Domesticy, Pillarization and Gender. Historical Explanations for the Divergent Pattern of Dutch Women's Economic Citizenship

Bosch, Mineke

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Domesticity, Pillarization and Gender

Historical Explanations for the Divergent Pattern of Dutch Women's Economic Citizenship

MINEKE BOSCH | UNIVERSITY OF GRONINGEN

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Are there historical explanations for the paradox that, in a country with a reputation for being egalitarian and democratic, reasonable and tolerant, women have less economic independence compared with other countries and are under-represented in decision-making roles in society? This has often, implicitly and explicitly, been the guiding question in historical research into the gender relations in the Netherlands. Mineke Bosch takes up this question again and discusses gender-historical research that focuses on specific developments in the area of 'work' and 'women's work', whereby the national character is of less relevance, as well as historical research in which broader lines are drawn in relation to the Dutch gender relations in comparison to other countries. In research in the second category, more so than in the first, standard explanatory concepts are used such as *burgerlijkheid* [bourgeois mentality] and domesticity, or pillarization. As outmoded connotations (and myths) concerning masculinity and femininity often lurk within these terms, this type of research risks degenerating into histories of nineteenth-century civilization in which gender relations were used as a basis for explanations.

Gender and civilization – gender and the Dutch nation

As the status of women has often functioned as a marker for the degree of a country's civilization, gender has never been far away in international comparative surveys or the world histories that have appeared from the eighteenth-century on, even though women as individuals may have been largely absent from these historical narratives.[1] Evolutionary theories of the national or cultural differences which have contributed to the ethnic and racial thinking fundamental to the nineteenth century Western mindset

all hinged on (often vague) ideas of gender. The two mottos printed on the title page of *The Woman Question in Europe* (1884), edited by American feminist and publicist Theodore Stanton, are good examples of such gendered underpinnings of cultural difference: 'If you would know the political and moral status of a people, demand what place its women occupy' – L. Aimé Martin, 'On the Education of Mothers' (book I, chapter IV)' and: 'There is nothing, I think, which marks more decidedly the character of men or of nation, than the manner in which they treat women' – Herder, 'Philosophy of History' (French Edition), volume II, book VIII, chapter IV'.[2]

Often it worked in the opposite direction. Given the nineteenth-century Dutch reputation as freedom-loving democrats (especially in the United States), in matters of gender relations the position of Dutch women was held in high esteem. In international surveys such as the book mentioned above, the Netherlands ranked high in this respect. And as reputations are often long-lived, it is no surprise that, in the first – by now classical – international overview of historical feminism, *The Feminists* (1977), British historian Richard Evans compared the Netherlands favourably with Belgium although he dedicated only half a page of the whole book to the Dutch situation. As for Belgium, he concluded that 'the main obstacle wasn't the system of government but the Catholic Church'.[3] Whereas both countries were parliamentary, constitutional and dominated by the middle classes, 'it was the Netherlands that boasted the strong feminist movement, not Belgium'. Evans returns to the Netherlands on the last page, where he concludes that the geographical spread of the Women's Liberation movement in the 1970s is not dissimilar to the older feminism, citing the Dutch 'Dolle Mina's' ['Mad Minas'] as a sign of the strength of the Dutch women's movement.[4]

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1 Including Claudia Honegger, *Die Ordnung der Geschlechter. Die Wissenschaften vom Menschen und das Weib, 1750-1850* (Frankfurt, New York 1992).

2 Theodore Stanton (ed.), *The Woman Question in Europe: A Series of Original Essays*, with an introduction by Frances Power Cobbe (New York, London, Paris 1884; photographic reprint of the original publication, New York 1970). On Martin, *Education des mères de famille*, 1834, see Gisela Bock, *Women in European History* (Oxford 2002) 89; on Herder, *Ideen zur einer Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit, 1784-1791*: Honegger, *Die Ordnung der Geschlechter*, 52. She also refers to Kant and other enlightenment anthropologists around 1800.

3 Richard Evans, *The Feminists: Women's Emancipation Movements in Europe, America and Australasia, 1840-1920* (London, New York 1977) 134-135.

Propaganda march for the use of the contraceptive pill
by Dutch 'Dolle Mina's' in Amsterdam, 10 October 1970.
('More human with the pill').
International Institute of Social History, Amsterdam.

This hidden (or explicit) criterion for the position of women as a gauge of the degree of a country's civilization or culture is, in my opinion, still often operational today.[5] Women's liberation is highly rated as a marker of Dutch and Western culture, compared to the values imported by (Muslim) migrants – particularly in debates on multiculturalism. These arguments run parallel to those of the organizational sociologist and marketing professor Geert Hofstede, who became a management guru specializing in cultural differences. According to him, one of the five cultural dimensions that can be measured for each nation is a position on the masculinity-femininity axis. On this chart, the Netherlands (a 'feminine country') scores low on his MAS-index (he takes masculinity for the norm), meaning that gender differences in the Netherlands are negligible.[6]

Given the positive opinions surrounding the position of women in the Netherlands, both among insiders and outsiders, Dutch feminists (much like Scandinavian feminists) have a long tradition of showing the contradictory state of Dutch women, in contrast to the supposed civilized and democratic character of the Netherlands. In 1895, the radical feminist Wilhelmina Drucker wrote that 'in terms of its women, the Netherlands may not be the most backward of people, such as the Congolese or the Hottentots, but it certainly is and will remain the China of Europe'.[7] The 'position of

4 In the recent comparative study edited by Sylvia Paletschek and Bianka Pietrow-Ennker, *Women's Emancipation Movements in the Nineteenth Century: A European Perspective* (Stanford 2004), there is a succession of countries remarkably similar to that in Stanton's book. See: Mineke Bosch, *The Woman Question in Europe in European History*: Contribution to the Web-feature 'European History – Gender History', in: *Themenportal Europäische Geschichte* (2009), URL: www.europa.clio-online.de/2009/Article=418>.

5 It is tempting to see Robert Inglehart and Pippa Norris, *Rising Tide: Gender Equality and Cultural Change around the World* (Cambridge 2003) as a twentieth-century successor to earlier civilization theories, but this view is not wholly fair. Their work can be placed on a continuum that, at one extreme end, is out to develop a benchmark for gender equality around the world as an instrument in, for instance, United Nations policy-making; at the other, it is drawing up a hierarchy among civilizations.

6 I don't want to suggest that there is always a reverse relationship between the validity of ideas and their market value, but I find the economic success of Hofstede's ideas astonishing. A good analysis of his use of gender is still due. See: www.geert-hofstede.com/. For his personal website: http://stuwww.uvt.nl/~csmeets/.

7 Maria Grever and Berteke Waaldijk, *Feministische openbaarheid. De Nationale Tentoonstelling van Vrouwenarbeid in 1898* (Amsterdam 1998); translated as *Transforming the Public Sphere: The Dutch National Exhibition of Women's Labor in 1898*. With an introduction by Antoinette Burton (London 2004) 35. Also cited in Marjan Schwegman, 'Strijd om de openbaarheid: sekse, cultuur en politiek', in: Douwe Fokkema and Frans Grijzenhout (eds.), *Rekenschap, 1650-2000. Nederlandse Cultuur in Europese Context*, volume V (The Hague 2001) 145-165, 146. Cf. for the cultural pattern of the Dutch as the Chinese of Europe: P.J. van Winter, *De Chinezen van Europa* (Groningen 1965).

Delegates of the Vereeniging voor Vrouwenkiesrecht [Women's Sufferage Association] at the 1911 congress of the International Woman Suffrage Alliance in Stockholm. Seated left Wilhelmina Drucker, seated in the centre another famous Dutch feminist of the first wave, Aletta Jacobs.
International Institute of Social History, Amsterdam.

women' can of course be measured in many different ways, but historical and contemporary feminists have by and large always put a strong emphasis on women's economic independence, as well as on women's representation in decision-making positions in politics and society. In the 1970s, second wave feminists started to repeat Drucker's complaint, thereby focusing on what Alice Kessler Harris called women's 'economic citizenship'.[8] In the 1990s, when the 'backward position' of Dutch women as regards their economic independence and their inability to reach top positions in public and private institutions became conspicuous also internationally, such complaints became even more vocal. Thus, the outcome of a comparative survey of women in higher education became famous as the short-hand version of the fact that the Netherlands was at the bottom of the list of all the countries in the world with respect to the number of women professors.[9] A report on women scientists in Europe published by the European Commission in 1999 assessed this under-representation of women in science and academia in the Netherlands in comparison to other Western-European countries, whereby 'a Dutch case' was born.[10]

Ten years on, a national survey of women professors in the Netherlands has shown that the average percentage of women professors in the Netherlands is now 11.7 percent: much lower than that of the average number for the EU-27, which is 19 percent.[11] Not only is there a strong vertical segregation, but the horizontal segregation is also severe, with 18 percent of students in technical studies being female, as opposed to 69 percent and 63 percent in the fields of Behaviour and Society, and Language and Culture respectively. In parliament, women comprise 42 percent of MPs. At local level, the figures

8 For a well-founded defense of the concept of 'economic citizenship' alongside the three well-known dimensions of citizenship (civil, political and social) introduced by the political scientist Marshall, see: Alice Kessler-Harris, *In Pursuit of Equity: Women, Men, and the Quest for Economic Citizenship in 20th-Century America* (Oxford, New York 2001). In this article, economic citizenship encompassed the (equal opportunity to the) 'right to do the work of one's own choice', but also the right to be part of decision-making processes in public and private organizations.

