Dutch Communal Life in Victoria

Henk Overberg

Group and Community

Saying that 95 000 Dutch-born persons reside within Australia is not the same thing as saying that there is a Dutch community in Australia. This is easily demonstrated when one considers that it is about this number of persons that congregates on the Melbourne Cricket Ground on a famous Saturday each September to watch the Grand Final of the Australian Football League. No one would call this agglomeration of persons a 'community' - the most we would say is that there is a 'crowd' at this football match.

If we claim that 95 000 Dutch-born persons living in Australia are in fact a 'community', we are making claims about these persons that go beyond this notion of 'crowd'. These claims fall into three categories. We are claiming first of all that these persons share a common characteristic and have a common purpose which distinguishes them from other persons. This common characteristic causes them to interact with one another more frequently than with other persons. This is at the basis of a specific common identity, which is another way of saying that members believe their Dutch-ness is important to them and informs how they live. This matter of common characteristic is, of course, also a feature of the football crowd, but here it does not necessarily lead to frequent interaction, as it does with members of a community. A second claim we make about a community is that it develops structures and patterns within which this interaction is meant to take place. In our case, these

involve *places*, where the Dutch-born persons congregate, interact and swap stories. They also involve patterns of *activity*, which are recognised as being distinctively Dutch, and which can only be engaged in when one is with others who know and understand them. And they finally involve *people* who develop and assume locations within the community. These persons begin to regulate the interaction, encourage certain activities and discourage others; they may suggest common community goals, exact community prices. In short, such persons begin to say what is community business and what is not; they establish boundaries and they become the gate-keepers of the community. They set the standards of the community, which involve 'frameworks of expectation and measures of esteem' (Sprott, 1975: 12). The third claim we make about a community is that it has a corporate memory; its time together has given it a story to tell. The present interactions of members are only the latest contribution to this story in the making, which in turn provides it with colour, meaning and a context for them. This institutional memory is fashioned and carried by the notables in the community, by the organisations, by the decisions that are made, by the objects it produces, by the places it frequents. This paper is about the places, the people, the interactions and the memories that together make up the Dutch community in Victoria.

Communities, as will be clear, do not just happen, they are made; and in developing them, actors may sometimes face difficulties, obstacles, or even attempts to make an alternative community. It is of some interest that the development of ethnically-based communities in Australia has not received much attention in the critical literature. Research into the genesis, the nature, the development and the significance of ethnic organisations is thin on the ground; rather the focus has been on the links between ethnic communities and mainstream society. Work on the Dutch community

specifically has been confined by and large to my own work in the 1980s. Equally, the development of a specifically Dutch-based community life in Australia has received very scant attention in the Netherlands. With the notable exception of Joed Elich (1985, 1987), who does provide some fascinating insights into Dutch-Australian community life from a Dutch perspective, the Dutch research focus for the last forty years has been on migration policy, the motivation of Dutch migrants to Australia and linguistic work about the development of Dutch in Australia. This is a great pity, because the total effect of such non-confrontation has been simply to define the community perspective out of existence or at best to relegate it to the level of cliché (the Dutch are good assimilators, etc.)

Ethnic Group: Identification and Cultural Maintenance

When approaching the concept of community, it is perhaps best to start with the awareness of that common characteristic which makes people want to interact, the characteristic 'of sufficient importance or "salience" ... so that the people having it feel it does or should influence their lives' (Makielski, 1973: 25). In so far as this applies to Dutch-born persons in Australia, this characteristic has to do with a common Dutch heritage: shared patterns of everyday behaviour, language, ritual and custom to which they were used in the Netherlands and whose continuation in Australia give them comfort and security in their new environment. Getting together as a community gives them occasions and outlets to satisfy these identification needs, needs they feel 'to have a relationship with other people that incorporates affection, "positive ego reinforcement", comfort, security, self-esteem, and the knowledge that other people care about one's existence' (Makielski, 1973: 26). The small groupings formed among Dutch-born persons during the very early years of Dutch migration to

Australia nearly all had this expressive function. They provided ‘kermis, klompen, kroketten, karnaval en kultuur’ [fancy fair, clogs, croquettes, carnival and culture] (*Courier,* April 1993:15), and the salience of this need is demonstrated by the fact that a number of those early groups still exist and fulfil this role. The cultural baggage that these immigrants brought into Australia was the situation of the Netherlands of the immediate post-War era, and it should come as no surprise that the then current patterns of Dutch social relations which they had internalised formed the basis of initial Dutch community life in Australia. They were, in Joed Elich’s phrase (1985: 22ff) the ‘structuring element’ which they brought into play when starting their Dutch community life here. These patterns have remained strong here, as Dutch visitors to Australia never tire to point out. By keeping these patterns intact, Dutch community life here, whilst catering for the identification needs of its members, has also acted as an agent of continuity and conservation for metropolitan Dutch social patterns of half a century ago.

Ethnic Group: Interest Group and Adaptation

Yet the satisfaction of these identification needs, however crucial to ethnic community life, does not fully explain the function of ethnic groups and organisations. Persons also interact within a community for what have been variously called instrumental or circumstantialist reasons; in other words they expect that being a member of a group or community gives them certain practical benefits and advantages. Groups can provide members with ‘practical benefits that they could not otherwise attain’ (Makielski, 1973: 26). If this is so, then communities based on ethnicity like the Dutch groups in Australia also function as interest groups, in addition to being identification groups. That is, they have the potential to promote

‘political-economic interests of ascriptive subgroups’ (Light, 1982: 55), and provide a ‘buffer for large... changes in the society’ (Light, 1982: 80). Developing this train of thought, John Rex (1992: 132) has suggested that ethnic minority associations may act ‘as a kind of community trade union’ and negotiate ‘with the larger society, overcoming the social isolation of individuals ... and ministering to the needs of individuals and families through various types of charitable and social work’. Belonging to an ethnic group may thus well be more a ‘strategic’ choice than an identification necessity of individuals. Such factors have certainly also played a part in the Dutch community experience in Australia, where Dutch community interest has been increasingly invoked in order to make claims on behalf of its members from mainstream Australia. The assumption of interest-group functions by Dutch groups has both diversified Dutch Australian community life and brought radical changes to it. It has affected its objectives, its personnel, its achievements and its visions.

In their efforts to gain access to mainstream resources, ethnic communities in Australia, and this includes the Dutch, have in fact gone along the track of what has been picturesquely called ‘retribalization’, that is, they have manipulated their culture markers ‘to rationalise the identity and organisation of the ethnic group’ (Nagata, 1982: 90). The anthropologist Pierre van den Berghe (1982: 254) puts it slightly differently when he claims that ‘individuals are found consciously to manipulate ethnic boundaries to their advantage’. Indeed, in common with other ethnic groups in Australia, the Dutch have not shied away from resurrecting and manufacturing their identity, where this has been perceived to be an advantage. Putting it differently, part of the reason why after such a long period of assimilation the Dutch community here has rediscovered that it is Dutch is because it pays to do so. This ‘retribalization’, however, is not in the first instance connected with the identification needs noted

above: it is more a *reaction* - a reaction to developments in Australian society of which these ethnic communities form a part and to which they now relate. Judith Nagata has indeed suggested that the characteristic distinction of the ethnic community is the unique way it combines what she terms cultural and strategic interests (Nagata, 1982: 92). But the process rests on a paradox: for insofar any ethnic group rediscovers its uniqueness and then acts as an interest group on the basis on this uniqueness, it commits itself to the institutional framework of mainstream Australia. For in giving the ethnic individual 'moral and material support in coping with the exigencies of his [new] existence, the immigrant society becomes a functioning part of the larger society' (Rex, 1992: 132). In the societal scheme of things, ethnic community interest groups like the Dutch here may function therefore as socially conservative force, rather than as an agent of social change.

