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## Federalism and Pillarization: The Netherlands and Switzerland Compared

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3. E.g. J.A.A. van Doorn, 'Verzuiling: Een eigentijds systeem van sociale controle', *Sociologische Gids*, vol. 3 (1956), pp. 41-49.
4. A. Lijphart, *The Politics of Accommodation: Pluralism and Democracy in the Netherlands* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968; revised edition, 1975).
5. Cf. e.g. K.D. McRae (ed.), *Consociational Democracy: Political Accommodation in Segmented Societies* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1974); A. Lijphart, *Democracy in Plural Societies: A Comparative Exploration* (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 1977).
6. S. Kuznets, 'Economic Growth of Small Nations', in: *The Challenge of Development* (Jerusalem: The Eliezer Kaplan School of Economics and Social Sciences, The Hebrew University, 1958), pp. 9-22; S.N. Eisenstadt, 'Sociological Characteristics and Problems of Small States', *The Jerusalem Journal of International Relations*, vol. 2 (1977), pp. 35-50.
7. This term is used by S.N. Eisenstadt, 'Israël 1948-1973: Het dynamisch conservatisme van een kleine "revolutionaire" gemeenschap', *Hollands Maandblad*, vol. 14, no. 305 (April 1973), pp. 11-18.
8. See for this and the following in more detail e.g. H. Daalder, 'Consociationalism, Center and Periphery in the Netherlands', in: P. Torsvik (ed.), *Mobilization, Center-Periphery Structures and Nation-building*, (Bergen: Universitetsforlaget, 1981), pp. 181-240; J.E. Ellemers, 'The Revolt of the Netherlands: The Part Played by Religion in the Process of Nation-Building', *Social Compass*, vol. 14 (1967), pp. 93-103; J.E. Ellemers, 'De Nederlandse maatschappij in sociologisch perspectief', *Sociologische Gids*, vol. 15 (1968), pp. 326-336; I. Schöffner, 'Verzuiling, een specifiek Nederlands probleem', *Sociologische Gids*, vol. 3 (1956), pp. 121-127; I. Schöffner, 'Protestantism in Flux During the Revolt of the Netherlands', in: J.S. Bromley and E.H. Kossman (eds.), *Britain and the Netherlands* (Groningen: Wolters, 1964), vol. II, pp. 67-83; I. Schöffner, 'Het politiek bestel van Nederland en maatschappelijke verandering', *Kleio*, vol. 14 (1973), pp. 518-534.
9. J.A. de Kok, *Nederland op de breuklijn Rome-Reformatie* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1964).
10. J. Briels, *De Zuidnederlandse immigratie 1572-1630* (Haarlem: Fibula-Van Dishoeck, 1978).
11. Cf. Lijphart, *The Politics of Accommodation*, op. cit.
12. Cf. e.g. H. Bakvis, *Catholic Power in the Netherlands* (Kingston: McGill-Queens University Press, 1981); J.A. Coleman, *The Evolution of Dutch Catholicism, 1958-1974* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978); Daalder, op. cit.; Schöffner, 'Het politiek bestel van Nederland', op. cit.
13. E.g. Lijphart, *The Politics of Accommodation*, op. cit.
14. Cf. e.g. L.N.J. Brunt, *Stedeling op het platteland* (Meppel: Boom, 1974); P.F. Maas, *Sociaal-Democratische gemeentepolitiek in Katholiek Nijmegen 1894-1927* (Nijmegen: Jansen, 1974); J. Verrips, *En boven de polder de hemel: Een antropologische studie van een Nederlands dorp 1850-1971* (Groningen: Wolters-Noordhoff, 1978).
15. Cf. M. Bax and A. Nieuwenhuis, 'Peasant Emancipation in the Roman Catholic South of the Netherlands', *The Netherlands' Journal of Sociology*, vol. 18 (1982), pp. 25-45.
16. Cf. e.g. J.D. McCarthy and M.N. Zald, Resource Mobilization and Social Movements: A Partial Theory, *American Journal of Sociology*, vol. 82 (1977), pp. 1212-1241.
17. Cf. J.E. Ellemers, 'The Netherlands in the Sixties and the Seventies', *Netherlands' Journal of Sociology*, vol. 17 (1981), pp. 113-135.

## Federalism and Pillarization: The Netherlands and Switzerland Compared

Hanspeter Kriesi

The Netherlands have played an important role as a model generator in comparative political science. From what began as a single case study, the general model of consociational democracy has been developed by Arend Lijphart (1968, 1969) in his well known and influential work. Lijphart has reacted to the American concern about the destabilizing political implications of social and cultural segmentation on the European continent. He maintained that a stable democracy is possible in a culturally divided society, provided the elites are aware of the dangers to the system and act deliberately to contain the divisions. As Daalder (1987) observes, other authors writing on other small European countries were arriving at conclusions similar to the ones of Lijphart. Yet Lijphart's book *The Politics of Accommodation* (1968) presented the best known attempt at what he himself called 'an extended theoretical argument based on a single case of particular significance to pluralist theory', i.e. the Netherlands. The other countries to which consociationalist theory was typically applied are Austria, Belgium and Switzerland. These countries were all considered to have culturally segmented societies, i.e. societies divided into subcultures with their own organizational infrastructures. In each one of these countries the potentially divisive effects of subcultural segmentation were said to have been overcome by the cooperative behaviour of the political elites representing the different subcultural segments.

