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Female Entrepreneurship

An exploration of the determinants that influenced female entrepreneurs who were born in the beginning of the 20th century

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Abstract

In this thesis the determinants that influenced women, born in the beginning of the 20th century to become self-employed are explored. In cooperation with ERGO, a research group within the Erasmus Medical Center in Rotterdam, 57 of the original participants of the Rotterdam Study were approached for this research. More than half of these women did not appear to be self-employed at any moment of their lives. This not only influenced this research, but may also influence the Rotterdam Study, which investigates the influence of human genes as a determinant on actual entrepreneurship. The constant comparative method of Glaser and Strauss (1967) is used for this research. Their method codes different events in such a way that they can be compared. The biographies were set up by using a narrative method constructed by Riessman (1993). My Results show that there were no significant differences between the participants and the results of previous studies. Most women possess more than half of the characteristics identified by previous studies. Even one woman possesses five of the six traits. Education is a trait which seemed to have a positive influence on actual entrepreneurship for six out of the seven women. Family background seemed to be the least influential determinant. Furthermore, I found that their main objective to start their own business is to be independent. They were able to find a balance between earning money and raising their children.

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1. Introduction

Female entrepreneurship is a topic which has been almost completely neglected for many years in academic literature. Most researchers did not distinct between self-employed men and women until the 1980's. Schreier (1973) was the first who studied the characteristics of the female entrepreneur. Schreier did not find any differences between male and female entrepreneurs. After Schreier, other authors became interested in the topic of female entrepreneurship. According to Buttner (1993) female entrepreneurs were women who were divorced, widowed, or had small children at home. Financial necessity was the main motive for starting their business. They did not posses any business experience and worked to support their family. Their enterprises were small establishments which mainly participated in the services industry. Start-up costs were supplied by personal savings or family loans.

This research uses some of the original participants of the Rotterdam study, focusing exclusively on female entrepreneurs, supplied by the ERGO group of the Erasmus Medical Center. The Rotterdam study which started in 1989 uses human genes as a whole new determinant which may influence actual entrepreneurship. The participants of this research were born around the 1920's. During and shortly after the second world war it was normal for women to be housewives. This research tries to find out what the incentives were for these women to become entrepreneurs.

The central research question of this thesis is: What determines women to become self-employed? To answer this question my research uses two forms of qualitative analysis. The biographies of these women will be written, using the method of narrative analysis set up by Riessman (1993). This method helps with analyzing a life story, in such a way that different events can be pointed out which influenced someone's life. The other theory that will be used is the constant comparative method of Glaser and Strauss (1967). Their method codes the different events, which make it able to find similarities and differences between the characteristics of the participants.

The set up of this thesis is as follows. In chapter 2 previous studies are being discussed, focusing on differences between self-employed men and women in respect to characteristics. In chapter 3 the methodology is dealt with, describing the different methods used to accomplish this research. The results are shown in chapter 4. Every determinant will be discussed separately. There will also be a

visual summary, showing which determinants influenced the different participants. Chapter 5 provides the concluding remarks.

2. Literature Research

There was little known about self-employed women until the mid-1980's. One of the first researchers who concentrated his study on describing the characteristics of the female entrepreneur was Schreier. In his pilot study he described the characteristics of self-employed women similar to those of men (Schreier, 1973). Hisrich and Brush (1986) analyzed the motivations of females to start their own businesses. It was the first longitudinal study of female entrepreneurs ever done in the United States. They analyzed 463 women and came with a description of the typical female entrepreneurs: 'as being the first born child of middle class parents. After obtaining a liberal arts degree, she marries, has children, and works as a teacher, administrator or secretary. Her first business venture in a service area begins after the age of thirty five'. They also suggested, that the motivation for females to start their own businesses was the search for independence and having things under control. This is not different from the motivation for males to become entrepreneurs (Schwartz, 1976; Hisrich and Brush, 1986; Carter and Cannon, 1992). There were no significant difference in characteristic of male and female entrepreneurs (Swartz, 1976; Hisrich and Brush, 1986). However, female entrepreneurs differ from men with respect to personal goals, the industries they participate in and the products they develop (Brush, 1992; Fisher et al, 1993; Verheul, 2003). According to Cromie (1987) self-employed women are less concerned with making money. Often they choose the world of entrepreneurship because of career dissatisfaction. Their main objective seems to be finding a balance between their career and the needs of their family.

Besides differences in characteristics between men and women there also exist differences between female entrepreneurs. Hisrich and O' Brien (1982) tried to answer the question whether self-employed women in the traditional sector were different from those in the nontraditional sector i.e. technology and manufacturing. They found that women from nontraditional sectors were older, had more education and were more likely to come from an entrepreneurial family.

In the following paragraph of this chapter the characteristics of self-employed women will be discussed. Not only will there be a general description of the entrepreneurial characteristics, but also the differences between self-employed women and men will be discussed.

2.1. Characteristics of an entrepreneur

Several studies have identified different determinants which effect someone to become an entrepreneur. Not only personal characteristics influence the existence of an entrepreneur, but the environment he or she is living in as well. In this section there will be a brief description of the most common determinants identified by previous studies. Also the differences between self-employed men and women will be discussed. Most of them are demographic differences. (Stevenson, 1986).

2.1.1. Age and experience

Several reasons can be suggested why older or more experienced people become entrepreneurs. Older people may have built better networks during their lives to run their own business. In contrast to these factors there are several personal characteristics in favor of younger people. Younger people may be less risk averse compared to older ones. Also the capability of working a certain amount of hours and dealing with stress involved with running your own business is different for younger people compared to older ones. Another reason could be that someone reaches a capital threshold on a certain age which creates the opportunity for him or her to become self-employed. Table 2.1 shows the number of self employed¹ people in the Netherlands split up by age and gender. The table shows that self-employed persons are mostly middle age There exists a difference between the ages caused by *a*) the opportunity people receive to get self-employed or *b*) the fact that they are willing to start for themselves. Praag and van Ophem (1995) did research this topic, using US data, about this topic. They found that younger people get significantly less opportunities to become self-employed compared to older ones. The urge of younger people to start for themselves was much higher than for older people. It seems that the willingness of getting self-employed decreases when age increases. This is exactly the opposite for the opportunities to getting self-employed. Perhaps this can be explained by the experience of older people. Experience increases during the time someone works, according to Parker (2004) you have to distinguish between age and experience when trying to explain why individuals choose to get self-employed. Parker suggests that regardless of the fact that both variables have a positive influence on self-employment, experience is the more accurate variance which captures the impact of human capital. These findings are supported by Lazear (2002). Lazear shows that individuals with varied job history were more likely to become self-employed compared to people who were only specialized in one profession. Table 2.1 also shows that self-employed women in the Netherlands do not differ from men in the different age

¹ Self-employed are those who are working in their own company or are working as freelancers (CBS, 2009)

categories. Study done in the United States by Devine (1994) shows that self-employed women tend to be older than employed women, although in the last decades the difference declined. According to Becker (1984) American entrepreneurs are not only older compared to people in other professions, but they also work longer hours and earn less money.

Table 2.1 Age Profile of the self-employed in the Netherlands, 2009

Year	1996		2002		2008	
	Workforce	Self employed	Workforce	Self employed	Workforce	Self employed
All Persons						
15-24	13.2%	3.6%	12.6%	2.4%	11.6%	3.4%
25-34	31.6%	21.9%	26.8%	20.3%	22.5%	15.4%
35-44	27.4%	29.8%	28.5%	31.5%	28.1%	32.6%
45-54	21.7%	29.4%	23.1%	29.0%	24.9%	29.3%
55-65	6%	15.3%	8.9%	16.8%	12.7%	19.3%
Total (x1000)	6,685	727	7,335	858	7,715	982
Male						
15-24	11.27%	3.4%	11.3%	2.4%	11.1%	3.5%
25-34	30.11%	21.3%	25.5%	21%	21.5%	15.4%
35-44	27.94%	29.2%	28.6%	31%	27.9%	32.1%
45-54	23.43%	29.5%	23.9%	27.9%	25.1%	28.6%
55-65	7.25%	16.6%	10.6%	17.6%	14.4%	20.3%
Total (x1000)	4,098	506	4,324	590	4,332	675
Female						
15-24	16.2%	3.6%	14.4%	2.6%	12.2%	3.3%
25-34	33.9%	22.6%	28.6%	18.7%	23.9%	15.3%
35-44	26.6%	31.2%	28.5%	32.8%	28.4%	33.2%
45-54	19%	30.3%	21.8%	31.3%	24.7%	30.6%
55-65	4.2%	12.2%	6.6%	14.5%	10.6%	17.6%
Total (x1000)	2,587	221	3,011	268	3,383	307

Source: CBS database (2009)

According to Marlow (1997) the difference between self-employed women and men lies in their experience level. Her study shows that female entrepreneurs are not as experienced as their male counterparts in starting up their own business. Therefore they may encounter more problems in managing their companies than men.

2.1.2. Marital status

A number of reasons can be suggested why self-employed individuals are more likely to be married than employees. Elements like start-up capital, two incomes and moral support are all in favor of married individuals. An explanation why married people choose to become an employee rather than entrepreneur is uncertainty. When a married couple has children to raise, they may choose for the certainty of becoming an employee.

It is easy to make a link between the marital status and the age of an individual which is discussed in the previous section. Younger people are less likely to be married than older individuals. Daly (1991) showed in his study that single people have a much lower self-employment rate compared to married individuals. Also cross-section econometric evidence shows this phenomenon (Parker, 2004). Research done by Devine (1994) shows that in the United States self-employed women are more likely to be married compared to employees.

Another important element to consider is the survival of an entrepreneur. Brüderl and Preisendörfer (1998) analyzed the influence of network support on the success of newly start businesses, using German data. They found out that emotional support from a spouse increases the odds of survival. Therefore the suggestion of moral support earlier made is supported by this empirical evidence. In general it seems that the status of being self-employed is positively influenced when someone is married and the opposite holds for single individuals. However, female entrepreneurs differ from their male counterparts. Ninety percent of self-employed men are married compared to 50-70% of the self employed women. Also the marriage of a self-employed man seems to be a stable one, with a supporting wife who lives in a traditional role. While self-employed women seem to have a less stable marriage, having a husband who is not very involved in her business (DeCarlo and Lyons, 1979; Goffee and Scasse, 1985; Watkins and Watkins, 1983).

2.1.3. Education

There are several studies that analyze the influence of education on actual entrepreneurship. The outcomes of these studies do not all point out in the same direction. There are studies that shows a positive influence associated with the level of education on actual entrepreneurship. On the other hand there are also studies that show the opposite. Robinson and Sexton (1994) researched the influence of education on entrepreneurship on three different aspects, using US data. The first field of their research was focused on the entrepreneur's level of education relative to the general public. The result showed that the level of education measured in years of education was higher for entrepreneurs compared to

the general public. The other two areas were addressed to education and the amount of success of an entrepreneur. Also these fields showed a positive influence of education on success.

