Farewell to pillarization

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FAREWELL TO PILLARIZATION

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Pillarization is a key concept in Dutch modern history. It sets the scene and is often used as an explanatory factor for virtually every process in Dutch society. Under the supervision of Amsterdam historian J. C. H. Blom, a research programme has recently devoted much of its attention to pillarization processes at the local level. Some of the results have since been published, so that a comprehensive picture is beginning to emerge.[1] Do we now know what pillarization is, and can further research into this typically Dutch academic export product be abandoned? Or has our insight only become less clear and are other research questions now coming up?

For quite some time, pillarization was a research field mainly covered by the social sciences. Numerous scholarly works were regularly published that were clearly the product of careful contemplation and consideration, and in a sense they led to the first extensive study on this phenomenon, a Ph.D. dissertation by Amsterdam political scientist Siep Stuurman entitled *Verzuiling, kapitalisme en patriarchaat* (Pillarization, Capitalism and Patriarchy) in 1983. He summarized the essence of his analysis as follows:

> "Pillarization began as the unintended and unforeseen result of a series of strategies in various social and political conflicts. Strategies directed against new social movements such as socialism and feminism, class and gender conflicts in the denominational groups and dissension in the ruling class led, intertwined as they were, to a social and political system that acquired a certain "solidity" and stability around 1920, and was not to be referred to as "pillarization" until much later."[2]

This means he interpreted pillarization as the specific configuration of power relations between the working class and the bourgeoisie, or better yet as the way the denominational factions of the ruling class had secured the loyalty of half the organized working class, established a Christian patriarchy, and forced the left wing into a minority position in a social and political as well as a moral sense. "The pillars" almost vanished behind these dynamics. Stuurman even avoided

the term "pillar" as much as possible and preferred "large blocs in society," which he further specified as:

> the Roman Catholic *pillar*
> the Protestant *pillar*
> the Socialist *movement*
> the Liberal *sphere*[3]

In the discussion that ensued, it was mainly noted that no matter how fascinating and stimulating his book was, it was still difficult to evaluate, since so little thorough historical research had been conducted on the subject.[4] In the same period, a study of this kind was announced by historian J. C. H. Blom. The first step was an internal publication, *Verzuiling in Nederland 1850-1925* (Pillarization in the Netherlands 1850-1925) in 1981, which summarized the various views on pillarization and proposed addressing the topic theoretically with as open a mind as possible on a local level. Four years later, it was followed by an attractive anthology, *Broeders, sluit U aan* (Brethren, Come and Join Us), which included a programmatic contribution by Blom and articles by various authors on "aspects of pillarization in seven Dutch towns."[5] More than a decade has gone by, and the Amsterdam research programme has since produced a number of Ph.D. dissertations that all met with extremely positive reactions. In this sense, the research programme, set up without large-scale funding from the Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research, has already been successful. The question now is whether – on the grounds of these local studies – the contours are gradually emerging of a new approach to pillarization.

Let us start by outlining what we knew about pillarization in the seventies. Ernst Kossmann, an eminent historian from Groningen, gave a concise synopsis in *De Lage Landen* (The Low Countries) in 1976. He analysed the views of Abraham Kuyper, the preacher and politician who first caused a schism in the Reformed Church and then gathered the orthodox believers in a political party (the Anti-Revolutionary Party of 1878), after which the formation of political parties on denominational grounds was to successfully ensue in the Netherlands:

> "The origins of what was later called pillarization, which is the system whereby state subsidies enable each group with its own way of thinking to create its own social world containing everything from kindergartens to athletic clubs and trade unions, lie in Kuyper's conservative love of multiformity."[6]

Kossmann went on to describe how pillarization expanded in the period between the two world wars. It was however not until after World War Two that it became a system political scientists were particularly interested in, for the simple reason

that it demonstrated how an extremely divided society could still function quite peacefully thanks to passive grassroots support and a business-like mode of interaction among the national political leaders. This analysis was a rather flippant combination of the ideas of three authors: the political scientist A. Lijphart, who noted the importance of the consultations among the elites of the various pillars, the sociologist J. A. A. van Doorn, who mainly emphasized the fact that various elites in a modernizing society were able to bring grassroots support under their control, and the political scientist H. Daalder, who largely explained the gradual nature of modern Dutch history by referring to the long Dutch tradition of consensus, compromise and coalition.[7] It is striking though how relatively late in time Kossmann situated the whole phenomenon. His description pertains more to the state of being pillarized rather than the process that led to it. What is more, he did not engage in conceptualization. Pillarization is mainly something people in the social sciences were interested in.

