On the origins of the Consociational Model
Daalder, H.

Citation
Daalder, H. (1984). On the origins of the Consociational Model. *Acta Politica*, *19: 1984*(1), 97-116.
Retrieved from https://hdl.handle.net/1887/3452429

Version: Publisher's Version
License: Leiden University Non-exclusive license
Downloaded from: https://hdl.handle.net/1887/3452429

Note: To cite this publication please use the final published version (if applicable).

On the origins of the consociational democracy model

H. Daalder

Introduction

There is little doubt about the moment when the consociational democracy model was first launched in an international environment of professional political scientists. In the winter of 1966-1967 I was asked by the then Secretary-General of the International Political Science Association, Serge Hurtig, to organize a panel on *Recent Typologies of Political Regimes* for its September 1967 Brussels Congress. At the request of the University of California Press, I had just read the manuscript of *The Politics of Accommodation: Pluralism and Democracy in the Netherlands* by Arend Lijphart – a young scholar I had only once met. The book presented in my view an excellent example of a particular *genre*: that of a theoretical country study. In Lijphart's own words, his book was 'an extended theoretical argument based on a single case of particular significance to pluralist theory', without an attempt 'to provide an exhaustive description of all facets of the political system'.[1] Since his gymnasium days in Holland, Lijphart had studied in the USA. He had done his graduate work in the Yale political science department which then comprised such luminaries as Gabriel A. Almond, Robert A. Dahl and Karl W. Deutsch. He subsequently taught at Elmira and Berkeley. He was therefore fully *au courant* of prevailing theories and models in American political science writing. Having read his manuscript, I asked Lijphart to prepare a paper for the Brussels panel, subjecting the then influential typology of comparative political systems of Gabriel Almond[2] to a critique. Lijphart complied with a lengthy paper, entitled 'Typologies of Democratic Regimes', which was published soon afterwards as the lead article in the first (April) issue of the new journal *Comparative Political Studies*.[3] Not, long afterwards, in January 1969, *World Politics* published another full theoretical statement under the very title 'Consociational Democracy'.[4] In the meantime, Lijphart had been appointed to the Chair of International Relations at Leiden University. On 1st February 1969 he addressed the Dutch *Kring voor Wetenschap der Politiek*

with a paper 'Kentering in de Nederlandse Politiek'.[5] In that paper he sought to apply his general theoretical argument to the changes which seemed to mark Dutch political and social developments at the time. In the Dutch case these seemed to erode the neat model, which he had painted in his book – written two years earlier, but published in English in 1968, and also offered in a Dutch edition in the same year.[6]

While Lijphart researched and expanded his views, others had independently travelled a similar road. Thus Gerhard Lehmbruch had written a short book entitled *Proporzdemokratie*[7], which was based mainly on an analysis of the cases of Austria and Switzerland. Again at my request, Lehmbruch had submitted his findings to the Brussels 1967 panel on *Recent Changes in Typologies*, with a paper 'A Non-competitive Pattern of Conflict Management in Liberal Democracies: the Case of Switzerland, Austria, and Lebanon'.[8] Within a group of scholars consciously seeking to promote the general study of the smaller European Democracies (headed by Robert A. Dahl, Val R. Lorwin, Stein Rokkan and the author of this paper), Stein Rokkan was to elaborate his general cleavages model of mass politics[9], while Val R. Lorwin – a historian with detailed knowledge of the international labour movement and European politics, notably France and Belgium – developed the concept of 'segmented pluralism' which sought to trace the degree of ideological divisiveness in European countries on a comparative basis.[10] Contrasts between Belgium and Switzerland, notably on the degree of tension on the linguistic issue as well in the general tightness of the organization of *familles spirituelles* in the two countries, offered much food for debate. This debate was fanned further when two other authors contacted the Smaller European Democracies group. Thus, after the death of Otto Kirchheimer who was to have been the expert on Austria in our group, his pupil Rodney Stiefbold (a young American who had worked intensively on Austrian politics) offered to write a monograph on Austrian politics.[11] At the same time, Jürg Steiner, a Swiss political scientist who had done graduate work at the University of Mannheim, submitted an elaborate manuscript on Switzerland for our criticism. His book on Switzerland *Gewaltlose Politik und Kulturelle Vielfalt: Hypothesen entwickelt am Beispiel der Schweiz* was published in 1970, followed by an American edition by the University of North Carolina Press – the University to which Steiner had moved in the meantime – entitled *Amicable Agreement versus Majority Rule: Conflict Resolution in Switzerland.*[12]