The consociational model is probably the most well known, although not the only one which stresses the similarities between Dutch and Swiss politics. In a more recent and equally influential attempt to come to terms with the politics of small European states, Katzenstein (1985) considers both countries to belong to the liberal variant of his model of 'democratic corporatism'. Being of Swiss origin and having worked as a political scientist in the Netherlands for four years, I have always been struck by the fact that the political systems of the Netherlands and Switzerland were so closely assimilated in the minds of my colleagues. As a daily observer of Dutch politics and as a member of the Faculty of Political Science at the University of Amsterdam, I was impressed by the important differences which exist between

the two systems, differences which do not seem to have been grasped by consociational or neocorporatist theory. This article presents an attempt to come to terms with these differences.

At first sight, the differences might be thought to be the result of more recent developments in the form of political decision-making. The Netherlands are said to have developed more polarized politics in the more recent past, whereas Swiss politics are still considered to be thoroughly consociational. However, I think that the differences which impressed me so much are more fundamental and have their origin in a more distant past.<sup>1</sup> The argument which I would like to develop is not that the Netherlands and Switzerland have moved in different directions in the most recent past. I would rather like to suggest that in a significant way they have taken different routes to modernity ever since the French Revolution. Although they have admittedly much in common, they are also characterized by political institutions which set them far apart. These institutions, which have their origin in the different reaction to the French occupation at the time of the French Revolution, concern the structure of the state: the Swiss state is a federal, decentralized state, while the Dutch state is a *unitary*, centralized one. According to the French standards of Badie and Birnbaum (1982: 212), Switzerland has 'neither a real center, nor a real state'. On the other hand, 'it is hard to find a more centralized state among European democracies than the Netherlands' (Andeweg 1989: 43). This very obvious difference between the two countries has important implications for the daily life of their citizens as well as for consociational theory. The difference is so obvious that it took me a long time to see it and to grasp its implications.

### 1. Swiss Federalism and Dutch Centralism

In pursuing the question of the differences between the two countries, I have found out that I am by no means the first to notice this basic difference between them. In an insightful comparison of the 'cases' of the Netherlands and Switzerland, Daalder (1971) takes note of the different degree of centralization of the two states. He locates the origin of Dutch centralism in the strong impact of the French Revolution on the development of the Dutch nation-state. Up to 1795, much as the Swiss Confederation the Dutch Republic had been characterized by an underdeveloped central state, decentralization, delegation and privatization of state tasks, self-regulation by private organizations and in general collegiate government (Van Waarden 1990: 15). Yet this polity was radically changed after the occupation of the Republic by the French revolutionary armies. The occupation brought a lasting unitary state, common citizenship, common laws and equal rights for the

various religions. As Daalder observes, Dutch political life has tended to be national in scope ever since: constitutional conflicts centered on the national institutions, and political oppositions tended to develop as contestants in one national political arena. In Switzerland, the French occupation had ended rather differently. Whereas the constitutional monarchy created in 1813 under King William I of Orange-Nassau ushered in a period in which the Netherlands came closest ever to absolutist rule, the Swiss returned almost completely to the old confederate order in 1815.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, the subsequent drive for Swiss unification led by the radical-liberals was decisively broken by a short, unbloody civil war in 1847. The constitution of 1848 which created the modern nation-state turned out to be a compromise between the victorious radical-liberals who wanted to institute a unitary state, and the catholic conservatives of the separatist cantons who wanted above all to defend their cantonal autonomy. In stark contrast to the Netherlands, Swiss politics has remained a very specific compromise between local, cantonal (i.e. regional) and national forms of government. While the once sovereign Dutch provinces now form the most impotent of the three layers of Dutch government, the Swiss cantons have remained powerful bodies, with great diversities in structure and politics.

