

Observations from Within, Observations from Without

The Dutch in Anthropological Perspective

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Prior to the 1950s, the ethnography of the Netherlands was virtually a *terra incognita*. Dutch anthropologists usually conducted research in the tropics and foreign ethnographers did not do fieldwork in the country either. It was only in the 1950s and 1960s that native and foreign anthropologists hesitatingly began to carry out research pertaining to Dutch society and culture. The 1970s were a take-off period, in which the number of anthropological publications on the Dutch steadily increased. The present review article describes the rise and growth, the theoretical and methodological approaches, and the themes of this subfield. It also discusses some of the pros and cons of endogenous ethnography.

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Introduction

Obviously, there is no such thing as *the* anthropology of the Netherlands. In regard of theory, methodology, and subject matters, the range of approaches is simply too diverse. Moreover, there is no strong tradition of “anthropology at home” or “endogenous ethnography” in the Netherlands. It was only in the 1970s that a growing number of Dutch and some foreign anthropologists began conducting research and publishing about various groups and segments of Dutch society. Previously, Dutch anthropologists predominantly did fieldwork in the tropics, and in the colonies of the East Indies, Surinam and Papua New Guinea in particular. In the academic division of labor, research into Dutch society and culture was more or less the preserve of sociologists, social geographers, historians and folklorists.

The repatriation of anthropology in the Netherlands, which occurred later than in most other European countries, can be attributed to several factors. Firstly, decolonization processes all but barred access for anthropologists to

the newly independent states and thereupon many had to find new fieldwork locations, and usually these were found closer to home. Secondly, less funding became available for ethnography in the tropics, while at the same time, government and non-governmental organizations increasingly financed applied and policy research at home, for example regarding ethnic minorities, marginal groupings, crime and so forth. Thirdly, anthropologists in academe realized that anthropology is the study of *all* human societies and cultures – including their own. New education and research programs were initiated, attracting scores of students, many of whom found employment in applied and policy research (van Ginkel 1994b).

This paper will review the ethnographic literature pertaining to the Netherlands. Generally, three broad streams can be discerned: historical anthropology, the ethnography of the social fringe and the ethnography of ethnic minorities. The literature on ethnic minorities is quite extensive, and will not be reviewed here since it has already been the subject of other review articles (see, for instance, van Niekerk

1993). Historical ethnography usually takes a diachronic or processual perspective, covering developments over a relatively long span of time. The ethnography of marginal groupings generally concentrates on specific social categories and either misses a historical dimension or takes a short-term (post-World War II) perspective. Before presenting the main findings of anthropologists belonging to these two 'schools', I will briefly dwell on the scanty ethnographic literature produced before the 1970s.¹

Predecessors and Early Ethnographers

Of course, there are authors who can be considered anthropologists or ethnographers *avant-la-lettre*. For instance, in his seminal book *The Embarrassment of Riches* (1987: 9), the historian Simon Schama states that 18th century writers of natural history – among whom Johannes le Francq van Berkhey and Cornelis van Alkemade – can be regarded as such and Martinus Stuart's work can also be mentioned in this respect (Ensel 1994). These scholars devoted much attention to the habits, customs and the 'national character' or regional cultures of Dutch people. The same goes for the myriad accounts of travellers who visited the Netherlands (cf. van Ginkel 1997a). In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, another category of writers should be mentioned: physical anthropologists and craniologists (for early overviews, see Davis 1865; Mayet 1902). However, for obvious reasons their biologicistic work has been discredited following World War II.

It was not until the 1930s that social scientists applied what is nowadays believed to be the hallmark of ethnography: fieldwork and participant observation. Generally their fieldwork was brief and only used as an additional research method. Sebald Rudolf Steinmetz – a jurist who turned sociologist, geographer and ethnologist – was the founding father of this school, known as 'sociography'. Sociographers conducted community studies and attempted to quantify the data they gathered in neat descriptive statistics. They also devoted attention, among many other things, to the mentality of the people they studied which they usually linked to racial characteristics. That is, they

tried to discern Franconian, Saxon and Frisian elements and character traits in the Dutch populace. Under Steinmetz's successor, Henri Nicolaas ter Veen, and his students, sociography became a form of applied social science. Their studies were often concerned with the consequences of the enclosure of the Zuyder Sea, land reclamations, and the coping strategies and social organization of the settlers in the reclaimed *polders*. However, by the mid-1950s the heyday of sociography was over. Modern sociologists criticized its empiricism and this new generation found inspiration in American functional sociology and its theories of the middle range. Sociography fell apart into three separate disciplines: sociology, social geography and anthropology.

In the meanwhile, cultural anthropologists had for the first time shown an interest in the Netherlands. It was Ruth Benedict who conducted a war-time study of Dutch culture "at a distance" (van Ginkel 1992b, 1993a). This work, written in 1944 in assignment and under the aegis of the Office of War Information in Washington, remained unpublished. It was Benedict's task to produce a document for the American army in which she had to outline the Dutch national character. This document had to instruct the American soldiers how to behave when liberating the Dutch population from the German occupation army. Benedict interviewed Dutch war refugees and immigrants and consulted various written documents, but was of course unable to conduct fieldwork in the country.

Nor did the first Dutch cultural anthropologist to write on his compatriots conduct fieldwork. H.Th. Fischer (1947) based his article on the Dutch kinship system entirely on the available literature. In this post-war period, it was still no general practice among Dutch anthropologists to enter the field and conduct participant observation.

It was only in the early 1950s that the Dutch/American married couple John and Dorothy Keur did extended anthropological fieldwork in a Dutch hamlet, Anderen, located in the province of Drenthe. Their ethnography, entitled *The Deeply Rooted* (1955), in many respects resembles the work of Dutch sociographers. It

is rather descriptive and covers a wide range of topics dominating social life in the village. But unlike sociographers, the Keurs based their book almost entirely on participant observation. This was, however, not an easy task. Initially, the villagers considered the Keurs “snooping strangers” and they were “loathe to speak freely of much that was significant” (Keur 1969: 518). But the Anderen people got used to the activities of the Keurs. However, the publication of their book led to some commotion, not only in the village itself, but also among sociologists, who regarded it as an incursion in what they considered their exclusive domain, and doubted the usefulness of participant observation and the qualitative turn in social science.

The first anthropological field research conducted by Dutch anthropologists in the Netherlands aroused similar sharp reactions from sociologists. It was André Köbben, assisted by four students, who in 1957 and 1958 did research among the followers of the leader of a religious sect, nicknamed Lou de Palingboer (after his occupation: he was an eel trader). This man believed he was God and so did his followers. Köbben was dissatisfied with the scanty first-hand information regarding religious groupings and for this reason he initiated this research, which was based on interviews and participant observation. Again, sociologists criticized the research methods applied. In addition, they commented upon fieldwork ethics, since the researchers did not disclose their identity of being anthropologists (cf. Bayer & Köbben 1959; Köbben 1959, 1977; Riedeman 1960; Bayer 1969).