In view of the fact that not much specific research had been conducted into pillarization, perhaps it was quite sensible to maintain this kind of ironic distance. Lijphart had some data, but for the rest all there was in essence was a well-known article by the sociologists J. P. Kruyt and W. Goddijn in *Drift en Koers* (Drive and Direction), where the results were presented of quantitative research into the extent to which various fields such as education and health care were organized in a "pillarized" way.[8] All this data pertains however to the 1950s. The most characteristic aspect of the whole pillarization debate was essentially that despite the dearth of in-depth research, everyone still had an opinion about pillarization. Under the circumstances, it is not surprising that there should have been differences of opinion on so many facets, from the periodization and the number of pillars to the causes of pillarization and consequently of depillarization as well. It was certainly an interesting discussion, be it that clarity was not its strong point. This was in fact the essence of the comments Blom made in 1981. Some very interesting essays might well have been written about pillarization, but it was still rather unclear what the debate was all about, i.e. what pillarization really was. Wasn't the term "pillarization" primarily a metaphor that had gradually become reified so that the whole debate was in danger of getting stuck at the dead end of essentialism? In my opinion, the most striking element of his proposal was not that he propagated historical research at the local level, but that he so punctiliously rejected any semblance of a formal definition:

"In contrast to a strict approach requiring precise definitions, the open method propagated here can make do with a description of the concept of pillarization that leaves room for multifarious aspects and explanations. () *Pillarization* is the extent to which people consciously can and do engage in their social, cultural and political activities within a circle of people who share their ideas and world view. *Pillarizing* is the process that expands the state of being

divided into pillars, and *depillarizing* is the process that reduces it. And *pillars* are segments of the population, the members of which consciously engage in an important part of their social, cultural and political activities within circles of people who share their ideas and world view and the collective organizations that make this possible."[9]

Thus an effort was mainly made to arrive at a definition that did not exclude anything in advance that might later prove to be pillarization. It was mainly this show of theoretical simplicity that deviated so sharply from what was customary at the time, and was diametrically opposed to Stuurman's approach. Blom and Stuurman crossed swords at various meetings, and in a nutshell, Stuurman felt that Blom had no idea what he was looking for and thus was not apt to find anything that made any sense, and Blom was convinced that knowing beforehand what he was supposed to find wasn't going to get him anywhere. Thus one might wonder who turned out to be right. In the first instance, it was Stuurman who seemed to be getting the better of Blom. If one consults the dissertations published in recent years, it is striking how hesitant the authors seem to be in their conclusions and epilogues to even want to transpose their local findings to a national level. The researchers all seem to have been quick to identity with "their" town – a tendency anthropologists refer to as *going native*. So it was not surprising that in the research results, the developments in each of the towns exhibited a unique pattern all their own; things were somewhat the same all over, but nonetheless quite a bit different. In *Roomsen, rechtzinnigen en nieuwlichters* (Catholics, Protestants and Modernists), Frans Groot could not help concluding that even the developments in a limited region like South Holland did not fit into a fixed pattern.[10] The only author who managed to systematically compare two towns, as was his original aim, was Jan van Miert with his study on Tiel and Winschoten. In the foreword to his fine book *Wars van clubgeest en partijzucht* (Totally Disinclined towards Club Spirit or Party Affiliation), he was however quick to admit he had selected these two towns on the grounds of the "high scientific ideals of the comparative method," thus effectively suggesting that otherwise no one is his right mind would ever have embarked upon such a project, since the two cities had very little in common to speak of – and this impression is one that stays with you as you read the book.[11] After various excellent studies, we are thus now familiar with a number of different histories of pillarization, but none of the pictures of pillarization as such have remained totally intact. None of the existing explanations have been either totally rejected or totally confirmed. All the claims that have ever been made about pillarization have some truth to them, but all the firm statements need to be whittled down a bit and put in the proper perspective. What have we got left but the lame excuse that pillarization is an extremely complicated and complex phenomenon with various dimensions

and numerous facets? If that is the result, then in order to suggest some semblance of order, tomorrow's writings should bear the following points in mind:

More emphasis should be put on the periodization. Scholars have agreed on the importance of the distinction between "pillarizing," with new dividing lines being drawn in Dutch society, though it is clearly not an irreversible process, and "pillarization," whereby a relatively stable situation has been reached and new developments such as legislation in the field of radio broadcasting are approached in a pillarized way. In keeping with a proposal made by Groot, we should subdivide the pillarization process into "early pillarizing," based primarily upon increasing denominational multiformity, and "late pillarizing," mainly based upon industrialization and the rise of the labour issue.

In keeping with the ideas of Stuurman and the historian H. Righart,[12] it should be noted that the developments took different paths in each segment of the population, and that each pillar had its own pillarizing process with its own characteristic form and contents, and with its own engine and brakes.