As noted by Andeweg (1989), it is symbolic of Dutch centralism that in no other democracy, provincial governors and municipal mayors are still appointed by the central government rather than elected regionally or locally. Quite symbolic, but no less impressive was for me the experience of receiving a letter signed by 'We, Beatrix, Queen of the Netherlands by the Grace of God' confirming my nomination as professor at the University of Amsterdam. In Geneva, the corresponding document carried the letterhead of the 'Republic and Canton of Geneva' and was signed by the executive Council of the State of Geneva. While university education is administered centrally in the Netherlands, it belongs to the jurisdiction of the cantons in Switzerland.<sup>3</sup> While the decisions of the Dutch minister of education have far reaching consequences for the members of the universities, there is no minister of education on the Swiss federal level. Education is entirely a cantonal or local affair. While Dutch scholarships are distributed centrally from Groningen, Swiss scholarships are administered by cantonal administrations and differ remarkably in size from one canton to the other. To modernize, i.e. to harmonize the Swiss system of scholarships would require a change of the Federal Constitution, because all the domains that are not explicitly attributed to the federal level fall under the jurisdiction of the cantons. These illustrations may give you some of the flavor of the two educational systems.

Tables 1 and 2 present some general figures which allow a more systematic comparison of the degree of centralization of the two states. As is shown in Table 1, in the Netherlands almost all taxes are raised by the central govern-

Table 1: Distribution of tax revenues and government expenditures 1986/87 on the three levels of government in the Netherlands and Switzerland: percentages

level	Netherlands (1)		Switzerland (2)	
	tax revenue 1987	expenditures 1986	tax revenue 1987	expenditures 1986
central	97.5	58.9	42.7	26.0
regional	-	2.5	33.2	41.5
local	2.5	38.6	24.1	32.5

1. Source: Tax revenue: Revenue Statistics of OECD countries 1965-1988. Paris: OECD. Expenditures: Personal communication by Frans van Waarden.

2. Source: Tax revenue: Revenue Statistics of OECD countries, op. cit. Expenditures: Eidg. Finanzverwaltung: Öffentliche Finanzen der Schweiz 1986. Bern: 1988.

Table 2: Distribution of government personnel 1980 on the three levels of government in the Netherlands and Switzerland: percentages

level	Netherlands (1)	Switzerland (2)	
		total	tradit. services
central	39.5	28.4	14.7
regional	4.2	37.4	47.2
local	56.3	34.2	28.1

1. Source: Statistisch zakboek 1985, p. 132. These figures do not include parttime, military and educational personnel.

2. Source: Du Pasquier (1986: 150ff). The total figures include all public personnel, traditional services include general administration, justice and police, fire departments and diplomatic services.

ment. In Switzerland, the share going to the central government is not even half of the total tax revenue, cantons take about a third and communes about a fourth. The picture is somewhat different, if we look at government *expenditures*. A large part of government expenditure in both countries takes place on the communal level. In the Netherlands, communes even spend somewhat more than in Switzerland. Moreover, in both countries, communes have a considerable policy autonomy. The enormous difference between the two countries concerns the intermediary level of government, which is most important in Switzerland, while it turns out to be almost inexistent in the Netherlands. These results are confirmed, if we take a look at the distribution of government *personnel*. In the Netherlands, there is hardly any personnel working on the provincial level, while the cantonal level in Switzerland is the one where we find the largest share of government personnel.

The relative size of the cantonal level depends on the measure we use. Taking into account all government personnel, which includes public enterprises such as the PTT and the railways, education and health services, its share is somewhat larger than one third. If we take into account only the traditional government services, the cantonal share reaches almost one half. The bulk of the Swiss public personnel (roughly 75%) is employed in only three domains (Du Pasquier 1986): education, health services and services to the economy, consisting mainly in services in the area of communications and transportations. It is important to note that there exists a certain division of labor between the different levels of Swiss government with regard to these three domains: while the services to the economy – above all the PTT, the railways and the electronic media – are concentrated on the federal level, health services are concentrated on the cantonal level, and education is mainly a local and, secondly, a cantonal affair.

## 2. Federalism and Pillarization: Two Types of Segmentation and Integration

Federalism and pillarization constitute two alternative mechanisms for the integration of subcultures into a larger national community. This has been noted many years ago by Lehmbruch (1967: 33ff) in his perceptive comparison of Switzerland and Austria. He contrasted the Swiss 'sectionalism', i.e. territorial or horizontal integration, with the Austrian formation of 'Lager', i.e. pillarization or vertical integration. Both, federalism and pillarization imply the construction of parallel organizational structures performing similar social, cultural and political tasks. In the case of federalism, these tasks are performed for a territorially bounded segment of the population. In the case of pillarization, they are directed to segments defined by some social or cultural criteria.<sup>4</sup> I would like to propose a *general hypothesis*: the preferred mode of integration depends on the structure of the state. While pillarization is the preferred mode in a centralized state, federalist state structures provide a functional alternative which renders pillarization much less important. Lehmbruch's comparison between Austria and Switzerland seems to confirm this general proposition, since Austria has a rather strong, centralized state which contrasts sharply with the weak, decentralized Swiss state (see Katzenstein 1985a). The more detailed comparison between Switzerland and the Netherlands provides additional support, as I would like to show now.