However, study done by Uhlaner and Thurik (2004) shows that at the macro level, higher levels of self-employed individuals in a country is associated with a lower level of education. So this research shows a completely opposite result compared to the research done by Robinson and Sexton (1994). Differences between countries can also be a plausible explanation. Research done by Blachflower (2004) shows that a positive correlation between education and self-employment exists in the US and a negative correlation in Europe. There are differences between men and women too. In general female entrepreneurs are better educated, finished high school and university programs before starting a business (Watkins and Watkins, 1983; Zapalska, 1997). Men seem to follow the route into entrepreneurship on experience and replicate a business of which they had good prior knowledge. Mostly the knowledge was generated by working at similar companies as an employee (Stevenson, 1984). This also confirms the observation made by Marlow (1997) that self-employed men seem to be more experienced than female when starting up their own business.

2.1.4. Family background

Having a family can be an important determinant in becoming self-employed. Roughly 50 per cent of business owners are second-generations proprietors (Lentz and Laband, 1990). Parents have great influence on the occupations of their children, because they act as role models. There are several other reasons why self-employed parents might increase the chance that their children will follow their footsteps. Self-employed parents can provide experience, business networks, capital and reputation. Also the fact that a child can inherit the family business motivates him or her to become an entrepreneur (Parker, 2004). Lents and Laband (1990) observed that sons of self-employed fathers were three times more likely to be occupational followers than the average employee. They also showed that managerial capital which only can be given by experience, implies greater success for second generation business owners compared to the first generation. Dunn and Holtz-Eakin (2000) suggested that there is a difference between male and female. While experience of 'father entrepreneurs' had a stronger effect on their sons to become entrepreneurs compared to their daughters. Mothers who were self-employed had that same effect on their daughters and less on their sons.

2.1.5. Network effects

The value of networks is widely acknowledged. According to Elfring and Hulsink (2003) networks help with discovering opportunities and gaining legitimacy. Networking can offer access to resources, like capital and information (Buttner, 1993). Networks should help the performance of a company in a positive way. Elfring and Hulsink's study showed that strong ties are beneficial, because of their ability to exchange tacit knowledge. Also receiving trusty feedback helps an entrepreneur to maintain and develop his or her business. There are some differences between self-employed women and men regarding networks. According to Buttner (1993) women have historically been excluded from the so called "old boys" networks. Therefore women must use different network strategies than men. Aldrich (1989) showed that women set up their network in a different way. Women's networks are organized around areas of work, family and social life. Their network included men and women while social networks of male entrepreneurs included very few women. Also the priorities of male and female entrepreneurs appear to be different. Men seem to set up their network for personal gain while women are looking for a social network (Buttner, 1993).

2.1.6. Psychological factors

Many studies claim that entrepreneurs possess special traits that made them self-employed. Therefore the important question is, what are these key characteristics of an entrepreneur? It seems that not only social factors play a role, but also cognitive factors influence nascent entrepreneurs. Amit, Glosten and Muller (1993) identified four key personality traits of entrepreneurs. The first trait was already identified by McClelland (1961), according to him the key characteristic of a successful entrepreneur is the 'need for achievement' (nAch). This objective would be even more important than the desire for money. The need for achievement was first defined by Murray (1938) as: *'To accomplish something, to master, manipulate or organize physical object, human beings or ideas. To do this rapidly and as independently as possible. To overcome obstacles and attain a high standard. To excel one's self. To rival and surpass others. To increase self-regard by the successful exercise of talent'*.

The need for achievement as a key characteristic for an entrepreneur was investigated by several authors. In 1986 McClelland himself verified in his study 'Characteristics of successful entrepreneurs' that many successful entrepreneurs have indeed a high need for achievement, whereas Johnson (1990) concluded that 'the lack of definitive research results regarding the link between achievement motivation and entrepreneurship, is more likely the result of flawed research methodology than the absence of a positive relationship'. Therefore Johnson concluded that this matter should be investigated

more thoroughly in entrepreneurial research. Finally McClelland (1961, 1986) claimed that the nAch could be trained. Hansemark (1998) investigated the change in nAch of individuals in a 9 months entrepreneurship course. He showed that the nAch increased significantly compared to individuals who did not follow the course.

The second trait identified by Amit, Glosten and Muller (1993) is 'Internal Locus of Control'. When an individual has a high internal locus of control this person initiates the believe that his performance depends highly on his own actions rather than actions by external parties. This could be a logical cause for individuals to become self-employed. Schiller and Crewson (1997) obtained evidence by using probit regressions that supports the hypotheses that an entrepreneur more likely has a high level of internal locus of control compared to an employee. But is a high level of locus of control a unique trait for an entrepreneur? Sexton and Bowman (1985) identified the internal locus of control also among successful business managers. It seems that this trait is not typical for an entrepreneur, however, a business manager can be compared to an entrepreneur on different facets, like leadership, creativity etc. McClelland (1961) believed that an entrepreneur does not necessarily have to be a business owner, but that an innovative manager who has decision making responsibility, is an entrepreneur as well. This discussion is not in the scope of this research, which is nevertheless an interesting subject for scientist to investigate. Finally Hansemark (1998) also shows us, like he did on the first trait 'need for achievement' that 'internal locus of control' can be coached as well.

The third trait is 'above-average risk taking propensity'. Knight (1921, 1971) was one of the first scientists who identified above –average risk taking propensity as a typical trait of an entrepreneur. The entrepreneur was someone who undertakes uncertain investments which lead to uncertain outcomes. Risk as a trait of an entrepreneur can be characterized as having an unusual low level of uncertainty aversion. Liles (1974) suggested that an individual who is thinking about becoming an entrepreneur risks financial well being, physic well being, career opportunities and family relations. Thus an entrepreneur not only takes risk on financial grounds, but he jeopardizes basically his complete way of living. Praag and Cramer (2002) investigated this topic empirically. They compared the level of risk aversion between employees and entrepreneurs. Participants received different questions about gambling and other kind of risky businesses. Their research suggested that entrepreneurs are less risk averse than the employees. They also claimed that risk aversion significantly decreased the probability that given individuals would choose to be entrepreneurs. But McClelland (1961) believed just as he did with the second trait, that risk aversion is not a typical entrepreneurial trait, but is also a trait indentified with

innovative managers. Still the differences between employees and entrepreneurs are significant as shown by Praag and Cramer (2002).

The final trait identified by Amit, Glosten and Muller (1993) is tolerance of ambiguity. Ambiguity tolerance is the ability to perceive a property of being ambitious in information and behavior in a neutral and open way. In other words, individuals who have a special feeling for ambiguous situations. Timmons (1976) proposed that entrepreneurs have a greater capacity than employees for dealing with ambiguous situations. They have the ability to see an opportunity in the market.

The above list of traits are not the only traits observed from entrepreneurs, many other traits are suggested, such as drive and energy, self confidence, long term involvement, persistent problem solving, goal setting, creativity, innovativeness, independence and optimism. Job satisfaction is an important element. Without being satisfied it is hard to do your job every day. But what satisfies a certain individual, are it the working conditions or because of independency? Every individual has his own purpose of working besides earning money or maybe money is the only satisfaction received with a certain job.

Welsch and Young (1984) researched the psychological differences between male and female entrepreneurs in their paper 'male and female entrepreneurs characteristics and behaviors'. They did not find any major differences between the two genders in psychological characteristics. However in a research done by Smith, McCain and Warren (1982) claim that women were more opportunistic than their male counterparts in running their businesses.

Table 2.2 Reasons for becoming self-employed

Reasons	All (%)	Men (%)	Women (%)
To be Independent	31	33	25
Wanted more money	13	15	7
Better conditions of work	5	6	3
Family commitments	7	2	21
Capital, space, equipment opportunities	12	12	11
Saw the demand	8	9	8
Joined the family business	6	6	7
Nature of occupation	22	21	23
No jobs available locally	3	3	3
Made redundant	9	11	3
Other Reasons	15	14	18
No reasons given	3	4	3
No. valid Responses (000) ^a	2,960	2,156	804

Note: Columns do not sum to 100% because respondents can give up to four reasons.

^a Imputed percentages based on all those who gave a valid response to the 'reason for becoming self employed' questions.

Source: LFS (2000), Parker (2004).

Table 2.2 shows the reasons why individuals in the United Kingdom became self-employed. The most important reason why individuals become entrepreneurs seems to be independence. It is most likely that this also is the key element of satisfaction for an entrepreneur. Research done by Blanchflower and Oswald (1998) showed the differences between employees and entrepreneurs. One of their findings was that the entrepreneur experiences higher levels of job satisfaction compared to employees. But there is another side that should be mentioned. To accomplish job satisfaction as an entrepreneur, they usually have to spend a lot of time in their business which gives them less time to spend with their family. Parasuraman and Simmers (2001) found that entrepreneurs enjoyed more job satisfaction, flexibility and autonomy at work, but at the same time experienced more family conflicts because of their occupation compared to employees. So on one hand we see great job satisfaction for entrepreneurs, but on the other hand this brings greater stress in their family lives. It seems that a satisfied entrepreneur has to find the right balance between work and family to enjoy greater life satisfaction.

2.1.7 Family lives and working hours

The main objective of self-employed women seems to be finding a balance between their career and family (Cromie, 1987). Men and women seem to have deeply integrated gender norms which lead to clear patterns of work family connections (Loscocco, 1997). According to Loscocco (1997) self-employed men and women differ from their role in respect to work-family connection. Men try to be the “good provider” while women want to be the “good mother”. Self-employed women seem to start their own business to accomplish a balance between work and their family, ‘reinforcing their role as primary nurturer and secondary breadwinner’. Men do not use the flexibility of working for themselves. Loscocco (1997) concluded that family mainly influence the self-employed women while men are influencing their family in becoming an entrepreneur. According to Buttner (1993) women appear to experience greater family-work conflict compared to self-employed men.

A logical cause for the differences in objectives between men and women seems to be the working hours. Many female entrepreneurs only work part-time due to household activities, whereas only a small percentage of the male entrepreneurs have similar obligations and therefore they can easily spend more hours in their companies (van Uxem and Bais, 1996). Research done in Sweden by Holmquist and Sundin (1988) showed that women have similar economic goals as men, but they also value other goals, like customer satisfaction and personal flexibility, which again is related to the part-time working hours and taking care of a household.

2.1.8. Financial barriers

Setting up a new business requires money. Banks do not easily give a loan to small companies. Entrepreneurs are very often forced to borrow money from family and friends (Shapero, 1987). According to Hisrich and O’Brien (1981) women experience difficulties in finding loans. But not only banks seem to be not supporting upcoming businesses . Also government agencies with special loan programs seem to treat self-employed women differently from their male counterparts (Loscocco and Robinson, 1991). Different studies suggest that difficulties in getting startup capital by self-employed women is one of the main reasons why they are less successful than male entrepreneurs (Buttner and Rosen, 1989; Loscocco and Robinson, 1991). According to Goffee and Scuse (1985) self-employed women are forced into the service industry because of lack of financial support. However, Buttner and Rosen (1989) did not find any supporting evidence for these statements and concluded that this subject still has to be investigated more to come up with a clear conclusion. Also research done by Verheul and Thurik (2001) shows no significant differences between male and female entrepreneurs. In general the

proportion of equity and debt (bank loans) of self employed women is equal to those of their male counterparts.