There is also the theoretical "giant step forward". Virtually every theory on pillarization has some "merit" to it. In other words, it was a multi-dimensional process that needs to be explained on the basis of the interactive pattern of a striving for emancipation, a desire to preserve the group identity, an intensification of social control, and the renewal of an old elite tradition of pursuing consensus and compromise.

All of this would be very sensible, but not terribly exciting. Perhaps we should consider a radically different course.

Regardless of the fact that the term pillarization presents a problem because of the constant risk of elevating a metaphor to something that actually exists, it would also seem to be a term that is constantly a topic of debate with the various points of view barely getting any closer to each other. In that sense, it belongs to the category of essentially contested concepts. The problem with this is that it is not even possible to reach any agreement as to the nature of the phenomenon, let alone its definition. It follows that – since it is hard to imagine how any kind of agreement could ever be reached about the operationalization of the concept – the debate will not be able to get much further. Perhaps an illustration might be useful here. There are a wide range of conceptions of *industrialization*, but a certain consensus can be reached about the developments generally referred to as "industrialization." The periodization and the scale of the process can thus be roughly approximated on the basis of a number of criteria, for example by counting the steam engines or the relative percentage of the working population engaged in industry. It gets harder when it comes to a phenomenon like *modernization*, but here again a certain standard can be found by focusing for example

on growing secularism, increasing mobility – the number of letters sent, telephone calls made, miles travelled by train, or bicycles sold – and certain characteristics of people's personal lives – the postponement of conception, the distribution of births, the increase in inter-denominational marriages and so forth. Of course there are all kinds of issues that need to be clarified, but at least it is conceivable that some kind of notions might be arrived at this way that could be operationalized in some fashion to provide some sort of options for comparing various countries and periods. The striking thing about pillarization though is the unfeasibility of specifying any criteria or of designing any standard for measuring the extent of pillarization. One of the complicated results of Blom's research programme is, after all, that the quantification of associations is so unsatisfactory in that sense. A methodically extremely meticulous effort towards this end was made in the pillarization research programme by the political scientist Pennings in his Ph.D. dissertation *Verzuiling en ontzuiling: de lokale verschillen* (Pillarization and Depillarization: The Local Differences) in 1991. The surprising thing is that according to him, since the number of non-denominational organizations was growing more rapidly than the number of pillarized organizations, pillarization was not all that marked. Although this was a disappointing conclusion, it was soon noted by his own colleagues that this conclusion was contestable on the grounds of any number of local studies. The organizations were each unique unto themselves, and their formal articles of association were only very distantly related to how they actually functioned. In short, it was a question of comparing the incomparable, and the figures were unreliable. In his Ph.D. dissertation *Bezwaarden en Verlichten* (Concerned and Enlightened Christians), Wolffram arrived at the following verdict:

"The number of denomination-based organizations is however not a reliable measure of the success of pillarization."[13]

Not only are there differences of opinion on pillarization, they can not be expected to ever be resolved, for there is neither a clear beginning nor a clear end to the labyrinth.

Now that we have come this far, perhaps we can make a short detour, wondering why historians began to use the term in the first place. Where does the term pillarization come from? The earliest clues at hand today allude to a very specific field, i.e. the care facilities for young unemployed people in the second half of the nineteen thirties. Officials at the Department of Social Affairs found it inconvenient to have to subsidize so many different associations and organizations in the care circuit for young unemployed people, so they pressured them into merging. As a result, four pillars were created, with most of the problems concentrated in the fourth pillar, the "general" or "neutral" one, which included

an extremely heterogeneous range of associations and organizations.[14] Thus the origin of the term lies in what might be labelled "administrative science" in the period between the two world wars. But it was not until the late fifties and early sixties that it was to become a technical term for sociologists and political scientists. It might be wise to focus for a moment on the different motivations of these two disciplines. To sociologists in general and cultural sociologists in particular, it was a term they felt could serve a very useful purpose in their pursuit of the unique aspects of Dutch society, which was linked to their deep concern about the declining binding ties in society. Cultural sociology had long been confined to the paradigm of F. Tönnies (Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft).[15] In addition, there were the political scientists who, in their striving towards professionalization, had a need for attention and recognition.[16] They used pillarization as a point of departure for propagating a change in the Dutch political culture, which they felt was too passive and indirect and had to become more direct and modern. At the same time, they saw it as a subject so out of the ordinary it could evoke international interest. In other words, what began as a word in the jargon of civil servants was now an academic term sociologists and political scientists could use to summarize all the favourable and less favourable aspects of Dutch society. In view of the great popularity the term soon gained, which was to increase in the sixties due to depillarization, it was only logical for historians to join in the debate. The more the pillarized past became a foreign country, as it were, the more they came to the fore as travel guides to the local communities.

