The Enterprising Dutch

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In this chapter I analyse the influences effecting the occupational adjustment of Dutch migrants who came to Western Australia (WA) after World War II; the reasons for their becoming self-employed, I determine how they achieved this, and briefly compare their workplace patterns, options and choices with those of the Dutch who emigrated after 1975.∞

From the late 1940s into the 1960s, Australia recruited foreign-born workers to reverse population stagnation, restore essential services to pre-war levels, sustain the momentum of the war-boosted economy and for reasons of defence (CIPC 1968).∞ Dutch people were enticed across by Australia with images of a bountiful land with booming industry and passage assistance. The lifestyle Australia portrayed was in stark contrast to the massive unemployment, cramped housing, food and clothing shortages, and fear of further hostilities characteristic of post-war Netherlands. At the same time they were urged to migrate by the Dutch Monarchy and governments which sought to rid themselves of perceived 'surplus population'. (Elich 1985)

Part One: Newly Arrived Dutch Migrants Participation in the Workforce.

In 1952, following a positive report to the Australian government on Dutch metal trades training, Australian immigration selection teams recruited tradesmen and semi-skilled labour from the Netherlands for Australia's rapidly expanding manufacturing and construction sectors. (Appleyard, 1956:91; 1963; Hempel, 1960:31) Workers

with trades skills were especially attractive for Australia because they would help develop the local economy without apprenticeship costs. However, unless emigrants had been selected to join specific migration programmes, such as the Rural Migration Scheme or that organized by Father Maas, a Dutch Roman Catholic Chaplain working in Geelong and Melbourne, pre-migration selection did not hold the promise of a definite job on arrival. (Peters, 1999)

When an emigrant set foot in Australia their most immediate concern was employment. The official procedure was for assisted migrants to be assigned work by the Commonwealth Employment Service (CES) in accordance with their directives on work placement priorities. The unassisted could go straight to an employment office in the town or city where they disembarked or apply for assistance from the evolving Dutch socio-cultural, economic and religious networks. Employers, desperate for workers, would often short-circuit this process by going to the wharf when a new vessel arrived, to tempt prospective employees off ships with offers of a job and housing before they were whisked away to migrant centres or other Australian destinations. ∞ The type of work these emigrants attracted was principally determined by the expertise for which they had been chosen. A direct consequence of this selection procedure is the large component of tradesmen, 42.42 per cent of Dutch males - who came to Western Australia between December 1951 and February 1955 - were classified craftsmen in contrast to only 17.9 per cent of the local workforce (see Table One in Appendix). ∞ Most prominent were carpenters, fitters, painters, electricians and bakers.

However, the transition from using expertise, acquired overseas, in Australia was not without problems. For example Australian trade unions' acceptance of foreign-trained

tradesmen was made conditional upon the newcomer meeting specific requirements, which included migrants joining trade unions and the government's implementation of equal wages and work conditions. In essence this meant European tradesmen had, on arrival, not only to produce documentary evidence of having been a tradesman in Europe, but also to pass a test set by the Local Trades Committee to prove conclusively that their 'training and ability' were on a par with local standards. (Fox, 1991:160ff)

Many failed the test the first time because of foreign language difficulties despite the aid of a translator, supplied at a cost to the migrant. Maria recalls that her electrician husband Wim sat the exam three times before passing. 'The first two times his English was not good enough and they did not give him any marks for the answers he wrote in Dutch.' As a result, Wim had to accept a job on a pick and shovel with the Main Roads Department. He did this until he was made aware he could apply to the State Electricity Commission for a permit to work in his trade under the supervision of an Australian electrical tradesman. Wim remained in this job until his grasp of the English language had improved enough to pass the test.

Not all trade unions required the newcomer to sit a trades test. A baker could have his papers issued by the union after acquiring a satisfactory report of his competency from two bake houses. This is perhaps not the best example to give as Dutch bakers' attempts to gain trade recognition had a deplorably high failure rate due mainly to the vastly different baking methods used in the two countries. Dutch bakers found it easier to gain acceptance as pastry cooks. (Appleyard, 1956: 91) Painters and plasterers also had to work with an Australian union tradesman to regain their papers. Appleyard (1956) maintains many tradesmen became self-employed to

avoid this procedure. Even so Dutch trade recognition was high compared to other immigrant groups. For example, in WA, 34 per cent of the Dutch who applied for metal trades recognition between January 1950 and March 1955 were successful compared to 32 per cent of the British, and only 20 per cent of the Italians.