2.2 Female entrepreneurship during the last decades

As discussed it is more likely for men to be self-employed than women. Table 2.3 shows that in the United Kingdom the percentage of self-employed men is about twice as high as the percentage of self-employed female. However, it is also clear that the absolute amount of self-employed women increased rapidly over time, almost two times more than the absolute amount of male entrepreneurs. The interesting question about this phenomenon is; can these differences be explained? And maybe even more interesting; is there an explanation for the differences over the last decades? In the upcoming paragraphs the evolution of female entrepreneurship will be discussed.

It is hard to find data which relates to female entrepreneurship in the mid 20th century. For most countries these figures are just available for the last 30 years, including those from the Netherlands. The data from the United Kingdom are used to discuss female entrepreneurship over the last 50 years. Also the differences between countries will be discussed.

Table 2.3 shows two important issues concerning female employment. In the earlier years of the 20th century the number of employed females was far less than the number of employed males. Secondly the percentage of self-employed females is twice as low as the percentage of self-employed men, this fact remains in the entire 20th century. The differences between the absolute amount of employed males and females are equal in most of the countries. Figures from the United States show that in 1956 about 20 million females were employed compared to 43 million employed men. Also in France and Belgium there is a division in 1956 of 1/3 female employed and 2/3 men employed using OECD 2009 data. In all these countries the differences in distribution decreased rapidly over time. In the United Kingdom there were over 13.5 million employed females and 15.7 million employed males in 2008. The United States shows that in 2008 46% of total employment are females. Also the difference in the Netherlands in 2008 is very small between male and female, respectively 3.9 million female workers over almost 4.7 million male employed workers. Apparently the trend of upcoming female workers compared to men over the last 50 years of the 20th century is viable for most of the OECD countries. The phenomena of women taking care of the children and household which occurred until the beginning of the 20th century, rapidly vanished in the last 50 years. More and more households are depending on two incomes. This is a clear sign of female emancipation.

Table 2.3 Self-Employment in the United Kingdom

Subject	Year	1956	1961	1966	1971	1976	1981	1986	1991	1996	2001	2008
Population (x1000)		50,946	52,807	54,642	55,928	56,216	56,357	56,683	57,438	58,164	59,113	61,411
Civilian employment (x1000)		23,149	23,978	24,934	24,165	24,509	24,011	24,379	26,058	25,727	27,316	29,308
Civilian employment females (x1000)		7,618	8,077	8,775	8,820	9,546	9,755	10,365	11,496	11,796	12,613	13,547
Civilian employment males (x1000)		15,530	15,900	16,160	15,345	14,963	14,256	14,014	14,562	13,931	14,703	15,761
Self-employment (x1000)		1,775	1,750	1,681	2,026	1,952	2,119	3,213	3,811	3,831	3,486	3,992
Self-employment % of civilian employment		7.66%	7.29%	6.74%	8.38%	7.96%	8.83%	13.17%	14.62%	14.89%	12.76%	13.38%
Females self-employment % of female civilian employment		4.33%	4.11%	4.16%	4.61%	4.08%	4.36%	7.97%	8.62%	9.27%	7.81%	8.23%
Male self-employment % of male civilian employment		9.29%	8.92%	8.15%	10.55%	10.44%	11.88%	17.03%	19.37%	19.65%	17.01%	17.82%

Source: OECD database 2009

There are still huge differences between working men and women related to work. Not only differences exist in occupations, but also differences between countries. As already described in the previous page men are more likely to be self-employed than women. Despite the fact that the differences in the United Kingdom remain the same over the last decades. Therefore the conclusion can be made that far more women entered the world of entrepreneurship, because the amount of women participating in the labor force increased rapidly over the last 50 years. Still there are huge differences between countries and their proportion of self-employed woman. In the United States 8.2 percent of the female employed are entrepreneurs in 1967, this is almost twice as high compared to the United Kingdom. Belgium shows even higher rates of self-employed females, namely 24.9 percent of the female employed in 1967 were self-employed, this rate is even higher than the percentage of self-employed men in Belgium. Table 2.4

shows the differences in rates between certain countries. Data for the Netherlands are only available from the year 1995.

Table 2.4 International differences among self-employed women

Year	1961		1976		1995		2008	
Subject	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
Country								
United Kingdom	4.1%	8.9%	4.1%	10.4%	9.6%	20.6%	8.2%	17.8%
United States	10.7%	16.4%	6.5%	11.2%	6.9%	9.9%	5.6%	8.3%
Belgium	30%	23.5%	18%	16%	17.6%	19.7%	10.8%	17%
France	-	-	16.6%	18.3%	8.3%	13.2%	6.2%	11.6%
Netherlands	-	-	-	-	10.7%	13.7%	10.1%	15.8%

Note, Subject: male/ female Self-employment as a percentage of male/female civilian employment.

Source: Eurostat database 2009

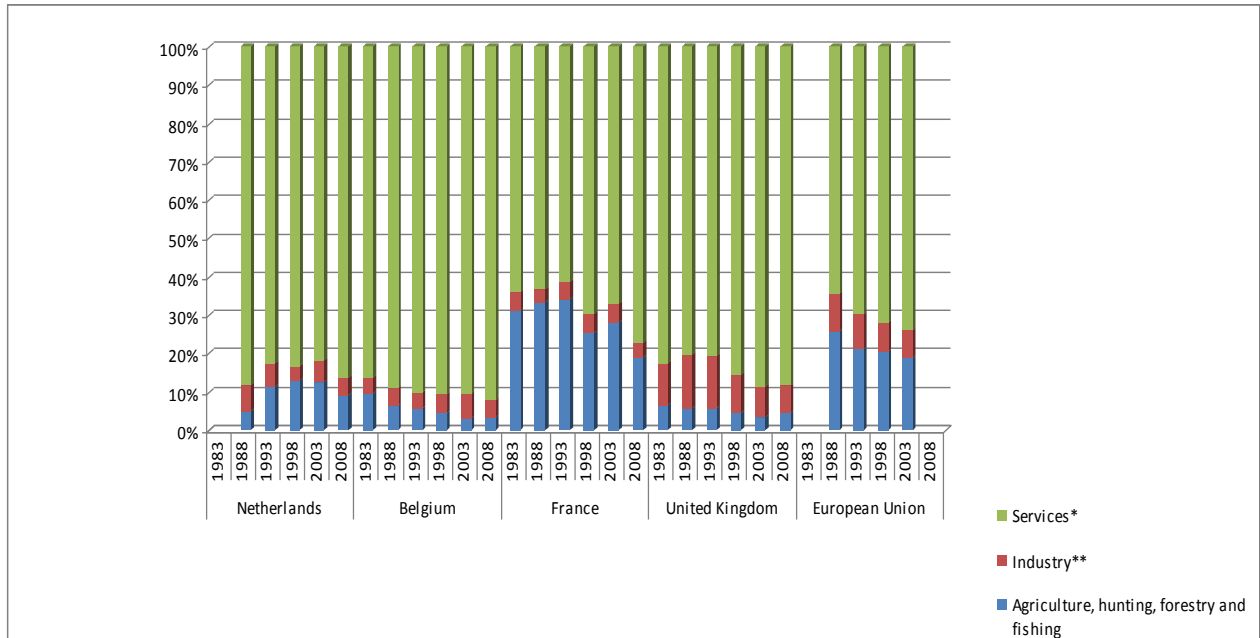
Differences between developed countries exist regarding self-employed women. While the United Kingdom shows a steady increase of female entrepreneurs over the last decades, Belgium shows a strong decrease in the percentage of self-employed women (because no other databases are available which show entrepreneurial figures from such early periods or make a distinction between men and women, it is hard to verify the unusual pattern of Belgium. This issue would deserve further research, but is beyond the scope of this thesis). Between 1979 and 2003, self-employment in the United States rose by 33 percent among women compared to 2,5 percent among men (National Women’s Business Council, 2007). Thus even the percentage of self-employed women decreased in the United States, the absolute amount of female entrepreneurs increased rapidly. This trend is almost viable for every country due to a rapid increase of women participating in the labor force over the last 50 years, while men participating increased only slightly. A key issue in comparing different countries in numbers and trends relating to female entrepreneurship lies in the definitional differences of what constitutes a women-owned business. In the United States the term ‘women-owned businesses’ includes businesses solely owned by women (Carter, Jones-Evans, 2006). Businesses which are owned equally by men and women are also counted as women-owned businesses. However, even when only those businesses which are owned for more than 51 percent by women, are taken into consideration, there is still a great

increase in female owned companies in the United States. Another cause of differences between countries is that every country has its own culture, political system and economic environment. (Richardson, Howarth and Finnegan, 2004). The GEM report of 2001 pointed out that the higher rates of international trade reflects higher levels of globalization, but also has a negative influence on entrepreneurial activity. In other words, countries which are well integrated into the global trading economy have much lower levels of entrepreneurship. Looking at the unique national features of some countries using the GEM report of 2001 the following observations relates to the Netherlands. In the last decades the business environment for the Netherlands improved, therefore the attitude toward entrepreneurship improved as well. The Netherlands is also characterized by a strong, generous social security system and a highly protected employee status. This may explain why the Netherlands has a relatively low number of necessity based entrepreneurs compared to countries like the United States without a generous social security system. Also a lack of good locations for new enterprises, particularly in the western part of the Netherlands, is pointed out as a negative factor for actual entrepreneurship. Another fact which can explain the difference between male and female entrepreneurs is the difficulty of raising capital. Data from the United States show that despite the fact that women create 70 percent of jobs and own 26 percent of privately held companies, they only received 4.4 percent of venture capital (GEM, 2001).

Over the last decades a strong increase of women owned businesses occurred, but the size of these businesses remains relatively small compared to male owned enterprises. Not only in turnover, but also in the amount of employees (Anna *et al.*, 1999; Franco and Winquist, 2002). One of the main reasons for the difference in size between male and female run companies is the fact that female business ownership is concentrated primarily in the service and retail industries, where the companies are relatively smaller in terms of revenue and employment compared to businesses in the high technology sector, construction or manufacturing (Anna *et al.*, 1999). Schreier's (1973) pilot study of female entrepreneurship showed that female business owners tended to operate mainly in the service and retailing industry. Loscocco and Robinson (1991) investigated the success of small businesses run by women in the United States. They observed that female owned businesses are mainly participating in the service sector while male owned businesses are almost equally divided in the industrial and service industries. The National Women's Business Council (2007) shows that nowadays more self-employed females in the United States are expanding into non-traditional industries, such as construction, manufacturing, agriculture and transportation. In graph 2.1 an overview of self-employed women is

shown divided over the three main labor sectors; agriculture, industrial and service industry. To show the differences with their male counterparts, Graph 2.2 displays the figures for men.