The individual quality of the Ph.D. dissertations written in the framework of Blom's research programme should certainly be noted. There has clearly been intensive collaboration among the authors, but they have each produced a very different book with their own personal style and approach. The programme has apparently inspired a new generation of good historians able to make good use of the vagueness of the concept of pillarization. Although they have not come up with a new generalizing thesis on pillarization, the research programme has still promoted a kind of collective serendipity. It is to its credit that such a wide range of relations and processes in society have been given new meaning, and in this light Stuurman's pessimism about finding too much and thus nothing at all has been unwarranted. I would like to briefly discuss a number of the results.

Firstly, there is the predominant importance of religion in the nineteenth century to the mentality of the population. It was not the intention, but in retrospect it is not the least bit surprising that the first dissertation produced in the framework of the research programme, *Bevoogding and bevinding* (Patronization and Religious Experience) by Rob van der Laarse, should have herded readers back to church and kept them there in the vestries. The same notion has been confirmed in book after book. Religious divisions were important in daily life, and were even increasingly so, mainly stimulated by inter- and intra-denomi-

national dividing lines. To many people, politics was first and foremost church politics. It was always essential to take church interests and religious convictions into consideration. In *Benauwde verdraagzaamheid, hachelijk fatsoen* (Oppressive Tolerance, Precarious Respectability), Jos Leenders made repeated references to the crucial significance of religion. It was the most important dividing line in personal and social life. Politics had long been mainly focused upon preserving the equilibrium between the various religious groups. Paradoxically enough, this even meant the loss of its influence on religion forced the government to intervene more than before in matters that had traditionally belonged to the domain of the church such as the care of the poor and the schools. Leenders interpreted the revolutionary changes of the 1860's, with various groups manifesting themselves far more emphatically, people showing less understanding for each other, and the municipal administration becoming increasingly politicized, as follows:

"The transformation was less due to economic or political causes than religious ones. Once again, it was clear what a fundamental social role religion was still playing."[17]

The importance of religion was so convincingly demonstrated that it is odd to think historians had not devoted attention to it much earlier. This might be accounted for by the fact that historiography was mainly a "liberal" profession with too much emphasis on the constitutional division between the church and the state and not enough on "ordinary people." The main focus was on the formal world of politics. Pillarization, however, was primarily based upon the intertwining of religion and politics. Here we see the ramifications of the emergence of church history as a separate sub-discipline of "ordinary" or political history. *Religieuze regimes* (Religious Regimes), an anthology of essays by the Amsterdam religious historian Peter van Rooden, illustrates how valuable a combination like this can be. This volume convincingly demonstrates that the rise of the first pillar, the Anti-Revolutionaries, should not be seen as the continuation of a traditional orthodox kind of Protestantism, but as the modern creation of a new "moral community."[18]

In addition, there is the long underestimated importance of social rank and position and social differences. Of course it is no secret that there were different social groups and indeed a subtle social hierarchy. But socio-economic research was initially primarily focused on the reconstruction of the occupational, the income and above all the class structure, in short the encounter with historical materialism. The insignificance of the results of these efforts gradually became so unmistakable that in the course of the seventies, this type of social history came to a standstill. Leenders for example nonetheless demonstrated in a highly detailed manner how social position and religion, family and neighbourhood

were all related.[19] For the time being, it seemed to be an approach that promised greater insight into people's social conduct than all kinds of methodically sound stratifications. A third subject that the studies discussed above shed a new light on is the nature of politics, and it might be useful to pay some notice to this point here.

For decades, complaints have been formulated in numerous historiographic articles about the low level of political historiography in the Netherlands.[20] It is striking how often this phenomenon has been attributed to the qualities of Dutch historians, who do undeniably exhibit a certain extent of masochism. Rarely if ever is the negligible amount of excitement that political history evokes accounted for, even in part, by the nature of the subject matter, i.e. Dutch politics as such. In the nineteenth century, it is striking how few publications there were for example in the field of political theory. And there were no clear crystallization points at all in the form of political parties, which did not begin to emerge until the end of the nineteenth century. It is this dearth that fostered an unclear archipelago of cliques of "political friends" and a wide range of voters' associations that came and went. That is why such extensive explanations are called for before one can refer to a politician as "liberal" or "conservative" or neither of the two, or liberal at home and conservative in The Hague or vice versa. This is in sharp contrast with the political trends in such countries as France or England, which can mainly be viewed in terms of the contention between the left and the right wing, between Conservatives and Liberals. All the Netherlands has to show for its efforts are the lengthy debates that ensued on three issues: the school funding controversy, suffrage, and the "social question." The form and contents of these issues were to alter regularly, and a wide range of coalitions were to take this side and that. Perhaps this is why it all came to be of such a differentiated and complex nature, though the start and finish are clear: the "nineteenth century" begins in 1848 with the liberal constitution of J. R. Thorbecke and ends around 1918 with the Pacification (the end of the school funding controversy and the introduction of universal male suffrage), the efforts by Social Democrat P.J. Troelstra to revolutionize the system, and women's suffrage. If Dutch politics, in the words of columnist Henk Hofland, can best be compared to "a path through a desert without any sun," then it is no wonder its historiography is like "bicycling through shifting sand."[21] A certain extent of impatience is characteristic of political historiography – we know which political system was not to be established until around the turn of the century – and an excessive concentration on the decision-making process in The Hague, where a narrow interpretation is implicitly used about the essence of politics.[22] And no matter how much the studies have differed in the pillarization research programme, they all nonetheless give rise to a broader interpretation of politics. The point of departure has not so much been the final result as it manifested itself in The