Many Dutch deplored Australian unions' attitudes. The felt these deliberately kept alive an image of 'the employer as the natural exploiter of the labouring man' to maintain a negative relationship between employer and employees. The majority of Dutch migrant workers employed in the trades appeared to have joined the union because they could see no way to avoid it. This was especially the case in WA where a preference clause operated in the building industry, which effectively meant that preference was given to workers with union membership. (Beltz, 1964; Johnston, 1979: 88)

Specialisation, that is the training in only one aspect of rather than the whole trade, was another factor hindering the trade recognition of Dutch trades persons. For example, whereas in the Netherlands you could be a 'fitter', in Australia you had to be a 'fitter-turner'. Incomplete documentation and semi-skilled migrants making application for tradesman's status were the most prevalent among the other causes of failure to achieve trade recognition.

Regaining one's trade papers did not, however, necessarily guarantee a job. Herman van Beurden recalls that to get into boat building in Fremantle you had to have someone (father, uncle, cousin) in the business, 'It was a closed shop.' Herman, a fitter, overcame the disappointment of failure to gain entry to his trade by securing employment as a farm labourer with the skills he had picked-up in the Netherlands as

a farmer's son. I also interviewed for an instrument maker employed as an engineer, a fitter as motor mechanic, a ship's carpenter building houses, and an electrician who had retrained as a radio technician.

It was also possible to improve on one's pre-migration skills. Tony (a bus driver) gained his trade papers after teaching himself to weld. Harry, a factory worker, was taught how to be house painter by a friend. Selling (products door-to-door, insurance, real estate and new or second hand cars) was popular among the unskilled as a great deal of money could be earned in sales.

Generally speaking, however, Australia's trades oriented recruitment policy worked towards the positive readjustment of the Dutch. This is perhaps best noted by the fact that the Netherlands-born had the highest family incomes while those from Italy and Greece maintained the lowest. (Zubrzycki 1964:74) Nonetheless, the state of the economy at time of arrival (boom, credit squeeze, recession), and a migrant's level of English proficiency could hamper the process. Peter Rademakers, who landed here during the 1956 building slump, still recalls the helplessness he felt at being unable to speak English when his sponsor took him to the CES to register for employment and unemployment benefits until he found work. As the days and weeks passed without the prospect of work, Peter became increasingly more depressed and homesick. (Rademakers 1988:1-18) It was two months before the economy improved and Peter was offered work in the construction industry by another Dutchman. First generation Dutch employers preferred to employ a person from their own linguistic background, because they could communicate the needs of the job to them more effectively at less costs.

Pre migration networks based on work, region of origin, social and economic location and religion could also influence job possibilities primarily because such of these networks re-emerged in Australia. Julien observed that assisted middle and upper-middle class Dutch nationals, who had been successful businessmen or managers in Indonesia gained jobs immediately in the financial centres of Melbourne and Sydney with agencies of the same companies they had been employed by in Indonesia. (1986:193)

Not many post-war Dutch women entered the Australian job market. The 1954 census recorded 18.2 per cent of Dutch women in paid labour compared to a 50 per cent participation rate by Estonian women. (Zubrzycki 1964:100) Traditionally a Dutch woman's job was to take care of her family. Consequently most married Dutch women in Australia were enveloped in domestic life as they had been in the Netherlands where, despite having attained suffrage, the working wife was uncommon and women remained subservient socially, legally, if not domestically. (Oudijk 1988:470). Their labour market participation in Australia was also greatly hampered by the lack of extended family support; and disenchantment with the quality of available child care. Jo Schaafsma, who began work as a seamstress in a shirt factory when her daughter started school six months after arrival, explains:

> I took Eddie [1 year] to the only child care centre in Perth. I did not last the day, it was dirty and when I left him there all the children were sobbing, I couldn't bear it and picked him up later in the afternoon.

It easier for Cor, Jo's cousin to hold down a job because her three children attended school. Cor, mentioned feeling appreciative of her ethnicity at the clothing factory where she was employed as it guaranteed her better treatment from the Australian bosses than her Italian peers attracted. Participation in waged labour was rarely a

career move for married women. Most sought employment to supplement the family income, in part-time or casual jobs as kitchen hands, domestics, cleaners, tea ladies, shop assistants, clerks or by working in the family business (Peters 1999; see Table Three in Appendix).