Gradually, however, the anthropological way of conducting research at home became accepted. Some sociologists even began to apply participant observation in their own research. In the 1960s, several anthropological studies on Dutch village communities were published. Hetty Nooy-Palm (1964, 1968) carried out fieldwork in Staphorst, a relatively closed community which then still maintained its traditional customs and costumes. Her monograph, entitled *Staphorster volk* (Staphorst People), is an example of a holistic community study about “real people”, but lacks a clear research question or problem and is mainly descriptive and

impressionistic, covering such subjects as the kinship system, social relationships, community gossip and social control. Peter Kloos studied religion and (non)church attendance in Gasteren, a community in the province of Drenthe, and reported about his role conflicts when doing research (1961, 1969). Kloos also conducted fieldwork in the colonization community of Swifterbant in the *polder* of Eastern Flevoland, which was reclaimed after World War II. Here he studied the formation of formal organizations (for example churches and associations), and the development of friendship relations and social networks (1966, 1975, 1981).

Although endogenous ethnography gained acceptance in academe, these initial research projects were little more than side-tracks. The overwhelming majority of Dutch anthropologists still went to the tropics to conduct fieldwork. Even for Köbben and his collaborators, Nooy-Palm and Kloos, the Netherlands provided a temporary fieldwork site which they switched again for research locations further afield. It was only in the 1970s that the Netherlands was put more firmly on the ethnographic map.

Take-Off: the 1970s

Jeremy Boissevain, appointed professor of social anthropology at the University of Amsterdam in 1966, stimulated ethnographic research in Europe. He established the Department of European and Mediterranean Studies and initiated a research project in the Alblasserwaard, a rural area in the province of South-Holland. Three anthropologists did fieldwork in the Alblasserwaard, each studying a particular community. Two of them obtained a Ph.D. degree: Lodewijk Brunt (1974) with a dissertation focusing on the relationships between autochthons and urban migrants in the village of Stroomkerken (a pseudonym) and Jojada Verrips (1978) with a dissertation on the relationships between and within various religious groupings in the dairy-farming community of Ottoland and their respective worldviews. Both books are in a way examples of political anthropology and concern shifting power balances.

Brunt describes the confrontations between

autochthons and urbanites against the background of the local power structure and the ways in which it changed as a consequence of internal and external developments. With the decreasing importance of agriculture, the autochthonous farmers' hegemonic power declined and new economic interest-groups filled the power vacuum. The newcomers became veritable competitors in the local political arena and new relationships developed.

Verrips also highlights local power struggles, particularly in the religious domain which he links to processes of state formation and social differentiation. In this case, too, the local farmers' power in the village arena declined in the process of modernization (for an English summary of this ethnography, see Verrips 1980).

Both community studies are based not only upon participant observation, but also on interviews, and the use of written sources. Verrips and Brunt used concepts and theoretical propositions which in the 1960s were developed by American and British anthropologists who were involved in peasant studies and the anthropology of complex societies.

Following the Alblasserwaard-project, the Netherlands was put more firmly on the ethnographic map. It was no longer deemed exceptional to carry out research at home, at least not in the anthropology departments of the universities of Amsterdam and Utrecht.

In the second part of the 1970s, Brunt and his colleague Frank Bovenkerk, both trained in Amsterdam but holding positions in Utrecht, wrote and edited several books with a programmatic character. In 1976, they published *Binnenste buiten en ondersteboven: de antropologie van de industriële samenleving* (Inside Out and Upside Down: The Anthropology of Industrial Society) (Bovenkerk & Brunt 1976). In their book they urged anthropologists to study modern industrial society and in particular the *rafelrand*, that is, social fringe groupings. With these fringe groupings, they had in mind thieves, drug addicts and drug dealers, prostitutes, alcoholics, murderers and other shady social categories, but also mayors, taxi drivers and so forth. As we shall see shortly, their advice was heeded by several ethnographers. Bovenkerk and Brunt were inspired by the Chicago School

of Sociology. Besides their editorial involvement in two books on anthropological research methods (Brunt 1977; Bouw *et al.* 1982), and one on urban anthropological studies in Dutch settings (Bovenkerk & Brunt 1982), Bovenkerk (1978) edited a book on ethnic minorities and racial discrimination in the Netherlands, which was one of the first publications in this field and stimulated research. For example, Bovenkerk and several of his colleagues published on Italian ice-cream producers and vendors (Bovenkerk *et al.* 1983), while a collection of essays on ethnic relations in the city of Utrecht appeared in 1985 (Bovenkerk *et al.* 1985). Other pioneers in the field of ethnic minority studies were André Köbben and Jeremy Boissevain, and today quite a few anthropologists are involved in this specialism. It is not in the least because of the widely available funding in the 1970s and 1980s that this subdiscipline has become relatively popular. Of course, it also gave anthropologists an opportunity to study other cultures close to home.

The number of historical anthropologists also expanded. Verrips' book was paradigmatic. It became an example for those conducting ethno-historical community studies, and for scholarly work on relations and conflicts between members of local-level religious denominations, as well. Historical or processual anthropology was further stimulated through the publication of a social history journal's special issue on "historicizing anthropology" (*Tijdschrift voor sociale geschiedenis*, vol. 6, 1980). It contained several contributions by anthropologists on Dutch society and culture, including a programmatic essay by Anton Blok (1980). Blok also published a booklet entitled *Antropologische perspectieven* (Anthropological Perspectives, 1977), which can be regarded as an introduction into (historical) anthropology. This subfield of ethnohistory implied more or less a return to sociology, since it was heavily influenced by the work of the German sociologist Norbert Elias and his Dutch compatriot Johan Goudsblom. This branch of research focuses on the sociogenesis of socio-cultural phenomena and on social linkages and the interactions between various levels of social integration. Thus, Dutch ethnography turned away early from the static, slice-of-time and

insular descriptions of communities and social categories which were typical of most contemporary mainstream American and European ethnographies. Jeremy Boissevain also encouraged his colleagues to look “beyond the community” and devote attention to social processes, while at the same time maintaining “real people” and their transactions in the picture (Boissevain 1977; Boissevain & Friedl 1977).

Thus, ethnohistorians studying Dutch society and culture devoted much attention to social processes, the embeddedness of social configurations in larger entities and acting individuals. In doing so, they were in the vanguard of developments in anthropology which began to turn away from structural functionalism. However, their work has had little impact in the international anthropological arena, because most of it was published in Dutch. It is striking that it was only in the late 1980s that an attempt was made to put the Netherlands on the international ethnographic map. Sydel Silverman had urged Jeremy Boissevain to do so and as a result, a collection of essays entitled *Dutch Dilemmas* (Boissevain & Verrips 1989), was published. As a whole, the contributions constitute a sample of the various types of endo-ethnography in the Netherlands.