9 As the second most backward country, the Netherlands was ahead only of Botswana, which in its implicit (racist) reference to 'Africa' made things even worse: S. Stiver Lie, L. Malik and D. Harris (eds.), *The Gender Gap in Higher Education: World Yearbook of Education* (London 1994).

10 ETAN report European Commission (Mary Osborn, Teresa Rees, Mineke Bosch et al.), *Science Policies in the European Union: Promoting Excellence through Mainstreaming Gender Equality. A Report from the Etan Expert Group on Women and Science* (Luxembourg 2000); cf. Mineke Bosch, 'Women in Science: A Dutch Case?', *Science in Context* 15:5-4 (2002) 484-527.

11 Marinel Gerritsen, Thea Verdonk and Akke Visser, *Monitor vrouwelijke hoogleraren 2009* (Vereniging van Universiteiten (VSNU), Landelijk Netwerk Vrouwelijke Hoogleraren (LNVH), Sociaal Fonds voor de KennisSector (SoFoKleS) and Stichting Simone de Beauvoir 2009).

are less promising, with 26 percent of City and Community councils and 24 percent mayors being women. In the Board of Directors of large companies in the Netherlands, women participate only as an exception to the rule (3 percent).

Underlying (or parallel to) this under-representation of women in decision-making positions in politics, and in society especially, is a strong division of labour by gender based on an adapted form of the traditional male breadwinner ideology, even though the economic independence of all women and men above 18 years of age was proclaimed by law in 1990. The effect of this law, however, was not overwhelming. Of all the women between 15 and 64, only 43 percent are economically independent defined as earning at least 70 percent of the minimum wage. The average annual income of women and men is € 20,000 and € 37,000 respectively, and most women are in the lower income categories.[12] In addition, women work predominantly in 'women's jobs' and in part-time positions, for an average of 24 hours a week. When the figures are corrected for part-time working and other differences, an average income difference of 20.8 percent remains.[13]

Childcare regulations are still not sufficient, while there is also an ongoing and vocal debate on 'working mothers' as a problem category. The *communis opinio* is that mothers can't work full-time. And if they do, they are still often seen as pitiable creatures who are always in a hurry and always short of time and attention. By contrast, their counterparts (called 'caring fathers'), get a much more favourable press; they are seen as better people who chose a kind of 'slow life', taking precious time off for their children, thereby enhancing their ability to work.[14] It therefore comes as no surprise that a high-profile group of women has recently arisen who declare themselves proud to be full-time mothers.

12 'Inkomenskloof tussen mannen en vrouwen niet kleiner geworden in de afgelopen jaren', Webmagazine, Wednesday 15 April 2009 9:30; URL: www.cbs.nl/nl-NL/menu/themas/inkomen-bestedingen/publicaties/artikelen/archief/2009/2009-2742-wm.htm, accessed 22 December 2009.

13 This figure is based on the website Loonwijzer.nl, facilitated by the Federation of Dutch Trade Unions, the University of Amsterdam, the Ministry of Employment and Social Affairs, among others. In the Global Gender Gap Report from the World Economic Forum, the estimate is 34 percent: a figure taken from the Human Development Report. The Dutch pay gap is wider than the average (14.5 percent) in EU countries. In the private sector, it is 22 percent and in the public sector 16.5 percent. See www.loonwijzer.nl/home, accessed 5 March 2010. For the pay gap at Dutch Universities, see *Monitor vrouwelijke hoogleraren 2009*.

14 Working mothers' lives are assessed in terms of scarcity, caring fathers' lives in terms of enhancement. Lies Wesseling, *Geleerde moeders* (Amsterdam 2001). Wesseling included in her book an analysis of several ego-documents by 'caring fathers' and a documentary series by the progressive television station VPRO. For a recent defense of the thesis that 'the glass ceiling is a myth': Marike Stellinga, *De mythe van het glazen plafond* (Amsterdam 2009).

Casparus Johannes Mortel, Broker Albertus Horstman and his family, 1823.
Amsterdams Historisch Museum.

This peculiar state of gender relations in a Western country with a reputation for being egalitarian and democratic, reasonable and tolerant, deserves our attention in a volume on the 'Relevance of Dutch History'. In this contribution, 'relevance' – as defined in terms of 'the relevance of Dutch history to themes of general interest' – is identical to what quite a number of historians have found relevant in Dutch historiography in the last decades.[15] Implicitly and explicitly, at the center of the argument or in the margins, there have been many efforts to explain historically the fact that Dutch women were not able to consolidate the vote into full economic citizenship. Although there is no reason to believe that Dutch gender relations at the beginning of the twenty-first century are the result of a historical *Sonderweg* [special path] (as the differences between European countries seem to be relative rather than categorical), many have posed the question – sometimes only casually – of how to understand these differences historically, and whether they represent a Dutch case.

Focusing on 'national history', we can hardly escape from exceptionalism.[16] This is also the case with the historical explanations that have been given in Dutch historiography for Dutch women's inadequate fulfillment of economic citizenship in terms of economic independence and representative positions of power and influence.[17] Nevertheless, there seems to be a distinction between gender historians who want to know more about gender, and gender and other historians who want to know more about Dutch history. I will start with the explanations that were put forward by gender historians who focused on women's participation in work and society in the

15 Van Eijl points out how, in the early days of gender studies, the self evident starting point of many researchers was that Dutch women (always had) had a lower labour participation rate than women in other Western European countries. Her book sees this claim as true (in comparison with Germany, France, Great Britain and Belgium), see for example table 2.4. At the same time, she shows the structural unreliability of labour statistics in the Netherlands and elsewhere, and the corresponding structural lower numbers of working women on paper than in reality. Corrie van Eijl, *Het werkzame verschil. Vrouwen in de slag om de arbeid 1898-1940* (Hilversum 1994), especially 52-69. A short time before the historical sociological study by Plantenga appeared, which likewise started with the observation that Dutch (married) women's labour participation was generally supposed to follow a divergent pattern. In her first chapter, she deals with the range of 'opinions' rather than robust explanations for the phenomenon. Janneke Plantenga, *Een afwijkend patroon. Honderd jaar vrouwenarbeid in Nederland en (West-) Duitsland* (Amsterdam 1993).

16 Henk te Velde, 'De internationalisering van de nationale geschiedenis en de verzuiling', *Bijdragen en Mededelingen betreffende de Geschiedenis der Nederlanden/ The Low Countries Historical Review* [BMGN/LCHR] 124:4 (2009) 499-514.

17 I will not address all of the explanations in circulation, such as late industrialization or Dutch neutrality in World War I, as some of these have already been sufficiently rebutted or not yet good enough, such as the recurring reference to the wealth of the Dutch nation. Especially Plantenga, *Een afwijkend patroon*, 2-7.

twentieth century. By and large, these interpretations show that it was not so much women's choice or women's natural needs that can explain Dutch women's position, nor anything distinctly 'Dutch'. In this, they differ from a persistent cluster of explanations that – in one way or another – see an important role for the image and reality of 'the Dutch housewife', as she was recently portrayed by Els Kloek.[18] In an admirable effort to give a summary of the literature on the subject, Kloek traced the Dutch housewife from the invention of 'bourgeois domesticity' in the early Dutch Republic, to the twenty-first century housewife as 'power mother'. According to her, married women could devote themselves to homemaking thanks to the early rise of capitalism and the wealth of the Dutch nation, resulting in an early form of bourgeois culture with its implicit ideal of domesticity. Then and there, Kloek argued, the ideal of the non-wage-earning wife, dedicated to home and children, was born.[19] In this conclusion, Kloek more or less ignored the recent outcome of a research project into early modern women's work, that has convincingly demonstrated that, until far into the nineteenth century, women labored in larger numbers and at a broader range of work than nineteenth-century and later sources have assumed.[20] Her book shows, therefore, how the idea of domesticity as something specifically Dutch and capable of explaining Dutch gender relations, retains its influence in Dutch historiography. In the rest of this essay, I will not go back as far as the early modern period in Dutch history, but rather discuss the most prominent historical explanations for today's gender relations that focus on the modern Dutch nation.