Hague, but how people perceive politics and what kind of society they really want. There is no denying that this has far more of a voluntary aspect to it.

In keeping with the American political scientists Almond and Verba, three ideal types or "political orientations" can then be distinguished, which emerged in successive periods, be it that they did not completely displace each other.[23] In the first stage, politics was mainly focused upon the immediate vicinity and was predominantly passive and anticipatory. This coincides with the information we now have. It is difficult, after all, to maintain that there was widespread interest in national politics in the nineteenth century. The election turnouts were poor, and even after the controversial fall of the liberal Tak van Poortvliet, whose proposal for a generous expansion of the franchise was rejected, there was barely any rise in the interest of the electorate in the ensuing elections of 1894. It might be noted here that this has interesting consequences as regards the analysis of the suffrage question. It is improbable that many people lost much sleep over not being eligible to vote. It was sometimes because of very specific issues that certain groups wanted the right to vote, but there were also politicians who wanted to expand the franchise just to reinforce their own position and enlarge the ranks of their supporters, or increase the stability of society. In particular, the workers had to be educated so they could then engage in orderly consultations. After this process with all its push and pull factors, obviously new studies would need to be conducted, devoting ample attention to the slow "nationalization" of the various local voters' associations. And now back to the ideal type at this stage. Most people probably did not think that much in political terms, but viewed all kinds of decision-making processes, or the lack of them, as sheer administration. They could only be roused if they felt not enough attention was being devoted to their interests, if they perceived the administration as being unjust, or if the elite was not successful at making the traditional patriarchal benevolence sound convincing. Under circumstances like these, large segments of the population would appear to have a traditional *repertoire of action* at hand. They would gather in droves at the market square and shout, break windows at the homes of the wealthy, or present the mayor with a petition. But normally speaking, they were happy to simply leave everything to the local elite. In particular Leenders, whose *Benauwde verdraagzaamheid, hachelijk fatsoen* (Oppressive Tolerance, Precarious Respectability) concentrated on the middle of the nineteenth century, gave various examples of how this worked. In that connection, he noted jocularly that "The Constitution of 1848 stipulated the right to assemble, not the need for it."[24] And in a passage on Mayor Van Akerlaken of Hoorn, the epitome of authority, that "Not a single contemporary source testifies that his regime was forced down anyone's throat or indeed that any objections were voiced."[25]

This was to pass into a second stage, where people became aware of the influence of the national political system on their lives and wanted to have a voice in it, be it on a limited scale for the time being, and often with the idea that it

would only be necessary for a short while. Perhaps this can best be illustrated by an example. In 1865, when the new voters' association *Burgerpligt* (The Duty of the Citizen) was founded in Amsterdam, the middle-class initiators stated:

> "It would *preferably* like to put power in the hands of someone above it in social standing. But its indisputable precondition is that it knows he deserves its trust.[26]

That is why "the third estate" was now called upon "to exercise its rights acquired in 1789 and 1848." Oddly enough, the underlying reason behind all this was the widespread dissatisfaction with the municipal administration, which was neglecting to guarantee the quality of the school system and failing to make use of national arrangements. *Burgerpligt* was however soon to intervene in all kinds of other matters, and even venture onto the national level and nominate candidates for the Lower Chamber of Parliament. Particularly in *Wars van clubgeest en partijzucht* (Totally Disinclined towards Club Spirit and Party Affiliation) by Jan van Miert, there is ample information about the rise of this new mentality. In Tiel as well as Winschoten, he concluded, it was clear how anxious certain segments of the population were to take part in the administration – initially only in their own town, but soon at the national level as well. The acknowledgement of this process, sometimes viewed as expressing a desire for integration into society, inspired Van Miert to cautiously propagate a certain re-evaluation of the age-old emancipation thesis as explanation for pillarization.[27]

Laboriously, a third political orientation was to emerge around the turn of the century, with ordinary people now convinced that to a large extent, the political system could be influenced and eager to take full advantage of the opportunities. The main emphasis came to be at the national level, and was now on building up a wide range of fixed, formal organs and procedures. By the time of World War One, this orientation had spread throughout the country, and that I feel was when pillarization began. I do not however wish to devote further attention to this period here.