Part Two: Dutch Entrepreneurs

Self-employment is an important part of the resettlement process of a variety of immigrant groups in host settings. (SBDC 1992:15) However, as in other migration countries, there is extensive variation in participation rates among the ethnic groups. (see Tables Four & Five in Appendix.) In 1991, 17.5 per cent of employable Dutch males in WA were in small businesses. This participation rate was higher than any other culturally and linguistically diverse migrant group in WA. The owner-operators of Dutch businesses in WA are first and second generation post-war migrants from the Netherlands and Indonesia, and recent arrivals. Most are business partnerships made up of spouses, parents and children, siblings, in-laws, region of origin or home-town friends, a few are sole proprietorships. Their concerns variously provided the owners with a range of returns from marginal economic survival to considerable personal financial wealth.

The First Generation Self-employed

Almost 45 per cent of the first generation self-employed are sub-contract tradesmen (carpenters, painters, bricklayers, electricians, fitter/turners boilermaker/welders, plumbers, butchers, bakers, dental technicians and shipbuilders. This reflects Australia's immigration selection procedures. The remainder are farmers, carpet

layers, taxi or truck drivers, grocers, owner managers of snack bars, delicatessens, fish and chip shops, cafes, importers of Dutch foods, milk vendors, lawn mowing and commercial cleaning contractors, and lodging house and aged-care home owners. The majority of females were in business partnerships with their husbands, the sample studied also included six sole women proprietors (a travel agent, market stalls (selling shells, take-away and imported foods); a dog grooming outlet, hairdresser, dressmaker and beauty salon owner.

The most prevalent motive they gave for becoming self-employed was the ease with which one is able to go into business in WA compared to the Netherlands. Prospective entrepreneurs in the Netherlands must hold specific educational qualifications and negotiate a dense network of laws. (Boissevain & Grotenbreg 1985) Further self-employment as a subcontractor in Australia was made easy during the 1950s and 60s by the sheer volume of lucrative sub-contract work available in the public and private sectors. Ben's experience is illustrative. His wife explains:

> My husband, a painter, was employed by the same boss in Amsterdam for twnty five years. We had been in the Holden migrant camp for six weeks when two Dutch builders came looking for a carpenter. I told them my husband was a painter. They needed a painter and he began with twelve houses. He used to go there with the tins of paint hanging off the handlebars of his bike. We registered our name . . . the boss of the employment agency helped us with that, and becoming a member of the Painter's Association. Then you get your number. I did the books and we had an accountant. We never looked back..

When Maria's electrician husband Hans started for himself: 'He put in tenders and did a lot of work on farms and in small towns rewiring houses, schools and pubs'. As the work declined so these men would move back and forth between subcontracting and employment depending upon the opportunities.

Emigration also opened up self-employment possibilities for the sons of middle and upper class families to attempt new endeavours unfettered by the family's working tradition. Ric Gerritsen explains:

> I went to university for a couple of years. I first studied for a job in the Indonesian Civil Service, but after a year I shifted to Law. However, I couldn't settle in it and shifted to economics and accountancy. I started as an assistant accountant. However, when a recession hit as the youngest I was retrenched. I had always wanted to go farming. You can't do that in Holland, you can't change from one profession to the other. You don't study at university and then become a bulldozer driver even if you earn more....

Small business was considered the only viable alternative by many educated Dutch whose qualifications or previous work experience were not recognised by Australian employers and professional bodies. Not being able to work in his profession was the catalyst that motivated Gerard, an architect to start a building company that eventually employed 500 people. Andrea and Henry, a buyer in the Netherlands, became self-employed when Henry lost his job as a sign writer after his employer discovered he had no papers. Andrea washed dishes at a city hotel to help keep the family solvent until they could access enough finance to buy a friend's business importing Dutch foods. Dutch bankers, managers and agricultural advisers, opened cafes, mixed businesses, grocery and green grocery stores, ran poultry farms, or drove taxis and trucks. On the other hand for the Dutch unskilled, whose job options were severely limited by lack of education, business ownership - even in a high risk low capital investment concern - provided a far greater chance to enhance their social status than did a job as a farm or factory labourer.

