** Elected member, Royal Holland Society of Sciences and Humanities (KHMW)
**2009** Fellow, Netherlands Institute for Advanced Study in the Humanities and Social Studies (NIAS)
**2010** Elected Fellow, Gerontological Society of America
**2011–2016** Vice-President, Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW)
**2016** Elected member, Academia Europaea
**2018** Elected Member, Governing Board of the International Science Council
**2022** Inaugural Foundation Fellow, International Science Council
**2024** Officer in the Order of Orange-Nassau
**2024** Erasmus with the Travelcap award