18 Els Kloek, *De vrouw des huizes. Een cultuurgeschiedenis van de Hollandse huisvrouw* (Amsterdam 2009). Though admirable, the analysis is not wholly convincing due to a lack of clarity about seeing the housewife as an empirical and social, or cultural, category. Kloek approvingly cites Geert Hofstede's typology of 'Dutch character', in which the Dutch housewife prominently figures between the minister, the nurse, the traveler, the merchant, the inn-keeper, the burgher and the farmer.

19 Kloek, *De vrouw des huizes*, 103.

20 Ariadne Schmidt, 'Vrouwenarbeid in de vroeg-moderne tijd in Nederland', *Tijdschrift voor Sociaal en Economische Geschiedenis* 2:3 (2005) 2-21; Myriam Everard, 'Verandering *en* continuïteit in de arbeid van vrouwen', *ibidem*, 81-102; Annette de Vries, 'Toonbeelden van huiselijkheid of arbeidzaamheid? De iconografie van arbeid en beroep in de vroegmoderne Nederlanden', *ibidem*, 103-125. See also the dissertations of Elise Nederveen Meerkerk, *De draad in eigen handen. Vrouwen en werk in de vroeg-moderne tijd* (Amsterdam 2007), on women in textile industries between 1581 and 1810, and Daniëlle van den Heuvel, *Women and Entrepreneurship: Female Traders in the Northern Netherlands c. 1580-1815. Women and Work in Early Modern History* (Amsterdam 2007). For information on the project Women's Work in the Northern Netherlands in the Early Modern Period (c.1500-1815): www.iisg.nl/research/womenswork.php, retrieved 22 February 2010.

It seems appropriate for an understanding of women and work today to start in the last quarter of the nineteenth century when women's work, bourgeois and proletarian, became a public and political issue. It is no coincidence that the breakthrough of first-wave feminism in the Netherlands came with the large National Exhibition of Women's Labour in 1898 that drew thousands of visitors. In the context of the struggle for women's legal and economic independence, first-wave feminists pointed out that women did participate in all kinds of work. It was therefore appropriate that the most important emblem of the Exhibition was the 'brick carrier' [*steenkruister*] by the artist Minca Bosch-Reitz. The organizing feminists tried to define women's work positively as ranging from paid labour to voluntary action, and from hard physical work to intellectual and social and cultural endeavors: in other words, as the valuable contribution of women to society. This was the jubilant message the Exhibition sent out all through the summer of 1898, in the breathtaking spectacle of women's work, as well as in the numerous meetings that were held on issues ranging from discussions of women's education, state regulation of (women's) labour, the promotion of moral conscience, and the elevation of women in the colonies.[21] However, the success of the Exhibition could not prevent labour from coming to be defined in gendered terms of 'work' and 'women's work'.[22] Outside the women's movement, women's labour was increasingly perceived as not only 'different' but also inferior, legitimizing (under- and over-)regulation and under-pay.

Corrie van Eijl has aptly demonstrated the importance of gender as an analytical category to explain women's labour participation in the Netherlands between 1898 to 1940 (and later) as not just a function of the phenomenon of 'Dutch domesticity'. Measures to restrict women's labour (some twelve during this period) were based on arguments of morality, reproduction and the family, but in fact protected the breadwinner role and the related family wages of men, married or not. The women's (labour) movement in the continuous negotiation over women's labour had to deal with several dilemmas which in the end led to the recognition of a variety of 'differences': between men's and women's work, between women labourers and 'other women' and between married and unmarried women. Taken together, these differences in their turn defined the meaning of women's work as temporary. And whereas the confessional trade unions took this for granted – as being part of the natural order of things –, socialist trade unions actively contributed to this state of affairs, in order to protect their male members from female 'under-sellers' and cheap labourers. The state, as a 'good

21 Grever and Waaldijk, *Transforming the Public Sphere*, *passim*.

22 Van Eijl, *Het werkzame verschil*, 352-353.

employer', also had an active input into the definition of women's work as temporary. Most of the legal measures taken against married women's work in public services were based, however, not so much upon arguments to protect the family, but on those of double income and pensions, and the breadwinner principle, which remained unquestionably a male prerogative.

To give an example of the way in which intricate meanings of gender played a role in the division of labour, it is worth looking at the pay cuts for unmarried civil servants imposed in the 1920s and 1930s. In the regulation of the salaries of civil servants in 1929 [Dutch: Bezoldigingsbesluit Rijksambtenaren, 1929] the definition of the 'unmarried civil servant' included the 'female married civil servant' (revealing the unmarried civil servant of the regulation to be male), while married women were excluded from the category of 'married civil servants', though this category included the 'female civil servant that had been married, but had not remarried'.[23] Another example of how labour protection laws were meant to discourage women's work, rather than protect the family, is the Royal Decree on Lead Poison that prohibited women and young workers from working with certain concentrations of lead in paint. This was based on a fictional greater sensitivity to lead poisoning on the part of women than men.[24]

The legal measures put in place were mostly, but not purely, introduced by confessional politicians. Interestingly, most of the measures taken were kept outside parliamentary debate, and laid down in 'Royal Decrees' or 'Ministerial Circulars', while the two most contentious laws prohibiting (all) married women's labour, in 1910 and 1937, were withdrawn before being introduced in parliament.[25] Apart from (married and unmarried) women's difficulties earning a fair wage in a well-regulated job, the abovementioned outcome of debates, negotiations and experiences had consequences for the social security system that was set up during the twentieth century, and that offered much better protection to men than to women. Given this history, Van Eijl discusses the dilemmas that still confronted women and feminists in the 1980s and 1990s: should all women (and especially young mothers on

◀ Photo of the sculpture of a *steenkruister* [brick carrier] by Minca Bosch Reitz. The sculpture was made specially for the National Exhibition of Women's Labour 1898 and donated by the sculptress to the Exhibition.
Aletta Institute for Women's History, Amsterdam.

23 See Bezoldigingsbesluit voor Rijksambtenaren 1929, in: Van Eijl, *Het werkzame verschil*, 348-349.

24 *Ibidem*, 238-249.

25 For all the details of the protests against the Catholic state minister Romme's prohibition law in 1937, see: Annet Schoot Uiterkamp, '"Terug naar het paradijs?" Akties tegen de beperking van vrouwenarbeid in de jaren dertig', *Jaarboek voor de geschiedenis van socialisme en arbeidersbeweging in Nederland* (Nijmegen 1978) 182-244.

social security) need to work when paid and unpaid labour was still divided so unequal and the reward system for women was still so unfair? What to think of the encouragement of women's part-time work, based on the same old definitions of women as 'housewife' and mother? And how to confront all the arguments that based the gendered division of labour on a discourse of choice? To deny women's active role in making decisions regarding their work would reduce them to passive victims of patriarchy, but on the other hand, to attribute women a freedom of choice in respect to work would deny the inequalities in their starting point compared to men.

Van Eijl's study of Dutch women's work as the outcome of social and political struggles over language and discourse (or the power to define) is very much the product of a gender history that focuses on an explanation of gender relations in a specific context. In this, it is very similar to Francisca de Haan's excellent book on office work, or my own dissertation on the long-running debate on women in higher education and science in the Netherlands.[26] All these books take the Dutch national context for granted, and are first and foremost interested in showing the contextual and historical specificities of gender in relation to certain aspects of society, influencing and regulating women's participation in the labor market, the office environment or academia. They give precise contextualized analyses of the constitution of gender differences in all these areas, and their orientation is often based on international literature. In general, such interpretations do not tell us what is Dutch (or not), nor how typically Dutch circumstances may have influenced the discourses of gender so as to result in the situation as it is in the Netherlands. The national framework is there, but there is no explicit wish to connect to existing national master narratives, nor to claim exceptionalism. This does not mean that all women's and gender history refrains from taking a national perspective when understanding Dutch gender relations, especially in respect of economic citizenship. In the next section, I will address a few further efforts to understand the Dutch women's situation as the outcome of a specific Dutch history. Here, pillarization (and depillarization) is mentioned

26 Francisca de Haan, *Sekse op kantoor. Over vrouwelijkheid, mannelijkheid en macht, Nederland 1860-1940* (Hilversum 1992). Translated as *Gender and the Politics of Office Work in the Netherlands, 1860-1940* (Chicago 1998); Mineke Bosch, *Het geslacht van de wetenschap. Vrouwen en hoger onderwijs in Nederland, 1878-1948* (Amsterdam 1994).

more than once as the most conspicuous factor of Dutch politics and society in the twentieth century, having an impact on women and gender relations.[27] In this context, domesticity also plays a role in several (dis)guises.