First of all, we should note that federalism as well as pillarization are *forms of segmentation*. This is often overlooked by consociational theorists and explains to some extent their difficulties in assessing the degree of cultural seg-

mentation of Switzerland. While they acknowledge that the Swiss subcultural structure is extremely complex, they are typically much less certain about the degree of its subcultural segmentation.<sup>5</sup> In a rather evasive manner, Obler et al. (1977), for example, conclude that 'among the European democracies Switzerland ranks neither with the very homogeneous nor with the very segmented systems.' By implication, to these authors Switzerland presents only a marginal case for the application of the consociational theory. This conclusion can only be drawn by someone who does not see how federalism reinforces cultural segmentation.

The Swiss *language* diversity provides the obvious example: Swiss linguistic diversity is exceptional. There are not only four national languages – Swiss-German, French, Italian and Rhaeto-Romanic –, but the dominant Swiss-German language group is again subdivided in a series of highly recognized regional dialects. There is no language of the center, because there is no center. To put it in terms of De Swaan's (1988: 79) floral figuration, Switzerland is 'all petal and no heart'. The different language communities have quite distinct orientations, which is in part a result of the fact that, except for Rhaeto-Romanic, the languages spoken are regional versions of national languages in adjoining realms. The cultural influences of the larger neighbours make themselves felt on many levels. The television programs of the neighbouring countries, to mention but one example, are much followed by the various Swiss publics. An unexpected indication of the profound cultural differences that exist between the Swiss language communities comes from a survey among the employees of a major multinational corporation in 66 countries (Hofstede 1984: 228). The study shows that German-speaking Switzerland is clearly culturally associated with Germany, and French-speaking Switzerland with France. According to these findings, there is a wide culture gap between the two parts of the country, which corresponds to the gap between German and French culture. This result is all the more astonishing, since there is no comparable gap between the two language groups in Belgium where the French culture dominates even among the Flemish. Another, more specific example illustrates the closure of Swiss intellectual communities. In their analysis of the citation patterns of Swiss sociologists, Geser and Höpfinger (1980) showed that both Swiss-German and French speaking sociologists primarily cite sources of their own language, and secondarily refer to Anglo-Saxon literature. However, they do not cite each other.

The point I would like to make is that this cultural gap between the language communities is reinforced and stabilized by *territorial segmentation*. The territoriality principle which applies to the language communities in Switzerland implies that in a given region only one language is the official one. This principle, in turn, is implemented by the federal structure of the Swiss

state. The press is regional or local, there are no newspapers which are widely read in all the parts of the country. There are three Swiss television channels – one for each major linguistic community.<sup>6</sup> Geographical mobility across the language boundary is rather infrequent, even for leisure trips. Contrary to widespread belief, the average Swiss usually does not understand, let alone speak the major national languages, which presents, of course, a formidable barrier for communication between the language groups. This fundamental barrier to mobility is *reinforced by the federal state structure*. Most importantly, as we have seen, the educational system is organized cantonally and locally. Take the example of the university system: since universities are cantonal, there are important differences with regard to the curricula and the organization of higher education between the different cantons. Most strikingly, the university system in the French speaking part of the country functions according to the French model, while the university system in the Swiss-German part follows the traditional German model. Needless to say that under such circumstances student mobility between the different universities is virtually impossible. On the level of primary education, to give another example, lack of coordination between the different cantonal school systems went so far that, until very recently, the school year started in Fall in some cantons, and in Spring in some others. Only two years ago, coordination has been achieved in this regard, but not with regard to other organizational aspects, not to speak about curricula. Other institutions organized by the cantons also serve to enhance the linguistic cleavage. Thus, contrary to received opinion, the Swiss army far from functioning as a melting pot enhances linguistic segmentation, because its units are composed of soldiers from the same cantons.<sup>7</sup>

The Swiss language diversity contrasts sharply with the situation in the Netherlands, where the center has been able to impose its language. On the whole, regional variation of speech has gradually disappeared without much conflict and the contemporary mass media now impose a countrywide standard of spoken Dutch (De Swaan 1988: 79). Of course, there still is a Frisian speaking minority. However, Frisian is a language very close to standard Dutch and the Frisians typically are fluent in Dutch as well. Remaining vestiges of regional speech are also still recognizable and constitute a regular subject of small talk. However, I was always struck by the fact that it was easier for me to understand a Dutchman from the South than to be able to follow a conversation among the lower class people of Amsterdam. My personal impression is that in the Netherlands the remaining class variations of speech are much more substantial than the remaining regional ones. This one would have expected in a centralized country with a pillarized substructure.