By way of digression, I would like to stress how useful this division into three stages or orientations can be, for example in analysing the rise of the workers' movement. It remained a predominantly local matter for quite some time, but at the end of the 1860s a number of workers' organizations emerged that exhibited a supra-local and even an international perspective. It is striking though that in 1872, when a somewhat broader popular movement emerged in Amsterdam which was strongly influenced by the socialist *Internationale* and voiced clear demands as regards improving the fate of the workers, in the end it did not get much further than a petition to the mayor. They realized that the world was enormous, but Amsterdam was still defining the action horizon.[28]

It should also be noted that a deep distrust of the existing political system had

long pervaded the workers' movement. So at the start, the attitude of the workers' associations was extremely ambivalent. Though they strove to achieve a place for themselves in that system, they were focused at the same time upon creating a world of their own. In 1872, when a socialist worker in Amsterdam proposed backing up the workers' demands by going on strike, thus forcing the world of politics to listen, his idea was dismissed with the argument that the workers had to help themselves by forming "a separate workers' state within the state."[29] To the great disappointment of a number of the leaders, the workers did not seem to have any interest in the right to vote. In 1870, one of the workers' leaders noted that there were people in the Netherlands who were in favour of universal suffrage, but they were always people who already had the franchise.[30] This reticent attitude to politics continued until the end of the nineteenth century. The workers' movement largely consisted of trade unions that did regularly support political formations, but were not to truly expand their ranks until they formally severed their ties with "politics" around 1900. From that moment on, in the words of Social Democrat W. H. Vliegen, the trade union movement was to start leading "an independent life of its own" and, in the words of syndicalist C. G. Cornelissen, start implementing "its own policy line."[31] In short, the leaders of the workers' movement had an extremely hard time making it clear to their followers how useful it would be to take part in politics and persuading them to go through the various stages described above, and perhaps in part they never really succeeded in doing so.

Let us go back to the results of a number of pillarization studies. After what has been noted above, it almost goes without saying that they contain some rather interesting suggestions, particularly with respect to some fundamental changes in the perception of politics and political culture, and thus also of political processes and the political system. In the modern jargon of the history of political theory, there have been crucial changes in all matters public. This might make one wonder whether these changes could not be better studied by abandoning the term pillarization altogether. As has become quite clear by now, all it has led to is a great deal of confusion. Pillarization has gradually come to be the convenient collective term for virtually all the socio-political changes in the period from 1860 to 1920, and the pillarization studies that have been published do not for a moment give the impression that a way has been found to make the concept any more specific. This was only to be expected, for ever since the term pillarization was first coined, it was mainly a clear and strong metaphor, making whoever is using it soon forget it has just as much or as little consistency to it as a term like "power" or "pessimism." These examples have been intentionally selected because it is clear that neither political science nor cultural sociology could do without these terms. After all, we do not abolish essentially contested concepts just because it is so hard to agree upon their contents. Instead, we

unobtrusively discard them as soon as there is an alternative. For historians, an alternative is at hand. It is evident from the research programme how extremely useful an open, broad interpretation of "politics" can be. Of course it is obvious that this does not nearly solve all the problems and indeed might even present some new ones. The big advantage however is that the unmistakable socio-political changes in the Netherlands in the second half of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century can then be addressed from a clear perspective. Because as the Catholic priest cum politician Schaepman once said:

"These days it goes without saying that movements first manifest themselves in the political field. After all, nowadays the State is once again on the way to becoming *everything* and there is virtually no conceivable position in life that does not come into any contact with the State. This fact explains the course of the people's movement."[32]