Pillarization and Dutch women's emancipation – 1900-1990

It seems appropriate to start this section with the summarizing article historian Marjan Schwegman and historical-sociologist Jolande Withuis wrote for the Dutch version of the volume on the twentieth-century in the international series *L'Histoire des femmes*, edited by Michelle Perrot and Georges Duby.[28] In this chapter, the authors analyzed the specifically Dutch way in which women attained 'female citizenship' (or not).[29] They wanted to know how Dutch women became 'nationalized' or included 'as women' in the nation. Within this context, they discussed the uses of 'motherhood'

27 Pillarization, or as it is also called by one of its major theorists, Arend Lijphart, the 'politics of accommodation', 'pacification', or 'consociational democracy', is a set of social and political organizational principles, as well as a set of conventions that came into being alongside the formation of the unified nation state. The common narrative is that pillarization in the Netherlands was strong and important, and began to take shape around 1900 when newly formed confessional parties started to organize their rank and file, also socially. And although there was local and regional variation, and different social developments run through the process that was never wholly completed, it resulted in four pillars (some claim three and a 'neutral rest group'), all topped by political parties: the orthodox Protestants, Catholics, socialists, and a liberal group – that completely dominated social and private life especially after 1917 until far into the 1960s. The process is often seen in terms of emancipation of the orthodox Protestants and Catholics, but also as a form of pacification by their elites in the age of emerging class articulation.

28 Marjan Schwegman and Jolande Withuis, 'Moederschap: van springplank tot obstakel. Vrouwen, natie en burgerschap in twintigste-eeuws Nederland', in: Georges Duby and Michelle Perrot (eds.), *Geschiedenis van de vrouw. De twintigste eeuw* (Amsterdam 1993) 557-583.

29 The article's quest for 'female citizenship' seems rather elusive. For a critique of the article's claim that the feminist waves were not so much nationally oriented as cosmopolitan and universal in their claims, see Maria Grever's response: 'Feministen en het vaderland. De historische legitimatie van een vrouwelijk "wij-gevoel"', in: M. Bosch et al. (eds.), *Feminisme en verbeelding. Jaarboek voor vrouwengeschiedenis* 14 (Amsterdam 1994) 162-170. Also Maria Grever and Berteke Waaldijk, 'Women's Labor at Display. Feminist Claims to Dutch Citizenship and Colonial Politics 1900', *Journal of Women's History* 15:4 (Winter 2004) 11-19. Also Mineke Bosch, 'The Uses of Folklore in the Spectacle of the International Woman Suffrage Alliance: Transnational Interpretations from a Dutch perspective', *Women's Studies International Forum. Special Issue on Circling the Globe: International Feminism Reconsidered, 1910 to 1975* 32:1 (2009) 4-12. WSF 1235 (ScienceDirect - doi:10.1016/j.wsif.2009.01.002).

Propaganda post card issued by the Dutch Women's Suffrage Association, around 1913. The caption reads: 'We ask suffrage for Mother'
International Institute of Social History, Amsterdam.

as the common bond of feminists in its positive and negative aspects. In the first wave of feminism, arguments based on women's 'social' or 'spiritual' motherhood had served as a stepping stone for women to enter the public sphere, they argue. This happened not least because they combined a women's contribution to society based on difference with a demand for political and legal equality. In the 1950s and 1960s, however, the national motto 'Gezinsherstel is Volksherstel' ['restoration of the family is restoration of the people'] appealed to women as housewives and mothers at home per se, without the social and legal equality feminists had wanted 'also for mother'.

According to Schwegman and Withuis, in fact only during a very short period after World War II [WWII] were women able to claim citizenship as housewives and mothers and to become fully integrated into the nation as such, due to women's broadly recognized pivotal role in sustaining family life and the resistance under the increasingly severe circumstances of Nazi occupation. After the war, women had felt a common bond right through the existing pillars and parties which united them in the conviction that 'as women' they had a role they could play within the nation. This produced a short-lived enthusiasm for a 'specifically female politics' under the heading 'Practical Policy', which however ebbed away as quickly as the wider political experiments in the 'Breakthrough' (of pillarized society).

Notwithstanding this failure of 'womanly politics', in 1955 all barriers to married women's work were lifted and married women became legally independent in 1956. But at the same time, the housewife and mother-at-home made a triumphant come-back, according to Withuis and Schwegman. The image of women as housewives became fully embedded in popular culture, in terms of a new emphasis on women as conscious consumers and active creators of domesticity.[30] And although there were changes in the definition of marriage and (hetero)sexuality, the liberating effect of this can be disputed. In the new rhetoric, women and men became partners and there was an increasing orientation on the (heterosexual) couple. This rather undermined women's sense of being a group with a political identity, and furthered the idea that women's emancipation had been achieved.

Nowhere in their chapter do the authors deal systematically with the specifically Dutch segmentation of society along religious and ideological lines, called pillarization. Nevertheless, there are several (unsystematic) references to this phenomenon in relation to the question of whether we can speak of a specifically Dutch trajectory of women's emancipation. Thus, in their conclusions, they suggest that with depillarization (the fellow traveller of secularization) in the 1970s and 1980s, Dutch 'female citizenship' became

30 The Cold War, according to the authors, struck harder in the Netherlands than elsewhere. See, for an international focus: Ruth Oldenziel and Karin Zachmann (eds.), *Cold War Kitchen: Americanization, Technology, and European Users* (Cambridge, MA. 2009).

more similar to female citizenship elsewhere. In more positive terms, Schwegman and Withuis explain the continuously low labour participation of women, which they see as 'specifically Dutch', as well as the particular form of child support (on the basis of numbers of children and paid to the fathers) as a result of (the return of) the cooperating pillarized elites in the 1950s. In their eyes, the succession of socialist-Catholic coalitions and the neo-corporatist model of harmonious deliberation between employers and workers (excluding women) was to blame:

> Especially the emancipation of women has been the victim of social-democrats and confessionals and employers and workers. Indeed at the highest level of for instance the Social Economic Council, were men who among each other fought their struggle over the reconstruction of post war Netherlands, but who were in complete agreement over one thing: a certain kind of family with a father breadwinner and a mother at home would be the cornerstone of society.[31]

In a synthetic study of the changing norm from the 'harmonious family' and its effect on women (and men) to 'individual development' four to five decades later, written by the historian Hans Blom almost at the same time, pillarization played a certain role as well, though firmly connected and subordinate to the concept of *burgerlijkheid* (bourgeois middle-class mentality) often (in praise of Huizinga) seen as a character trait of Dutch society.[32] In his explanation, the pillars – rather than cherishing all their specific (religious or political) ideologies – were mediators of a shared 'bourgeois pattern of culture', which in their mutual competition perhaps even furthered the moral elements in this pattern.[33] This is perhaps why what Blom captured under the heading of the normative 'harmonious family model' (which reigned from the 1930s until the 1970s, even if always complemented by ideas on individuality and self development), was an even more continuous factor in the twentieth-

31 Schwegman and Withuis, 'Moederschap: van springplank tot obstakel', 578.

32 J.C.H. Blom, 'Een harmonisch gezin en individuele ontplooiing. Enkele beschouwingen over veranderende opvattingen over de vrouw in Nederland sinds de jaren dertig', *BMGN* 108:1 (1993) 28-51.