Today, historical anthropology and the ethnography of the social fringe are still the two most important foci in the anthropology of the Netherlands. (At least, if we disregard ethnic minority studies, which is an important sub-field in Dutch anthropology generally.) In the following two sections, I will outline the main research subjects and results of both ‘schools’ (or, rather, “styles”) of endogenous or endo-ethnography. The next section briefly deals with anthropological views of Dutch society and culture from the perspective of foreigners, which is followed by reflections on the pros and cons of doing ethnographic research in one’s own country.

Historical Anthropology

Although classifications are always arbitrary to some extent, the following are the major themes in ethnohistorical studies pertaining to the Netherlands: religion, elites, entrepreneurs

(for example farmers, fishermen, barges), brigandage, witchcraft, feasts, rituals and identities. I will address these subjects separately.

Religion, Pillarization, and Morals

In the Netherlands, a large proportion of the population is Protestant or Roman Catholic. There are various denominations of Protestantism, ranging from liberal *Hervormd* (which used to be the state church) to orthodox *Gereformeerd*, with several sub-denominations. These religions were not only important in shaping worldviews, but also had a profound impact on social life, especially since the late 19th century. Many organizations (for example political parties, associations and unions) were affiliated to churches. This phenomenon is known as *verzuiling* (pillarization). Anthropologists in the Netherlands (along with sociologists and historians) have developed a keen research interest in religion and pillarization (and post-World War II depillarization and deconfessionalization processes). Although social life in many respects became divided as a consequence of pillarization, this was at the same time an integrative process, since it led to denser social relations and networks within a pillar. One of the main objectives of the pillars’ leaders was to seek integration in the nation.

As we have seen, some of the earliest examples of Dutch endo-ethnography cover these subjects. Brunt (1972) maintains that, contrary to what is often claimed, the emancipation of *Gereformeerden* was not a movement of small people (*kleine luyden*) and that this denomination was not a unity. A distinction must be made between strictly doctrinaire Calvinists and neo-Calvinists. Tennekes (1969) describes the worldview of a conservative variant of Dutch Calvinism, the *Oud-Gereformeerden* in view of Max Weber’s thesis about the selective affinity between Calvinism and capitalism. He claims that this thesis does not apply to the *Oud-Gereformeerden*; they do not believe that economic success proves one’s election but that only the right religious experience does. In another article, Tennekes (1988) examines the updating of the religious discourse among Dutch Protestants since the 1960s. He states that in this discourse, the image of God turned from a

God who dispenses salvation to sinful humans into a God who legitimates the struggle for social justice. Verrips (1973) deals with a conflict between two groupings within the *Gereformeerde* church of Ottoland. He shows that this factional strife which on the face of it dealt with the religious "truth" was inextricably intertwined with the rise of modern, liberal theology and the conservative resistance to it, and also with the bad economic situation of these conservatives. Hak (1991) focuses on local pillarization processes in the fishing-town of Urk, where the number of Protestant denominations rose from 3 in 1947 to 10 in 1988.

This is only a small sample of ethnographic work on such local-level religious processes and power struggles in Protestant communities. Very few community studies – if any – leave the subject of religion and pillarization untouched. A part of the literature deals with more specific topics. Miedema (1979) examines the reasons for the high incidence of enforced marriages among orthodox Calvinists in the Netherlands. He claims that several factors combine to keep the realms of worldliness and religiosity apart, which allows for premarital intercourse. Verrips discusses some 20th century cases of manslaughter committed by Calvinists as pathological elaborations of Calvinist representations in general and of Calvinist sexual morality in particular (1987, 1991b).

Mart Bax is among the most prolific endo-ethnographers. His work focuses on relations of power and dependency among Roman Catholics in the province of North-Brabant. He coined the concept of "religious regimes", which provides a model for studying the mutual conditioning of processes of power and meaning. The majority of his articles concern the confrontations between the Roman Catholic church and the state, and between and within religious groupings (usually between religious specialists and lay-people), as well. In analyzing these power struggles and factional processes, Bax emphasizes the relative autonomy of religious processes vis-à-vis other social processes and aims to bring power back into the study of religion. He devotes special attention to transformations in devotional practices, such as pilgrimages and also describes changes in a mon-

astery (Bax 1983, 1985a, 1985b, 1986, 1987, 1988a, 1989a, 1989b, 1990a, 1990b, 1992, 1994).

Ton Duffhues devotes attention to pillarization processes within the Roman Catholic population, and to Catholic leaders, networks, movements and parties, as well. He uses network analyses and theoretical concepts adapted from the literature on social movements and collective action. Regarding the Catholic community of Arnhem, the provincial capital of Gelderland, he is particularly concerned with the role of entrepreneurial elites, their financial resources and the significance of ideologies in mobilizing and organizing the local Catholics (Duffhues 1991; Duffhues & Felling 1989).

Peter Meurkens's ethnographic work on Catholics in the Kempen (a region in the province of North-Brabant) between 1840 and 1910 describes, among many other things, their transforming norms, values and behavioral standards (1985, 1989). In particular, the religious and community elites launched civilizing, moralizing and disciplining offensives so as to change public morality. Similar offensives which aimed at bringing about the virtuous behavior of people from all walks of life, are also described by other authors, for both Protestant milieus (Verrips-Roukens 1987; Helsloot 1995; van Ginkel 1995b) and Catholic milieus (Kalb 1994). Most authors writing about this particular subject are influenced by Norbert Elias's civilization theory.

Local and Regional Elites

Kitty Verrips-Roukens portrays shifting power balances between local populations and elites, especially concerning the relationships between large land-owners and tenants, in a Salland village (province of Overijssel) against the background of local and national developments (1982). Commercialization of agriculture brought about class-relationships, but these became more diffuse with processes of social integration. She further analyzes the sociogenesis of specific mentalities (1988). Gerrit Wildenbeest's (1983b) ethnographic writings with respect to the rise and fall of an agrarian elite in the eastern part of the province of Gelderland bears a family resemblance to Verrips-Roukens's work. He shows how a category of overse-

ers of large-landowners turned into a landed gentry (the *Scholten*), but lost its power as a consequence of internal and external processes, leading to its marginalization in the 1930s. This decline was accelerated as a result of an endogamous marriage system and conspicuous consumption.

The Limburg and Frisian nobilities have also been the subject of anthropological scrutiny, by Dick van den Bosch (1979, 1981) and Yme Kuiper (1993), respectively. Both authors devote considerable attention to 18th and 19th centuries transformations concerning the political and governmental influence of noblemen, their land ownership as a source of wealth and power and their culture as a means of distinction vis-à-vis other social groupings. Both conclude that in the course of time there was a rapprochement with bourgeois elites, although the nobility succeeded in maintaining some cultural distance through their exclusive lifestyles.

Heidi Dahles (1988, 1990a) devotes attention to one of the favorite pastimes of the nobility and other elites: hunting. She focuses on the changing classifications of hunters (both of categories of game and hunters), their perceptions and legitimizations of the hunt, their relationships with one another and their behavioral codes. According to Dahles, the hunt must be regarded a ritual means of distinction and identification. She shows how hunters respond to the growing public opposition to their activities. Dahles also goes into the cultural meaning of poaching (1991). In her ethnography, she combines a processual perspective with notions from symbolic anthropology.