Language communities always have a strong territorial base, which is why

they do not lend themselves as easily to pillarization as other groups. In the Netherlands, as elsewhere, it is above all the *religious* cleavage which has given rise to pillarization. Religious groups in the religiously mixed European societies have also been concentrated in specific regions, following the rule of 'cuius regio, eius religio'. With the industrialization process, this territorial segmentation of religious groups has, however, been broken up – at least partly. In Switzerland, the industrialization process gave rise to the emigration of hundreds of thousands of catholics from their 'homelands' in the catholic cantons to the new industrial centers in predominantly protestant regions. In the diaspora, these catholics got into direct contact with other religious communities and with socialism. As is shown by Righart (1986), it was at this point that the construction of the catholic organizational structure set in, above all in the diaspora. Similarly, in the Netherlands the catholic pillar first took shape in the large cities and in the regional centers of industrialization (Twente). Righart points out that the traditional elites in the catholic 'homelands' – the catholic cantons in the central part of Switzerland, Brabant and Limburg in the Netherlands – long resisted against the formation of a catholic organizational infrastructure in the union movement and in politics. Thus, they were sceptical of the constitution of a mass party, because this would imply an extension of political participation and a certain amount of democratization of decision-making. To some extent, the pillarization process was also a modernization process, which explains the resistance of the traditional elites. Pillarization to them only seemed to be a second best solution which they adopted once their traditional strategy of building up their regional power bases had lost its meaning in the face of a transforming society.

Righart underlines the similarities of the catholic pillarization process in the four countries he studied – Austria, Belgium, the Netherlands and Switzerland. However, I think that Stuurman (1984: 62) is right when he insists on the exceptional degree of the Dutch pillarization. Righart's decision to study only the catholic pillar is one reason why he overestimates the similarities between Switzerland and the Netherlands in particular. While in the Netherlands catholics and protestants took to the formation of their own organizational systems, in Switzerland it was only the catholics who developed their own 'subsociety' to a significant degree. Second, in Switzerland religion was one factor in a highly diversified society, whereas in the Netherlands the contest between calvinists, catholics and more secular elements of the society became of overriding importance. Finally, in the Netherlands the religious conflict turned out to be a national contest and as such it became both a divisive and an integrative force. If the resistance of the catholic conservatives from the South against the pillarization process had been particularly strong in the Netherlands, once it was broken, pillarization was no longer

impeded by regional considerations. As is observed by Daalder (1971), the religious contest

split mixed religious local communities and built strong organizational links among like-minded believers across the nation. The strong institutional build-up of Calvinist and Catholic organizations led to a strong segmentation of the Dutch nation in separate subcultural communities of Calvinists, Catholics and more secular groups. But this new division, while splitting the country along a new dimension integrated and nationalized political life.<sup>8</sup>

In Switzerland, on the other hand, the religious conflict continued to be influenced by the fact that the catholic conservatives had at their disposal an independent power base in the cantons of the catholic homelands.

If both, federalism and pillarization, reinforce cultural segmentation, they also both provide *mechanisms for integration*.<sup>9</sup> Both types of structures allow for a large amount of selfregulation of the different cultural communities. There exists, however, a crucial difference between the mechanisms which has major implications for their functioning: federalism is a 'horizontal' *state* structure, while pillars are 'vertical' *societal* structures. Pillarization *concentrates* political power at the top of the pillars, while federalism *diffuses* it. Federalism fragments the political process quite generally. The cantonal prerogatives in the elaboration of political decisions as well as in the process of policy implementation considerably reduce the central state's capacity to act. Thus, Art. 3 of the Swiss constitution delegates all the rights which are not explicitly attributed to the federal state by default to the cantons. This implies that each time a new task is to be attributed to the federal state, the constitution has to be changed first, before the corresponding legislation can be elaborated. The federal state has, for example, never got a general competence to legislate in the area of social policy. The result was that the introduction of each new branch of the social insurance system required a change of the constitution. One can easily imagine that this cumbersome procedure has considerably slowed down the construction of the Swiss welfare state. Similarly, policy implementation is typically delegated to the cantons, which serves not only to slow down the process, but also leads to important differences in the application of one and the same act of legislation. The administrations of the smaller cantons often are simply not able to implement the federal legislation. The elaboration of decisions under pillarized structures does not suffer from analogous drawbacks. On the contrary, by concentrating political power at the top of the pillars, pillarization contributes to a centralization of decision-making, which increases the efficacy of the political process. With regard to policy implementation, pillarization also implies decentralization, especially in the field of social and cultural services. However, the possible sources of inefficiency in this case are rather different from the ones of feder-

alism. While federalism puts the breaks on public welfare spending and results in underdeveloped welfare programs, pillarization rather implies a wasteful overdevelopment. Elite agreement on the expansion of welfare state programs is facilitated by the fact that each pillar profits from the expansion of its social and cultural service organizations. The parallelism of pillarized structures performing essentially the same services, however, is likely to be very costly. Thus, it has been suggested that the comparatively great expansion of the Dutch welfare state has to no small extent been caused by the pillarized arrangements (Scholten 1987: 13).