33 Blom has an ambivalent relationship with pillarization, as can be sensed in his summary article in the large research project on pillarization he initiated and led in the 1980s and 1990s: J.C.H. Blom, 'Vernietigingskracht en nieuwe vergezichten. Het onderzoeksproject verzuiling op lokaal niveau geëvalueerd', in: J.C.H. Blom and J. Talsma (eds.), *De verzuiling voorbij. Godsdienst, stand en natie in de lange negentiende eeuw* (Amsterdam 2001) 203-287. For a critical review: Huub Wijfjes, '"Schikken en plooien". Recensie van Blom en Talsma etc.', *Historisch Nieuwsblad* (November 2000) 54-55.

century history of gender relations than in Schwegman's and Withuis' view.[34] Like Withuis and Schwegman, he notices the upsurge and enthusiasm of a political womanhood united in the feminine qualities of the housewife and mother after the WWII, but his emphasis is on continuity more than on rupture. And while he likewise stresses the restoration motto 'Gezinsherstel brengt Volksherstel' ['restoration of the family means restoration of the people'] as characteristic of the 1950s, at the same time he values the role of the traditional women's movement as bearing the torch of individuality and self-realization, though he doubts whether the role of macro changes in the economy and social development have not been much more important than the traditional feminists' 'pointed activities'.[35] In his conclusion, Blom sees 'accelerating change (even of an explosive character)' in the 'bourgeois pattern of norms and values' between the 1930s and 1990s, from the harmonious family model to individualism and self-development. This should not, however, prevent us from seeing the 'line of continuous dynamics, development and change'.

Hans Blom's measure of change is a change of norms regarding the Dutch housewife as implicated in the harmonious family that is an important aspect Dutch bourgeois mentality as embedded in, and even promoted by, pillarization. He does not mention any of the legal changes toward women's 'self realization' in terms of economic independence, nor empirical facts about women's economic citizenship as a measure of 'individual development'. Schwegman and Withuis focus only indirectly on women's economic citizenship, while looking for Dutch women's options for claiming 'female citizenship'. In both narratives, pillarization (as a specifically Dutch phenomenon) plays a negative role that becomes visible only after depillarization. Whether Schwegman and Withuis see a connection between 'motherhood arguments' within first-wave feminism and the traditional historical emphasis on Dutch women as housewives is not clearly stated, but I agree with Everard and Aerts that they do give a skewed view of Dutch feminists' vocabulary by emphasizing their uses of 'motherhood'.[36] In doing

34 Hans Blom thanks Schwegman and Withuis for their comments in 'Een harmonisch gezin en individuele ontplooiing', 28; Schwegman and Withuis refer to Blom's article in *Geschiedenis van de vrouw*, 582.

35 Blom, 'Een harmonisch gezin en individuele ontplooiing'.

36 Myriam Everard and Mieke Aerts, 'De burgeres. Geschiedenis van een politiek begrip', in: Joost Kloek and Karin Tilmans (eds.), *Burger. Een geschiedenis van het begrip 'burger' in de Nederlanden van de middeleeuwen tot de 21ste eeuw* (Amsterdam 2002) 227-228.

so, they implicitly assess the validity of many historians' claims that the Dutch women's movement was rather 'weak' due to the prominence of the 'housewife' in Dutch bourgeois culture, and the relatively low percentage of working women in the Netherlands.[37]

Gender and pillarization, or women at the heart of the moral nation

In recent studies of pillarization, gender as an analytical category has not been included as deserving of special attention, nor did it figure in a recently finished project studying the nation state.[38] The main exception is Hanneke Hoekstra's contribution to the national state project. In the book *In het hart van de morele natie* [At the Heart of the Moral Nation], she focuses on the moral and religious dimension of nation-state formation at the end of the nineteenth century, and consequently brings gender and feminism to the fore as intrinsic factors in this process. Hoekstra convincingly argues that what characterizes the nineteenth-century reorganization of Dutch political culture was not so much the pillarization of politics and society that was the *outcome* of the emancipation of religious groups and socialists in the face of a dominant liberal political elite, but rather the moral register that during this process of nation formation permeated liberals, Protestants and feminists alike. Unlike the more common assumption that the changing political landscape in the nineteenth century was driven by individualistic, liberal and democratic convictions (a bit similar to Blom's emphasis on the bourgeois cultural pattern), according to Hoekstra it was the common humanitarian impulse that made people aware of the existence of pitiable others, and that promoted a sense of moral community and nationhood. All of the social, religious and political groups were convinced that the common wealth of the political nation profited from curbing self-interest and egoism, and from promoting a 'public spirit and sense of duty'. And although liberals were the first to enact measures such as the abolition of the death penalty in their rational and unemotional sense of duty towards their fellow man, they were not the ones who won the hearts of the people. That success was reserved for the confessional and socialist political parties, which originated around 1880.[39]

37 Everard and Aerts cite J.C.H. Blom and E. Lamberts (eds.), *Geschiedenis van de Nederlanden* (Rijswijk 1993) 329, and refer to Henk te Velde's treatment of the women's movement in: R. Aerts et al., *Land van kleine gebaren. Een politieke geschiedenis van Nederland 1780-1990* (Amsterdam 1999) 161-165, in Everard and Aerts, 'De burgeres. Geschiedenis van een politiek begrip', 227.

38 In his evaluation of the pillarization project, De Rooy suggested taking up the study of the nation state: Piet de Rooy, 'Zes studies over verzuiling', *BMGN* 110:3 (1995) 380-392.

The focus on humanitarianism in the process of nation formation automatically brings out the centrality of women and gender in this process. Not only does the important role of melodramatic 'domestic' novels, such as Charlotte Mary Yonge's *Heir of Redclyffe*, which had a decisive impact on the formidable orthodox Protestant politician Abraham Kuyper (who is seen as the pioneer of party politics *and* pillarization) become visible, but also that of (female) emotions in mobilizing the masses. In this perspective, it is logical that the first mass-based women's organization that acted politically was the Protestant Dutch Women's League to Elevate Moral Conscience [Dutch: Nederlandsche Vrouwenbond ter Verhoging van het Zedelijke Bewustzijn] under the leadership of the aristocratic sisters Anna van Hogendorp and Marianne Klerck-van Hogendorp in 1884. Here, the slogan 'The Women's Movement is Organized Mother Love' that the Women's Suffrage Association used in a brochure made for the National Exhibition of Women's Labour receives full attention, reminiscent of Schwegman and Withuis' emphasis on motherhood rhetoric. Indeed, the political citizenship women earned with the vote was the final outcome of women's struggle for moral reform, the abolition of the double standard and the brothel, Hoekstra's conclusion goes.

With her analysis, Hoekstra to a certain extent followed earlier interpretations with respect to the role of religion in nineteenth-century feminism. In the classical overview of Dutch feminism *Van moeder op dochter* [From Mother to Daughter], the aristocratic Protestant revival movement (Réveil) figured prominently in the birth of the nineteenth-century women's movement.[40] Though the connection was largely denied in 1985 by De Bie and Fritschy in a perhaps overly rigid application of Nancy Cott's assessment of the feminist aspects of the 'bonds of womanhood' in mid-nineteenth-century evangelicalism, in a theoretically and historically very sophisticated way, Francisa de Haan and Annemieke van Drenth reconfirmed the old views. In their book *The Rise of Caring Power*, they pointed at humanitarianism and religion, or the 'rise of caring power', as an important factor in the history of Dutch feminism and – at some distance – the origins of the welfare state.[41] Their three stages of gender consciousness from women's activism, the women's movement to feminism, are quite familiar in their reminiscence of the stages that the several authors of the classical *Van moeder op dochter* had taken for granted: from individual female philanthropy to

39 Hanneke Hoekstra, *Het hart van de natie. Morele verontwaardiging en politieke verandering in Nederland 1870-1919* (Amsterdam 2005).

40 This is a topos in early histories of feminism in many countries, and is connected to the relations traditionally seen between Protestantism, individualism, capitalism and liberalism.

41 Annemieke van Drenth and Francisca de Haan, *The Rise of Caring Power: Eizabeth Fry and Josephine Butler in Britain and the Netherlands* (Amsterdam 1999).

women's organization to political feminism. But Hoekstra also radicalized and politicized the religious dimension of feminism, and not only the role it played in its origins. In her book, she emphasizes the humanitarian card Dutch suffragists played in their struggle for equal citizenship, demanding equal rights as social and spiritual mothers, or 'housewives' on a national scale, rather than as individuals who claimed full citizenship in order to protect themselves. Moreover, they did so not only as women, but also as participants in an intrinsic Dutch way (even though Great Britain was an important example) towards the modernization of politics and society, namely as full participants in the formation of a moral – Christian – nation.