Entrepreneurs and Occupational Cultures

As we have seen above, farmers figure prominently in the work of Dutch anthropologists doing research in their own society. It is no coincidence that in the 1970s this occupational category began to attract considerable attention. During this decade, peasant studies were quite popular in Dutch anthropology, following trends in American anthropology. An early example of this kind of writing is Jorada Verrips's essay on the decline of small-scale farming in the South-Holland village of Ottoland (1975).

Bax and Nieuwenhuis (1980) present an example of a Brabant peasant emancipation movement.

Several anthropologists have held (or still hold) jobs at the Sociology Department of Wageningen University, a university specializing in studies related to agriculture. They include Kitty Verrips-Roukens (whose work is mentioned above), Gerrit Wildenbeest, Nadette Somers and Henk de Haan. Wildenbeest describes the time-regimes of farmers in Markelo (eastern Gelderland) and the protests of farmers in a neighbouring community against the plans to designate their district as an official national landscape area (1988a, 1988b). Nadette Somers's (1991) Ph.D. dissertation concerns small-scale family firms and their survival strategies from the 1880s to the 1980s. She further deals with the problems and possibilities of agricultural extension. Henk de Haan (1993, 1995) also develops the theme of (small-scale) family farming in the Netherlands, with its specific kinship, property and inheritance patterns. He describes how these patterns are transformed as a consequence of commercialization and modernization processes, using examples from the eastern part of the country, and Twente (province of Overijssel) in particular.

Jorada Verrips studies the problem of solidarity in the occupational community of barge-men in the 20th century (1989, 1991a). Scores of barge-masters' associations have arisen and rapidly disappeared according to a similar pattern and few in existence today can pride themselves on a relatively long life. The reason why mutual solidarity cannot be sustained in the form of stable associations is the internal differentiation of the occupational community and the ambivalence of the bargees concerning their individual and collective coping strategies, especially when the economic tide is changing. Another topic concerns the naming of the barges, and the "hidden meaning" of these names (Verrips 1990).

A small number of Dutch anthropologists is involved in maritime anthropology. Durk Hak writes about fishermen in the Frisian village of Lemmer (1988) and on the former island of Urk (1991). His work is rather descriptive and does not seem to be informed by a specific research

question or problem. Most of Rob van Ginkel's publications concern the use of marine common property resources. He deals with the transition from capture to culture shellfish fisheries in the Zeeland town of Yerseke and shows that, contrary to what the theory of the "tragedy of the commons" and similar propositions predict, the enclosure of the commons is not a panacea for resource management problems (1988, 1989, 1991a, 1994c), although the development of the Zeeland mussel industry provides a successful example of privatization in the fisheries (1990, 1998). In his anthropological writings on the fishermen of the North-Holland island of Texel, van Ginkel shows that commons tragedies can only be understood when contextualized. Moreover, due to their resilience and adaptive strategies, Texel fishermen coped with both ecological and economic problems (1993b, 1994a, 1995c, 1996a, 1997b). In addition, van Ginkel deals with fishermen's collective action problems (1991b, 1996b).

Don Kalb describes the vicissitudes of Brabant shoemakers in the early 20th century industrialization process (1991, 1994). Among other things, he devotes attention to class experiences and protests. In his Ph.D. dissertation, Kalb (1995) – besides dealing with the shoemakers again – describes and analyzes the early 20th century industrialization process in the Brabant city of Eindhoven, and theorizes on class relations. More specifically, he deals with the multinational Philips company and coins the concept of "flexible familism" to explain the lack of labor unrest in this industrial firm. This concept refers to three dimensions of regional conditions: the nature of relations between region and world market; the dynamics of local capitalist relations; and the specific relations of power and dependency within which a local labor culture and social interventions of industrial management arose.

Brigandage, Infamy, and Witchcraft

Anton Blok writes about the rise and decline of 18th century Bokkerijder Bands in the southern part of the Netherlands (1975, 1989, 1991). Many of these bandits held infamous occupations; among them were skimmers, shoemakers, spinners and weavers. Blok regards the Bokke-

rijders' illegal activities as a social protest against power holders such as the church, the clergy and land owners. His work on infamy is an example of symbolic anthropology. In the past, the positions of midwives (van der Borg 1992; Abraham-van der Mark 1993) and prostitutes (Huitzing 1983) were ambiguous and henceforth they were also struck by the stigma of infamy.

The anthropological-historical writings of Willem de Blécourt cover a wide range of topics related to the phenomenon of witchcraft and witchcraft accusations, scolding, fortune-tellers, healers and quack doctors in the northern and eastern areas of the Netherlands from the 16th until the 20th centuries (1990, 1991, 1993, 1994, 1995; de Blécourt & Pcereboom 1991; de Blécourt & de Waardt 1990, 1991). De Blécourt distinguishes four different types of witchcraft: Bewitching (doing harm by witchcraft), unwitching (counter-witchcraft), witching (enrichment by means of witchcraft) and scolding (calling someone a witch). He describes the developments of the phenomenon, linking it with economic and demographic factors.

Feasts, Rituals, and Identities

In 1983, a collection of essays entitled *Feest en ritueel in Europa* (Feast and Ritual in Europe) appeared (Koster *et al.* 1983). It contains several contributions with respect to the Netherlands. Most of these deal with local or regional feasts and rituals and the participation of and confrontations between various groupings. For example, articles are included on ritualization in a Catholic village, various feasts in Brabant, marriage feasts and funerals in Twente (province of Overijssel) and eastern Gelderland, and on Carnival in the city of Den Bosch.

Jeremy Boissevain, who has been important in stimulating research into feasts and rituals in the Netherlands, indicates that there is a revitalization of the celebration of Dutch feasts, which are often invented traditions or renewals of old feasts (1991). The contributors to this booklet edited by Boissevain illustrate this in their descriptions of various ritual celebrations. Boissevain (1983, 1991) maintains that these celebrations are important vehicles for the expression of identity.

This claim is substantiated by van Ginkel's (1994d, 1995d) essays on the celebration of local feasts on the island of Texel. These constitute a counterpoint in the process of nation and state formation. Increasingly, Texelians express local consciousness through an articulation of localness. Similarly, people from the southern province of Limburg also began to articulate their identity more strongly during this process, which gave rise to regional chauvinism (Goltstein 1986). They pride themselves in their own culture, folklore, dialect and history.

Ethnography of the Social Fringe

The ethnography of the social fringe (or urban anthropology), propagated by Lodewijk Brunt and Frank Bovenkerk, has yielded several interesting studies concerning subcultures in the periphery of Dutch society. These studies pertain to post-World War II developments or to contemporary situations. The major topics are: discrimination, racism and extreme right-wing political parties, urban life-styles, crime and criminal subcultures, prostitutes and sexual minorities, gender, occupational and corporate cultures, sectarians, psychotic people and euthanasia.