Zuilen and Australia

The earliest community activity I have been able to trace in Australia was religious activity. This is highly characteristic of Dutch society of the late forties and early fifties, from which Dutch migrants were drawn. Social life in metropolitan Holland was highly compartmentalised at the time, consisting of vertical institutional blocs referred to as *zuilen* or pillars, based on the different and conflicting world views then current within the Netherlands. The blocs directed the social activities of persons and organisations in the Netherlands along strict ideological lines. They enabled organisations and individuals to stay clear of confronting different world views by giving them the possibility to lead a full life within their respective blocs. Belonging to a bloc therefore both opened up and limited the social possibilities of individuals and organisations, and it has been said that the pillar system was largely maintained

by deliberately *truncating* social interaction between individuals across the blocs (Bagley, 1973: 24). There were religious blocs - the Catholics, the Protestants and the Orthodox Reformed, and there were secular blocs - the liberals and the socialists; and each bloc maintained its own network of institutions at the national level. There was little interbloc communication, and the usual way to spend one's public life was to remain anchored within the one bloc. Needless to say, the emigration programs were organised along bloc lines too, and as early as 1950 the religious blocs all had structures in place in Australia to receive Dutch migrants.

It is difficult for non-Dutch readers to fully appreciate the extent to which the *zuilen* at that time permeated every aspect of Dutch public life. The individual read the newspaper of his *zuil,* listened to the radio station and watched the television program of his *zuil,* selected the programs from the media guide produced by his *zuil,* he probably worked in a work place run by people connected with his *zuil*, belonged to the trade union of his *zuil,* he sent his children to the school of his *zuil,* supported the football club of his *zuil,* voted for the political party of his *zuil*, and if he contemplated emigration, the arrangements would be made through the emigration organisation of his *zuil*. His entire sphere of social, economic, leisure and ideological activity was circumscribed by his *zuil,* and was unlikely to extend beyond it. In the parts of the country south of the big rivers, which are solidly Catholic (and from which Australia has drawn the majority of its Dutch immigrants), this *zuil* context was further deepened by a sense of difference to the rest and loyalty to district: one was a Brabander or Limburger as well as a Catholic, and both identifications mutually strengthened one another. The *zuil* as the sum-total of the everyday, ideological, and social world of the individual was part and parcel of the cultural baggage of every Dutch immigrant who set foot on shore in Australia in the 1950's. Wendy Walker

Birckhead has recently suggested (Walker Birckhead, 1995: 63) that the Dutch immigrant's expectation that social interaction must be truncated by *zuilen* lessened the claims he was subsequently prepared to make of Australian society and thus had a bearing on his reputation as an immigrant who easily assimilated.

Of course things have not stood still in the Netherlands since the 1950s. The intervening years have brought the great increase in the standard of living, the unification of Europe in which the Dutch have played a leading part, the abandonment of colonialism, the Dutch vanguard experience in the Catholic *aggiornamento* of the 1960s, the counter-culture *kabouter* and *dolle Mina's* happenings, the onset of Mediterranean and ex-colonial immigration, the euthanasia debate - and all of these have contributed to a general sense of what the Dutch refer to as the *ontzuiling* (de-pillarization) of society in the Netherlands. Dutch immigrants of course have been able to observe all this from the safe distance of Australia, but they have not participated in these developments directly, so there is some truth in the statement that the *ontzuiling* has largely passed them by. Little wonder therefore that Dutch visitors to these shores marvel at the intactness of the old Dutch *zuilen* in Australia.

Even so, those Dutch visitors also miss things. For, as the chairman of the Association of Netherlands Societies once said, 'Nederlanders zijn met Nederland meegegroeid en wij zijn zo'n kwart eeuw met Australië meegegaan' [The Dutch have kept growing with the Netherlands, and we have gone with Australia for the last quarter of a century] (*Courier*, July 1989: 3). The Australia of the 1950s, which the Dutch immigrants found on arrival and which is still on occasion presented in the Dutch press as an actuality, has also undergone fundamental changes, which the Dutch here

have had to live with and cope with the best they could, and which have changed their own sense of what they are about. Their own immigration experiences, the beginnings of the social recognition and emancipation of Aborigines, the Vietnam War, the economic abandonment of Australia by Europe, Australia's reorientation towards Asia, the onset of multicultural ideologies - in all these the Australian Dutch, steeped in their *zuilen*, have played their little part, and these have helped to subtly change their own social and cultural perceptions, outlooks and aims. These factors, too, have left their traces in the development of their Dutch communal life here. So however true the proposition may be that the old *zuilen* are alive and well here, it is equally true that what the old *zuilen* represented has been transmuted by the experiences of a new - Australian - social environment which now go back close on half a century. It is as well to bring this in any description and interpretation of Dutch communal life here.

A Community Grows

Since the early 1950s, Dutch communities of some significance have become established in all Australian states, except perhaps in Queensland and the Northern Territory. In Tasmania they still represent the largest non-Australian born group. The largest of all Dutch communities, however, resides in Victoria. It has also shown the greatest amount of community development during the last half century, so this chapter will focus on the situation in Victoria as representative of wider Dutch community development. The earliest attempts at Dutch community life in Victoria were made fully within the bloc structure with which the Dutch were so familiar. Even in the very early 1950s one can already find Roman Catholic, Protestant, and *Gereformeerde* groups within Victoria, some of which are still in existence today.

The earliest Catholic communal ventures have much to do with the personality of Father Leo Maas, who had first come to Melbourne as early as 1946 to recover from his concentration-camp experiences in Indonesia. He had struck up a close relationship with the Catholic Archbishop Daniel Mannix of Melbourne. Mannix soon saw him as a sure tool to increase the Catholic presence in Victoria through sponsored migration of Catholics from the Netherlands. Maas' training as a missionary and a teacher, combined with his pastoral inclinations, led to his encouragement of a number of groups and organizations among the then quite unorganised Dutch migrants in Melbourne, and for years Maas walked a tightrope between his countrymen's need for Dutch-type organisations and the Catholic Church's requirements for their full assimilation. Characteristic for Maas' work is that he always encouraged organisational development which had both an identification and a structural function. He began with the formation of the Catholic Dutch Migrants Association (CDMA) in Melbourne, later one of the cornerstones in the formation of the Association of Netherlands Societies. The establishment of a migrant reception hostel for single Dutch youths in Kew (1951), his arrangements to rent a reception centre for Dutch Catholic families at Daylesford (*The Gables*, 1952), his encouragement of the St Gregorius Choir (1952) initially to sing in the familiar style at Midnight Mass each Christmas, his founding in 1951 and his prolonged editorship of the monthly journal *Onze Gids* (Our Guide) to bring community news to the people: these constituted a string of early initiatives upon which later groups were built. Later he initiated a residence for homeless children (*Providence*) in Bacchus Marsh (1957); when that had to close because of health regulations, he had plans for an age-care complex, which was completed in 1990. The liberal protestant (*hervormd*) Dutch stream worked similarly albeit less spectacularly through an established church within Australia, first the Presbyterian Church, later the Uniting