Graph 2.1. Female entrepreneurs divided into different sectors overtime



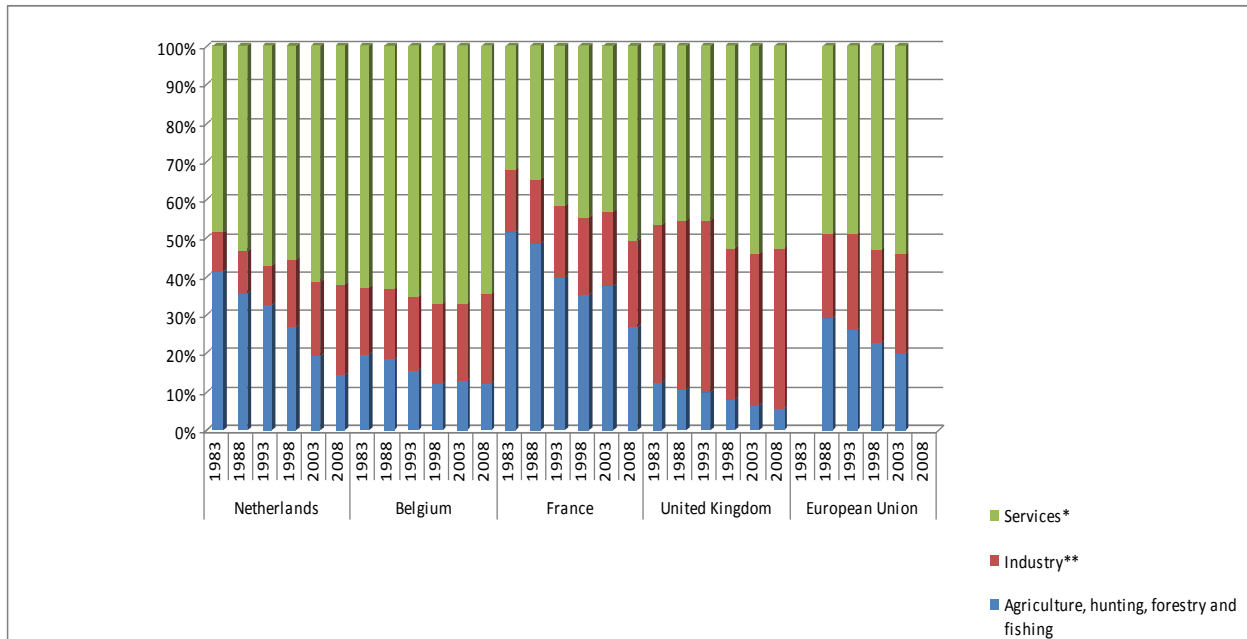
Source: Eurostat, LFS Series 2009

* Services includes wholesale and retail trade, hotels and restaurants, transport, storage and communication, financial intermediation, real estate, renting and business activities, public administration, education, health and social work, activities of households and extra-territorial organizations and bodies.

** Industry includes mining and quarrying, manufacturing, electricity, gas and water supply and construction.

Graph 2.1 shows that most female entrepreneurs are participating in the services industry. There are some small differences between countries, but overall the percentages are quite similar. However, in France a quite large amount of self-employed women are participating in agriculture. The trend of the last 25 years shows that the percentage of women participating in the services industry increases while the percentage of women active in agriculture decreases. The percentage of women participating in the industrial sector basically remains the same.

Graph 2.2. Male entrepreneurs divided into different sectors overtime



Source: Eurostat, LFS Series 2009

* and ** see graph 2.1.

Graph 2.2 shows that self-employed men are more divided over the three sectors compared to female entrepreneurs. A larger part of the self-employed men are active in the industrial sector. The biggest part is active in the services industry, just like self-employed women. Also the overall trend for men is similar; a decreasing percentage of entrepreneurs in agriculture and an increasing percentages in the services industry over time. It seems that the evolution in occupation for self-employed men and women is basically the same. Shifting from manual work to service activities, which is also the overall trend in the labor market in the last decade.

3. Methodology

3.1. Procedure

This research of female entrepreneurs in the mid 20th century is using some of the original participants of the Rotterdam Study. The Erasmus medical center started a research called ERGO. ERGO is a long term population research in Rotterdam. The study investigates health problems which occur mostly on elderly people. The participants have a minimum age of 45 and live in the Ommoord district in Rotterdam. The ERGO group supplied the participants for this research. Initially over 200 female participants were noted as entrepreneurs. This information was obtained by a survey. Over the years most of these participants passed away. About 57 women were still alive during this study. All of these women were approached by letter². In this letter the women were informed about this research and the fact they would be called by me for an appointment. Ten depth interviews were conducted in the second half of 2009 at the former entrepreneur's residence. Seven biographies were written.

3.2. Participants

The participants are between the age of 80 and 91 . All 57 women were approached, not all of them participated, due to several reasons:

- 23 women claimed not to be former entrepreneurs.
- 15 women could not be reached.
- 5 women were not interested to participate in this research.
- 4 women were ill or demented.

Three out of the 10 women interviewed appeared not be entrepreneurs; their husbands or family members were self-employed instead. Most of the women who participated in this study are widows, living in a home for the elderly. They have been entrepreneurs between 1946 and 2001. One woman sold her business when she was 73 years old. Three women purchased an existing business and the other four established their own business from scratch. Four of them had employees at some point in

² signed by professor Dr. Roy Thurik, head of the Entrepreneurship department of the Erasmus University in Rotterdam and Dr. J. Heeringa, coordinator of ERGO

time while others worked alone during their whole entrepreneurial career. All of them participated in the services industry, ranging from a hairdresser to a retailer.

3.3. Analysis

This research has been done by using narrative analysis. There is no standard set of procedures compared to some forms of qualitative analysis (Riessman, 1993). Only guidelines are given by Riessman (1993) how to perform narrative analysis. Figure 2.1 shows the steps that have to be taken when doing narrative analysis:

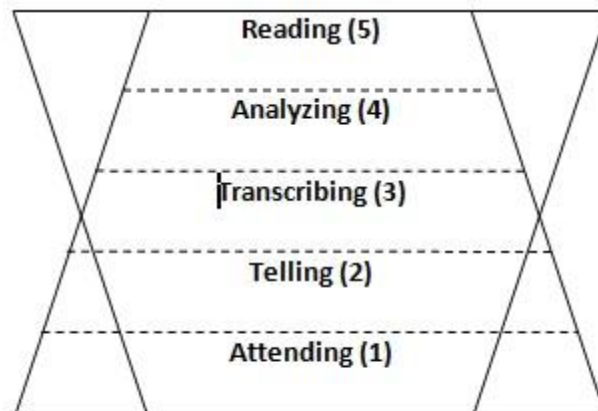


Figure 2.1. Levels of Representation in Research Process

Source: Riessman (1993) page 10

3.3.1. Telling

To create narratives it is important to accomplish a conversation with the respondents. By asking them open ended questions, participants are encouraged to tell their unique stories, without forcing them into a certain direction. Questions like “when did X happen” calls for discrete piece of information while “tell me what happened” calls for more extended account of some past time (Riessman, 1993). Because it was important to discover the life stories of these women, open ended questions were mainly used. Every woman had her own unique story, so it was important not to ask them exactly the same questions. By less structure in the interview you give more control to the respondent. But because the focus is about entrepreneurship the following questions were asked to create a certain level of structure:

- How was your childhood?
- How was your family life?
- What kind of environment did you live in?
- Can you tell me something about your character?
- Why did you decide to become an entrepreneur?
- What have been the turning points in life?

Also questions regarding the determinants of entrepreneurship were asked, so it would be easier to analyze the data later on. Another important thought of the interview was signaling the “abstract” words. For example words like difficult and hard can be interpreted in different ways. By signaling and asking the respondent to explain herself, intelligibility is created (Riessman, 1993).

3.3.2. Transcribing

Transcribing is essential for narrative analysis, because there are so many details within a story, which cannot be noted instantaneously. Transcribing the interviews started during the conversations with the participants, writing down rough elements which are pointed out as key moments. The conversations were also taped to complete the transcription later on.

The transcription was made by dividing the determinants which are mentioned in the literature research, such as family background, education and so on. By classifying the events in such a way a clear structure is made about possible influences these women encountered during their lives and which influenced them to become an entrepreneur. After listening to the recordings and writing down statements made by the women, re-transcribing began, writing down the rough sentences and statements more precisely. Based upon the final version of transcription, the biographies were written in a chronologic sequence.

3.3.3. Analyzing

1. The objective of this research is to answer the main research question of this study, which is ‘what are the determinants influencing women born in the beginning of the 20th century to become entrepreneurs?. To do so the constant comparative method of Glaser and Strauss (1967) has been used. This method involves four stages:
2. *Comparing incidents applicable to each category.*

The transcription is divided into different categories, using different determinants used in

previous studies. By coding the different events in respect to the different determinants, similarities and differences can be discovered later on. By using this code technique new categories were identified, such as experiences of the 2nd World War and the influence of regions.

3. *Integrating categories and their properties.*

At this stage the relationship among different events are made. For example one of the ladies was captured during the 2nd World War in Indonesia where she witnessed terrible things. Starting a business seems to be a risky matter, but after all this woman had put up with, she did not felt this as deceptive. By putting things in perspective and integrating them into the biographies, the stories became easier to interpret and better insights were created.

4. *Delimiting the theory.*

By comparing the codes identified in the first two steps, I was able to find similarities and differences with previous studies, but also among the biographies. These relationships are being reviewed in the discussion part of this thesis.

5. *Writing theory.*

In the last stage of the analysis all the findings were put together. Taking all the different fragments in consideration to answer the research question and write the conclusion, which will be dealt with in chapter 6

4. Biographies

4.1. Mrs. E. van Zuylen-Jansen (Beautician)

Mrs. E. van Zuylen-Jansen was born in Batavia Indonesia (since 1942 called Jakarta) in 1926. She is the oldest of three children. She had a brother and a sister. Both of her parents were teachers. Her parents moved to Indonesia from Holland just before she was born. In that time the salaries of teachers in Indonesia were two times as high compared to Holland. But that was not the only reason why the family moved. Her father just didn't like Holland at all, he did not like the culture, the crowd and the fast way of living. From his point of view a bright future awaited him and his family in Indonesia.

The first couple of years in Indonesia went by like planned, they were all settled. But when the 2nd world war started in 1939 everything changed. This was a turning point in her life. The Japanese conquered Indonesia and in the beginning of 1942 her father and brother were taken out of their home, to be placed in a concentration camp. Suddenly Mrs. van Zuylen-Jansen became head of the family, taking care of her sick mother and her younger sister. This was a difficult period her being a 16 year old girl, but also a very educative one. She was simply been forced to grow up quickly, learning how to take care of a family even while she was still a child herself. Six months after her father and brother were deported, the rest of the family was taken to a camp in Bandung, Indonesia. They were held there for 2.5 years. In these 2.5 years much has happened. Men and women lived in separate camps, without any kind of education for the children. Her father started to teach the children in the camp, but only her brother was able to profit from this, since men and women were separated. Thus Mrs. van Zuylen-Jansen did not receive an education in a maybe crucial period of her life.

In 1946, when the war had ended, the whole family moved back to the Netherlands. The first time Mrs. van Zuylen-Jansen visited Holland was in 1932. Her parents found it important that she followed a normal education. Because she missed a couple of years of education, she had to start from the beginning. While the average age of her classmates was 16, she was 20 years old. This was quite difficult, because she had basically been raising a family during the last 4 years. She was simply more mature than her classmates.