Discrimination, Racism, and Fascism

Along with the arrival of ethnic minorities from the (ex)-colonies, labor migrants from the Mediterranean, political asylum-seekers and refugees, there was a growing demand for knowledge with respect to these immigrants. Amongst others, anthropologists began to fill the void by conducting applied and policy research. Following the genesis of a multi-ethnic society, the phenomenon of discrimination arose. In 1978, Bovenkerk edited a collection of essays dealing with various forms of prejudice and discrimination. The book contains ten articles on these subjects, covering such themes as the exclusion of ethnic minorities on the labor and housing market, and the attitude of bus passengers, the police and labor unions towards minorities (Bovenkerk 1978). Abraham-van der Mark (1985) describes the perception of minorities by Dutch people in an Amsterdam workers' neighbourhood.

Some anthropologists have conducted research into extreme right-wing political parties and movements, and fascism. For instance, an ethnography about the *Nederlandse Volks-Unie* (literally: Dutch People's Union) examines the backgrounds of racial discrimination and prejudices, the rise of this political party, its leader and his followers (Bouw *et al.* 1982). Van Donselaar (1991, 1993) presents data on the rise and decline of various post-war right-wing extremist movements and parties, the social backgrounds of their adherents, their leaders and the internal controversies and conflicts which brought about schisms and fragmentation. Given the widespread public opposition, fascist and racist leaders face a dilemma: in public, they have to play down their fascist and racist motives and this leads to an estrangement from their followers. It is precisely this tension between the public face of "decency" and the group's internal emphasis on ideological principles which brings about tensions and conflicts. So far, these parties have been small and many have been ephemeral. Nonetheless, some persist and van Donselaar points out how they adapt to these problems. Most of these parties are "single-issue" movements, that is, they link social problems to the presence of ethnic minorities.

Urban Life-Styles

While working at the University of Utrecht, Frank Bovenkerk and Lodewijk Brunt strongly promoted urban ethnography in the Netherlands. They focus on phenomena occurring in cities – anthropology in the city – and on the nature of urban settings – anthropology of the city (Bovenkerk 1985; Brunt 1985, 1996). Theoretically, they are oriented towards American urban anthropology and ethnography, but they also use the writings of, amongst others, Ervin Goffmann and Ulf Hannerz. Brunt became a professor of urban sociology at the University of Amsterdam. At the University of Leiden a small number of anthropologists study urban life-styles, using a biographical approach.

Thaddeus Müller (1993, 1997) conducts research into the intimate and erotic aspects of social interactions in the Amsterdam public domain. Criticizing the predominant social sci-

ence view of the city as a locus of shallowness and loneliness, Müller shows that urbanites do in many respects maintain positive or “warm” social relationships. He argues that there are three modes of involvement in urban public places: civil inattention, civil attention and uncivil attention. In his view, it is civil attention which makes for the “warmness” of the city’s public places.

Karen Wuertz reports on the material culture of homes, the mixture of life-styles, socio-spatial symbolism, pauperization and the perception of insecurity in the cities of Groningen and The Hague (1989, 1993). Increasingly, the inhabitants of specific old neighbourhoods feel unsafe. They lament about the demise of a community spirit, and opt for communication strategies which mark off the familiar from the unknown.

Lia van Doorn (1994) did fieldwork among the homeless in the city of Utrecht. The homeless are socially excluded. She describes their life-styles and perspectives, their modes of behavior, survival strategies and adaptations. Van Doorn presents a typology in which three types of homeless people are distinguished: the recently homeless, the experienced homeless and the homeless with a psychiatric background. For each of these categories she gives policy recommendations.

Crime and Criminal Milieus

The anthropological methodological repertoire is apparently well-suited to study criminals. Some anthropologists, for example Frank Bovenkerk, have even become criminologists. He writes on organized crime and the sex and gambling business (1991), and details the life-story of a Dutch woman who served as a go-between for Colombian narcotics cartels (1995). Lodewijk Brunt also frequently publishes in the field of criminology, for example on fraud by people on the dole (Brunt *et al.* 1993), and on the relation between anxiety and delinquency in urban settings (Brunt 1993). Several authors describe and analyze small-time juvenile crime in urban milieus, for example vandalism (e.g., van Laar & Müller 1991), and mugging (Vogel 1993). Other instances of criminal ethnography relate to the life-styles of drug addicts and

dealers, and their ways of coping with anti-narcotics policies and the police in the cities of Utrecht and Amsterdam (Verbracck 1984; van Gemert 1988).

Gerben Kroese and Richard Staring (1993), who have done research among the inmates of five prisons, study robbers’ motives, choices, perceptions of violence and “work” styles from a rational choice perspective. On the basis of criminal careers, they present a typology of robbers. They discern “desperates”, “beginners”, and “professionals”. These categories differ with respect to their attitude towards prestige, preparations of robberies, willingness to use violence, perception of potential victims and attitude towards detention. Based on interviews, psychiatric and police reports, van Gemert (1994) sums up the motives of murderers of (older) homosexual men and sketches profiles of the (potential) offenders. Most of these murders are committed by young male prostitutes.

Sex and Gender Domains

Several anthropologists devote attention to prostitution and prostitutes. Paul van Gelder researches the interactions of Rotterdam street prostitutes and their clientèle, among other things in view of the dangers related to AIDS (van Gelder & Kaplan 1992). Sari van der Poel deals with the prostitution policies of municipalities, and the emancipatory movement of professional prostitutes (1995). She also portrays the life-worlds of young male homosexual prostitutes in Amsterdam in the AIDS-era (1991, 1992). She analyzes male prostitution as a commercial service-oriented business, outlines the prostitutes’ attempts to professionalize, draws a typology according to their careers and social positions and describes how they respond to stigmatization.

Mieke de Waal (1982) has written an ethnography on transvestites and transsexuals in which she sums up the problems these sexual minorities face, the ways in which they try to cope with them, the dilemma’s of either “coming out” or hiding their sexual identities and the motives and choices of drag queens to undergo a gender operation or not. De Waal states that transvestites constitute a more heterogeneous category than transsexuals. Their dressing up

has little to do with gender-identity, but a lot with sexual fetishism.

On gender issues, there are several publications by anthropologists. Mieke de Waal (1985, 1989, 1993) studies high school girls in the city of Utrecht, their friendships with one another and with boys, their worldviews and modes of dressing. More specifically, de Waal poses the question of why these girls lose their advantage over boys in school achievements during their puberty. She shows that this has to do with contradictory, gender-related expectations within their social environment.

Against the background of the Dutch sex-gender system, Anna Aalten discusses the ways in which female industrialists sought and seek to combine their female gender identity with their entrepreneurial activities, two conditions which are often considered incompatible (1989, 1991). In order to show how these women have lived and resolved this "contradiction", Aalten presents a number of life-stories and describes the activities of an organization of female entrepreneurs.