Church. The key figure here was Marius Geursen, who had been sent to Australia by the *Nederlands Hervormde Kerk* in 1951, and became a Presbyterian minister in Melbourne. Much the same as the Catholic Church, the Presbyterians were anxious to play down any suggestion of ethnic particularism within their church, so organisationally it never went any further than agreeing to the formation of an amorphous 'Dutch charge' within the church (1953), which Geursen looked after until his death in 1988. The more Orthodox Protestant *gereformeerde* stream insisted on forming its own church organisation from the beginning, which it called the *Reformed Churches of Australia and Tasmania* (sic) and during the 1950s laid the basis of a fully integrated set of organisations. These include churches and schools, a seminary in Geelong (1954), community care facilities, as well as a host of papers and broadsheets. These organisations have latterly been supplemented by three elderly citizens care complexes. The Reformed stream is a special case, as it from the beginning insisted that it was not an ethnically Dutch group, but a religious group with a proselytising mission in Australia (Bouma, 1989), which aimed to become as Australian as quickly as possible. The original Dutch ministers of the reformed Church have now all retired and have been replaced by Australian personnel. I have written about these origins of Dutch community life more fully elsewhere (Overberg, 1980, 1986).

The groups especially called to life to perpetuate Dutch forms of social contact often were embedded within these religious streams, and the chaplains and ministers were continually involved in their community affairs. A truly baroque variety of these social contact groups, card groups, billiard clubs, choirs, carnival's associations, church groups, had sprung up by 1966, and were leading a by and large independent existence, only meeting on one occasion per year when the ball celebrating the Dutch

Queen's Birthday had to be organised, which was often the occasion for acrimonious dispute among them. It was initially to regularise this function (and also to secure cheap group charter flights to the Netherlands) that a coordinating body was established, the Association of Netherlands' Societies in Victoria in 1966. It started a monthly newspaper, the *Dutch Societies' Courier*, in 1970. In the thirty years of its existence, the Association has tried to keep a tab on Dutch community life in Victoria, and has represented the community on occasions when foreign dignitaries have visited it.

The very first issue of the *Dutch Societies' Courier* (May 1970: 3) featured a rather prophetic article entitled 'Wat straks?' [What now?] about an issue that was to be the catalyst for new developments and redefinitions within the Dutch community - it was the issue of the ageing of the community. It ushered in a number of initiatives to consider the implications of this ageing process for the community, and before long a group of concerned community leaders led by Tom Westerveld established the Holland Australia Retirement Foundation (HARF) with the specific aim to establish elderly accommodation for the community (4 February 1971). It proved to be the first of a number of like initiatives. The HARF took care to operate as a general organisation outside the blocs, so, true to form, the Catholics soon decided they had to have their own scheme, and they began their Providence Association with a similar purpose (1975). The Reformed groups also got in on the act, and began making their own plans. Other groups followed suit, the latest one being *Avondrust* (1985). At about the same time other groups, stimulated by developments within Australian mainstream society, went different ways. The availability of Commonwealth Government subsidies to employ social workers for ethnic communities found the Association constitutionally unprepared to apply for such a grant; it used the CDMA

to steer through an application. Managing and accounting for such a social worker to the satisfaction of the relevant government authorities proved too much for the Association and the CDMA; an ad-hoc subgroup was established, which later grew into the Australian Dutch Community Services (ADCS), the first group to bring some sort of professional approach to community concerns. From 1979 until 1990 it ran an office in the suburbs, with a social worker, a number of social work volunteers and visiting program. It acted as a resource and a model to other groups that have been formed subsequently. The withdrawal of grants by the Government threw the onus of financing such a community service back onto the community, which it was ill-prepared to meet. This caused the ADCS to collapse. However, later groups have taken up the task again (Dutch Australian Community Services, DACA, 1994).

The proliferation of these interest groups has been at the root of the great changes within Dutch community life over the last fifteen years. They have led to a great diversification in Dutch community life. Unlike some other ethnic communities in Australia like the Greeks and the Italians, it took the Dutch community some time to fully appreciate the implications of the Australian Government's immigrant settlement policy switch from migrant assimilation to multiculturalism in the early 1970s. The Dutch were slower than most to fully understand the Whitlam Government and its flamboyant minister Al Grassby. It was the Mediterranean groups who first set the example of organising themselves in such a way that they could claim the resources which the government began to make available for specifically ethnic concerns. They were soon well on the way drawing government money for their own schools, homes for the aged, community resource centres, and the like. The Dutch found that in this new situation their reputation as successfully assimilated migrants was becoming more of a liability than an asset. They were thought not to be

in need of any such resource allocation by mainstream agencies; their very success in assimilating was sufficient reason for funding authorities to pass them by. It took the Dutch community a while to wake up to this new situation, but from the early 1980's onwards, there is evidence that it was beginning to learn its lesson: if the Greeks were getting money because they were Greek, the Dutch were also going to get money because they were Dutch. 'We hebben niet geleerd te zeggen wat we willen' [We have not learned to say what we want], headlined the *Courier* (August 1982:1), and a keynote speaker at the 1982 annual meeting of the Association had this to say:

> When we talk social workers or caring for the elderly .... we enter the public part of identity, and to pursue this public part of identity you need social workers, houses. …. You need *resources*. Activity [in the public domain] means two things. First, it means that we believe that there are certain areas of public life where we claim that we know best how to solve problems. ... But to make this claim stick we need buildings, staff and money. So the second implication is that we claim we have a right to public resources *precisely because we are Dutch and for no other reason*. .... We need to make sure that both our life-styles and our interests are catered for. It means that, as a community, *we enter the political game*. It means that we make our voice heard *when and where it counts.* .... We need to be *organized*, and start acting a bit like a pressure group. .... We have this marvellous reputation [as migrants] precisely because we have never made any substantial claims on the public purse on the grounds that we're Dutch. If worst comes to the worst, we might have to say goodbye to our reputation.

The Greeks and Italians in Melbourne had been good teachers: if you want resources to come your way, you have to stress your ethnic uniqueness and base your claims on that. That was not easy for the Dutch after twenty years of believing they were the best immigrants in Australia because they assimilated so well. They had to find 'the tribe' again, so to speak, and this 'retribalisation' was obviously much on the agenda of the speaker at that meeting. Indeed the process itself has been well commented upon in the literature: 'once one group marks out its distinctiveness, others feel compelled to follow suit. In some cases, saliency attaches less to the substance of the supposed distinctiveness, and more to the need to display it' (Cohen, 1989: 110). Once the genie was out of the bottle, it could not be stopped: 'Let's get visible, for the sake of survival' (*Courier*, May 1989: 11). Dutch community life now began to change drastically. New definers came on to the scene; people who could link community business believably to mainstream society. Community business became streamlined and professional. New committees were formed, societies were incorporated, architectural problems were tackled, submissions were written to government, politicians were lobbied: all in the name of attracting mainstream resources for Dutch community concerns. It is hardly surprising that there were the occasional hitches in the process: the community was now in uncharted waters, and had to feel its way. Subsidies lapsed on occasion because there was not a properly constituted community agency to receive them. Court-cases were lost now and again because the community did not know how to prepare its brief (*Courier*, May 1989: 2). At the same time, and herein lies the paradox, in making claims for itself the community was becoming more closely linked with mainstream Australia: it was becoming aware of mainstream objectives, mainstream requirements, and it attempted to satisfy them as best it could. Conversely, the community also sent its delegates to

mainstream Australia to argue its case, participated in Ethnic Affairs Commissions, and the like.