This generation associate their business success with their strong work ethic. The Australian neighbours of the fruit, vegetables and flower growing Dutch in the Dandenongs (Victoria) also claim their survival in tough times was due to their capacity for thrift and endurance:

> You can't compete with the Dutchies. . . . No matter how tough it gets, they can reduce their expenditure. They can live on less than anyone. They take pride in surviving on less than you can. (Gilmour, 1990: 48)

Similar Calvinist values and beliefs underpin the employment policy of many Dutch Australian firms. For example the founding owner/operators of a large Tasmanian building and construction company recruited their staff via the Church migration agency in the Netherlands, because this way they were certain to gain workers who similarly valued the Conservative Calvinist principles of hard work and thrift and rejected active unionism and had the specialised knowledge needed to give the company an advantage over local firms. (Julien 1986:112-115) These Dutch are not well represented in Australia's wealthy suburbs or among her socialites, their capital is in land, business and investments. (Gilmour 1992:48)

Establishing yourself in the self-employed sector was, however, difficult without financial security, a credit rating or a guarantor. It was made even more difficult by the Dutch Government placing restrictions on the amount of capital emigrants could take out of the country as this meant the vast majority of emigrants, after contributing toward the cost of the fare, had little more than landing money to start a new life in Australia. The only acceptable way to overcome this restriction was by turning cash into assets before leaving. Martin and his sons were able to establish themselves in the very profitable cray fishing industry with the two trucks and two fishing boats Martin purchased before leaving the Netherlands. Thirty years on they are still operational.

Many first generation family firms thrived on a heavy labour and financial commitment from obligated family or friends. Most Dutch who set-up businesses

within a few years of arriving did so with finance borrowed from overseas relatives, personal savings; the vendor or a money lender at huge costs. Lambert Smits, an industrial chemist raised the finance for his galvanising business by:

> ...being a waiter at nights, an electrical fitter and fixer at the Railways during the week and playing the piano at the Dutch club on weekends. I did a deal with a manufacturing firm to do all their windows and doorframes. Initially I rented premises. Then I used the £550 I had saved and a second mortgage on my house to buy land to build my own factory.

Dirk saved the cash for his first ship building business by delivering bread. 'I did a deal with the boss. I bought the bread from him on contract. For him I used to deliver 150 loaves per day, for myself 350'. Emile and El Zwart started a fish and chip shop with friends (Wil and Zus) from their home town with the money Emile saved from a job that included free rent: 'First we leased an empty shop. Then we made the tables and repaired the kitchen, bought chairs, new fridges, gondolas and stock'. The tight finance meant many firms were under-capitalised. After covering the day to day bills such as electricity, telephone, rent, bank loans and feeding and clothing a family there was rarely anything left. This financial situation did not ease until the mid 1960s when banks established less restrictive fiscal policies and migrants had accumulated some assets.

In business partnerships run by two couples, the women often ran the business so the husbands could hold-down outside jobs'. Each family taking responsibility for the shop on alternate weekends (DACA 1996). El Smits also coped single-handedly, with the domestic and child-rearing chores. Lambert Zwart recalls. 'My wife worked in the family factory. She had twenty girls in her department, plus Frank our baby. Ric Gerritsen's wife helped clear and seed pasture for diary cattle on the abandoned British Group Settlement Scheme farm they purchased.

The heavy domestic responsibilities of female co-owners could also cause conflict. The partnership of El, Emile, Wil and margaret dissolved when the childless woman objected to the time the other woman spent putting her young children to bed. Conversely, business ownership could also facilitate child-rearing obligations. Paula, a 41 year old Dutch mother of three children and pregnant of the fourth child bought a delicatessen when her husband died because she could live behind the shop, and she would be there for the older children after school. 'Gerald our youngest was only six weeks when I started the shop. I hid him from the customers behind a wall of biscuit tins in a playpen or a high chair' (DACA 1996). Paula hired help for a couple of hours each day; her children helped serve customers after school.

It was more common, however, for women to be involved in their husband's businesses. These women acquired, what Goffee and Scase refer to as a vicarious identity derived from and dependent on their husbands (1985:122). The marriages of women, who found it impossible to subordinate completely their economic, social and psychological needs to those of their husbands often ended in divorce. Edith's business career began after her children started school, when she completed a beauty course and began building-up a client base from home. Her husband who experienced this as a loss of face threw every possible obstacle in her path. She eventually divorced him and for the past 15 years has operated a very successful beauty salon in the heart of the city with her daughter.

Some children help ease their parent's financial burden by providing: unpaid labour. Sjannie explains:

> I was seven when I first waitressed in the family shop. I helped out the next three family businesses, even after I was married and had two small sons. When my parents went to the Netherlands, for their first return visit in 25 years

> Mieke, my sister, and I ran their 12 hours a day, seven day a week business for them. Mieke was paid a small wage and I was expected to give her lodging rent-free.