Both, federalism and pillarization introduce *coordination problems*. In the case of pillarization, they turn out to be relatively simple. Summit diplomacy among a limited number of coherent actors is likely to do the trick. In the case of federalism, coordination is much more difficult. By opening up additional political arenas on the cantonal level, federalism not only introduces new levels of political coordination and new political actors – the cantons themselves –, it also fragments the political actors who should engage in the coordination. The multiplicity of political sub-systems of the cantons gives rise to context-specific configurations of power. One implication is a highly fragmented party system. In Switzerland, parties are forged in response to political stimuli found in cantonal, not in federal politics.<sup>10</sup> The different cantonal sections of one and the same party find themselves in quite different contexts, which implies that they develop different points of view. Thus, the Radical-liberal Party in French-speaking cantons is generally more to the left than the sections in the Swiss-German speaking part of the country (Steiner 1981). One of the reasons is that in three of the French-speaking cantons, it has a competitor on its right – the Liberal Party –, which does not exist in all of the Swiss-German speaking cantons except one. Similarly, the position of the Christian-democratic Party in the cantons of the catholic 'homelands', where the party controls the absolute majority, tends to be much more conservative than its position in a canton, where catholics form a minority. Thus, in the context of the canton of Berne, the Christian-democratic Party has become the leading spokesman of the separatist cause of the rebels from the catholic North of the Jura. The fragmentation of the party system quite generally reduces its overall significance for the political process at the federal level. By contrast, in the pillarized structure of the Netherlands comparatively disciplined parties constitute the major brokers in the political process.

### 3. Federalism and Pillarization: Two Modes of Control of the Population

In his incisive critique of the consociational model, Scholten (1987: 18)

argues that observers have frequently been too hasty in equating the structures which they encountered at the societal level with the existence or absence of cleavages at the mass level. Instead of assuming that the values of the population are reflected in structures, Scholten suggests that the reverse may be more plausible, 'namely that the structures are instrumental in shaping the values, and that the elites quite often have ideals, aspirations, and interests which do not necessarily coincide with those of their followers'. Scholten (1980) argues that the formation of pillarized organizational structures has not grown from bottom upwards, but has been *imposed from top down*. Instead of being the reflection of basic value differences in the population, these organizational structures, he suggests, have been imposed to encapsulate the religious subgroups and to preserve their traditional loyalty. This interpretation of the pillarization process receives strong support from Righart's (1986) comparative historical study of the emergence of the catholic pillars which I have already cited above. Righart clearly shows that catholic pillarization in each one of the four countries was above all a defensive church strategy against the secularization process, in particular against the mobilization by socialist unions and by socialist parties. The lower catholic clergy understood that the church needed to adapt itself to the modern society, if it wanted to survive. Protection through adaptation, this was the essence of pillarization.

Federalism, I would like to propose, can be interpreted in an analogous way. Just as pillarization, federalism has served as a defensive strategy of traditional elites against new challenges to their authority. First, it has been a means by which the traditional conservative elites have attempted to preserve their unlimited autonomy in the face of the challenge of the radical-liberals. Then, it has permitted them to preserve their power position against the challenge of socialism. As discussed above, the conservative catholic elites considered pillarization only as the second best strategy for the preservation of their power position. In the catholic homelands, their control of the state permitted them to organize society and notably the school system – according to catholic principles and to stabilize a clientelistic relationship with the catholic masses. Control of the cantonal states dispensed them from other types of organization building. But catholic notables have not been the only ones to profit from federal structures. Quite generally, one may suggest that federalism has undercut class loyalties by enhancing territorial loyalties which, as we have seen, are tied to identities based on religion and language. The emphasis on territorial loyalties has become one of the central elements of the political style in Switzerland which often serves to hide the real issues from the general public (Hischier and Kriesi 1980). Today, representatives of dominant interests fight against the demands of the new social movements in the name of federalism. They defend, for example, the traditional autonomy of the cantons in the domain of energy policy, which means that concerted

efforts to reduce the energy consumption become impossible, because individual cantons are either unwilling or unable to legislate in this direction.

How about the present state of these control mechanisms? After all, there has been a lot of talk about depillarization in the Netherlands, and about (excessive) centralization in Switzerland. In spite of widespread belief, pillarization is not a phenomenon of the past (Scholten 1987). Pillarization no longer succeeds in encapsulating the confessional masses. Some pillarized organizations have been decisively weakened – trade unions, communications, leisure associations. However, the network of pillarized organizations continues to exist and to play an important role in the sector of social and cultural services. Thus, the majority of primary schools in the Netherlands continue to be confessional. As noted by Huyse (1984: 152) for the comparable case of Belgium, the pillars profited from the expansion of the welfare state: 'The generous policy of subsidizing by the public authorities gave strong growing-impulses to the pillars, but at the same time the networks appeared as a more or less indispensable mainstay of the welfare state'. The structures continue to exist and prosper even though the underlying causes which led to their establishment have long since disappeared or diminished in silence. However, the internal authority relations of these structures have undergone considerable change: where the members of these organizations and their clients could not exert the exit option, they raised their voices.