Yet whilst all this structural institution building was going on, the old social contact clubs continued in their customary way, they came and went, they provided their activities, their fun, they had their evenings, their little fights; they behaved like all voluntary organizations. Rather than repeat the characterisation I wrote of them in 1986, and which is still by and large accurate (Overberg, 1986: 15), I prefer to cite a description which one of them provided for me in 1996, written in the characteristic and inimitable Dutch that is developing under half a century's Australian experiences, and which Michael Clyne analyses so well in his contribution to this volume:

> Onze DUTCH... CLUB Inc[orporated] heeft het doel om oudere mensen een gezellige dag te geven. Elke 2e Maandag, ze spelen kaart en wat Bingo. Ze betalen $2. Daar krijgen ze 2 kops of coffee en lunch for. Dan elke 3e maand geven we wat intertainment. "KOFFIEMORNING". Dan elke 2e Dinsdagsavonds for de dames wat gezellig bij elkaar komen. Ook zorgt het bestuur voor zieken bezoek, thuis, en in 't hospitaal. Dan eens per jaar hebben we een gezellige avond voor all. Ook hebben we donation af en toe for het migrant Hostel. Ook daagje uit b.v. bustrips, pick nics etc: NEVER a dull moment. We hopen dat u hier wat aan heeft. Groeten van het bestuur.
>
> [Our Dutch club Incorporated aims to give older people time in good company. Every second Monday they play cards and bingo. They pay $2. For that they get 2 cups of coffee and lunch. On top of that we give some entertainment every third month. COFFEE-MORNING. Then every second

> Tuesday night is for the ladies to get together and have company. The committee also visits the sick people, either at home or in hospital. Then once a year we have an evening get-together for all. As well we have a donation now and again for the migrant hostel. Also a day out, for example bustrips and picnics: NEVER a dull moment. We hope this information is of use to you. Greetings from the committee].

Community Groups Today

There is some difficulty getting an accurate idea about the number of Dutch groups within Victoria. It is hard to give a precise figure. The last public count, dating back to 1994 (DACA), lists 54 Dutch community groups in Victoria. It does not include the *klaverjas* (card) groups, of which I found 9. Since 1994 some groups have disbanded, new ones formed. I surveyed these in June 1996 to get the basis for a profile of these groups, and also to get some information on what Joed Elich (1987: 153) has called the 'degree of organisation' of the Dutch in Victoria. Groups were asked details about the nature and number of their membership, the date they were established, how their committee was organised. They also were invited to make comments on their aims and activities, and a number of groups availed themselves of this opportunity. The following presentation is based on the data obtained.

I received answers from 56 of the organisations contacted. These organisations could be described as follows:

Table 1: Victoria 1996 - Dutch community groups and organisations

Type of Organization	Number
General social contact clubs	37
Klaverjas (card) clubs	9
Soccer club	1
Specific purpose organisations (religious, social work)	4

The majority of members of these groups were born in the Netherlands, although there were a number of non-Dutch members, especially in the social contact clubs. The groups reported a total of 3324 Dutch born members, perhaps a slightly inflated figure as some persons may be members of more than one group. Given the fact that there were 28 434 Dutch born persons resident in Victoria in 1991 (Census), that means that 12% of all Dutch born persons in Victoria had at least some association with a Dutch born group.

It is instructive to construct an *age profile* of the membership of these groups, given the oft-repeated community perceptions that the Dutch groups are an old and ageing group. There are two ways of approaching this task. One can take as a reference point the total Dutch membership of Dutch groups, and then calculate the number of members in selected age groups as a proportion of this total membership of Dutch groups. This yields the following picture:

Table 2: Victoria 1996 - Dutch born members by age as proportion of total Dutch born members (N=3324)

Age group	Number of Dutch born club members	% of total membership of Dutch clubs
< 45 years	142	4%
45-54 years	309	9%
55-59 years	432	13%
60-69 years	1 105	33%
70 + years	1 336	40%

The picture yielded by these figures is unmistakeable: the community groups are a sanctuary for the Dutch aged. Nearly three quarters (73%) of all members of Dutch groups in Victoria are 60 years and older, indeed a full 40% of them are 70 years and over. A paltry 4% of members are less than 45 years old. That Dutch community life is essentially a concern of the aged can be verified quite easily by a visit to any group Dutch community function such activities as the annual Queen's Ball or the Holland Festival. This has been much commented upon, the community itself recognises this, and is uncomfortable about it. The publicity it generates within the community has a powerful streak of the Armageddon-scenario about it: the end of our world is nigh, we will soon be helpless, old and alone in an alien ocean of disinterest. It is this feature of Dutch community life here that determines more than anything else the image of the community that is spread about. It is this that the metropolitan Dutch media are wont to pick up and present - with less than exemplary sensitivity - as a sort of social pathology:

> Nederlandse emigranten die er [in Australië] wonen, zijn grotendeels om te kokhalzen, want ze zijn meestal geen Australiërs geworden, maar spelen Nederlandertje uit de jaren 50, eten drop en pindakaas en hebben een molentje in de tuin staan. (Büch, 1993: 5; also cited in *Courier*, May 1993: 9)
>
> [Dutch immigrants living in Australia make you spew: because for the most part they have not become Australian, but they play at being little Dutchies from the 1950s. They eat liquorice and peanut butter and they a little wind-mill out in the garden.]

It is this type of public knowledge about itself that generates so many protests by the people here. Yet it is merely the normal situation of a migrant community that has relied on a very limited temporary wave of arrivals, and it is replicated in other ethnic minority settings in Australia.

There is, in addition to this end-of-the-world perspective, another series of repercussions that flows from this perception of ageing within the community, and it has to do with the perceived non-involvement and disinterest of younger Dutch age groups in Dutch community affairs. The never ending stream of meetings, speeches, articles in the *Courier*, all have in common the helplessness and fury the community feels about not knowing how to come to grips with this issue:

> Het is frappant en beledigend dat onze gemeenschap in Australië zelfs geen club voor tweede generatie Nederlanders kan blijven onderhouden... Hebben we onze kinderen dan zo weinig meegegeven van een kultuur, die al eeuwenoud is, en denken we dat het niet de moeite waard is om zo'n kultuur (en taal) te bewaren? Als dat het geval is kan men alleen maar denken: schande, schande, schande! (*Courier*, June 1994: 4)

> [It is striking and insulting that our community in Australia cannot even support a club for second generation Dutch. Have we really passed on to our children so little of a culture which goes back for centuries, and do we really think it is not worth the trouble to maintain such a culture and language? If that is indeed the case, one can only think: shame, shame, shame!]

You can get hostels, nursing homes, accommodation and aged care by begging, stealing, cajoling, persuading; it is difficult, but it can be done, and the results are there to show it. But ensuring succession within one's own community that satisfies present members and offers attractive perspectives to future members: here one is at a loss. The groups which over recent years have tried to involve the younger generation, like *Going Dutch*, have run along a difficult path, and have never lasted long. If the ageing of the community is a matter to which a vast proportion of community time, activity and resources are dedicated, so is the vexed question of community succession to a new generation. It is a perplexing issue.