Occupational and Corporate Cultures

Sari van der Poel (1983) has conducted research into the slow integration process of women in the Amsterdam police force. Previously, an equal opportunity law was passed. But there was widespread male opposition to the arrival of women in the force, and the women faced specific problems and only gradually gained acceptance. Van der Poel links these problems to the occupational culture of policemen and to the nature of the police organization. Van der Poel conducted her research under the supervision of Maurice Punch, a sociologist who did extensive ethnographic fieldwork among the Amsterdam inner city police, and who encouraged the method of participant observation (see, e.g., Punch 1979). Rieke Leenders (1990) deals with the failed professionalization of the Amsterdam Civil Defense. Alex Strating devotes attention to the occupational ethos of flower traders (1994). In a recent monograph he vividly describes and analyzes the Rijnsburg flower trade and the marketing strategies of these entrepreneurs. He shows that kinship and the local community are extremely important in their economic rela-

tionships (Strating 1997).

Some anthropologists specialize in the relatively new subdiscipline of "corporate cultures" or "culture and management". Most publications concern theoretical or methodological issues (cf., e.g., Koot 1991; Koot & Hogema 1990; Tennekes & Wels 1990). There are few examples of ethnographic research projects. An exception is Verweel's dissertation on planning and policy processes at Utrecht University (1987). However, it is to be expected that this subfield of anthropology will yield several publications on the culture of specific organizations in the near future.

Sectarians, Psychotic People, and Euthanasia Religion has attracted considerable attention from historical anthropologists, but to a lesser extent from ethnographers who do research in contemporary Dutch society and culture. There are some publications concerning sects and small religious movements such as Jehovah's Witnesses and Mormons. Singelenberg (1989, 1990) concentrates on processes of group formation and boundary maintenance of the Jehovah's Witnesses and their cultural codes, for instance their rejection of blood transfusions.

Medical anthropology has recently become an important subdiscipline in the Netherlands, which even has its own journal (*Medische antropologie*). Much work focuses on specific health problems of ethnic minorities, but there are also publications about Dutch natives. For instance, Els van Dongen's (1994) work deals with psychotic patients in a psychiatric hospital in the South of the Netherlands. She regards psychosis as a culturally defined illness and describes the social meaning of medicine, analyses the socio-cultural dimensions of interactions and conversations between patients and also between patients and mental health workers, the self-diagnosis of schizophrenics and their attitudes towards physical contact.

Robert Pool (1996) studied voluntary euthanasia practices, a hotly debated issue in the Netherlands. He interviewed and observed physicians, nurses and patients and their kin in an Amsterdam hospital. The jurist and cultural anthropologist Anne-Mei The conducted similar research in a Groningen hospital, focusing

specifically on the role of nurses in euthanasia practices (The 1997). In his ethnography, Pool details the mutual communication patterns, negotiations and interactions between patients and physicians in view of the patients' euthanasia requests. He concludes that there are no objective criteria underlying the decisions who will or will not receive a lethal dose of morphia and when. Moreover, messages exchanged between physicians and patients are rarely unequivocal. They are part and parcel of complex social processes and interpretations, a kind of performance. Although not all euthanasia decisions comply with the law, they do conform to medical and ethical hospital rules. Originally, Pool is a South African, who has been living in the Netherlands for many years.

The View of Foreign Anthropologists

As said, foreign anthropologists have not devoted much attention to Dutch society and culture. Ruth Benedict did research 'at a distance', John and Dorothy Keur conducted fieldwork in Drenthe and one could even consider Karigoudar Ishwaran's (1959) study on family life in the Netherlands – though mainly based on survey research – as an anthropological one. But following the publication of his book, few anthropologists from abroad studied the Dutch. Although the Indonesian anthropologist Koentjaraningrat researched the fishermen of Spakenburg and Urk, he has never published any work on this topic. It was only in the mid-1970s that several German ethnographers presented their views on the Netherlands in a special issue of the journal *Notizen* (1976, 4), entitled "Bewohnte Umwelt: Betrachtungen zum Bauen und Wohnen in den Niederlanden". They reported on themes like urban life-styles and identity, the care of monuments, citizens' initiatives, new *polder* communities, and building and living in the Netherlands. However, their contributions are not very sophisticated and are mainly descriptive, since they were written on the basis of short excursions.

Since the 1980s, foreign anthropologists show more interest in the Netherlands. For example, the American anthropologist James Olila, who has been living in the Netherlands for quite

some time, did research in the centre of a city, dubbed "Tulpendam". His interesting dissertation, entitled *Exaggeration and Bravado, an Urban Anthropological View of Petty "Crime"* (Olila 1984; also see 1992), is based on this research project. Olila describes "Sam's world". Sam is his 24 years old key-informant, but he also devotes attention to several other Tulpendam people. Olila attempts to understand their activities, norms and views in various social contexts and links these with definitions of crime, Olila's encompassing research topic. In "Sam's world", which mainly consists of family networks, there are "deviant" rules as to the appropriation of goods, forms of taking the law into one's own hands and feuds. This underclass has its own culture, which its members contrast with the dominant culture. "Standing up for oneself" is their motto. In his analysis, Olila distinguishes several "semi-autonomous social fields". That is, individuals can participate in the processes of a group without being members and they can choose to either accept or reject group rules. From this perspective, Olila describes interactions and daily private and public life in the inner city and in a Tulpendam street. He devotes attention to the stereotypes and accusations of, among many others, shopkeepers who regard Sam and his kind as bums, moonlighters, street fighters, thieves and anti-socials. In general, the behavior of these underclass urbanites is dominated by bravado.

Cynthia Mahmood conducted research in the province of Friesland, where she studied the Frisians as an "ethnic minority" (1989). Her main focus is on the expression of a separate Frisian culture and identity, and the extent to which these are still maintained today. According to Mahmood, the Frisians clearly express meaning to and derive meaning from their own culture and identity, which is most obvious in their use of the Frisian language. She also reflects on her research (Mahmood 1990; Mahmood & Armstrong 1990; on the Frisians, see also Sjaardema 1960; Wittermans 1967; McCormack 1974). Gregory Gabor (1989) describes, analyzes and interprets conflict and cohesion in the newly created *polder* community of Swifterbant. He studied social relations in connection with competition over and control of resources.

Peter Stephenson (1990) also did research into community formation in the IJsselmeer-*pol- ders* (a topic which was, as we have seen, popular among Dutch sociographers and ethnographers). He also published on the concept of self and society in the Netherlands (Stephenson 1989). On the basis of a short stay, Ulf Hannerz (1993) wrote an article on Amsterdam as a window on the world.

An interesting development concerns a research project of the Indo Dutch Program on Alternatives in Development (IDPAD), entitled "The Welfare State from the Outside: Ageing, Social Structure and Professional Care in the Netherlands". Within the framework of this program, a Nepalese and two Indian anthropologists carried out fieldwork in the Netherlands. Projects like these mean a breakthrough in the one-way traffic in anthropology. Among other things, Rajendra Pradhan, Sanjib Datta Chowdhury and Roma Chatterji researched the care for the elderly in the Netherlands (Pradhan 1989, 1990; Chowdhury 1990, 1993; Chatterji 1995; see Das 1985 for a description of the project). They have dealt with notions of (in)dependence, privacy and hospitality, amongst others.