Others by working in return for board and keep, or giving parents their entire wage. Bernard, a navy cadet sent nearly all his earnings home until he was engaged to be married. This type of family organisation was common among some sectors of the Dutch working class in the Netherlands. Annie an employee of the Phillips Factory in Eindhoven, the Netherlands, recalls:

> I gave my wages [to my parents] until the last day. I would get seven guilders. From that I had to buy my own stockings. When I became involved in a serious relationship I got ten guilders' [love pays off!] (van Drenthe 1991:161).

Dutch Australian teenagers who handed their parents sizeable portions of their wages couldn't get ahead financially, nor could they afford to mix with Australians, who in any case thought the custom antiquated.

Second Generation in Business

The upsurge in Dutch self-employment rates in the mid- 1970s can be linked with the increased participation in the business sector of the second generation. Generally, most were in higher capital investment lower risk businesses than their parents - bank finance became easier to access. A few had initiallly become self-employed in milk, cleaning or newspaper delivery rounds, second hand car sales

yards, selling door-to-door or sign writing. However, the majority in this category had characteristically spent many years working at a variety of occupations for their parents or in other peoples businesses or the armed forces before being able to eventually focus on entrepreneurial activities.

More, second than first generation male informants had found their way into white collar occupations as salesmen selling insurance, cars, real estate electrical goods, or furniture before becoming self-employed. Their late entry into self-employment typically related to lack of capital. Their business knowledge (technical, management, clerical or sales) predominantly acquired on the job or by upgrading their education at night school (MEAC 1986:34-37). Tony, who runs an import-export business, took- up accountancy at the WA Institute of Technology after he left the armed forces. John, who operates a hotel and catering business studied administration, accountancy and hotel management while working his way up to hotel manager after a six year stint in the Navy.

Dutch working class parents in Australia generally thought a prolonged formal education unnecessary for their children, given the effortless manner in which they could become self-employed. The males, in fact tend to be less well educated than their trade-skilled fathers (see Des Cahill's article] as were kept at school only so long as the system required. Pieter recalls: 'Look, as soon as you were old enough to work you were expected to earn a quid to help your parents buy a house or business - that was more important to them than your feelings or your career'. As a consequence more of this category are located in wholesale and retail outlets less in the trades like their fathers. They are also hotel or motel owners, catering, grocery or liquor, delicatessen, newsagencies, fish and chip shop proprietors, run printing firms, dairy or wheat farms, The professionals among them are architects, engineers, accountants or stock broker.

Many picked-up the skills to start for themselves in a family business. Corny's business life started in the one-stop shop his parents bought when he was eighteen. He also g acquired management skills working for an insurance company at night. Dutch males were more likely to be rewarded for helping in the family enterprise than their sisters, Jonas elucidates:

> At age twenty my father gave me the newsagency attached to his mixed business. I delivered newspapers at 5 am every morning come rain, hail or shine. Then I put in a whole day in the shop. After selling the newsagency some six years later I started a second- hand car yard. I currently operate a motorbike and spare parts franchise, a motor school and repair business with my wife (a UK migrant) my two sons, my brother and 8 employees. I am also an insurance broker and I wholesale antiques.

Most females, are even less well educated than their brothers. After a short sojourn in the labour market most had pursued self-fulfilment as wives and/or mothers. By 1961 their workplace participation rate, Australia-wide, had only increased to 20.4 per cent. A quarter of this number were seamstresses or clothing factory workers, clerk-typists, shop assistants, domestics or cleaners. A much smaller percentage were nurses and teachers (Beltz 1964:196; Zubrzycki 1960:99; Hempel, 1960.41). Many, like Maria, had to leave school early. She was taken out of school at 14 after only two terms of Australian education, when her father failed to get a job, despite the headmaster explaining that she was capable of being a teacher. Instead she cleaned cake tins, scrubbed floors and babysat the Dutch baker's offspring, so his wife could work in the business.

Most are in partnership with their spouse, parents or siblings. The few sole proprietors include a dressmaker, hairdresser, beauty salon proprietor, bookkeeper, door to door saleswoman, self-employed bookkeeper and an employment consultant. Only a few upgraded their qualifications. Nicole, mother of three, would not have been able to establish her personnel agency without matriculating from night school after marriage. Before joining a personnel agency she was a clerk, interior decorator, sold Tupperware, ran a fish and chips shop with her husband and parents, raised funds for spastic welfare:

> I started up for myself 18 months ago. I paid cash for the office furniture and equipment, rented the premises and hired a girl for the office. I now have five staff.