The age profile of the Dutch community and its implications are one thing. It is also important to say something about what *degree of community organisation* these groups reflect, and how accessible these groups are to members of the Dutch community. To answer questions about community organisation and accessibility the figures need to approached from a different perspective. For instance, if one considers separately the 7971 Dutch-born persons in Victoria aged 60 years and over, then 2316 of these had an association with a Dutch community group, that is 29% of this group. If one disaggregates into further age groups, the following picture emerges:

Table 3: **Victoria 1996 - Dutch-born club members as proportion of total Dutch born**

Age group	Dutch born in Victoria	Dutch born club members	Members as % of Dutch born
<45 years	10 630	142	1%
45-54 years	6 931	309	4%
55-59 years	2 725	432	16%
60-69 years	4 703	1 105	23%
70 + years	3 268	1 336	41%

These figures yield an idea of the *availability* of Dutch community life to Dutch born persons, and the degree of community organisation which has penetrated the community. Nearly a quarter (23%) of all Dutch persons between 60 and 70 years of age are members of a community group, as are well over one third of those Dutch born persons aged 70 years and more (41%). Conversely, only 1% of all Dutch born less than 45 years old belong to a Dutch community group. But what do those figures mean? Interpreting them is somewhat hampered by a comparative perspective which is not available. We do not know the situation in other ethnic communities in Australia; we do not know the degree of organisation of the elderly in metropolitan Holland. So there are no standards. Nevertheless, the folklore knowledge, sometimes confirmed by the community itself and sometimes by press articles or scholarly comment (Unikosky, 1978), which normally suggests that the Dutch in Victoria are poorly organised for community life, is not born out by my own figures.

The degree of organisation of the community is one thing: it also needs to be checked how *accessible* these groups are to the residents they purport to serve. This is best done by examining the location of the various Dutch groups in relation to settlement patterns. As has been analysed elsewhere in this volume, the Dutch in Victoria exhibit the same sort of urban-rural settlement pattern as does the general population - two thirds of them live in Melbourne and one-third in the country. Within Melbourne, the majority of Dutch have settled in the southern and eastern regions; within the country, there are sizable Dutch communities in Geelong and Warrnambool, Ballarat and Bendigo, the north east around Shepparton and Albury-Wodonga, and Gippsland. The following table gives the number of Dutch-born persons of 60 years and over in each of these areas, as well as those who belong to a local Dutch group:

Table 4: Victoria 1996 - Dutch born club members as a percentage of total Dutch born aged 60 and over per selected region

Region	Dutch born 60 years and over	Dutch born club members 60 years and over	% of club members to total Dutch born
East/South Melbourne (inc Mornington Peninsula)	4 233	1 530	36%
North and West Melbourne	942	288	31%
Geelong and Warrnambool	810	344	42%
Ballarat and Bendigo	281	137	48%
Shepparton and Albury/Wodonga	158[a]	84	53%[b]
Gippsland and Latrobe Valley	516	48	9%
Total Victoria	**7 971**	**2 431**	**30%**

[a] 280 residents of Albury NSW not included
[b] 19% if the residents of Albury are included

Apart from the Gippsland figure, which, because of non-replies needs to be treated with some caution, the table indicates that between one third and one half of all elderly Dutch residents in Victoria have reasonable access to Dutch local groups within their region. Whether one looks at the situation from a state-wide perspective, or whether the figures are disaggregated into local communities, the picture that emerges is the same: Dutch born groups show a high degree of ethnic community organisation, and ethnic Dutch life is available to them without undue obstacles.

Aged Care

The developing community focus on the care of the aged, the gradual changes in mainstream community attitudes and the professionalisation of community activity have been at the basis of the Dutch development of aged care organisations since 1970. They have developed complexes comprising independent living units, hostel

bed accommodation facilities, nursing homes, and Community Age Care Packages, a sort of nursing care facility in the home of the recipient. The Holland Australia Retirement Foundation (HARF) runs two such complexes, Beatrix Village and Princess Margriet Hostel, the Catholic Church has developed Providence Village, the Reformed Churches run Olive Gardens, Outlook Gardens and Ebenezer village and there is an independently run *Avondrust* - all these are located in and around Melbourne. There are moves afoot at the time of writing to coordinate all the above except for the three Reformed organisations into a single Dutch community authority to be entitled Dutch Care. At present, the Dutch community has a combined total of 87 independent living units (flats for the elderly), 72 hostel beds and nursing care places and 45 community care packages

The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare has published a set of planning ratios for the development of age care facilities in Australia. It recommends that 52 nursing home beds, 40 hostel places, and 2 community aged care packages should be available per 1000 persons of 70 years and over in the population (AIHW, 1995: 232). It makes no recommendations for the availability of independent living units, which it sees as a private, not a public concern. Applying these ratios to the Dutch community one gets a rather bleak picture. There are 3268 Dutch born persons of 70 years and over in Victoria. For every 1000 Dutch born persons there are only thus 22 combined hostel places and nursing beds (instead of the recommended 92). To offset this, however, there are 13.8 community age care packages for every 1000 Dutch born persons (instead of the recommended 2). It should also be noted that the Dutch community has also put the majority of its resources into independent living units.

The Dutch, of course, are not the only ethnic community in Victoria which is overwhelmingly concerned with aged care. The Italian and Greek community in Melbourne have a history and an age profile similar to the Dutch community. They have also been working to establish the appropriate ethno-specific infrastructure for their aged care, and a comparison is instructive:

Table 5: Victoria 1996 - availability of aged care: selected ethnic communities

Type of elderly care	**Italian community (11 840 It. born 70 years & over)**	**Greek community (3 576 Greek born 70 years & over)**	**Dutch community (3 268 Dutch born 70 years & over)**
Independent living units	10 (0.8 per 1 000)	none	87 (26.6 per 1 000)
Hostel beds	176 (14.9 per 1 000)	102 (28.5 per 1 000)	72 (22 per 1 000)
Community Age Care Packages	80 (6.8 per 1 000)	80 (22.4 per 1 000)	45 (13.8 per 1 000)

The above table, it seems to me, points to two things. First of all, it shows that the provision of aged care facilities in the Dutch community is on a par with the facilities in comparable communities, and that the comparatively poor availability of hostel places and nursing beds specifically for the migrant aged is more a general ethnic minority phenomenon in Australia rather than a Dutch-specific phenomenon. But it also indicates the specific fondness of the Dutch here for independent living until a very advanced aged, and their preparedness to put resources into this. In the light of the simple comparison attempted here, the situation of the Dutch born aged is quite comparable to that in other ethnic communities, and the effort the community has put into providing infrastructure must be considered considerable.

The earliest Dutch publications in Australia were bloc publications, cyclostyled broadsheets or pamphlets emanating from the religious chaplains, and containing news mainly on religious observances. The most durable of these has been *Onze Gids* [Our Guide] a cyclostyled monthly started by Father Leo Maas in Melbourne in 1950, and has appeared unbroken ever since. It has 295 subscribers. The contents of the paper have been interesting, insofar as during the 1950s there are the never ending appeals to Catholics to retain their faith in a foreign land. In the 1960s interestingly it was a source of information to Dutch Catholics about the developments at Vatican II. Since the 1970s the paper has been concerned with the greying of the Dutch community as well as with Australia's new multicultural reality. An analogous publication, *Nederlands Kerkewerk* [Dutch Ministry] has appeared in Melbourne since 1953 to cater for the religious needs of Dutch *Hervormd* communicants of the Presbyterian Church, later the Uniting Church. It has a list of 220 monthly subscribers. The Dutch Reformed groups have generated a stream of in-house publications since the early 1950s.