After these initial contacts between 1967 and 1970, meetings between the various authors were few and accidental. But their work has become incorporated in the general literature of comparative politics, in a variety of ways. Lijphart became by far the most-cited political scientist, working in

and on Holland. Robert A. Dahl integrated the consociational democracy literature into his general comparative analyses, e.g., in chapter 7 of his book *Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition*[13], entitled 'Subcultures, Cleavage Patterns and Governmental Effectiveness' which built on his earlier analyses in the same direction in *Political Oppositions in Western Democracies.*[14] In 1974 Kenneth D. McRae brought a number of writings of different authors together into a separate reader *Consociational Democracy: Political Accommodation in Segmented Societies.*[15] I was asked in 1973 by the editors of *World Politics* to write a review article entitled 'The Consociational Democracy Theme'[16] in which I included besides Lijphart, Lehmbruch and Jürg Steiner the excellent Dutch-language study of Lucian Huyse *Passiviteit, Pacificatie en Verzuiling in de Belgische Politiek*, and two further monographs by Eric A. Nordlinger and G. Bingham Powel. And, of course, Lijphart himself wrote a large number of theoretical and empirical, as well as methodological papers in the 1970s which he eventually consolidated in his book *Democracy in Plural Societies: A Comparative Exploration.*[17]

The writings on 'consociational democracy' have had a massive impact in the field of comparative politics writing, while Lijphart's analysis of the Dutch case has been highly influential within the Netherlands and in the formation of a stereotyped view of Dutch politics abroad. This degree of success has led critics to assume the existence of a 'school' post factum, and to erect a rigorous 'model' or even a 'formal theory' – to some degree of their own making – at which they have tilted with considerable ardour and conviction.[18]

I shall not join the fray. Instead, I shall focus on the pedigree of the concept of consociational democracy. First, I shall attempt a sketch of interpretations of Dutch politics and society which preceded Lijphart's 1968 book. Then, I shall review the state of comparative politics writing before Lijphart made his contribution to that literature. Finally, I shall give a short assessment of the effects of the marriage which Lijphart achieved between the two.

Interpretations of Dutch politics before Lijphart

From 'schotjes' to 'zuilen' or unity in diversity

The period of war and occupation between 1940 and 1945 brought about a substantial shift in the evaluation of the relation between 'nation' and 'subcultural groups' in the Netherlands. Both before 1939 and also during the war period, there had been a distinct nationalist, occasionally even

authoritarian, sentiment in favour of one undivided nation. Such sentiments had been expressed in *De Nederlandse Unie* – a mass movement whose leaders had proclaimed the need for a national regeneration in 1940, in a climate of anti-party sentiment fanned by the Germans who hoped for *Pétainiste* developments in the Netherlands. Similar views had been canvassed in part of the Resistance, and also in the milieu of London exiles (Queen Wilhelmina being a particularly influential example). Yet, such sentiments sat uneasily with the traditional diversity in outlook and social organization in the Netherlands. If war and occupation brought some leaders together across former divides, many people tended rather to turn inward, towards the safety of like-minded family and friends, with different Churches providing at least some degree of shelter untouched by strong national-socialist indoctrination. The outcome of the war resulted, therefore, not in the disappearance of former social organizations, but rather in their reconstruction albeit often in new forms, sometimes with new leaders and new programmes.[19] Typically, separate organizations were no longer seen as erecting undesirable 'schotjes' (partitions between people fundamentally at one), but as 'zuilen' – pillars which each from its special position gave support to a common state. Such a reinterpretation had a powerful effect on the interpretations of Dutch politics and society among authors of different disciplines.

Debates among historians

The approach and outbreak of war led many historians to a search for the essence and values of Dutch national character.[20] Traditionally, Dutch historians had been engaged in a great debate on the nature of the Revolt. Most of them had treated this in a 'little Holland' perspective, to which others (e.g. Pieter Geyl) opposed a 'greater Netherlands' one. There had been substantial disagreement on the causes of the Revolt (e.g. on the role of socio-economic factors; on the part played by different classes, religious groups, cities and provinces; and in the evaluation of particular statesmen such as Maurice or Oldenbarnevelt). There had also been conflicting interpretations of the unification process after 1795, of the advent of responsible government and democracy, and of the role which different groups played in such processes in the 19th and early 20th century.