A small percentage also completed tertiary education after marriage when university education became free in the mid-1970s.

The business problems this generation encountered were often a consequence of the 'sink or swim' education policy that prevailed. During the 1950s and 60s migrant children were not assisted with the transition from one culture and language to another, nor were they prepared for the receiving society's labour market (Vasta 1990:4). Hank a commercial boat builder recalls:

> I encountered problems because of my lack of formal education. I was unaware of pitfalls or information services. I blundered my way through 15 years, never went broke but I certainly had some right royal times when I lost some sweat...it was probably a good lesson in retrospect.

Hank, who eventually employed expert investment advisers and boat designers, is now the most successful boat builder in WA. He markets the ships he constructs worldwide.

This generation generally subscribe to their parents' work ethic. This is not surprising considering that such behaviours and beliefs are inculcated via socialisation practices by parents holding high expectations of their children and only begrudgingly, if at all, praising their achievements. Jan expected his twelve year old son to start contributing by performing the dirtiest jobs in the factory in return for pocket money. When he turned seventeen Jan paid a return trip for him to the Netherlands but told him he would have to earn his own money over there. He returned home 10 months later with a sizeable saving.

Lack of parental recognition keeps Willy achieving. She started her business by baking and selling patisserie items to coffee shops. When she had accumulated the necessary assets to secure a bank loan she opened a trendy cafe that currently employs ten staff. Willy's father does not acknowledge his daughter's achievement because he believes only outsiders should do that. Deanna and her brothers, who often laboured for up to 14 hours per day in the family business or on the farm, eventually gave up striving to gain their father's recognition of their input. 'In the end he didn't get our support either, we left home instead'.

In contrast to their parent's this generation benefit from the school based socio-economic networks their parents had to relinquish when they emigrated. Stephen elaborates:

> I attended school in a large wheatbelt town where there was a Department of Immigration migrant camp through which thousands of migrants passed. My business now relies on Dutch people from my parent's networks, people from

> the migrants camps, and the local lads and farmers sons who attended the same Marist Brother's and State High school I did.

The second generation targets source labour that is suitable for the job rather than for its ethnicity. Some employers recruit their employees from church circles because they deem them to be more trustworthy and because they uphold a similar work ethic. Ben, a large-scale manufacturer explains:

> Ten out of every twelve of my employees are first and second generation Dutch from the Re- Reformed Church. . . where I was a member. My brother, who is still active in the church, is my contract manager. They put in a hard days work.

This generation relate their penchance for hard work to their humble background. They were not used to having 'things' dished up for them. Asked to speculate about their children (third generation) typically evokes the following response:

> I worked in my father's business for board and pocket money. We lived in tents for years and only gradually moved to a better part of town. But my children are growing up in plush surroundings. I can't teach them about hardship so I don't know what's going to happen. Will they squander what my father and I have built up?

Recent Arrivals

Although Dutch populations in Australia have generally declined due to the deaths of the early settlers and to a lesser extent return migration outpacing new

immigration, WA has been able to attract a disproportionately large number of the Dutch who settled in Australia since 1971 (Hugo 1986, 1996). In contrast to the early Dutch who were predominantly from the working class this group are drawn mainly from the middle class, as a consequence they are generally better educated than their postwar second generation Dutch-Australians peers. A good command of the English language enabled them to immediately access local information networks.

Most claim the restrictions placed on enterprise by the Dutch socialist government; the threat of nuclear war and other nuclear disasters; feeling stifled by Dutch society; and the need to avoid Dutch social problems and overcrowding is what gave impetus to their flight. Robert elucidates:

> We certainly didn't go to Australia because we wanted to go to Australia. We went to Australia because we wanted to get out of Holland. That's a big difference. I wanted to get out of Holland because of its small-mindedness. And I wanted to give my kids a better life away from drugs. We were at a stage where it didn't matter so much where we went so long as it was out of Holland where people watch each other constantly and interfere with each others' private lives.