In my view, the most important implication of the continued existence of a pillarized organizational structure in the Dutch social and cultural sector has been a strong *demand for the democratization* of the sector from below. Social and cultural service professionals are, as I have argued elsewhere (Kriesi 1989), particularly sensitive to the post-materialist values of individual autonomy and of individual participation in decision-making processes. They are, in other words, particularly critical of traditional authority relations as they have persisted within the pillars. It does, therefore, not come as a surprise that they have launched a strong challenge for the democratization of these relations – a challenge that was successful in many respects, given the accommodating style of Dutch politics. Thus, the Netherlands have, for example, experienced the most far-reaching democratization of the university system of any West European country. The Dutch have also introduced the institution of the 'ondernemingsraad' (enterprise council) giving the employees a (limited) say in the management of their organization, which may be a private firm or a (semi-)public institution. The Dutch social-democratic party, the preferred party of many of these social and cultural professionals, has given itself a more democratic internal structure, which has had important consequences for Dutch politics in the seventies and eighties (Van Praag 1990). Quite generally, in a wide range of organizations mechanisms for consultation and negotiation have been institutionalized which permit their

members to participate in the internal decision-making process in one way or another. My point is that this democratization process typically has not concerned the political institutions of the state, but the private or semipublic institutions of the pillars.

If I emphasize the relatively far-reaching democratization that has taken place within the pillarized structure, it is to contrast this process with the fact that the Dutch political institutions have been left largely unreformed (Andeweg 1989). However, I do not wish to pretend that traditional authority relations have completely withered away within the pillarized system. As Scholten (1987: 14) points out, in the final analysis, these organizations are controlled neither by consumers nor by the professional staff nor by the state. Control still rests with the board of governors (or equivalents) who are co-opted from the pillar elites in a quite undemocratic fashion. These boards supervise the management, decide on how the finances are spent, and directly or indirectly control hiring and firing. The implications are considerable, especially in times of economic crises as the Netherlands have experienced during the better part of the eighties. Scholten (1982) suggests that under conditions of a shrinking labor market, the continued existence of pillarized forms of control introduces vastly unequal employment changes for civil servants in the social and cultural service sector. More generally, the boards of governors ultimately decide how far innovative democratic experiments may go. The conflict in and around Dennendal, a large institution for mentally retarded children, which has caused considerable commotion in the Netherlands of the early seventies, graphically illustrates how these boards act to discipline staff and clients, and to what extent they still are the ones who hold the power (Van Staveren 1988).

Just as the pillarized organizational structure, Swiss federalism has also profited from the expansion of the welfare state. Given the distribution of tasks over the three levels of government, it is not surprising that the relative importance of the federal level in the policy implementation has not increased since the second World War. On the contrary, all indicators show an increasing decentralization of implementation (Nüssli 1985: 182-246). There are some indications of a tendency towards increasing centralization with regard to policy making. Swiss federalism may tend to become a 'federalism of implementation'. In view of the concomitant tendency of the federal parliament to make ever more general laws which leave a lot to be specified in the implementation process, it is on balance very difficult to say whether the cantons have gained or lost power in the more recent past. One thing, however, is certain: federalism is still very much alive and kicking.

Switzerland has not known a comparable drive to democratize its social institutions. For example, the popular initiative for codetermination at the work place launched by the unions in the seventies has been a dismal failure.



Traditional authority relations also have been largely preserved within the universities. However, the political institutions in Switzerland have since long known a *direct democratic* element which is absent in the Netherlands. In other words, I am arguing that the drive to democratize the pillarized institutions can be compared to the drive to democratize the political institutions in the Switzerland of the 19th century. Since social control in Switzerland has primarily been exerted by the political institution of federalism, attempts to control the controllers have above all been directed at political institutions. Such attempts materialized first on the cantonal level, then they were also successful at the federal level. Moreover, direct democracy generally is more elaborate on the cantonal level than on the federal one. In my view, the availability of these instruments has limited the enthusiasm for the introduction of the democratization of social institutions after the cultural revolution of the late sixties. However, since the late sixties when democratization has become the watch word in the Netherlands, the already available instruments of direct democracy have been used much more intensively by the Swiss. At the beginning of the seventies, conservative observers lamented about a 'flood of initiatives' and of an 'abuse' of direct democratic institutions.