At that same school she met her future husband, Mr. van Zuylen. He was 19 and was one class of level above her. She married him at the age of 23. They had three daughters. The youngest was born in 1976. Her husband had a job in construction, which was a very physically intensive job. Mrs. van Zuylen-Jansen decided to back up her husband financially, as guarantee that they could raise their children, if something should happen to him. So she started a course to become a beautician. In first instance her incentive to become self-employed, was financial independency. Her first clients were family and friends, but quickly her clientele increased. She treated her clients at home. The choice of starting her own business was because she had to raise 3 children. Therefore she did not start working at an existing beauty parlor. Independence and managing her own working hours was therefore an important issue. She loved to develop herself and expand her business, but her husband would not let her. The fact that she became independent and built a successful business was an eyesore to her husband. Instead of supporting her, he opposed her ambitions. In practice this shows the observation made that husbands are not that supportive of their wife's career (DeCarlo and Lyons, 1979; Goffee and Scasse, 1985; Watkins and Watkins, 1983). At first she did not notice it, but when time went by it became clearer to her; she and her husband were opposites. After 35 years of marriage they decided to divorce.

At the age of 58, Mrs. van Zuylen-Jansen had to take care of her three daughters and herself. Luckily she still had her business and clientele. Furthermore she received alimony. So with the profit she made from her business and the alimony, she was able to take care of her family.

Because there were no obstacles anymore, she was able to develop herself even more. She had some need for achievement. She decided to become a movement therapist as well. A movement therapist focuses on specific elements of the body that indicates certain problems, such as tensions, body movement, posture, breathing and body dysmorphic. She expanded her field of expertise not only for the money, but more importantly, for her own knowledge. She was and still is very interested in how she can develop her knowledge. In 2004 she officially stopped her business. Occasionally she still treats clients at home, simply because she likes it.

Looking back at Mrs. van Zuylen-Jansen's life so far, some moments which shaped her life can be pointed out. The 2nd World War had a great impact on her. The fact that she was taken from her home and put in a concentration camp, influenced the way she lives nowadays. In the beginning of her life she was quite insecure. But because she had to take care of her family at an early age, it made her "tougher" and more independent. She learned how to live with insecurity early in life. The first time she realized

that she was not afraid to take a risk was in the concentration camp, where she defended herself in words against a Japanese counsellor. That obviously was a very risky thing to do back then.

Imaginable is that someone build some kind of hate against their occupiers. In the case of Mrs. van Zuylen-Jansen, the Japanese soldiers. But not Mrs. van Zuylen-Jansen. She does not feel any hatred towards them. She pointed out that this is a thing she learned from the Indonesian people. They do not feel hatred against the Dutch after being occupied and treated brutally for so many years. Another event that influenced Mrs. van Zuylen-Jansen was her marriage Her ex-husband was not supporting her, but was opposing her. She was not able to develop herself like she wanted to. Just after the divorce she got the opportunity to develop her talents. But by then she had already reached the age of 58.

Characteristics like the urge to develop her knowledge, not afraid to take a risk and always being truthful are elements that eventually caused the break up and accounted for the life she is living nowadays.

4.2. Mrs. J. Meuwsen- Walker (Hat shop)

Mrs. J. Meuwsen- Walker was born on December 30th 1922. She was the youngest in the family, which consisted of 1 brother and 4 sisters. Her father was an employee in the harbor of Rotterdam, her mother was a typical housewife. There was a big age difference between her and her siblings. Her brother was 14, 5 years older and her sisters respectively 11,5, 10 and 4,5 years.

Mrs. J. Meuwsen- Walker was a very active girl in her childhood, completely different from her brothers and sisters. Her father was a strict man, while her mother was a careful and lovely woman. The relationship with her mother was therefore better than with her father.

Mrs. J. Meuwsen- Walker was a very socially active child. She had a lot of friends in her neighborhood, with whom she played on the streets a lot. When Mrs. J. Meuwsen- Walker grew older, she held contact with the children from her block. Many of her friends were Jews and in the 2nd World War almost all of them were deported by the Germans. Also a very good girlfriend of her got killed by the bombing of Rotterdam. These events impacted her deeply.

After elementary school she went to the household school like most of the women at that time. After finishing the household school she followed a private education to become a hat maker. This was extraordinary for that time, because most women started working or took care of the household. After the 2nd World War she started working in a hat shop in Rotterdam. She worked there with great enthusiasm and in 1950 she got the opportunity to become owner of the shop, when the owner asked her if she was willing to take over the shop. . Without any doubt she immediately took that opportunity. She was able to purchase the business from him, by borrowing the money from her brother in law to whom she paid back the loan in monthly terms. Banks did not easily give a loan to upcoming entrepreneurs, therefore they were forced to borrow money from family or friends. This is also observed by Shapero (1987).

After running the business for 8 years Mrs. J. Meuwsen- Walker closed down the shop. This was not a voluntary choice, but occurred because of two conflicts. The first reason, which was the most important one, was the fact that the property owner threw out all the tenants. In that time there was not a contract which protected tenants . So basically Mrs. J. Meuwsen- Walker was forced to quit her business. The second reason, which is the reason that caused her not to start over, was the fact that the demand for hats decreased rapidly. Hats were and still are a fashion item. They simply got out of fashion. That is why she decided to refrain from starting a hat shop again. It seems that she did not have the urge to be independent, because she chose to work as an employee again. Furthermore she did not have a husband or children to take care of. As shown in Table 2.2, being independent and family

commitments are the most important reasons why someone decides to become self-employed. It appears that Mrs. J. Meuwsen- Walker started her own business out of passion for hats.

Because Mrs. J. Meuwsen- Walker was still single at that time, without any children, she had to take care of herself. She found a job in a factory-tailored shop in Rotterdam as a saleswomen. She worked there with great pleasure, never thinking about starting over a shop for herself again. She did not have the urge to achieve high goals. After 12 years of working in the factory tailored shop, she met her husband at the age of 48 and became a housewife.

The love life of Mrs. J. Meuwsen- Walker was a tough life. Her first genuine relationship, was with a divorced man, who was 12 years older. That relationship was not accepted by her father, because he was a divorced man. The relationship sustained for 20 years. Her second relationship lead into an engagement. But one month before their marriage he died of a heart attack. When she was 48, she married to a café owner. This was quite an impulsive move, because it was only short after they had met each other. After 3 weeks of marriage she knew that she had made a mistake, but in those days, divorce was not always an option. They basically lived separate lives under the same roof. Twenty one unpleasant years followed for Mrs. J. Meuwsen- Walker. After 21 years her husband died and she became a widow.

Looking back at Mrs. J. Meuwsen- Walker's life, you can point out a few elements which defined the path her life took. She was a very social and extrovert human being. This helped her working in the retail business, where she was in touch with her customers all the time. She had an eye for opportunities. Without hesitation she took over the shop. Knowing that she was able to run it herself, shows confidence. She was not afraid to take a risk. She married someone she barely knew, this shows some of her impulsiveness. A reason for the quick marriage could be the fact that she had not experienced a very good love life. Nowadays Mrs. J. Meuwsen- Walker enjoys life every day as it comes, as they say in Latin; 'Carpe Diem'.

4.3. Mrs. E.J. Sprangers- van Boekel (Shoe store)

November 11th, the autumn of 1919, Mrs. Sprangers- van Boekel was born in Waalwijk. She was the second child of Mr. and Mrs. van Boekel. Eventually they would raise 9 children. Mr. van Boekel had his own business, which was a link between manufacturers of leather and craftsmen who made shoes. Her mother was a typical housewife.

Mrs. Sprangers- van Boekel had a great childhood despite the financial crisis in the thirties of the last century. Her father had a successful business and therefore the family did not notice much of the crisis. They were able to buy everything they needed to have a pleasant life. Mrs. Sprangers- van Boekel had several hobbies, such as hockey and playing with friends. Her childhood was a very pleasant one. She was a very happy child, influenced by her mother, who was always happy as well. Playing with friends from the neighborhood was a daily activity.

Mrs. Sprangers- van Boekel went to school until the age of 14. Then she simply had no choice other than helping her father with his business and her mother with all kind of jobs in the household. This was quite normal in those days, despite the fact that she wanted to go to the high school. Therefore she did not have the chance to develop her knowledge by education, although there were no financial barriers.

In 1941 she met her husband in Rotterdam. He was the son of a shoe salesman. Because the war just started it was not easy for them to see each other, because he lived in Rotterdam and she lived in Waalwijk. Therefore they decided after a relationship of one year to get married. She moved to Rotterdam, to live with her husband.

Living during the 2nd World War was not easy, but they made the best of it, grabbing every opportunity which passed by to make life as pleasant as possible. Not only noticing opportunities was a characteristic of Mrs. Sprangers- van Boekel which made her life more pleasant during the war, but also the fact that she never panicked. She wanted to be in control, taking care of her own business without depending on others, which is a sign of internal locus of control. A trait identified by Amit, Glosten and Muller (1993) The need to be independent was clearly present. On her birthday in 1943 her first child was born

At the end of the war, there were hardly any jobs. At one day her husband was biking his usual route through Rotterdam, when he met and spoke with a shoe salesman. He told Mr. Sprangers that he wanted to sell one of his shops. With this news he went home and told Mrs. Sprangers- van Boekel what he was told. Without any doubt Mrs. Sprangers- van Boekel decided to buy this shop. According to her,

the end of the war was the best time to start your own business, demand would increase rapidly. The very same day they bought the shop. This showed that she was not risk averse. They got a loan from her dad of 5,000 guilders to buy the shop. Bank loans were not easy to get, especially as an entrepreneur (Shapero, 1987) There was only one problem; they had a shoe shop, but without shoes. There still was not any supply of shoes in Rotterdam, because of the war. But Mrs. Sprangers- van Boekel discussed this with her father , who had supplied leather to many shoe manufactures in Brabant for a long time. So through her father she got in touch with these manufacturers, who were willing to supply her shoes, without getting paid right away. They were very keen to sell shoes again. Thus by family relations and experience with the product, she was able to start her own shop, which is normally a characteristic of self-employed men when they start their own business (Stevenson, 1984). She started the business together with her husband , who was the son of a shoe salesman. So in august 24th 1945 they opened their Shoe shop in Rotterdam, at that time the only shoe shop in Rotterdam which actually could sell and provide customers with shoes. During the first six months the shoes were sold out every other day .

The business was mostly run by Mrs. Sprangers- van Boekel. She was managing the stock, sales and daily activities in the shop. Mr. Sprangers transported the shoes and did the administration. This separation of activities evolved naturally. Mrs. Sprangers- van Boekel liked to take control, like she always did, managing the things the way she liked. One year after the opening of the shop, their second child was born. Because she did not want to raise her children fulltime, they hired an au- pair. Mrs. Spranger- van Boekel was simply not a typical housewife. She wanted to be busy with achieving things, earning money and building a successful business. So it appears that there was not only need for achievement, but also need of being financially independent. Being self-employed was not caused by having children to raise, which is identified as one of the main reason of self-employed women, in order to manage their own working hours (Loscocco, 1997).

After 25 years of running a successful shoe shop they decided to sell the business. Not because they got tired of it, but because Mrs. Spranger- van Boekel had health problems. Her husband could not run the business on his own, so to avoid that they would be forced to shut their business down, they sold the shop, receiving a nice amount of cash to live from.