Another major difference between this group and postwar Dutch is the former had the financial resources (from personal savings, superannuation pay-outs and/or the sale of a business in the Netherlands) to travel to Australia before emigrating to review the employment and business environment, arrange jobs or business partners and check on housing and school costs. This enabled them to put a substantial down-payment on a residence and set up a business. Such assets also made accessing Australian bank

finance for business or a house mortgage relatively easy. Unlike their postwar co-ethnics this group align themselves with the Australian middle class and have located themselves in higher status suburbs and send their children to private schools and remain openly proud of their heritage. This is also fostered by the current multicultural -rather than earlier assimilation- resettlement policy.

Recent arrivals operate businesses dealing with industrial design, hydroponics, small business broking, computer programming, management consulting, large scale catering, importing, hardware, wine growing, air-conditioning, printing, engineering, the manufacture of leisure furniture, hardware, electronics, plumbing, international freight and tile wholesaling. Two (a flower grower and a large caterer) came under the Business Migration Scheme when it was necessary to commit $500 000 to establishing a business enterprise within two years of arrival (DIMA 1982). The sole women proprietors I interviewed include a hairdresser, invisible mender, a computer programmer, the proprietor of a 'trendy' coffee house and marketing expert (of paper packaging products) The remaining women were in business partnerships with their husbands.

Most, but not all choose labour workers for its their skills rather than ethnicity. Wilma gives preference to university students as waitresses because they provided better and more reliable service, whereas David recruits Dutch workers to grow and pick his flowers because he believes they have a predisposition for this sort of work.

In contrast to the early Dutch this group also make frequent trips home to see relatives and to maintain and expand their European business, collegial, information and export networks. Louis Velthoen explains:

> I went into real estate for four years and then bought this farm. It was my idea to grow large asparagus. I had all my agriculture school diplomas (I had been a successful mushroom grower until the market became saturated). But asparagus are not popular here. So I decided to try hydroponic farming. I grow burpless cucumbers. I make a living from one acre of cucumbers. I access the up-to-date knowledge I need for this venture from my contacts in agriculture in the Netherlands.

Despite the thirty years that elapsed between the first arrivals and this group they also cited the ease with which it is possible to become self-employed in WA - compared to the Netherlands- as one of the reasons for choosing WA. Because as Jacqueline, a hairdresser, explains:

> Anyone here who has the initiative and money to start something can do it. In Holland business-ownership it is so regimented it takes nearly all the challenge out of it. Prospective proprietors need a Middestants Diploma - and must meet a battery of other criteria.

Jacqueline's business also benefits from the Dutch system since the accountancy, finance, bookkeeping training her Dutch diploma entails helps her operate a more efficient business. Some Like the migrants of the 1950s some also established themselves in business when Australian authorities would not recognise their qualifications. Laurence K an engineer and his wife Cora: '...bought a run-down security systems firm and developed it into a lucrative enterprise. He runs the workshop which makes up the systems and she sees to their installation. Cora explains:

> He employs Dutch workers with the skills his business requires if they are available because they work hard. I run the office. We advertise in the Dutch community newsletter we offer the Dutch a service in the Dutch language.

This is an extremely successful marketing ploy since many of the elderly Dutch have lost their second language ability due to age and illness.

In Australia the social network of these recent arrivals comprises mainly other recent arrivals and members of the Australian Netherlands Chamber of Commerce (ANCOC) an initiative established by members of this group. John explains:

> ANCOC is available to anyone that wishes to join, it is not an inner circle as such. It is networking! You meet people not necessarily to do business, but you do business later on, a different way. If someone comes to my office for business they are there to do business. If you meet someone after hours you don't know prior to going there what is going to happen. You meet them on a different level. You haven't got that business viciousness about you. You can assess the situation and if later on you want to do business well then you have got their card.

The first and second generation of post-war migrants hardly figured in the membership of ANCOC in the first seven years unless they were in big business and had accrued finance and status. The small business person felt they were not made welcome. This is confirmed by Elich (1985), in his study of the Dutch in Australia he

too noted that ‘recent arrivals’ considered the trades person and ‘self-made’ businessman unsuitable to mix with socially.

Another problem is the different expectations the various groups hold for the club. For example whereas recent arrivals tended to treat ANCOC like a Dutch social club, postwar migrants expect it to function as a chamber particularly to foster overseas trade. ANCOC’s membership has declined dramatically as the recent arrivals became more integrated with Australian society. It is currently dominated by second generation Dutch who will need to build stronger trade networks with Europe if it is to survive.