NOTES

1. In chronological order, the following works have been published:
    Robert van der Laarse, *Bevoogding en bevinding. Heren en kerkvolk in een Hollandse provinciestad. Woerden 1780-1930* (Patronization and Religious Experience. Patricians and Churchgoers in a Dutch Provincial Town. Woerden 1780-1930), The Hague 1989.
    Paul Pennings, *Verzuiling en ontzuiling: de lokale verschillen. Opbouw, instandhouding en neergang van plaatselijke zuilen in verschillende delen van Nederland na 1880* (Pillarization and Depillarization: The Local Differences. Rise, Preservation and Decline of Local Pillars in Various Parts of the Netherlands after 1880), Kampen 1991.
    Jos Leenders, *Benauwde verdraagzaamheid, hachelijk fatsoen. Families, standen en kerken te Hoorn in het midden van de negentiende eeuw* (Oppressive Tolerance, Precarious Respectability. Families, Classes and Churches in Hoorn in the Mid-Nineteenth Century), The Hague 1991.
    Frans Groot, *Roomsen, rechtzinnigen en nieuwlichters. Verzuiling in een Hollandse plattelandsgemeente, Naaldwijk 1850-1930* (Catholics, Protestants and Modernists. Pillarization in a Dutch Rural Community, Naaldwijk 1850-1930), Hilversum 1992.
    Dirk Jan Wolffram, *Bezwaarden en verlichten. Verzuiling in een Gelderse provinciestad, Harderwijk 1850-1925* (Concerned and Enlightened Christians. Pillarization in a Provincial Town in Gelderland, Harderwijk 1850-1930), Amsterdam 1993.
    Jan van Miert, *Wars van clubgeest en partijzucht. Liberalen, natie en verzuiling, Tiel en Winschoten 1850-1920* (Totally Disinclined towards Club Spirit and Party Affiliation. Liberals, the Nation and Pillarization, Tiel and Winschoten 1850-1920), Amsterdam 1994.
2. Siep Stuurman, *Verzuiling, kapitalisme en patriarchaat. Aspecten van de ontwikkeling van de moderne staat in Nederland* (Pillarization, Capitalism and Patriarchy. Aspects of the Development of the Modern State in the Netherlands), Nijmegen 1983, p. 335.
3. Stuurman, *Verzuiling*, p. 60.
4. This conclusion could be drawn from a discussion file in *Bijdragen en Mededelingen betreffende de Geschiedenis der Nederlanden* (Contributions and Statements on the History of the Netherlands), 100, 1985, pp. 52-77 with contributions by H. Daalder, P. de Rooy and S. Stuurman.
5. J. C. H. Blom, *Verzuiling in Nederland en in het bijzonder op lokaal niveau 1850-1925*

(Pillarization in the Netherlands, Particularly at the Local Level 1850-1925), Historical Seminary, Amsterdam 1981.

J. C. H. Blom and C. J. Misset, eds., *'Broeders, sluit u aan.' Aspecten van verzuiling in zeven Hollandse gemeenten* ('Brethren, Come and Join Us.' Aspects of Pillarization in Seven Dutch Towns), De Bataafsche Leeuw, The Hague 1985.

6. E. H. Kossmann, *De Lage Landen 1780-1940. Anderhalve eeuw Nederland en België* (The Low Countries. A Century and a Half in the Netherlands and Belgium) Agon, Amsterdam / Brussels 1976, p. 220. Also published as *The Low Countries 1780-1940*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 1978.

7. J. A. A. van Doorn, "Verzuiling. Een eigentijds systeem van sociale controle" (Pillarization. A Modern-Day System of Social Control) in: *Sociologische Gids* (Sociology Journal) III, 1956, pp. 44-49.

H. Daalder, *Leiding en lijdelijkheid in de Nederlandse politiek* (Leadership and Passivity in Dutch Politics), Assen 1964.

A. Lijphart, *The Politics of Accommodation: Pluralism and Democracy in The Netherlands*, Berkeley 1968.

8. J. P. Kruijt and W. Goddijn, "Verzuiling en ontzuiling als sociologisch proces" (Pillarization and Depillarization as Sociological Process) in: A. N. J. den Hollander et al., *Drift en Koers. Een halve eeuw sociale verandering in Nederland* (Drive and Direction. Half a Century of Social Change in the Netherlands), Assen 1961, pp. 227-263.

9. J. C. H. Blom, "Onderzoek naar verzuiling in Nederland. Status questionis en wenselijke ontwikkeling" (Research on Pillarization in the Netherlands. State of the Research and Desirable Development) in: J. C. H. Blom and C. J. Misset, 'Broeders,' p. 17.

10. Frans Groot, *Roomsen*, p. 255.

11. Jan van Miert, *Wars van clubgeest*, p. V.

12. Stuurman, *Verzuiling*, p. 60.

Hans Rigthart, *De katholieke zuil in Europa. Het ontstaan van verzuiling onder katholieken in Oostenrijk, Zwitserland, België en Nederland* (The Catholic Pillar in Europe. The Advent of Pillarization Among Catholics in Austria, Switzerland, Belgium and The Netherlands), Meppel / Amsterdam 1986.

13. Dirk van Wolffram, *Bezwaarden en verlichten*, p. 250, cf. p. 297, note 6.

14. W. ten Have found a comment on "the four pillars" in the field of the care facilities for young unemployed people in the issue of *De Tijd* dated 29 April, 1938, and I found a comparable reference in the issue of *De Telegraaf* dated 20 February, 1940. The term presumably began to circulate in 1936 in the consultations among the various officials at the department.