Because they were not that old yet (Mrs. Spranger- van Boekel was 50 years old and her husband 52), they still wanted to remain active. It was not in their nature to sit at home and doing nothing, although they could afford to do this. Mr. Sprangers started working for a bank as a credit critic for small

companies. Mrs. Spranger- van Boekel started to do volunteer work for Humanitas. She liked helping others who needed it the most. She has done this till the age of 83.

Multiple characteristics influenced the life of Mrs. Spranger- van Boekel, besides the fact that she originated from an entrepreneurial family. She always wanted to have control, not depending on others. She did not want to be accountable to others. Being and wanting to be independent was a natural cause of these elements. Complaining does not appear in her dictionary. People have to make the best of it, being positive is important to achieve your goals.

After all she has lived a good life so far. She achieved her goals, or like she said 'my job is done'. She built a successful business and which made her financially independent. She has lived a social good life as well, not only with her husband, but also with her friends and family. She raised two children, giving them all the opportunities to live their lives the way they wanted to. Mrs. Spranger- van Boekel is very satisfied with the way she lived.

4.5 Mrs. G.E. Verlaat-Batist (Fabric Retailer)

Mrs. Verlaat-Betist was born on april 2nd 1928 in Rotterdam. She was the oldest of seven children. Her father was a carpenter (paid employee) and her mother was a housewife. It was not always easy to be the oldest. She had to be a good example for her brothers and sisters all the time. Her mother was a very strict kind of woman and also raised her children that way. She prohibited her children many things, which was one of the main reasons that Mrs. Verlaat-Betist did not have many friends, whereas she was a very social and extravert child. Mrs. Verlaat-Betist experienced her childhood as not pleasant.

After Primary school, she went to the domestic science school for approximately 1.5 years. Her father did not find it necessary for his daughter to follow another education, because she would become a housewife anyway. Mrs. Verlaat- Batist did not agree with her father and went to the fashion school during the 2nd World War. Throughout her education she had several jobs. She started working in a grocery shop. After that she became a servant for a general practitioner in Rotterdam. She never finished the fashion school, because she did not feel supported or stimulated at all, which was necessary to her.

After the 2nd World War she started working with her aunt. Together they made clothes on demand. This was a pleasant and educational period. She got spoiled by her aunt, who took her to musicals and other theatre pieces. Her parents, brothers and sisters were jealous about this. She was just so different, compared to the rest of the family. Mrs. Verlaat-Betist had worked with her aunt for about three years, when she started as an employee of Vroom & Dreesman at the fabrics department. When she was 22 she met her then future husband. After a relationship of three years they got married. Their first child was born when she was 26 years old and she was forced to quit her job, to become a housewife. Eventually she became a mother of four children, 2 sons and 2 daughters. Raising her children was the most important thing, she started to raise the children while her husband became the provider.

In those days it was not easy to get a job. Her husband moved from one job to another, which was not very satisfactory. Because Mrs. Verlaat- Betist was a very frugal kind of woman they never got in big financial problems. If they needed something, they would save the money for it, instead of taking a loan. After thirteen years of living this way, they decided to start their own fabrics store, because they wanted to be financially independent. While her husband would do most of the physical labor, Mrs. Verlaat-Betist would take care of the finance and of course the children. Because she had to raise their children, she worked a lot at home, where she did the administration, but also a lot of needlework. By having their own shop, they were able to combine these two activities perfectly. This was one of the main

reasons for her to start her own business together with her husband. Now she could be the “good mother” managing her own working hours while her husband could be the good provider. This phenomenon is also mentioned by Loscocco (1997). Thus becoming self-employed was not only because of financial reasons, but also because of independency and family commitments.

In the beginning she worked supportively, being able to take care of the children. But their main supplier would change that. In their shop they sold one of the top fabrics in the market. The supplier of that fabric had a great influence on his distributors. Retailers had to be proud to receive the opportunity to sell this fabric. The supplier was not very happy about how things were going in the shop. They wanted that Mrs. Verlaat- Betist would interfere more with the daily activities, especially with the sales. And this was exactly what she would be doing from then on. Quickly the turnover increased. The profits they made were reinvested in their business. She found it very important to show her customers the “top of the line”. She was a socially active woman with a lot of knowledge of people. This would help her sell the items they offered. Throughout the years the business remained healthy. It became a real family business, because her youngest daughter worked in the shop as well, she even became a full partner. In 2001 they sold the shop, while 3 years before her daughter started her own shop in the south of Rotterdam after a disagreement. Mrs. Verlaat- Betist is 72 years old now and the business still exists today.

Looking back at Mrs. Verlaat- Betist’s life so far, you can see that she is a very proud woman. Not taking big financial risks, but rather making well thought decisions. She was different from the rest of her family, she did not want to do what was “normal”. She wanted things that she liked to do, following her ambitions. She tried to develop herself, looking for satisfaction, but she did not receive any support from her parents. The need for achievement was still there, being financially independent and taking care of her family at the same time. Eventually when she looks back at her own life, she concludes that it has been a hard, but good life. Her childhood was not always easy, but she does not regret any of her actions. Nowadays she enjoys her life as it comes.

4.5. Mrs. Nicodem-Groenendaal (seamstress)

Mrs. Nicodem-Groenendaal was born on April 10th 1927 in Rotterdam. She was the second child of Mr. and Misses Groenendaal. Mr. Groenendaal had his own business, he was a butcher. Her mother was a housewife. After elementary school, she went to the industrial school to learn everything about the art of sewing. She finished school at the age of 16. Mrs. Nicodem-Groenendaal had a good childhood, despite the 2nd World War. Her parents raised her with love and care. She was also a very social type, having many friends with whom she played a lot in the streets of Rotterdam.

In the 1950's it was normal for a child, who did not attend school anymore, to pay her parents so called "costs money". Mrs. Nicodem-Groenendaal therefore had to earn money to pay her parents. Because she loved to sew, she started to sew all kind of clothes for family and friends. She was very creative and handy and her customers loved her clothes, which was one of the main reasons why her clientele increased. The main reason why she started her own business was because of financial needs.

When Mrs. Nicodem-Groenendaal was 21 her father passed away. To fill up that blank spot her boyfriend decided to live with her and her mom. In that same year they got married. Because her husband did not allow her to work somewhere else, she was forced to keep sewing at home, earning some extra money for the family. This was absolutely no punishment, she liked what she did.

Because Mrs. Nicodem-Groenendaal wanted to develop her knowledge even more, she decided to go back to school. She had a need for achievement. She followed a course at the fashion school to become a teacher. At the age of 25 she finished her education and became a fully licensed teacher. Because she still was not allowed to work outside her home, she started teaching at home. She stopped making clothes for customers and put all her time in teaching her students. She has done this approximately 8 years. One of the main reasons why she kept working was the fact that she did not get pregnant. Her husband worked fulltime at a bank in Rotterdam and she simply wanted to do something, instead of sitting at home and doing nothing. Eventually she got pregnant at the age of 40 and never worked again. Not only because she had a daughter now, but also because her husband earned enough money. Her main goal, when she started her own business: to earn extra money, was not necessary anymore. Her objective vanished. Because she did not start her business to take care of her family, she stopped working after the birth of her child. She did not feel the need to be independent. Her husband was able to be the only provider of the family.

Mr. Nicodem got Parkinson when he was 50 years old. From then on, Mrs. Nicodem-Groenendaal had to take care of her husband and their child. Eventually he died at the age of 82.

When she described herself, a few characteristics were typical for Mrs. Nicodem-Groenendaal. She thinks of herself as a creative and impulsive person. These two elements bundled and were more important than any risky undertaking, so she is risk averse. Other characteristics are that she is caring and sees almost everything in perspective. This characteristic was especially formed by the 2nd world war. Nowadays she still has intensive contact with her daughter. She lost contact with, most of her friends and family when her husband got Parkinson's disease.

4.6. Mrs. T. Raa- van Dijk (Violin Teacher)

June 9th 1929 was the day that Mrs. Raa- van Dijk was born. Her father was a teacher on a high school and her mother was a teacher on a music school. Two years later her brother was born. When she was approximately eleven years old, her parents got divorced. Her father thought that he was completely on his own, witnessed no support from his wife, who was mentally ill all the time. She thought that she had all kinds of physical diseases . After the divorce Mrs. Raa- van Dijk and her brother moved with their mother to Bilthoven. Her father remarried in Almelo and became father of another son and a daughter.

Because the war had started, it was not possible for her and her brother to visit their father in Almelo. It was too dangerous to make the journey. Therefore she was not able to see her father for five years, which was difficult for her, but it was not the end of the world to them. Many others suffered similarly, because many fathers were deported or went into hiding during the 2nd World War.

In Bilthoven she went to the Workplace. This was a school established by Kees Boeke. He named it the Workplace, because he said that it was a place where people have to work together for their future. Teachers were not called teachers, but staff members. They had to support the students to help them with their future. This school had a great influence on Mrs. T. Raa- van Dijk. It was the first place where she really felt accepted. Her mother was Swiss and she was raised with 2 languages, French and Dutch. Most of the time she spoke French with her brother on her former school, which was not appreciated by the other children. At the workplace there were all kinds of children, foreigners, children with different religions etc. Finally she was not “different” any more. She experienced the school as one big family, not only working on your own future, but trying to help others as well. Mrs. Raa-van Dijk was noticed in this school and she became the so called common controller, like every class had. She was chosen by the fact that she had natural charisma and was very benevolent. She experienced an unusual childhood, compared to the other children during the 2nd World War.

During the war Mrs. Raa- van Dijk experienced a lot of awful things. She witnessed executions on the streets and death by starvation. Even when she was just a teenager, she tried to help the resistance in any way she could. She helped making false Identities (she could falsify the autograph of the mayor) and smuggled these from Bilthoven to Utrecht in her violin case. These were very stirring times for a girl of her age. But again, helping others was a great part of her life even when she had to risk her own. She

was not risk averse. She distinguished herself from others of her age, by participating in the resistance like she did.

After the war, she went to the lyceum at the age of 16. The workplace teaches children till the 3rd grade of high school and therefore she had to finish high school somewhere else. The first two years on the lyceum went well, with good grades, but in her last year she got a burnout, which is very unusual for an 18 year old. Her mother still suffered of the same mental illness and therefore Mrs. T. Raa- van Dijk had to take care of her mother, brother and herself. She could handle this a couple of years, but in the end it broke her down. She was forced to drop out of school. She had to take a break from everything for a whole year, doing nothing.

After a year she regained counter on her life again. She did not want to go back to the lyceum, because she had to do the last year all over again. Because Mrs. Raa- van Dijk had a language talent , she wanted to follow an education to become an interpreter. These courses were very expensive, she could not afford this.

Mrs. Raa- van Dijk was very good in playing the violin. At one day someone pointed out that she had to go to the music academy. She got a scholarship and Mrs. Raa- van Dijk then became a student at the music academy. Because she still had to take care of her family, she got a job at a music store where she took care of the administration. Years went by and she became a very experienced student at the academy. Many other students who just started at the academy needed private lessons to keep up with the level needed to stay at the school. Mrs. Raa- van Dijk decided to give private lessons to these students. Consequently she would earn some extra money while at the same time she was able to do what she liked, playing music. The fact that she was able to help others, was a great satisfaction. When she participated in the resistance her main objective was to help others too. Quickly her clientele increased, especially after she graduated. Apart from teaching her clients at home or in her own practice, she also gave lessons on a music academy in Zutphen. Teaching others the art of music became a fulltime job. Not only did she teach others, but she would set up small orchestra's, just because she liked it (costs outweighed benefits). Thus earning extra money was not her main objective.