The case study material in this article provided a detailed insight into the organisation of the working world of Dutch Australians. The study also explored the differences between the generations and genders in workplace concentrations and activities. The research clearly illustrates the importance of family networks to the setting-up and running of first generation businesses; links a local education and school-based networks to the success of second generation enterprise; and a good command of the English language and an upper secondary education or tertiary qualifications to the business success of recent arrivals. As such it shows Dutch self-employment in WA is not a monocausal phenomenon, rather, the business strategies in the study reflected a complex web of interactions in which the organisational aspects (social, cultural, and economic resources) of Dutch workers and entrepreneurs engage in a dialectic with the structural influences and opportunity niche of the host society.

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. The analysis derives its conclusions from the personal testimony obtained from 125 interviews with Dutch migrants in WA (conducted by the author for her Ph.D between 1992 and 1996), which traced their employment and self-employment activities. The oral history extracts throughout this article are taken from

these interviews, however, the names of the informants have been changed to protect their privacy.

. The newcomers included emigrants from Britain, Western and Southern Europe and displaced persons from Eastern and Central Europe and the Baltic States.

. The remainder comprised semi-and un skilled workers. The fact that Australia did not select Dutch migrants from the professional or managerial areas did not stop a small proportion of such Dutch, disillusioned by the economy and the rigid social structure from taking their chances in Australian.

. Migrants also disembarked at specific ports on the advise of their ship's Captain. My father opted to get off at Fremantle rather than Melbourne, when the Captain of the Volendam on which he was a passenger, insisted job opportunities were far better in Western Australia.

. The large concentrations, Australian-wide, of Dutch in the construction industry - by 1961, 46 per cent of employable Dutch males in Canberra were working on construction sites against a national average of 22.7 per cent for the Dutch reflects Australia's selection priorities (Beltz 1964:183/4 - see also Table Two in Appendix) .

. Between 1951 and 1954 a few migrants also found their way into a metal trades job by appealing to the 1946 'Tradesmen's Rights Act' established to overcome shortages in the metal trades in the immediate post-war years. This enabled people who passed the short technical training course, in a particular aspect of the trade, to gain work in that trade providing no apprenticed tradesmen was unemployed (Appleyard 1956:91).

. Almost 48 per cent of Dutch electricians regained their trades papers.

. Dutch also objected to the lack of responsibility Australian workers appeared to have for their employers' property or interests (Beltz 1964).

. More Dutch entered the painting trade in this way during the 1950s than any other migrant group (Hempel, 1960:33, Appleyard, 1956:52 and Beltz, 1964:190).

. Hempel noted that many more Dutch people in Australia were located in sales than was the case in the Netherlands (Hempel 1960:31; Beltz 1964).

. A strict division of labour reigned: men earned the family's living so that the women would not have to work outside the house. As late as 1968 the Netherlands still had the lowest rate of working wives and the largest number of male-dominated jobs of all the European Community Countries (Huggett, 1971:70; Hofstede, 1964).

. The Small Business Development Corporation Fact Sheet (1999) defines small businesses is independently owned and operated; managed personally by the major investor and if non-manufacturing employs less than 20 people, if manufacturing less than 100 persons.

. This is a major achievement given that the Dutch did not figure significantly in the self-employed sector until the mid-1970s (see Tables Six in Appendix).

· First Generation postwar (52); Second generation (32); and Recent Arrivals (30). Well over 95% were located in the small business sector. Around 6% were sole women proprietors.

. I follow Palmer (1984:99) who defines the second generation as the sons and daughters of an immigrant, who were either born either overseas or in the host country but educated predominantly in the new environment.

. I define recent arrivals as the Dutch who arrived after 1975, are about the same age as the second generation but who were better educated and financially better placed to invest in a business activity.

. Translated from the Dutch which reads: 'Ik heb tot de laatste dag alles

afgegeven. En ik kreeg zeven gulden. En ik moest daar mijn eigen nylons betalen....Toen ik echt verkering kreeg toen kreeg ik en tientje.'

. Educated parents tended to keep their children at school longer.

. Jan completed a Ph.D while she was child rearing and eventually lectured at university. Deanna, a shop assistant, obtained a Bachelors Degree and currently runs a centre for the ethnic aged. Adriana, a seamstress in a sweatshop before marriage, retrained as a medical secretary when her children left home.

· In contrast to most other Australian states except Queensland, in WA there has been a continued, albeit small, growth of the Dutch-born population to 11 622 in 1986 and 11 694 in 1991. This number is augmented by the approximately 1,000 Dutch nationals born in Indonesia who also resettled in WA but who do not appear in Netherlands-born population figures (Hugo 1990:74/5)