War and its aftermath had a substantial effect on such discussions. On the one hand, the post-war expansion of universities (with Calvinist and Catholics academic institutions gradually receiving 100% state support on a par with other universities) led to an institutionalization of diversity. Not unnaturally, Calvinists, Catholics, and Socialists concentrated their work

to a considerable extent on the study of what they regarded as the emancipation of their own groups in society, which in their view a dominant Liberal historiography had tended to neglect.[21] Separate institutions were established such as the *Katholiek Documentatiecentrum* in Nijmegen, and the *Historisch Documentatiecentrum voor het Nederlands Protestantisme* of the Free University in Amsterdam, while the *International Institute of Social History* in Amsterdam played a very much similar role for socialist and radical groupings. But on the other hand, the professionalization and cooperation at the national level of historians also increased.

On the whole, the post-1945 period showed therefore a more pluralist and tolerant climate. Interpretations from different ideological perspectives, and analyses of the role of different ideological groups, were no longer seen as inexorably rivalling, but as potentially complimentary ones. The very metaphor of *verzuiling* contributed to this development, because it suggested equal value and equal rights for different groups. When the sociologists Jacques van Doorn and Jan Ponsioen defined *verzuiling* in terms of the simultaneous existence of more than one ideological organization for similar social tasks[22], the historian I. Schöffer objected to such a definition. It neglected in his view the fundamental characteristics of *verzuiling* which implied mutual recognition, the conscious view that each separate ideological organization represented only a part which provided support to an overarching, larger whole.[23] Nuances and mutual acceptance became the prevailing modes of debate rather than one of exclusive claims and unsolvable combat. Eventually, a reader like the two-volume *Vaderlands Verleden in Veelvoud*[24], came to offer contributions on Dutch history by professional historians and others in which there is considerable ideological diversity, but nothing like sectarian controversy or ideological apportionment.

Developments in sociology

Dutch sociology was to a large extent born from a school of descriptive local studies entitled *sociografie*.[25] The disciples of the founder of this School, H. N. ter Veen, came to occupy the major chairs of sociology in the Netherlands after 1945. E. W. Hofstee established the department of rural sociology at Wageningen and contributed powerfully towards insight in regional diversities in social change and modernization. F. van Heek at Leiden worked mainly in the field of social stratification, but also published an important study on the position of Catholics in Dutch society. Undoubtedly the major sociologist of *verzuilings*-studies, however, was J. P. Kruijt, whose first major study dealt with the process of secularization in

the Netherlands.[26] Kruijt treated the phenomenon of *verzuiling* both conceptually and empirically, developing a series of measures for studying the degree of social segmentation of different sectors and groups in Dutch society.[27] Kruijt also cooperated closely with the theologian and social critic Willem Banning, e.g. in setting up a sociological institute for the Dutch Reformed Church. Both as a writer[28], as a powerful actor within the Dutch Reformed Church (seeking to combat its traditional tendency to fall apart in separate sectarian organizations), and as an influential thinker in the recasting of the new *Partij van de Arbeid* (Labour Party), Banning played a singular role in post-war Dutch society, combining a desire to overcome traditional cleavage lines with general respect for different historical and spiritual traditions in Dutch life.

If earlier scholars concentrated mainly on descriptive studies and analyses of ideological traditions, younger sociologists like Jacques van Doorn, Jan Ponsioen and others sought to redirect the analysis of *verzuiling* in more functional and systemic terms. Thus when the Roman Catholic bishops issued a pastoral letter in 1954 reemphasizing the need for Catholics to stay apart and warning notably against the lure of socialist beliefs and organizations, Van Doorn and others published a special *verzuiling*-issue of the *Sociologische Gids* in 1956[25] (in which they emphasized the social control element in the *verzuiling*-process), while scholars of different disciplines joined to produce an issue of the academic monthly of the Labour Party *Socialisme en Democratie* (1957-jan.) on the same subject. In sociology as much as in history, separate research institutes were established along ideological lines (e.g. the *Katholiek Sociaal Kerkelijk Instituut* in The Hague, the departments of sociology of the Catholic University at Nijmegen, the Calvinist Free University in Amsterdam, the Kruijt-Banning institute for the Dutch Reformed Church mentioned earlier, etc.).