The *Dutch Australian Weekly* (now called the *Dutch Weekly*) was founded in 1951 in Sydney by the journalist Alfred Schuurman as a weekly newspaper for all Dutch-speakers in Australia. It has enjoyed continuous publication ever since then, although there have been occasions when its existence was extremely tenuous. Not being linked with any of the blocs, it has lacked the identification with the blocs and therefore legitimation within them. In 1990 it had about 7000 subscribers throughout Australia (*Courier*, February 1990: 14). The following extract from a letter by Leo Maas is a comment on the salience of bloc influence within Australian Dutch society and gives an idea of some of the difficulties the paper has had to contend with:

> Further [you] asked about my opinion of the *Dutch Australian Weekly*. I do not think there is any reason to recommend this paper as we have our own paper *Onze Gids* , which I would very much like to recommend. This gives everything a Catholic migrant wants to know, as the other paper is only a thing of money-making and business. (Maas to Leahy, n.d., 1953?)

The characterisation of the *Dutch Australian Weekly* in *Hervormd Nederland* (December 1988) is still true:

> Er staat nauwelijks iets in over Nederlanders in Australië. Grotendeels bestaat de inhoud uit berichten over Nederland, maar wel volgens een eenzijdige selectie: ze gaan over symptomen van verloedering in Nederland: frauderende steuntrekkers, wankele seksuele moraal, vervuiling op straat. Nog sprekender zijn de illustraties: ophaalbruggetjes in Loenen, dorpspleintjes, trapgeveltjes. Die inhoud verraadt twee functies: een stillen van heimwee en een rechtvaardigen van de uittocht. (Geradts, 1988: 11, also cited in *Courier*, March 1989: 18)

> [It hardly says a thing about the Dutch in Australia. It consists for a large part of articles about the Netherlands; one-sided articles though: they deal with symptoms of moral degeneration in the Netherlands: fraudulent dole-bludgers, plummeting sexual morals, pollution in the streets. The pictures are even more telling: little draw-bridges in Loenen, village squares, houses with traditional facades. These pictures betray two functions: coping with home-sickness and justifying the emigration to oneself.]

For a while during the 1950s, a second Dutch weekly called *Nieuwe Wereld* [New World] was published at Geelong for Victorian Dutch persons. It folded in 1961, for reasons understandable in the light of Maas' comment above.

In 1970 the Victorian Association of Netherlands' Society established the *Dutch Societies' Courier*, renamed in 1985 *Dutch Courier*, a monthly whose aim is to bring news of the various Dutch groups to its readers. It has maintained an unbroken publication record since its inception. Although its original purpose was the spread of news about Dutch social contact groups, we have already seen that its very first number devoted attention to the issue of the ageing of the Dutch community here. It is now the most important agent of articulation of Dutch community concerns in Victoria. The focus on the elderly has grown into one of its prime concerns in the quarter century of its run, but there have been other running editorial concerns, such as the maintenance of Dutch as a language here, and the question of the second generation. Its circulation has fluctuated considerably over the last 25 years: its claim that at present it has 6000 Victorian subscribers, as well as an additional 4000 subscribers throughout the rest of Australia, needs to be treated with caution, as no audited figures are available.

Of interest about these papers, as well as the societies and the media, is the fact that together they form a type of closed circular information world, whose components function to mutually confirm each other on every possible occasion: the press informs about the clubs, the clubs recommend the press, the press announces the radio programs, the radio programs have information about church services etc. The same individuals and the same concerns resurface time after time.

Radio

Even in the heyday of assimilation, one could find the occasional Dutch language broadcast program on Australian radio, such as the Sunday afternoon hour of what was then 3GL Geelong in the 1950s. However, the permissible extent of foreign language broadcasting was at that time severely curtailed by law. The present situation is as follows. Radio programs in Dutch are broadcast both through SBS (Special Broadcasting Service) radio outlets as well as community radio stations. Dutch language radio broadcasts are featured through the radio network of the SBS - like its sister television service SBS is a national service funded by the State through the taxation and by advertisements. Dutch culture features through programs made available through metropolitan Dutch services supplemented with locally produced material. Programs are run by professional broadcasters. The Dutch service, which reaches all of Metropolitan Melbourne plus the adjacent country areas broadcasts for 4 hours each week.

Community radio broadcasting in Australia predates the development of SBS and goes back to the establishment of the first community access radio station in Melbourne in 1974 (Dugdale, 1979: 1). The first Dutch broadcast on this network took place on 26 June 1975 (*Courier*, July 1975: 1). During the subsequent twenty years, a comprehensive service base has been developed by local group initiatives, with access to both the AM and the FM bands. The programs are devised by local amateur community groups, and are coordinated through the National Ethnic and Multicultural Broadcasters' Council. At the present time, there are 17 such community radio stations in Victoria in the FM band. Eleven of these stations feature

programs run by Dutch local groups, broadcasting a total of 17 hours per week of Dutch language programs across the state. These programs are broadcast to all the regions in Victoria in which Dutch born feature in the population in any significant numbers at all. Table Six illustrates the combined radio coverage of SBS and community broadcasting in Dutch:

Table 6:Victoria 1996 -Dutch language radio programs

Station(s) - call sign	Extent of coverage	Hours per week
SBS	Melbourne	4
BBB, CCC	Ballarat/Bendigo	2
GCR	Gippsland	3
ONE,RPC,WAY	Warrnambool/Portland	4
ZZZ	Melbourne	2
RIM	NW Melbourne	2
RPP,SER	SE Melbourne	3
YYR	Geelong	1

Source: *The Ethnic Broadcaster,* 1996(?):6-7; SBS National Network, 1996

Television

Television programs in the Dutch language are beamed through the Melbourne outlet of the SBS, funded by a mixture of government funding and advertising revenue. Begun in 1975 as a radio service in non-English community languages and broadcasting to the metropolitan areas of Sydney and Melbourne, the SBS was upgraded to a national network in January 1994, which runs parallel to the Australian Broadcasting Service and which specifically supplies programs in languages other than English. Both the nature and the presentation of the material is of a professional standard. Dutch material in the form of films, serials, sports and documentaries are regularly featured on this channel. During the 12 months from 1 August 1995 to 31 July 1996, the Melbourne outlet featured an average of 5 hours and 50 minutes of

Dutch language programs per month, consisting chiefly of feature films, soap operas and sports presentations.[1]

Education and High Culture

Although there have been expressions of concern about the propagation of Dutch as a high culture within the Australian context over the years, in fact few Dutch community resources have been devoted to it, and the decisions about it have been made predominantly by actors working in mainstream Australian society. Dutch was available as a language and cultural study within the University of Melbourne from 1950 until 1992, and for years attracted such academics of world repute as Augustin Lodewyckx and Jacob Smit. In the 1950's it fed on a reservoir of students who were able to study Dutch at a preparatory study at secondary level, and also served as a service course within a complex of Germanic languages and philology. However the development of such courses occurred separately from Dutch community development, and was financed from mainstream Australian sources supplemented at times with grants from the Dutch and Belgian consular authorities. When enrolments in these studies started to decline at university level, there grew an increasing level of concern among Dutch groups about their continuation, and, although the University attracted some Dutch and Belgian government grants for a few years, the programs were discontinued in 1992 without so much as a murmur being heard from within the community. The community has also experienced a constant, though sometimes erratic stream of visits by media people and junior academics from the Netherlands. The latter have been attracted to Melbourne by the international reputation of the linguist Michael Clyne, and have regarded the community as a suitable object of their research activities (Pauwels, Elich, Hoek, Ammerlaan). The effect of these on Dutch

community life here has been mixed. The seemingly incorrigible need of the Dutch academic visitors to tell their Australian stories to a sensation-hungry media on their return home has not always found appreciation here. One academic, Anne Pauwels, has made Australia her professional and intellectual home, and now heads a linguistics department at one of the Australian universities. Clyne and Pauwels have generated a considerable body of linguistic research here, Gary Bouma has explored the religious life of the Dutch here, I myself have on occasion written about Dutch community life in Australia. Whether the sum total of these activities by resident or visiting academics have left an identifiable impact on the Dutch community here, is not immediately apparent. Only one of the constituent organisations of the Association, the Erasmus Society, aims to keep alive Dutch cultural concerns within Australia by means of an on-going series of lectures and seminars on Dutch-culture related topics. However praiseworthy, this possibly represents a rather minimal Dutch community concern with the demands of high culture.