An important goal was to gain insight into the ways in which the Dutch deal with the contradiction between the core value of autonomy and its limitation and demise when elderly people need care. Chatterji conducted research in a nursing home in Arnhem. Chowdhury worked as a trainee nurse in an Amsterdam home for the elderly, where he observed interaction patterns among the inhabitants. Pradhan did fieldwork in Schoonrewoerd, an orthodox Protestant village. With its tight time schedules and nursing tasks, Dutch care for the elderly differs completely from what these South Asians were used to at home. What puzzled them most was the fact that the elderly themselves often withdrew in the privacy of their own rooms in the nursing homes and that relatives could not take care of those who had fallen ill. Chowdhury shows that the boundary marking of one's room, where only nurses and kin are admitted, is connected with the need for privacy. These rooms are both sitting-rooms and bedrooms and the elderly only meet one another in

the public spaces of the nursing home. They prefer to maintain the boundary between the private and the public domain. Even when they are ill, they will not be visited by their fellow inmates. Therefore, those who are structurally unable to go to the public spaces often suffer from exclusion and loneliness. Pradhan was surprised by the fact that his neighbours often invited him for a drink, but rarely for a meal. He, too, perceives a connection with the Dutch penchant for drawing sharp boundaries between private and public domains.

Chowdhury and Pradhan, and Mahmood and Stephenson as well, published articles in a special issue of the Dutch anthropological journal *Etnofoor* (1990, 2) on the Dutch in the eyes of foreign anthropologists. The goal of this special issue was to hold up a mirror for Dutch anthropologists, so that they could implicitly experience the rift between anthropological description and self-perception. Some of the contributors did not do research in the Netherlands, but reported on their experiences with Dutch society and culture based on their more or less prolonged visits (cf., for example, Per-tierra 1990; Minghuan 1990; see also Mach 1991). Often, these observations of foreign anthropologists lead to recognition. Sometimes, however, Dutch readers will probably be astonished by the speculative nature of interpretations. One example is Stephenson's (1990) article. He writes that contrary to initial government plans, a particular part of Lake IJssel was not reclaimed because reclamation would mean that the Netherlands would be "complete", leaving nothing to dream of or desire. Such psychologizing is hardly based on solid fact, but what is more disturbing is that the author completely ignores social and political processes that gave rise to the Dutch government's change of plan.

Reflections on Endo-Ethnography

Along with the increase of anthropological research at home in the latter part of the 1970s, the theoretical perspectives and methodological approaches have become more diversified. Of course, this goes for anthropology in general, since at present a dominant paradigm seems to be lacking. But there is a general tendency in

Dutch anthropology of theoretical eclecticism. One should not be surprised to find the works of such strange bedfellows as Claude Lévi-Strauss and Marvin Harris or Mary Douglas and Michael Taussig used complementary in analytical frameworks. Moreover, in Dutch anthropology centrifugal forces are at work. Many Dutch anthropologists have done interdisciplinary research. Partly as a consequence of this phenomenon, several of them have ended up in neighbouring disciplines such as criminology, sociology, social geography, history, ethnology (*volkskunde*), and the science of religion. However, within these disciplines anthropologists are only accepted hesitatingly. They are often involved in boundary disputes, unless they specialize entirely in their new discipline, shaking off their old identity as anthropologists.

What lends the anthropologists' work its special flavor in the midst of that of their fellow scholars is their use of participant observation as a principal research method. However, this may be so generally, a caution is in order. There are many anthropologists who gather data on the basis of interviews or archival and literature research, and there are several sociologists (and even historians) who conduct participant observation. Nonetheless, participant observation remains an important trademark of anthropological research. Its advantages are clear: to gain the trust of informants and intimate knowledge of their life-styles and ideational systems demands prolonged participation and observation. A disadvantage of participant observation is that the research is relatively time-consuming, and that its quality depends very much on the person who conducts it. Many anthropologists who have carried out research in the Netherlands reflect on methodological matters, especially those who did contemporary research. These reflections often concern participant observation and ethical issues.²

For certain types of research, participant observation is a useful and sometimes even the only possible technique. However, we should not forget that it is in fact a methodology which was born out of necessity. Firstly, in the incipient phase of anthropology, ethnographers have often used participant observation because they did not speak the language of the people they

studied. Secondly, these people were often illiterate, so that the use of questionnaires was impossible (Köbben 1991: 54). Written sources were usually lacking, although researchers sometimes had reports written by missionaries and administrative personnel at their disposal. We should therefore neither underestimate nor overrate the usefulness of participant observation. Anthropologists conducting research at home can hardly avoid using other avenues of obtaining data. They usually have to interview informants, do research in archives and libraries, use statistics, and egodocuments such as diaries, letters, photographs and documentary films, and so forth. Köbben even claims that an anthropologist doing research in a modern community using participant observation solely would run the risk of "presenting a distorted image of reality" (1991: 57).

As to the advantages of fieldwork at home, it is often remarked that the native anthropologist has an intimate knowledge of the society and culture where he or she conducts research. However, given the heterogeneous character of all cultures, it is not easy to find a locus where any anthropologist would genuinely be "at home". Even if such a setting exists, there will be many unfamiliar situations and moments in which researchers will either assume or will be ascribed the role of outsiders. The Dutch anthropologist Brunt makes a point of stressing that it is fundamentally wrong to assume that ethnographers doing fieldwork in their own society only have to deal with people who adhere to closely corresponding values: "Not only may there be a difference between the anthropologist and his informants, but it is very likely that there are differences between various groups of informants as well" (1975: 36). With regard to his research in the village of "Stroomkerken", Brunt observes that he was not at all familiar with all kinds of conventional rules, nor could or would he call himself an insider vis-à-vis certain local groupings (1979: 88–89). Even in a small country like the Netherlands, an anthropologist can discover that something familiar like a morning coffee drinking ritual is performed and is lent significance in a different way within a rural community than in a city. Nor does using one's mother tongue necessarily

mean that communication is unequivocal or that anthropologists can take the words of their informants at face value. In addition, dialect or occupational lingo may distort communication considerably (see van Ginkel 1994 for an extensive review of the pros and cons of anthropology at home).

Endogenous ethnographers face specific problems because those commissioning research, informants and other parties involved are literally closely involved, not only in the research but also after publication of its results. Let me elucidate this. With respect to contract research in particular, government representatives and state officials often want to maintain control over what is stated in the final ethnographic product. Sometimes they will even try to prevent publication of unwelcome results or decree in advance what these results should be (Köbben 1991: 34–35). Needless to say, this puts ethnographers in an awkward position as to their intellectual freedom. But it is not just bureaucracies or other institutions commissioning research which may attempt to influence its outcome.