#### 4. Conclusion: Modes of Decision-Making

According to consociational theory, it is political accommodation among elites which finally preserves political stability in a country ravaged by cultural segmentation. My argument so far has not directly addressed this core proposition of the theory. What I have tried to argue is that federalism and pillarization are two functionally equivalent modes of segmentation and integration of culturally heterogeneous populations. Moreover, I have suggested that the question of which mode is to be implemented is decided by the strategies of the dominant elites at specific junctures in a country's history. Their choice of strategy, in turn, depends on earlier choices which have been made at previous important junctures and whose repercussions have materialized in institutional structures. In centralized systems, I have suggested, pillarization is the obvious choice. In federal systems, pillarization is only regarded as a second best solution. For the elites, both modes constitute alternative forms of social control. Finally, I have suggested that both modes are still with us although they have no longer the same encapsulating effect they used to have in the past. I have proposed that they both provoke typical efforts of democratization from below: pillarization leads to demands for the democratization of social institutions, while federalism implies demands for the democratization of political institutions.

Thus, I agree with Scholten, who maintains that there never was a stability problem in search of a solution, neither in the Netherlands, nor in Switzerland. This implies, of course, that elite accommodation did not fulfill the stabilizing function attributed to it by consociational theory. There was and is segmentation to be sure, but segmentation does not necessarily imply mutual hostility. It may also lead to mutual ignorance, as the divided community of Swiss sociologists graphically illustrates. This type of relationship is, of course, more likely in the case of the territorial segmentation of Swiss federalism, but it is not improbable either in the case where people live side by side in a pillarized community. Common values of mutual respect and tolerance are not necessarily required for peaceful coexistence of different cultural communities; a pragmatic attitude which permits the other to live his or her life as long as s/he does not interfere with one's own is all that is required. Such fundamentally pragmatic orientations are characteristic of both countries. There was and is elite accommodation, to be sure, but elite accommodation was not an elite reaction to the dangers posed by segmentation for the survival of democracy. I agree with Daalder (1971) that in both countries traditions of political accommodation long preceded the processes of political modernization and the segmentation it implied.<sup>11</sup> Such an accommodative posture on the part of the elites is quite compatible with the idea that they have more or less consciously chosen modes of segmentation to control their followers. Keeping their followers under control enhances their own power position as intermediaries in the political process. Moreover, elite accommodation is facilitated by the exclusion of the followers. The various representatives of the different subcultures may form 'distributional coalitions' at the expense of all of their followers.

Consociational theory can probably not be saved. Its former major representatives have moved off in different directions (Main 1987): Lehmbruch, for example, has become a major participant in the neo-corporatist crowd, Steiner promotes the study of different decision modes, Lijphart has taken to the construction of models of democracy based on institutional characteristics of political systems. The protagonists have moved off, but they have left behind some unfinished business, which continues to haunt their present work. Thus, the distinction between centralism and federalism reappears as a second major axis in Lijphart's (1984, 1989) models of democracy. While I am very sympathetic with the general thrust of Lijphart's present argument, I still think that we should get the original cases right, before we start making general arguments covering the whole range of the liberal democracies. It is in this spirit that I have attempted to pinpoint the fundamental differences between the two small European democracies I know best and like most.

## Notes

1. In his recent reassessment of Dutch politics, Lijphart (1989) also stresses the continuities in the Dutch political system rather than the more recent changes.
2. The unitary Helvetic Republic imposed by the French armies in 1798 had never been a success. In 1803 already, the French had given in: by the Act of Mediation they had reintroduced the federal system.
3. There is the exception of the two higher technical schools which are administered federally.
4. Stuurman (1984: 71) is prepared to talk of 'pillars' only in the case of organizational systems based on religious identification criteria. Most observers would, however, include segmented organizational structures based on class criteria as well.
5. For the consociational theory to apply, cultural diversity is not sufficient; the different cultures have to be segmented from each other (Steiner 1981).
6. The small Rhaeto-Romanic group being associated with the dominant German one.
7. On the level of officers, interregional contacts are more frequent, but this is a point to be discussed more fully below.
8. Or, in De Swaan's (1988: 103) formulation: 'The result of this "pillarization" was a transition from networks of local control to a series of national networks, one for each "pillar", connected at the top through bargaining among the various elites'.
9. This aspect of federalism is usually recognized by consociational theorists. Thus, Obler et al. (1977) note with respect to Switzerland that 'because of federal structure, many of the tricky problems for a subcultural country are dealt with primarily on the cantonal and even at the local level'.
10. As is noted by Kerr (1987: 123), 'one is hard pressed to speak of federal elections in terms of the national arena of party competition; it is more apt to speak of political contests being fought out in spatially segmented spheres of competition, defined by the relative weight of the various axes on which these partisan conflicts turn'.
11. Obviously, I also think he is right to suppose that the strategy of elites 'may go far to determine how cleavages are handled in a political society, to what extent they become loaded with political tension, and to what degree subcultural divisions are solved in a spirit of tolerance and accommodation, or by violence and repression.' Daalder does not use the term 'strategy', but speaks of elite 'culture'. I prefer the former term, because it stresses the fact that elites make deliberate choices, and act self-consciously.

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