15. The most recent publication on this point is by Gerrit van Vegchel, *De metamorphose van Emmen. Een sociaal-historische analyse van twintig kostbare jaren 1945-1965* (The Metamorphosis of Emmen. A Social Historical Analysis of Twenty Estimable Years 1945-1965), Amsterdam / Meppel 1995, pp. 68-91.

16. Ido de Haan, *Zelfbestuur en staatsbeheer. Het politieke debat over burgerschap en rechtsstaat in de twintigste eeuw* (Self-rule and State Administration. The Political Debate on Citizenship and the Constitutional State in the Twentieth Century), Amsterdam 1993.

17. Jos Leenders, *Benauwde verdraagzaamheid*, p. 398.

18. Peter van Rooden, *Religieuze regimes. Over godsdienst en maatschappij in Nederland, 1570-1900* (Religious Regimes. On Religion and Society in the Netherlands, 1570-1900), Amsterdam 1996.

19. Although Leenders felt he was doing all he could to follow Maarten Prak's instructions, Prak still was not satisfied; what he wanted was a truly deep elaboration upon wage dependence and price trends: Leenders, *Benauwde verdraagzaamheid*, VIII; review by Maarten Prak in *BMGN* 109, 1994, pp. 101-102.

20. A number of examples are presented in P. de Rooy, *Een ideaal dan ons toelacht?* (An Ideal Bidding To Us?), Amsterdam 1994.
21. Henk Hofland, *Man van zijn eeuw* (Man of His Century), Amsterdam 1993.
22. Meindert Fennema and Ries van der Wouden, eds., *Het politicologendebat: wat is politiek?* (The Debate Among Political Scientists: What is Politics?), Amsterdam 1982.
23. G. Almond and S. Verba, *The Civic Culture* (Boston 1965) and *The Civic Culture Revisited* (Boston 1980). In order to avoid possible misunderstandings, let me make it clear that it is not their widely criticized concept of *civic culture* I am interested in here, but solely the distinctions they drew between three political orientations. Marcel Hoogenboom drew attention to the possibilities of this approach in *De miskende democratie. Een andere visie op verzuiling en politieke samenwerking in Nederland* (The Misunderstood Democracy. A Different View of Pillarization and Political Cooperation in the Netherlands), M. A. thesis, Political Science Department, University of Leiden, August 1993.
24. Leenders, *Benauwde verdraagzaamheid*, p. 330.
25. Leenders, *Benauwde verdraagzaamheid*, p. 331.
26. Quoted from Theo van Tijn, *Twintig jaren Amsterdam. De maatschappelijke ontwikkeling van de hoofdstad, van de jaren '50 der vorige eeuw tot 1876* ((Twenty Years in Amsterdam. The Social Development of the Capital from the 1850s to 1876), Amsterdam 1965, p. 331.
27. Van Miert, *Wars van clubgeest*, p. 214.
28. This passage is based upon an interpretation of the material presented by Jacques Giele in *De eerst Internationale in Nederland. Een onderzoek naar het ontstaan van de Nederlandse arbeidersbeweging van 1868 tot 1876* (The First Internationale in the Netherlands. A Study on the Origins of the Dutch Workers' Movement from 1868 to 1876), Nijmegen 1973, pp. 174-211. Giele was also struck by the fact that a well-known man like Klaas Ris should have mainly focused on municipal matters, and "viewed national problems as more or less second rate"; Ris was more a "citizen of the town" than a "citizen of the nation."
29. Giele, *Eerste Internationale*, p. 184.
30. Van Tijn, *Twintig jaren*, p. 461.
31. Jacques Giele, "Socialisme en vakbeweging. De opkomst van socialistiese vakorganisaties in Nederland (1878-1890), deel 1" (Socialism and the Trade Union Movement. The Rise of Socialist Trade Unions in the Netherlands [1878-1890], Part 1), in *Jaarboek voor de geschiedenis van socialisme en arbeidersbeweging in Nederland* (Yearbook for the History of Socialism and the Workers' Movement in the Netherlands), 1978, pp. 27-82.
Ad Knotter, "Van 'defensieve standsreflex' tot 'verkoopkartel van arbeidskracht'. Twee fasen in de ontwikkeling van de Amsterdamse arbeidersbeweging (ca. 1870 – ca. 1895)" (From 'Defensive Class Reflex' to 'Sales Cartel for Labour.' Two Stages in the Development of the Amsterdam Workers' Movement [circa 1870 – circa 1895]), in *Tijdschrift voor Social Geschiedenis* (Social History Journal), vol. 19, 1993, pp. 68-93.
32. Quoted by Jos. Van Wely, *Schaepman. Levensverhaal* (Schaepman. A Life Story), Bussum 1954, p. 409.