Today and Tomorrow

It is as well to recapitulate here what Dutch community resources are on offer in Victoria at the present time and for whom. I have described the extensive network of community groups and whom this reaches. I have also given an outline of the Dutch community media and its spread. There is the availability of the elderly care structures, as outlined. What I have not mentioned is what I shall call the marginal network that exists around these core groups and activities to further satisfy community concerns. There are still two priests working specifically with Dutch Catholics in Victoria (Nederlandse aalmoezeniers), and there are a further nine Dutch-speaking priests working in Victorian parishes (*Onze Gids*, June 1996:15). As

there are 11 540 Dutch born Catholics in Victoria, that gives a ratio of one priest for every 5770 Catholics if one counts only the two full-time chaplains; if the nine Dutch speaking priests are added, the ratio is one priest for every 1049 Catholics. This might be compared with the overall ratio of one priest for every 2793 Catholics for Victoria in general (443 priests for 1 237 398 Catholics). Similarly, the Uniting Church still has sixteen Dutch ministers, and the Reformed Churches still have a total of ten Dutch speaking ministers, but these have now all retired. Victoria has a total of four family doctors of Dutch descent who speak the Dutch language, and there is a small network of ancillary medical services (podiatrists, physiotherapists, optometrists, etc.) of twenty four professionals. There exists a network of shops and businesses serving a Dutch clientele, well advertised in the *Courier* and the *Dutch Weekly*, ranging from general stores to travel agents, restaurants, butchers, bakers, builders and garden specialists, where the most diverse consumer needs of life can be satisfied in culturally appropriate ways. And all this to serve a Dutch born population of 28 434 persons. If we consider that virtually all the young folk, and there are 10 630 Dutch born persons under forty five years of age, seem to make little use of Dutch community structures, then this entire organisational network is *de facto* available for a population of less than 18 000 souls. This seems a telling comment to make on the degree of organisation available to Dutch born persons in Victoria, and it makes one stand back a little from all those expressions of loneliness, abandonment and decline that are bandied about in profusion when the Dutch situation in Victoria is considered, whether by the community itself or in metropolitan Holland.

What are the future prospects of the Dutch community in Victoria as a community? In answering this question one is necessarily involved in an amount of crystal ball-gazing, and it is a difficult business predicting the vagaries of personal developments

and ambitions, government policies, and the like, which have a combined bearing on how the community will fare. With such caveats in mind, it seems to me that the community will face three overriding concerns in the next few years: the concern of how the community is likely to continue, the issue of the succession of the second generation in community life, and the loss of autonomy in community decision making. I shall conclude this paper with a short discussion of each of these issues in turn.

The *continuation* of the community. Will the community continue? And in what form? How realistic are the expressions of what I have called the Armagheddon complex above? I conducted a previous survey of Dutch community groups in Victoria in 1983 (Overberg, 1986) and gathered data similar to those gathered earlier this year for this paper. A number of comparisons between these two sets of data are possible.

In 1986 I reported the existence of 71 Dutch groups within the community, and my survey then was based on 54 of them. The exact number of groups that existed in 1996 could not be ascertained, but I received 56 responses suitable for analysis. In terms of number of groups, therefore, there has been little change in the intervening 13 years. Nor has there been much change in the types of groups, as the following table illustrates:

Table 7: Victoria - Types of Dutch community groups 1986, 1996

Type of group	Overberg 1986 (N=71)	Overberg 1996 (N=56)
Social contact clubs	31	37
Klaverjas (card)clubs	31	9

Soccer club	1	1
Specific purpose organisations	8	9

Both in 1983 and in 1996 I asked the groups to indicate the years in which they were established. The results were as follows:

Table 8: Victoria - Year of establishment of Dutch clubs

Year established	Overberg 1986 (N=50)	Overberg 1996 (N=54)
1950-1959	6	7
1960-1969	16	10
1970-1979	24	14
1980-1989	4	17
1990-1996	-	6

Whereas there may be a big splash in the community when one of the trusted old group disappears, it is clear from the above table that the disappearance of groups is certainly off-set by the emergence of new ones. Groups continually disappear, others take their place, often with similar personnel and aims.

In 1983 the 54 groups reported a total membership of 2846 members, the comparative figures for 1996 was 3324. As a percentage of the Dutch born population in Victoria this membership stood at 9% in 1983, whereas it stands at 12% today. Again, in the light of these figures, a conclusion that Dutch community life in Victoria is diminishing, would not seem to be warranted.

This picture, however, becomes in need of qualification if we disaggregate the membership of Dutch groups into age groups. This situation is presented in the following table:

Table 9: Victoria 1983, 1996 - membership of Dutch clubs by age groups

	1983			1996		
Age group in years	Dutch born members (N=2846)	% of total Dutch club membership	% of Dutch born age group	Dutch born members (N=3324)	% of total Dutch club membership	% of Dutch born age group
<45	507	17%	3%	142	4%	1%
45-54	553	19%	9%	309	10%	4%
55-59	525	18%	21%	432	13%	16%
60-69	956	34%	27%	1 105	34%	23%
70 +	307	11%	23%	1 336	38%	41%
60 +	1 263	44%	26%	2 441	73%	31%

With these figures, we come, I think, to the crux of the matter. Whereas neither the number of Dutch groups, nor the participation in them, nor their formation, is diminishing over the years, the membership of these groups is shifting in age as the Dutch born population is growing older as well. In the age groups up to 70 years of age, the proportion of Dutch born who are members of groups is less in 1996 than it was in 1983. The fact that there are still more group members overall in 1996 is due solely to the fact that there are nearly four times as many club members of 70 years and over in 1996 than there were in 1983. Conversely, the decline in membership is arresting in the younger age groups, whether viewed as a proportion of total club membership, or as a proportion of the total Dutch born in that age group. Younger members are just not coming through. Membership has aged as the community has aged, and roughly in the same proportion. In short, the situation seems to be this: those who are members, will stay members, but there is no facility to attract new ones. That highlights what I have called the issue of succession within the community.