In several cases, in particular when “studying up”, informants may demand more than a say in what is said about them. Heidi Dahles (1990b) presents an instance of this kind of interference. The hunters she studied – who simultaneously were her sponsors – tried to meddle in the concepts she used, the theoretical perspective, the interpretation of the data collected, and the results published. Sometimes, members of the research population demand ratification of the final text, as I myself experienced when doing fieldwork in a Dutch fishing community. Furthermore, there are several instances of problems which arose after the press reported untimely, over-simply, falsely or negatively on research outcomes (Brunt 1975, 1979; Staring & Kroese 1991: 119, 138, n. 7). This often leads to embarrassment of an anthropologist vis-à-vis his or her informants.

Of course, several of these difficulties can also arise when research is done abroad. However, in my opinion, the chance that it actually happens increases proportionally if fieldwork is done closer to home. The proponents of ethnographies often read the publications in which

they figure, and this may hamper a frank description. It is my conviction that the fact that historical anthropology is such a strong subdiscipline in the ethnography of the Netherlands has to do with this fact. Historicizing creates a distance between ethnographers and their objects. Writing in a balanced mode on people with whom one has established close contacts is not easy and can be fraught with self-censorship. Many ethnographers refrain from writing things which are potentially harmful to their informants’ interests. This is true in general, but it is much easier to conceal their identities when working abroad. If a third party, for example a news reporter, reveals the informants’ identities, this will certainly disrupt the relations between the interlocutors. It can also lead to strife in the community where research was conducted; there are several instances in Dutch endo-ethnography where this has actually happened.

In the case of endo-ethnography, auto-censorship may also serve to protect one’s self-interests. Of course, it is easy to be called to account by sponsors, respondents or fellow scholars in one’s own society. Therefore, it is probably far from exceptional that ethnographers will be extremely careful – perhaps even overly careful – in deciding what to make public and what not. The anticipated continued relationship between investigators and their informants may affect what the former write. They face more direct dilemmas in decisions concerning whether or not to withhold certain information than their counterparts working abroad.

Closing Remarks

In conclusion, anthropological work pertaining to the Netherlands is quite heterogeneous. This goes for the research subjects, and it also applies to the theoretical frameworks and methodologies. Therefore, it would be hard to speak of *the* anthropology of the Netherlands; rather, one should refer to *anthropologies* of Dutch society and culture. Nonetheless, it is possible to discern two broad perspectives (leaving aside the work on ethnic minorities): the ethnography of the social fringe and historical anthropology. Much of ethnography of the Dutch social

fringe has an applied or policy dimension, concerns contemporary phenomena or recent history and is rather descriptive. Historical anthropology is to a certain extent more theoretically oriented, and describes long term processes or past socio-cultural aspects of Dutch society.

Internationally, ethnographic studies on the Netherlands are not well-known. Though foreign anthropologists have recently begun to show a greater interest in Dutch society and culture, it would be an exaggeration to say that it attracts huge attention. Foreign fieldworkers are still quite exceptional in the Netherlands. At the same time, few Dutch authors publish in international anthropological journals. This goes for Dutch anthropology in general, though the number of English-language publications is expanding quite rapidly. This is a consequence of the 'publish or perish' policy and the demand to publish internationally in Dutch academe. It must be said, however, that it is not easy for Dutch anthropologists to publish about the Netherlands in international anthropological journals. As an ethnological field of study, the country is simply not well-known and not very popular, which does not stimulate anthropological debate about it (like, for example, is the case with Mediterranean areas). But in part, this lack of attention in international publications is because of the style of Dutch anthropological writing: it is often modest and refrains from grand theorizing. At the same time it is thorough, serious and reliable; it is not confined by disciplinary boundaries, and it shows a keen eye for complex processes and contexts (Boissevain & Blok 1984: 341). However, most high-ranking journals demand theory, not just thorough ethnography.

Although the Netherlands is no longer an anthropological *terra incognita*, there are still many blank spots on its ethnographic map. And what has been mapped constitutes a curious mixture of details. The imaginary anthropologist from Mars studying Dutch society and culture on the basis of these publications would have to conclude that it consists of a range of ethnic minorities, racists and fascists, junkies, drug addicts and drug-pushers, hunters, poachers, fishermen, barges, farmers, transvestites

and transsexuals, school girls, male and female prostitutes, bank robbers, policemen and policewomen, shoemakers, aristocrats, physicians troubled by euthanasia dilemmas, religious sects, nuns, and so forth. In other words, this extraterrestrial anthropologist would think that Dutch society is made up of a raggle-taggle crowd. Of course, it is quite legitimate to devote attention to the social fringe, but given the dominance of this focus it harbors the danger of tribalizing and exoticizing the Netherlands. On the other hand, one dimension of anthropology is to show that what appears to be exceptional and quaint is in fact quite ordinary, whereas the seemingly ordinary can turn out to be special and exotic.

In ethnographic studies of the Netherlands, the former has been shown sufficiently, but the latter needs clarification. This type of ethnography could direct itself towards everyday existence, the routines and life-styles in suburbia, the behavioral standards, attitudes and morals of (sub)urban citizens, their social relations, sources of income, and leisure activities. In other words, what is behind the façades of their tidy homes? There is also a need for more anthropological knowledge concerning powerful institutions, groupings and persons. For example, in a socio-cultural sense we know very little about politicians and political parties, civil servants of various administrative levels, the judiciary and the Bar, the organizations of employers and employees, environmentalists, multinational corporations, banks and insurance companies (and their personnel), the medical profession and medical institutions. In regard of policy and administration, anthropologists usually study their impact, but not the ways in which they come about and how in fact policy is made and how administration is run. Nor do we know much about national identity formation, state symbolism, and the language of politics. What also seems to be lacking is an anthropological view of the specificities of Dutch culture and society in comparison with other societies and cultures. Though by now there is a body of detailed ethnographies, anthropologists have not synthesized these and data from other disciplines to obtain a broader view of Dutch society and culture. Of course, I am

merely suggesting possible research avenues, and surely many more could be made.

Scholars from other disciplinary backgrounds are already beginning to cover some of these subjects. Several of them use anthropological methodologies and theoretical approaches. I have not covered this rapidly expanding literature, but suffice it to say that part of it is quite interesting. As yet, the implications of this development for endo-ethnography are unclear, but sometimes it would seem that there is a blurring of disciplinary genres. The future will learn whether anthropologists in the Netherlands studying their own society and culture can continue to add a specific dimension with their methodological, conceptual and theoretical repertoire vis-à-vis other scholars.

Notes

1. This article is a thoroughly revised version of an article in Dutch (van Ginkel 1995a), which presents a review of anthropological literature, mostly written in Dutch. The present article does not refer to all of these publications, but instead reviews the most important ethnographic monographs and articles, referring to versions in English if available. (Usually, Ph.D. dissertations contain a summary in English, and articles in Dutch journals are often abstracted in English.)
2. Most of this literature is in Dutch (for an overview, see van Ginkel 1995a:36, n. 32; for publications in English, see Kloos 1969; Brunt 1973, 1975; Boude-wijnse 1994). Usually, monographs contain a section on methodology.

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