While in earlier histories of the women's movement, there had been a temporal order – from the social to the political, from religious inspired philanthropy to (secular) feminism, from this perspective it is the other way around: the women's movement played an important part in the creation and consolidation of social and religious pillarization. According to Hoekstra, the fact that the mass-based women's (suffrage) movement broke up after the vote should therefore not be judged as too dramatic, as women now went into their respective pillars, where their new women's organizations actively helped build new social and political communities. Women did not just go back to their homes as women, but as 'modern women' who had learned from the women's movement how to claim space for themselves. This may explain why the number of births went down, also within Protestant milieus, even though birth control was officially deemed immoral. Or why, in the 1950s, a new vision on the welfare state could be developed in Catholic circles in which there was an open family and a role for married women as 'human beings' in the world. Here, Hoekstra's interpretation seems to connect to research by Mieke Aerts into 'constructions of femininity' in several Catholic women's organizations: firstly that women within the Catholic pillar were able to define themselves and secondly, that Catholic women had become a (modern) social category as well, which meant that they had an input in the Catholic community 'as women'.[42] In the 1950s and 1960s, women would therefore play an intrinsic role in contesting pillarization from within.

Hoekstra's interpretation brings women into the heart not only of the Dutch moral nation, but also of Dutch historiography, claiming agency for them as modernizing influences in the women's movement first, and within their respective pillars later. In so doing, however, she smoothes out

42 Mieke Aerts, 'Catholic Constructions of Femininity: Three Dutch Women's Organizations in Search of a Politics of the Personal, 1912-1940', in: Judith Friedlander et al. (eds.), *Women in Culture and Politics: A Century of Change* (Bloomington 1986).

the ideological differences between the pillars in a similar way as many other historians did with their emphasis on a common bourgeois cultural pattern, their paternalism, moralism or regent mentality. Like Blom, and Schwegman and Withuis, Hoekstra in the end claims that the real change in the moral register, and therefore the scope for women to invent themselves, returned only in the 1970s, when pillarization was on its way out. But why only then, when during the first wave, feminists could promote the moral nation and their own citizenship at the same time? Could it be that the wish to make women the subject of history has led to a view in which women's agency is taken for women's emancipation?

Pillarization and (gender) 'difference': an alternative view

The abovementioned interpretations all point to pillarization as a kind of common denominator in the mediation of a specific moral, Christian and/or bourgeois-inspired Dutch moral political culture that, in the course of its development, absorbed even the feminism that initially helped to form it. Though the view of dominant bourgeois or moral values pushing out more liberal ideas of individual feminism is dominant, and may perhaps be correct, this is however so, in my opinion, partly for reasons other than those suggested. Instead of this being the result of 'majority rule', it is in my view the systematic standardization of social difference in more or less fixed interest groups at the expense of social groups outside the 'big three or four' that are beyond the rules of this specific game. It is no coincidence that, after the majestic farewell Blom gave to the concept of pillarization, it has recently slipped back in again through the back door. It did so in the context of the contemporary debates on migration and integration that feed a renewed interest in historical segmentation and pluralist democracy in order to better understand contemporary processes of multiculturalism as social segmentation. Of course, in the process, the concept took some of its meanings from the context it came with. An example is the introduction of the term 'ethnicization of religious difference' in the discourse of pillarization, projecting back contemporary concepts into the past.[43]

43 Peter van Rooden, *Religieuze regimes. Over godsdienst en maatschappij in Nederland, 1570-1990* (Amsterdam 1996); Hans Knippenberg and Herman van Wusten, 'De zuilen, hun lokale manifestaties en hun restanten in vergelijkend perspectief', in: Corrie van Eijl, Lex Heerma van Voss and Piet de Rooy (eds.), *Sociaal Nederland. Contouren van de twintigste eeuw* (Amsterdam 2000) 129-150, 134; Marcel Hoogenboom and Peter Scholten, 'Migranten en de erfenis van de verzuiling in Nederland. Een analyse van de invloed van de verzuiling op het Nederlandse migrantenbeleid', *B en M – Tijdschrift voor Beleid, Politiek en Maatschappij* 35:2 (2008) 107-124.

For me, pillarization likewise came back in the context of my own historical research on the integration of women into (state) universities. Here, a monograph by church historian Otto J. de Jong opened my eyes to two related aspects of pillarization that are underestimated, overlooked or both: 1. the fact that pillarization did not stop at public institutions, and 2. that 'other differences' than the standardized divisions could not be accommodated in the system of pillarization.[44] As for the first point, Piet de Rooy's conviction that the liberals – who lost their political position when pillarization broke through after the Constitutional change of 1917 – nevertheless kept hold of positions of public power, is a good example of a commonly held view:

> As far as liberals had a hinterland, that was in the public sphere: universities, the judiciary and government bureaucracy. They profited in this regard from the fact that public offices in the Netherlands were not politicized. That is why to a certain extent it is possible to see the state as a liberal pillar.[45]

De Jong's analysis of appointment policies at state universities between 1883 and 1964 gives ample evidence for a contrary position. Instead of the dominant idea that the pillarization of academia was fulfilled with the foundation of an orthodox Protestant VU University (1880) and a Catholic university (1923), alongside the (originally) four state universities, De Jong turns up quite an amount of evidence that the state universities themselves became thoroughly pillarized in the course of the twentieth century. When the first confessional cabinet reigned, under the Anti-revolutionary Prime Minister Mackay (1888-1890), the first appointments were already made to ensure a politically balanced Council of Curators [Dutch: College van Curatoren] at the state universities; later, the appointments of university professors became the constant object of strategies to ensure a representative reflection of the main political-religious spectrum.

As for the second point, De Jong not only states that some social groups, such as women and people to the left of the socialists, were not even considered for appointment in the higher administrative functions, he also states that nothing of this was ever recorded: 'Whatever has been said about political background, religious conviction, sexual preference, social behaviour,

44 Otto J. de Jong, *Benoemingsbeleid aan de Rijksuniversiteiten (1876-1931)* (Utrecht 1982).

45 P. de Rooy, *Republiek van rivaliteiten. Nederland sinds 1813* (Amsterdam 2002) 145. Stuurman similarly points to universities as 'outside pillarization', in Siep Stuurman, 'De Nederlandse staat tussen verzuiling en moderniteit', in: F. van Besouw et al., *Balans en perspectief. Visies op de geschiedwetenschap in Nederland* (Groningen 1987) 263-283, 267.

The first female full professor in the Netherlands, paediatrician Cornelia de Lange, appointed in 1927.
Maria Elisabeth Georgina Ansingh, Portrait of Cornelia de Lange, 1957.
Library of the University of Amsterdam (UvA) Special Collections.

and whether these aspects have been obstacles, has not been documented'.[46] His conclusions are supported by archival sources dealing with the appointment of women professors at Dutch universities until 1964: 9 full or regular professors, 7 special or extraordinary professors. In line with De Jong's suggestion that women were a problematic category in the age of pillarized appointment procedures, is the fact that the first female full professor in the Netherlands, paediatrician Cornelia de Lange, was appointed in 1927, not at one of the state universities, but at the University of Amsterdam, which at that time was still a city university. Appointments were made by the city council, in which social liberals and social democrats were always in the majority. This then was the first institution to appoint women and socialists (and even Communists) to university professorships, before WWII. It is also significant that six of the nine full female professors (before 1964) were appointed at the University of Amsterdam, which leaves only three women to be appointed as full professors at state universities.[47]

There is ample reason to believe – and this deserves to be studied in greater detail – that the same happened in public administration or governmental bureaucracy; in the case of top positions deliberately, but in lower positions more as a consequence of recruitment practices that were based on (pillar-bound) nepotism.[48] That is to say, the recognized pillars had to be represented; other differences were ruled out, not so much as a matter of religious or other conviction, but as a result of the Dutch organization of difference. The idea that universities, the judiciary or government bureaucracy was free from pillarization can therefore be questioned. Gastelaars once showed how policy oriented social research by government order in the 1950s was pillarized. This meant, for example, that not just one government report was written about modern mass youth, but two.[49] The confessional cabinet of Mackay also set an example for the pillarization of public offices with a preference for confessional (Catholic) candidates for two appointments of mayors. This means that, while it is true that in the Netherlands public offices were not politicized in the sense that with each change of government the bureaucratic apparatus was adapted, each pillar that was topped with a political party was able to ensure a guiding hand in many, if not all, prestigious and less prestigious public and administrative appointments.