In Zutphen she met her husband, Mr. Raa. He was a divorced man. They got married in 1965. One year later Mrs. Raa- van Dijk got pregnant and quit her lessons in Zutphen. She still would teach individuals at home, so she would be able to raise her child. Mr. Raa was a lawyer and a deputy cantonal judge. He started teaching law at the Erasmus University in Rotterdam. Therefore the whole family had to move to

Rotterdam. Because her husband still had to pay alimony and did not have a big paycheck, Mrs. Raa- van Dijk still earned the extra money by giving private lessons. So now the extra money she earned became one of the main objectives. By working independently she was able to raise her kid, which was a big advantage. In 1975 she stopped with the lessons, because financially it was not necessary anymore. In 1982 they lost their son due to cancer.

Because her husband tried to become a professor at the university, he had to do much field research, especially in France, because he was investigating the history of the cantonal court. Many foreigners therefore visited Mr. Raa in Holland. Mrs. Raa- van Dijk was a very careful woman, taking care of these visitors. She also helped her husband with his research and his visitors, because she spoke fluently French. She started teaching the foreigners English and Dutch at home, simply because she loved helping others. This is also one of the main characteristics of Mrs. Raa- van Dijk; she always placed herself in second place. Helping others was more important than earning money. Money was never the most important subject in her life. Satisfaction was the feeling she got by helping others and that was the most important feeling of all. Thus the need to achieve satisfaction seemed to have shaped her life.

After all she can say that she has lived a good life. Of course it was not always easy and she witnessed terrible things. But by being creative and inventive she was able to make the best of it. She did not like to think in problems, she rather thinks in solutions.

4.7. Mrs. Liefwaard (Hairdresser)

Mrs. Liefwaard was born on March 13th 1929. Her family was very poor. It was the time of the financial crisis which occurred all over the world. Her father did not have a job and her mother was a housewife. It was very difficult for the family during the 2nd World War as well. After the War her father got a job in the wood business. It became more easy for the whole family to live their lives, with less tensions due to financial causes.

Mrs. Liefwaard was raised very strictly, especially by her mother. Her father was a lovely man, a very kind soul, whereas her mother was very strict. She prohibited the children many things. Many times her mother would denigrate her. One statement her mother would make multiple times, which she always will remember was: 'when you're born as a penny, you will never become a quarter'. Mrs. Liefwaard never wanted to believe this, she had a positive mentality.

Playing outside, hanging out with friends, were activities that Mrs. Liefwaard liked a lot in her childhood. She had a lot of friends, which showed that she was a very socially active child.

Because of the war Mrs. Liefwaard did not follow an education. At the age of 14 she got a job at a hairdresser. She had to do small jobs, like getting groceries, washing hair of clients and cleaning the shop. When Mrs. Liefwaard was 4 years old she already knew that she wanted to become a hairdresser. She liked working in the shop and decided to follow a course to become a fully licensed hairdresser, she wanted to develop herself, finding a way to achieve her goal. She finished her education when she was 17 years old. She worked in that shop for a couple of years with great enthusiasm.

Suddenly a great opportunity occurred. Mrs. Liefwaard got the opportunity to run her own shop on a cruise ship of the Holland America Line. Without hesitation, she took this amazing chance, without thinking it through. It seems that she was a very impulsive woman. She was 23 years old, still living at her parents place. Her life would change radically. One day she was living with her parents, working as a hairdresser in Rotterdam and the next day she would be traveling all over the world, on her own, without any relatives or friends. By working on the Holland America Line, she has seen a lot of the world. Seeing New York for the first time was a great experience. Ultimately she has worked for approximately 3 years on the Holland American Line.

Back in Holland she started working again in a hair dress saloon until she met her husband. She got married and like almost everyone she became a housewife. But not for very long. Her husband was addicted to alcohol and gambling, therefore living with her husband was not easy. Especially when she

noticed that she was not able to get children, she wanted to do something on her own again. By working she would be able to use her energy in a positive way again.

She got the opportunity to take over another hair dress saloon and got a loan from the current owner. She had to pay him 50 guilders (23 euro's) monthly. There was only one problem. To run your own business in those days you must have a merchant license, so Mrs. Liefwaard got back to school to get her license while still running the shop at the same time. The shop did well and soon she had 3 hairdressers working for her. After 8 years of running the shop, Mrs. Liefwaard was forced to sell her business, because she had not finished school and therefore was not allowed to keep running the business without a merchant license. She sold the shop, the same way she bought it, by giving the new owner the opportunity to pay her back with a fixed amount every month. It seems that the reason why she started a business was because she was not satisfied at home and opportunity great opportunity she received. It was not her objective to become self-employed, she just wanted to work again.

Because she was not able to continue running her own shop, she started working as a freelancer again. Visiting her clients at their homes, earned her some extra money. After doing this for another 7 years she started a business again in 1975 in a home for the elderly. She rented a space, where she styled the hair of the residents. She has done this for another 20 years with great joy and enthusiasm. In 1995 she got a hernia, which forced her to stop working ever again.

There are a few words describing the life of Mrs. Liefwaard almost completely. These words also characterize her character. Words like impulsive, honest and positive define her life, but also cheeky, bad luck and looking forward were elements which shaped her life drastically. The fact that she worked almost all of her life, was because she was not able to get children. This was very difficult for her, but she learned how to cope with it, trying to make the best of it. Again this shows that Mrs. Liefwaard had a positive attitude towards life. Not thinking of problems, but rather thinking of solutions. A very funny statement she made maybe describes her best,

: 'you have to be positive in life, otherwise you will become a very bitter old lady'.

5. Discussion

In this part of this research the biographies are being compared with each other and with other academic studies. This is the third step of the analysis. Different characteristics are being discussed in a distinctive way. First the features of the various determinants are being pointed out, followed by the traits of the biographies which can be compared to the discussed determinants. In the last section the unique traits identified in the biographies will be discussed.

5.1. Age and experience

Entrepreneurs are most likely aged between 25 and 34 as showed in Table 2.1, of the literature review. Self-employed women do not differ from men in respect to age. Looking at the lives of the respondents, five out of seven women were between 22 and 28 when they started their own business. The other two differ a lot compared to the others regarding their age, because they were respectively 44 and 50 years old when they started as entrepreneurs.

Regarding the level of experience there are only two who started their business without any form of experience with respect to the sector in which they were active. According to Marlow (1997) female entrepreneurs are not that experienced when they start their own business. This research shows that most of these women (5 out of 7) were experienced in a certain level when they became entrepreneurs. Mrs. J. Meuwsen-Walker worked in her hat shop as an employee for several years before she bought the business, while Mrs. Verlaat-Batist worked in several comparing businesses when she started her own fabric retail shop. According to Parker (2004) experience is the more accurate variable which captures the impact of human capital on self-employment. His judgment is supported by Lazear (2002) who found a positive relationship between experience, measured in job history, and actual entrepreneurship. The outcome of this research regarding the characteristic age and experience seems to confirm this statement.

5.2. Marital status

Marital status and age are correlated to each other. Younger people are less likely to be married than older people as can be read in the literature review. Six out of the seven self-employed women in this research were married during their existence as entrepreneurs. Two were self employed before they got married and one got married after she stopped being self employed. This result confirms research done

by Devine (1994) who showed that self-employed women are more likely to be married than employees. However, another interesting element of marriage as a determinant of actual entrepreneurship is the moral support. Brüderl and Preisendörfer (1998) showed that emotional support of a spouse increases the odds of survival. But self-employed women seem to have a less stable marriage with a not very supporting husband (DeCarlo and Lyons, 1979; Goffee and Scasse, 1985; Watkins and Watkins, 1983). In some degree this phenomenon reflects on the lives of the interviewed women as well. Two out of the seven interviewed women experienced lack of support. Even one of the husbands withstood his wife in a mental way. The other woman found a motive in working for herself because of her unstable relationship. To avoid her life at home, she looked for comfort in her business. Another female experienced a very inconvenient marriage, but that was after her career. The remaining four women had a happy marriage, with a supporting husband. Two of them worked closely with their husband in the same business. The suggestion that some female entrepreneurs receive lack of support by their husband seem to apply for some of these women as well.

5.3. Education

The overall tendency of women that grew up during the 2nd World War is that they finished school at an average age of sixteen. The most common statement made by the participants is *'it was normal for a girl to help in the household as soon as possible, there was no room for discussion'*. Previous studies do not point all in the same direction regarding the influence of education on actual entrepreneurship. There are studies that show a positive influence of education on actual entrepreneurship (Robinson and Sexton, 1994) Uhlaner and Thurik (2004) found a negative relationship between education and entrepreneurship.

The women participating in this research are quite similar to each other. Most of these women tried to develop themselves by education. Four out of the seven participants followed an education after the household school. From a private education to become a hat maker to someone who followed a hairdresser course. Two of them felt not supported by their parents in following an extended education. Two women developed their knowledge in a later period of their lives. Especially to expand their businesses.

It seems that there was a strong relationship between their education and their businesses. The remaining woman did not follow another form of education after the household school. She was the oldest participant in this research, born in 1919. Six out of seven women followed extended educations, which shows that they were well educated as regards to the profession they practiced.

5.4. Family background

Parents seem to have great influence on the occupation of their children. Roughly 50 per cent of business owners are second-generations proprietors (Lentz and Laband, 1990). Only one of the self-employed women who participated in this research followed her parents footsteps as regards to their profession. But not in the full aspect, whereas her parents were employed teachers, she tutored her students independently.

Two women came from an entrepreneurial family. Mrs. Sprangers- van Boekel who started her own shoe store had a father who also participated in this industry. He supplied the leather for the shoes. Her father in law, however, had his own shoe store. It seems that these two factors influenced her decision to start her own shoe store in a positive way. Using her father's connections helped her enormously to set up and run her business, like she mentioned herself.

The remaining women participated in completely different professions compared to their parents. Most mothers were housewife's. Fathers were working respectively in the harbor , as a carpenter, or a teacher. Only one the fathers was unemployed.

5.5. Psychological factors

Four key personality traits are indentified that influence someone to become an entrepreneur (Amit, Glostén and Muller, 1993). These traits are:

- Need for achievement;
- Internal locus of control;
- Above average risk taking propensity;
- Tolerance of Ambiguity.

An important part of this research lies in the analysis of the biographies, linking different events with each other to discover certain traits. Some of the women who participated in this research clearly showed that they possessed some of the key personality traits. These key traits will be discussed separately in this paragraph.

5.5.1. Need for achievement

Four out of the seven women interviewed pointed out that they possessed a certain degree of need for achievement. The need for achievement was first defined by Murray (1938) as: *'To accomplish something, to master, manipulate or organize physical object, human beings or ideas. To do this rapidly and as independently as possible. To overcome obstacles and attain a high standard. To excel one's self. To rival and surpass others. To increase self-regard by the successful exercise of talent'*. Mrs. van Zuylen-Jansen explicitly wanted to develop her knowledge. Not only in order to expand her business activities, but also for her own interest. Two other women mainly had the need for financial independency, this was their first objective. To accomplish this they started their own company. Later on in their lives their businesses became their passion. Not only did they achieve financial independence, but they also received joy as being an entrepreneur. The last woman had one main objective in life and that was helping others. During the second world war she helped the resistance. Her first business was not only because of a financial reason, but also because she wanted to help others improving their musical skills.