This issue of *succession* within the community already alluded to above, though well recognised, has not been solved, despite continuing and recurring efforts. There are some interesting approaches to this issue in the theoretical literature, although

empirical research into the question is thin on the ground. (Cohen (1989: 107) suggests that ethnicity represents what he calls ‘a convincing level of sociality’ in circumstances where ‘national entities .... are recognised increasingly as having failed to deliver economic and political goods’. People ‘assert community ... in the form of ethnicity... when they recognise in it the most adequate medium for the expression of their whole selves’. To come down to cases, first generation immigrants are the ones most likely to see the new society as alien and inappropriate to satisfy their expressive needs and interests. This is where *faute de mieux* the ethnic community comes in. The children of these immigrants, however, are much more likely to have acquired the social knowledge and skills of this new society necessary for reaping both its ‘economic and political goods’ as well for finding it ‘the medium for the expression of their whole selves’. They do not *need* the ethnic community, neither for their expressive needs, nor for their interests. If this is what the theory tells us, we may now at least be able to speculate about the reasons why second generation Australian Dutch have little interest in their ethnic community. These reasons may have to do with the idea that group life similar to what the Dutch community offers here is simply not attractive to younger groups in the Netherlands, either. Or perhaps they are about the countless alternatives available for the young in mainstream Australian society, which would help pull the young Dutch here away from community structures. A third set of reasons might postulate that the primary identification function which is at the basis of these Dutch groups is the concern of those persons who did the migrating, but not of their children. Linked to this identification explanation may be the limited cultural horizons of the Dutch groups: younger persons may not be fully satisfied with a game of *klaverjas*, a card of bingo, a cup of coffee, a *speculaas* biscuit, or a carnival-night accompanied by Schriebl and Hupperts. And if the interest-group nature of Dutch community life is highlighted, not

every second generation Dutch migrant is interested in devoting their social or professional life to the development of age care facilities. A fourth explanation might be sought in the intermarriage rate between young Dutch and persons of other groups, which will weaken ethnic ties of subsequent generations and diminish the attractiveness of a specific ethnic social life for them. A fifth explanation might highlight the ease of access of the Netherlands themselves in these modern times: if you need your ethnic life, you simply hop on a plane and visit the homeland without inordinate cost or trouble. The full explanation of the disinterest of the second generation possibly lies in a combination of all these factors: the fact remains that the community itself is not able to attract younger members and give them reasons, status and rewards for community input.

Finally the *loss of autonomy.* The last twenty years have seen a greater diversification of what the community has seen as its business. New objectives have come on the scene, new organisations, new persons who have started to define what the community is all about. Developing an interest-group infrastructure has given the community a clearer profile and a greater diversity, but it has also created necessary links with persons, organisations, interests and policies outside the community, on which the community is becoming increasingly dependent for its survival. To put it bluntly, a situation is building up where potentially at least decisions about the community will be made by factors outside the community itself. And those decision-makers outside the community may well act on agendas which the community itself does not agree with or find legitimate. The control of an ever increasing array of community structures may ultimately come to rest outside the community. The Dutch community has already had some experience of this. The ADCS folded up simply because a group of government bureaucrats decided that a grant to the Dutch

community was not a priority. Programs have been changed and discontinued on SBS at the behest of the management of the station, not because of Dutch community decisions. Melbourne University closed its Dutch studies without consultation with the community. So the process has already started, and is likely to continue.

References:

Aerial: Program guide of the Special Broadcasting Service, 1995 and later, Special Broadcasting Service, Melbourne

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (1995) *Australia's Welfare: Services and Assistance*, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra.

Bagley, Christopher (1973) *The Dutch Plural Society. A Comparative Study in Race Relations,* Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Bouma, Gary D. (1989) 'Religion and Dutch Identity in Australia', in A. Ata (ed) *Religion and Ethnic Identity: An Australian Study*. Spectrum and Victracc, Melbourne., 1989, pp. 34-44.

Cohen, Anthony (1989) *The Symbolic Construction of Community*, Routledge, London.

Dugdale, Joan (1979) *Radio Power: A History of 3ZZ Access Radio*, Hyland House Melbourne.

Dutch Australian Community Action (1994) *Dutch Australian Community Directory*, DACA, Melbourne.

Dutch Societies Courier Dutch Australian Monthly, (after 1985 *Dutch Courier*) 1970 and later, Melbourne

Elich, Joed (1985) *De omgekeerde wereld. Nederlanders als etnische groep in Australië*, Rijksuniversiteit te Leiden/COMT, Leiden.

Elich, J.H. (1987) *Aan de ene kant, aan de andere kant. De emigratie van Nederlanders naar Australië 1946-1986,* Eberon, Delft.

Hervormd Nederland (1988), December 1988.

Light, Ivan (1982) 'Ethnic Succession' in Keyes, Charles F (ed), 1982, *Ethnic Change,* University of Washington Press, Seattle

Makielski, Stanislaw J. A. (1973) *Beleaguered Minorities, Cultural politics in America,* W H Freeman, San Francisco.

Nagata, Judith (1982) 'In Defence Of Ethnic Boundaries: The Changing Myths and Charters of Malay Identity', in Keyes, Charles F (ed), 1982, *Ethnic change,* University of Washington Press, Seattle.

Nederlands Kerkewerk, 1953 and later, Melbourne.

Neeleman, Petra (1995) 'Care For The Dutch Aged In Victoria, Today And Future Options'. Grüter, B. J. & J. Stracke, (eds.) (1995) *Dutch Australians Taking Stock* Dutch-Australian Community Action, Melbourne.

Onze Gids, 1950 and later, Melbourne

Overberg, Henk (1981) 'The Dutch in Victoria 1947-1980: Community and Ideology', *Journal of Intercultural Studies* 2, 1: pp 17-36.

Overberg Henk. (1984)'Dutch Aged as Minority aged, Situations and Perceptions', *Australian Journal on the Ageing,* vol. 3, no. 4, pp. 30-40.

Overberg Henk (1986)'Ethnic minority community life. Dutch clubs in Victoria' *Journal of Intercultural Studies,* 7(1)

Overberg, Henk (1987)'Living arrangements of the Dutch aged in Australia', in *The future of adult life*., Teeside Polytechnic, Centre for the study of adult life, Cleveland United Kingdom.

Overberg, Henk (1988) 'Post-War Dutch Immigration' in Jupp (Ed), *The Australian People,* Angus and Robertson, North Ryde. pp 355-361.

Overberg, Henk (1992) ‘Ethnic clubs are changing - the Dutch experience’. In Rasmussen R (ed), *Ethnic Community Organisations: Role and Provision of Services*, Working Papers No 18 Monash University, Centre for Migrant and Intercultural Studies, Melbourne.

Overberg, Henk (1995a) ‘The Dutch in 1993: Facts, figures & issues. Grüter, B. J. & J. Stracke, (eds.) (1995) *Dutch Australians Taking Stock* Dutch-Australian Community Action, Melbourne.

Overberg, Henk (1995b)‘Dutch Australian aged in the Dutch press’ Grüter, B. J. & J. Stracke, (eds.) (1995) *Dutch Australians Taking Stock* Dutch-Australian Community Action, Melbourne.

Rex, John (1992) *Race and ethnicity*, Open University Press, Buckingham

Special Broadcasting Service (1996) ‘SBS National network’, Melbourne.

Sprott (1975) *Human groups*, Penguin, Harmondsworth.

The ethnic broadcaster 1996 Special Broadcasting Service, Melbourne,

Unikoski, R. (1978) *Communal endeavours: Migrant Organisations in Melbourne,* Australian National University Press, Canberra..

van den Berghe, Pierre (1982) *The Ethnic Phenomenon*, Elsevier, New York.

Vara Gids, 1993.

I would like to acknowledge my indebtedness to the following who have helped in various ways in the preparation of this paper: Janet Overberg, Benoît Grüter, Max Leening, Don Rowland and Yvon Davis.

[1] Figures compiled from nine numbers of the SBS monthly program guide *Aerial* between August 1995 and July 1996. The issues of September 1995, November 1995 and March 1996 were unavailable for study.