46 De Jong, *Benoemingsbeleid aan de Rijksuniversiteiten*, 32.

47 Bosch, *Het geslacht van de wetenschap*, 429-443.

48 Blom and Talsma, *De verzuiling voorbij*, 145, cf. they write that some political pressure was put on the bureaucracy, and illustrate this with the appointment of some mayors.

49 Marjo Gastelaars, 'De lange mars door de zuilen. Sociologie en sociaal beheer in naoorlogs Nederland (1945-1965)', *Grafiet* 4 (1983). Quoted in Tjitske Akkerman, 'Inleiding', in: Idem and Siep Stuurman (eds.), *De zondige rivièra van het katholicisme. Een lokale studie over feminisme en ontzuiling* (Amsterdam 1985) 25.

Interestingly, in the 1880s among political radicals – or radical liberals – 'moral politics' [Dutch: *morele politiek*] meant attention for 'minorities' in democracy.[50] In their eyes, it was time that Catholics, Protestants and radicals/socialists could represent themselves, instead of being represented by the liberal elite. In Amsterdam, the radicals therefore built 'unnatural' coalitions with Catholics and Protestants to ensure their inclusion in the city council. After the breakthrough of pillarization in 1917, however, the concept of minorities wasn't heard of anymore until the 1970s. And then it was taken up by other groups such as women, who were not a minority, but who hoped for political recognition 'as a minority' .

Within the context of vertical compartmentalization of the political/public and private/personal sphere, with interlocking directories as a major form of intercommunication, it becomes difficult for 'outsider groups' or ' categories of difference' other than those being identified as orthodox Protestant, Catholic, or socialist/liberal, to be recognized as having (sometimes) special interests. This holds for (non-assimilated) Jews, (professional and working) women, (practicing) homosexuals and other groups, such as migrants.[51] In the context of pillarization the exclusion of women from public offices was never universal or uncontested, but thorough it was. In the infrastructure that was set up around the implementation of labour-related insurance schemes and pensions, especially in the (Central) Appeals Courts [Dutch: (Centrale) Raden van Beroep], many groups were represented, but women (as a group) had no say, which means they were not able to execute their political right of decision-making on the basis of their political right to vote in this social realm.[52] The exclusion of other groups

50 Damsma and De Rooy have failed to understand that 'moral politics' has nothing to do with state intervention or social policy: Dirk Damsma and Piet de Rooy, '"Morele politiek". De radicalen in de Amsterdamse gemeentepolitiek, 1888-1897', *Tijdschrift voor Sociale Geschiedenis* 19:1 (1993) 115-298. For a correct understanding of the meaning of moral politics: Frank van der Goes, 'Jong Amsterdam', *De Nieuwe Gids*, part I, 3:1 (February 1888) 475-490; part II, 4:1 (December 1888) 281-298; part III, 4:2 (June 1889) 287-300; part IV, 6:2 (August 1891) 395-421.

51 Intersectional theory tells us that people are never only and in the same way Jew, or woman, or homosexual (or any other category), having generic 'specific interests'; even if they identify themselves as such, they may at the same time belong to a pillar.

52 Marian van der Klein, *Ziek, zwak of zwanger. Vrouwen en arbeidsongeschiktheid in Nederlandse sociale verzekeringen, 1890-1940* (Amsterdam 2005) 400.

than the standardized pillars (and corporatist groups) may also explain why the Dutch Association of Housewives, that can be seen as an important consumer organization, was never recognized as a partner in the Dutch consultative structure, nor in administrative councils or committees that dealt with food quality, health and education, or housing inspection.[53] Here, we can also recall Schwegman and Withuis' claim that women were not represented at the consociational deliberations, for instance, in the Social Economic Council, which decided on major Dutch policies.

There were exceptions to the rule of women's exclusion from deliberative institutions. One exception is the Women's Advisory Committees on Housing [Dutch: Vrouwen Advies Commissies voor de Woningbouw or VACs) in urban planning, discussed by Bijker and Bijsterveld.[54] Another exception was the National Council of Women which, during World War I did welfare work in connection to the National Support Council as part of local 'urgency councils'. But these were abolished after the war. What role the officially installed National Women's Committee [Dutch: Nationaal Vrouwen Comité] founded as part of the breakthrough politics after 1945 has played in the corporatist division of Dutch politics and society, has not yet been studied in depth.

Only after WWII, starting from the time that women were temporarily seen as a core group in the nation for the crucial role they had played (as women) during the occupation, did the argument of 'one woman should be in' (to represent 'women') gradually gain social and political acceptance. This representational strategy was pushed especially by some of the women who had collected credit (or social capital) as resistance fighters.[55] It would be interesting to study the spread of this principle of women's representation, and its (in)effectiveness. We now know that it is difficult to make a difference in matters of gender for 'one woman' on a committee or board. The second wave of feminism pushed the idea of women as a social and political group that had to be represented, and gender as an important dimension of social organization, even further. To what extent Dutch strategies were related to old-time pillarization, however, is still unclear, though there have been suggestions that Dutch feminists had their 'revolution' subsidized in a way that was reminiscent of the age of pillarization. Indeed, it is almost impossible for special interest groups not to be reminded (or accused) of pillarization as

53 Ineke Jonker, *Huisvrouwenvakwerk. 75 Jaar Nederlandse Vereniging van Huisvrouwen* (Baarn 1987).

54 Wiebe Bijker and Karin Bijsterveld, 'Women walking through Plans', *Technology and Culture* 41:3 (2000) part 3, 485-515.

55 The war gave women recognition as a group, but individual women who had in one way or another been active in the resistance, were sometimes rewarded with political and professional opportunities that they would not have had before. See for instance Hilda Verweij-Jonker, *Er moet een vrouw in. Herinneringen in een kentering van de tijd* (Amsterdam 1988). A biography of Verweij-Jonker by Margit van der Steen is forthcoming.

something negative from the past. But historical pillarization is also invoked in a positive way by women in order to defend their sometimes special interests and rights.[56] The same holds true for migrant groups.[57] This shows that it is perhaps still difficult for the Dutch to deal with difference other than in terms of pillarization.

Conclusion

It probably comes as no surprise that there are no clear answers to the question of whether there is a specific Dutch history which can explain Dutch women's delay in the attainment of full economic citizenship in the broad sense of economic independence and equal opportunities for gaining positions of power. This is so, even if it has been the object of inquiry in several degrees of intensity. Yet, with some creativity, the answers may be categorized in two kinds of explanations.

In the first category are the explanations that assess 'something Dutch' or shades of Dutch exceptionality by focusing on 'women' and gender in the nation at large, and by bringing the specific bourgeois, Christian character of Dutch culture, or the specific pillarization of Dutch society, into focus, often claiming that these two influence and supplement each other. In these explanations, early bourgeois domesticity and a Christian ethic of morality led to a specific gender regime that obstructed women's independent labour participation and women's representation in politics and in public positions of power, as well as women's agency in trying to change gender relations. Some historians in this category are more optimistic about Dutch women's destiny. What women lost in attaining full (economic) citizenship, they gained in the private sphere, so to speak, leading to the somewhat paradoxical figure of the twenty-first-century Dutch 'power mother' who, in Kloek's analysis, is the happy outcome of a long history. And while Blom emphasizes that, even when the harmonious family (with the implied housewife and mother) as a stalwart of Dutch bourgeois Christian culture was a major hindrance to women's social, political and economic participation, at the same time he sees individualizing tendencies (rather than feminist action) that, all

56 For instance, in 1994 Margo Brouns claimed that the success of women's studies in the Netherlands could be attributed to the tradition of pillarization: Kathy Davis and Marianne Grunell, 'The Dutch Case. Interview met Margo Brouns', *Tijdschrift voor Vrouwenstudies* 15:1 (1994) 100-106.

57 Marcel Hoogenboom and Peter Scholten, 'Migranten en de erfenis van de verzuiling in Nederland. Een analyse van de invloed van de verzuiling op het Nederlandse migrantenbeleid', *B en M – Tijdschrift voor Beleid. Politiek en Maatschappij* 35:2 (2008) 107-124.

through the twentieth century, worked towards women's emancipation. Also, Schwegman and Withuis' analysis of Dutch women's 'nationalization' or full participation in the nation 'as women' could be categorized here for their implicit connection to the master thesis of Dutch morality and domesticity, even though, unlike the other authors mentioned here, in the end they are less optimistic about the outcome for women. Hoekstra's work is more difficult to categorize. On the one hand, she likewise claims women's agency in the central historical concept of the 'moral nation'; while on the other, her interpretation is unique as she puts the humanitarian impulse at the head of the process of Dutch state formation.