5.5.2. Internal locus of control

When an individual has a high internal locus of control, this person initiates the belief that his performance depends highly on his own actions rather than actions performed by external parties. It is difficult to discover this trait within the biographies. None of the women showed a clear degree of internal locus of control. However a clear statement made by a few women was that if you want to accomplish something you have to do it on your own. This shows that some believe strongly that their performance depends on their own actions rather than actions taken by others.

5.5.3. Above risk taking propensity

Risk taking propensity is something which is very hard to measure. All the women interviewed grew up during the second world war and witnessed horrible events. These events influenced their way of living. Setting up a business can be a risky matter, however, these women did not perceive being self-employed as risky. Money should not be the most important thing in life, especially when it is compared to health and living in freedom. Therefore it is hard to conclude whether one of the interviewed women had a above risk taking propensity.

5.5.4. Tolerance of ambiguity

A clear case of the trait tolerance of ambiguity is displayed by Mrs. Sprangers- van Boekel. After the 2nd World War, many shops in Rotterdam were destroyed because of the bombing. When she got the

opportunity to buy an empty shoe store, she acted immediately, because she knew that she would be able to supply shoes through her father's network in Brabant. Because other shoe stores did not have the same contacts as she did, Mrs. Spranger- van Boekel and her husband were practically the only shoe store at the end of the war being able to supply shoes. The first day they opened their doors for the public, they sold their complete stock. This high demand for shoes kept on for several weeks. Then their shoe store established a strong basis for future existence due to brand awareness. This example shows clearly the high level of tolerance of ambiguity Mrs. Spranger- van Boekel possessed.

Also Mrs. Liefwaard and Mrs. Verlaat-Batist showed that they had an eye for opportunity in the market and how to deal with ambiguous situations. Mrs. Liefwaard left her home at a young age to work at the Holland America line. She knew she had to take this opportunity, because it was a chance of a lifetime. Leaving everything behind for this great opportunity without hesitation, shows how she handled opportunities. This is also strongly linked with her risk taking propensity, not on a financial level, but on an emotional level. To obtain joy and experience something completely different from her daily life in Holland, she had to take this risk.

Mrs. Verlaat-Batits showed, in her way, that she had an eye for opportunity. Fabric retailers can supply all kinds of different qualities at a certain price. Most fabric retailers promoted expensive products through catalogues, because they found it too expensive to display these fabrics directly in shops with the possibility of fading colors. However, Mrs. Verlaat- Batits was convinced she had to display these articles in her shop, so that these fabrics would sell easier. This is linked with risk taking propensity. Her feeling did not disappoint her, since her shop became a successful distribution place of expensive and high quality fabrics in Rotterdam.

Because Tolerance of ambiguity can be interpreted in different ways, it is hard to characterize the remaining women by this trait. All these women possess a certain degree of this trait, setting up their own business, wanting to accomplish their objectives and taking the opportunities the market supplied to reach their goals.

5.6. Family lives and working hours

Independency is for most people the main objective when they decide to become self-employed as can be seen in table 2.2. According to Cromie (1987) women become self-employed, which enables them to find a correct balance between career and family life. To compare the participants in this matter, there

are a few important issues that have been looked for, namely; did they have children, what was their main reason to set up a business and how did they combine their careers with the needs of their family.

Five out of the seven women have children. Three of them clearly pointed out that they became self-employed because it enabled them to take care of their children. They were also working mainly from their home, giving their kids a comfortable and familiar surroundings. A natural effect was that they did not always work fulltime hours. Because they were self-employed, they were able to work flexible hours. Another woman hired an au pair to help her with raising her children. She had to run the store fulltime and was not able to find a balance between her business activities and raising her children. One woman stopped working when she gave birth to her daughter. She became mother at a late stage in her life. Her husband earned enough money to take care of his family, so she decided to run the household fulltime and took care of their daughter.

The last two women did not have children. One woman was not able to get children because of physical reasons. Because she did not have to raise children, she decided to spend her time working instead of being a fulltime housewife. It was not her style 'to sit at home and do nothing'. The last woman was single for a long time and did not have to take care of a family, so she was able to devote all of her time to her business.

Consequently it seems that most mothers who participated in this research became self-employed to spend more time with their children. Flexible hours and working at home were the most important benefits of being an entrepreneur. The other women pointed out that because they did not have children, they worked fulltime.

5.7. Financial barriers

According to Shapero (1987) many entrepreneurs were forced to borrow money from family and friends, because banks did not give loans to small companies easily. In this research the women were also asked how they financed their businesses. Three out of the seven women borrowed money from a third party, other than a financial institute, to finance their business. One of them borrowed money from her brother in law while another received money from her father. The third woman found an agreement with the former owner to pay him periodically. Another similarity between these women was the fact that all of them bought an existing business.

Three other women used their own money(private savings or money from their husband) to set up their businesses. They all started their company from the ground up, mainly practicing their companies at

home. One woman received a loan from the bank and also used their family savings. She started her business later than the other women.

What can be noticed is that the participants can be divided into two groups, those who borrowed a large sum of money from a third party to take over an existing company and those who financed their business using their own money.

4.8. Visual summary

Table 4.1 shows the different characteristics which are directly linked to the participants. When a characteristic is mentioned as “yes” than this shows that the participant possesses this trait. For the characteristic education it is assumed that it has a positive influence on actual entrepreneurship. Marital status is measured at the moment someone became entrepreneur. Furthermore the trait ‘above risk taking propensity’ and internal locus of control are not included in the calculation, because these variables are hard to measure based on the biographies.

Table 4.1 Characteristics linked to the biographies

Characteristics \ Participants	Mrs. E. van Zuylen-	Mrs. J. Meuwesen-	Mrs. E.J. Sprangers-	Mrs. G.E. Verlaat-	Mrs. Nicodem-	Mrs. T. Raa-van Dijk	Mrs. Liefwaard	Total
Age and experience	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	5/7
Marital Status	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	4/7
Education	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	6/7
Family Background	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	2/7
Need for achievement	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	4/7
Tolerance of Ambiguity	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	3/7
Total Score	3/6	2/6	5/6	4/6	3/6	3/6	4/6	

Overall Table 4.1 shows that all participants at least possess one or more characteristics which are identified as traits that have a positive influence on actual entrepreneurship. Four out of six characteristics are identified with most of the participants. While one participant possesses five out of the six characteristics. The women who possesses the least amount of characteristics still has a score of 2/6. The average score is 57%. This indicates that these women were positive influenced by traits which are also identified by several studies as determinants influencing actual entrepreneurship. Furthermore Table 4.1 shows that education influenced most of the participants, while the opposite is true for family background.

5.8. Typical characteristics of the participants

The women participated in this research were born between 1919 and 1929. Therefore they grew up during the 2nd World War. This war had a great impact on their lives. It influenced their characters in several ways. Creativity was a must to survive the war. Because they had lack of scarce resources, they were forced to be innovative. This changed the way they looked at their life. To express their feelings the Latin expression 'carpe diem' (seize the day) suits perfectly. They all pointed out that they do not like to think in problems, but rather in solutions. This also influenced their way of doing business. Their main objective seemed to be enjoying life as much as they could.

Four out of the seven women also experienced an unpleasant childhood because of their father or mother. Three women pointed out that they were raised very strictly. They felt this as unpleasant, because they were not able to live their lives like they wanted to. Furthermore two of these women defined themselves different from their brothers and sisters. Especially their energetic level was frequently mentioned as different compared to the rest of their family.

The last similarity between these women was that they all participated in the services industry. Most self-employed women participated in the services industry. In the last two decades almost 90% of the self-employed women were participating in the services industry as show in graph 2.1.

6. Conclusion

This research explores the determinants that influenced self-employed women, born in the beginning of the 20th century to become entrepreneurs. The topic of female entrepreneurship is almost completely neglected by academic researchers till the 1980's. The results of this research can also be a contribution to the Rotterdam Study in their research of human genes as a new determinant of actual entrepreneurs.

Initially over 200 females who participated in the Rotterdam Study, were defined as entrepreneurs. The Rotterdam Study obtained this information through a survey. Currently 57 of these women are still alive. However, most of them did not appear to be entrepreneurs. This resulted in a very selective group suitable for this research. This discovery can influence the original Rotterdam Study who uses these participants to measure the influence of genetics on actual entrepreneurship.

Comparing the determinants of the participants with participants from previous studies show that there are many similarities. These women were mostly middle age when they started their business. However, most of them seem to be experienced in respect to their profession. This is also found by Stevenson (1984) regarding self-employed men. All of the participants were married, but not all enjoyed the marital life. The women were not supported and sometimes even opposed by their spouses. This reflects the results of different studies which suggest that self-employed women seem to have a less stable marriage and a husband who is not very involved in her business (DeCarlo and Lyons, 1979; Goffee and Scasse, 1985; Watkins and Watkins, 1983).

Education had a great influence on their businesses. Five out of the seven women were well educated in respect to the sector they participated in. However, the main reason for becoming an entrepreneur seemed to be independency. Managing their own time and working at home while at the same time raising their children seemed to be a very big advantage of being self-employed. This is also suggested by previous studies as the main objective of self-employed women (Buttner, 1993; Loscocco, 1997; van Uxem and Bais, 1996). Also the financial barriers witnessed were similar as those suggested by previous studies. Receiving a loan from a third party, different than from financial institutes, was the way to finance their company.

Four key characteristics which were identified by Amit, Glosten and Muller (1993) were investigated as well in this thesis. The need for achievement was discovered to be important for most of the participants. Not only the need to achieve financial independency was pointed out, but also the need to develop their knowledge. It is hard to analyze the trait 'above-average risk taking propensity' and internal locus of control. Risk perception is probably biased after surviving the 2nd World War.

Most of the determinants identified by previous studies fit these women as well. All women possess at least two of the characteristics that influence actual entrepreneurship in a positive way. Most traits are identified within the biographies. One woman even possessed five out of the six characteristics used in Table 4.1. The average self-employed woman used in this research scored 57% in respect to the characteristics. Education is a determinant which is identified by six out of the seven women. This trait seemed to influence most of these women in respect to their occupation. None of these women took over a family business, which can explain the low score of family background in Table 4.1. Furthermore no differences are discovered. It seems that they are the pioneers of the average self-employed women. Despite the difficult time they lived in (financial crisis and war) their incentives were similar to women who became entrepreneurs in a later period. Being independent so that they were able to raise their children seem to be their main objective.

To find significant evidence for the determinants of entrepreneurship, a larger group of women has to be found. By performing a quantitative research the determinants can be tested more accurately. Another suggestion for future research would be to compare self-employed women from different regions. Rotterdam was the only city in the Netherlands which has been bombed. Therefore the economy in Rotterdam differs from those in other cities. Existing companies were destroyed and the supply of products and services declined tremendously.

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