The second category consists by and large of explanations that do not so much focus on women/gender and the Dutch nation as a whole, but rather on 'women' or gender in specific aspects of society: higher education and science, the labour market, office work, and the daily practice of pillarization. The studies that contain these explanations do not so much question whether there is a Dutch case; rather, they come up with historical explanations for specific gender differences in Dutch society, while at the same time pointing to gender aspects that are absent from standard histories, or ignored. In so doing, they question the universal pretentions of basic concepts that underlie the historical master narrative, such as 'work', 'full employment', 'the welfare state', 'politics', the 'labourer', 'citizenship', pillarization. They often question Dutch exceptionality, pointing out commonalities, or gradual rather than fundamental differences from foreign examples. Thus, even though the abovementioned research programme on women's work in early modern history focused on Dutch women, it took general (international) theories on women's work as its point of departure, and its major accomplishment is in the precise research outcomes that undermine the theories and the historical interpretations of Dutch women's work that are indebted to worn-out interpretations of early Dutch bourgeois culture and its inherent domesticity. Corrie van Eijl, in her study of twentieth-century women's work, contradicts Dutch exceptionalism without denying differences with other countries, while my own analysis of the appointments of women professors at Dutch universities has challenged the standard definition of pillarization. What these studies seem to have in common is an empirical and analytical focus based on international literature, leading to sometimes new, but often unconnected, visions. In this, they differ from the more synthetic studies mentioned above, which are built mostly on secondary literature and well-known Dutch truths and fictions, even if only implicitly.

Before we can arrive at a more definite answer to the question of the Dutch women's gap in economic citizenship, I think we need to drop the suggestion of exceptionalism and break with explanations that are rooted in 'Dutchness', which are often based on old myths and stereotypes of the past that somehow were related discourses of civilization. Rather, we should focus on specific issues in clearly defined contexts, which are hardly ever the nation

as a whole. We still know too little about too many aspects of women, gender and Dutch society in Dutch history, to come even close to an explanation of Dutch gender relations at large. To restrict ourselves to the last century, we are still in need of the most basic historical information: biographies of female politicians and scientists, publicists and social reformers, or precise studies of what women themselves did, individually and in groups, as agents of change in an increasingly individualizing society. We need more local and systematic studies of women and gender in politics and society, in the labour market and the professions, culture and the mass media. We still do not have enough demographic studies and studies of traditional and new feminisms, religious women's organizations, as well as transnational and parallel discourses and trends, to be able to answer the relevant questions. Indeed, how did women's pillarized as well as autonomous movements function, and when and how did their arguments of representation 'as women' start to be heard and installed in practice? Even if we could assess Blom's statement that it was not so much women's agency (through feminist organizations), but rather fundamental socio-economic processes that played a role in breaking the spell of the harmonious family, there is no systematic study of even the core traditional feminist association at the time, the Association of Women's Interests, Women's Labour and Equal Citizenship [Dutch: Vereeniging van Vrouwenbelangen, Vrouwenarbeid en Gelijk Staatsburgerschap], except for a student thesis from more than twenty years ago.[58] And let us not forget the impact of the European dimension in forcing women's equality and economic independence upon Dutch politics and society. This chapter is still unknown among historians, although the obligation to legally ensure equal pay (1975) and equality in social security (1978, implemented in 1985) were crucial in paving the way for the 1990 measure on women's economic independence.[59]

With so many chapters still unwritten and so many questions unresolved, the relevance of this history of Dutch women's delayed economic citizenship for the international historical community is probably mixed, as it tells us perhaps more about ways of doing gender and history, than giving an answer to the question. And perhaps it lies somewhere else, namely in what could be called – after Joan Scott's paradigmatic book *Gender and the*

58 Blom, 'Een harmonisch gezin en individuele ontplooiing', 49. Neither is there one book-length study of the Dutch women's suffrage movement yet. The history of second-wave feminism in the Netherlands has already received quite some attention, especially by political historian Anneke Ribberink.

59 Anna van Vleuten, *Dure vrouwen, dwarse staten. Een institutioneel-realistische visie op de totstandkoming en implementatie van Europees beleid* (Nijmegen 2001). The Dutch had to be forced to implement all the equality measures and did so reluctantly and slowly, because they were 'too expensive'.

Politics of History – 'gender and the politics of history in the Netherlands'.[60] The dominant pattern was and in some ways still is (like in this very special issue) that the majority of historical research agendas and gender-historical research perspectives operate separately; the gender dimension being rather weak in contributions that do not explicitly deal with gender, while the 'Dutch dimension' is less prominent in gender research. The intuition among Dutch gender historians, most of them (but not all) still women, is that elsewhere – especially in Great Britain and the United States, but also in Germany – gender as a category of analysis fares better and is integrated more systematically, also by male historians, into major research projects and core historical journals.[61] Of course, this may still be an intuition, but if the intuition be true, the question of why this is so may be found not so much in Dutch domesticity and bourgeois mentality, but rather in the historical discourse that over and over again repeats this story. ◀

C.W. (Mineke) Bosch (1954) is Professor of Modern History at the University of Groningen. Her fields of research are: modern history, gender history, history of science, history of politics and political culture, ego-documents, biography. Recent publications include: 'The Woman Question in Europe' in European History: Contribution to the Web-Feature *European history – gender history, Themenportal Europäische Geschichte (2009)*, URL: www.europa.clio-online.de/2009/Article=418; 'Paradoxical Aspects of the Personal in Political Biography: Observations from a Dutch Perspective', *Journal of Women's History* 21:4 (2009) 13-37 and *Een onwrikbaar geloof in rechtvaardigheid. Aletta Jacobs, 1854-1929* (Amsterdam 2005). Forthcoming: *De liefde en de vrijheid, natuurlijk! Het dagboek van Frederike van Uildriks (1854-1919)*. With an introduction and notes (Hilversum 2010).

60 During the 1990s, there were several painful exchanges between 'women's history' and 'established history'. For analyses, see among others: Josine Blok, 'Vrouwengeschiedenis en de 'gevestigde' geschiedwetenschap. Een ontmoeting', BMGN 109:1 (1994) 26-52 and Maria Grever, '"Scolding Old Bags and Whining Hags": Women's History and the Myth of Compatible Paradigms in History', in: Mary O'Dowd and Sabine Wichert (eds.), *Chattel, Servant, and Citizen: Women's Status in Church and Society* (Belfast 1993) 22-33.

61 Frances Gouda, 'Add a Chapter and Stir', in: Mineke Bosch and Marieke Hellevoort (eds.), 'De ijkpunten geijkt. Evaluatie van het NWO-onderzoeksprogramma Nederlandse cultuur in Europese context, uit het perspectief van vrouwengeschiedenis en genderstudies', in: *De ijkpunten geijkt. Special issue of Tijdschrift voor Sociale Geschiedenis* 29:1 (2003) 1-20.

Imperialism, Colonialism and Genocide

The Dutch Case for an International History of the Holocaust

IDO DE HAAN | UTRECHT UNIVERSITY

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During the past three decades, the historiography of the persecution of the Jews in the Netherlands has been dominated by attempts to resolve 'the Dutch paradox': the contrast between the tolerant reputation of the Netherlands on the one hand, and the large numbers of Dutch Jews that perished on the other. Attempts to resolve this paradox often look for specifically Dutch characteristics, thereby neglecting factors of an international nature that had a particular impact in the Netherlands. Attention is devoted in these contribution to German imperialism, which had special ramifications for the persecution of Dutch Jews; to the implications for population policy of the colonial regime that arose in the Netherlands, and to the social compartmentalisation and propaganda that accompanied these genocidal policies. This international perspective leads to new questions for the Dutch case, while this case sheds new light on the international history of the persecution of the Jews.

The persecution and destruction of the Jews is a part of European history. Considering the territorial scale of the event, as well as the ambition of the Nazis to eradicate all the Jews in Europe, this may seem self-evident. Nevertheless, there is a tendency in Holocaust historiography to construct the history of the Holocaust strictly within a national context. Although the nationalization of Holocaust history has deepened our understanding of its genesis, development and outcome, it has also distracted our attention away from the international aspects of the genocide on the Jews of Europe. In this contribution, I will argue that the Dutch case demonstrates why we need to re-conceptualize Holocaust history from an international perspective. I suggest we explore the concepts of imperialism, colonialism and genocide in order to develop questions on which to base further research in this area.