In the analysis of *verzuiling* a variety of approaches competed with one another: analyses of ideological traditions, regional analyses including specific community studies[30]¹, studies of the degree of *verzuiling* in different social sectors[31] and more general systemic analyses. Later, detailed sociological studies appeared, on the emancipation of specific social groups, e.g. Calvinists[32], Catholics[33] and emancipationist movements generally.[34] The upshot of it all tended to be both a growing knowledge of and respect for the traditions of different social groups, *and* a greater awareness of the whole in more functional and systemic terms. Through specific studies in the field of the sociology of religion (often published in *Social Compass*), and as a few more general analyses of Dutch society as a whole, Dutch developments began to receive attention also outside Dutch borders.[35]

Interpretations by constitutional lawyers

As compared to historians and sociologists, constitutional lawyers were generally less affected by the ideological pluralism of Dutch society. One could find something of a Calvinist school in constitutional law, emphasizing – in the footsteps of the Christian-Historical leader A. F. de Savornin Lohman – the historical role of the monarchy in establishing the constitution and holding that there was a natural duality between *Overheid* (Government) and *Onderdaan* (subject), authority being founded not on popular consent, but on God's commands. But the potentially authoritarian effect of such teachings was blunted by the simultaneous acceptance in Calvinist circles of Kuyper's insistence on 'sovereignty of spheres' (*soevereiniteit in eigen kring*), later formalized in Herman Dooyeweerd's work on the sovereignty of the *Wetsidee*.[36] Similarly, in certain Catholic milieus there was in the 1930s a strong insistence on the independence of the Crown and of Government[37], but the practical effect of such teachings was to some degree counteracted by corporatist ideals which according to the principle of subsidiarity presupposed some degree of autonomy for different social activities. The experiences of the 1930s and the *débacle* of 1940 tended to foster a more general insistence on the part of many writers on the Dutch constitutional system on the need for strong government authority, coupled with pleas for a potential reduction in the role of Parliament and voters. During the war both in London and in the occupied Netherlands such sentiments led to fairly authoritarian plans for post-war government, which in the end stranded, however, on the continuing effect of existing constitutional arrangements, the return of prewar politicians in Parliament in 1945, and the activities of more democratic elements in the Resistance.[38]

Once the dust of such debates on the renewal of the Dutch constitutional framework had settled after 1946, constitutional lawyers generally turned towards interpretations of positive constitutional and administrative law – which provided a common ground for specialists of whatever ideological origin. Such debates as were carried on, concerned the better working of democracy and democratic institutions rather than their replacement by more authoritarian forms of government: e.g. discussions on the advantages and disadvantages of the extreme proportional representation system in force[39]; the idea of some kind of *Proporz*-executive[40] – which never came about at the level of central government although it was applied increasingly in local government – as against a system providing for clearer government-opposition relations; and different views on the relation which ought to prevail between government and parliament (which some wanted to be *monist* in character, along a more or less convention-type of

reasoning, and others preferred to see in dualist terms, with the Cabinet and Parliament each playing a distinct role, although in reciprocal dependence on one another).

Contributions of political scientists before 1967

As compared to the practitioners of the three disciplines treated sofar, Dutch political scientists were few in number, and had initially little influence in practice. Of the first three holders of chairs, Jan Barents (Amsterdam), L. W. G. Schlichting (Nijmegen) and J. J. de Jong (Free University), only the latter contributed in a definite degree to an interpretation of the workings of the Dutch political system (e.g. through his dissertation on political parties, his work on Dutch and comparative electoral research, and his smaller study of pressure groups.[41] De Jong's work was often couched in a conventional Calvinist mould, but he contributed to the establishment of a more empirical tradition.[42]

Of somewhat greater importance for our subject were the contributions of two semi-outsiders in Dutch political science, J. J. Schokking and W. Verkade. Both had been among pre-war critics of the divisions in Dutch society.[43] During and immediately after the Second World War Schokking had analyzed Dutch political processes, both internal and external ones in terms of heavy ideologization which paradoxically contributed towards a practice of arranging 'matters in according with complicated schemes which were carefully prepared and worked out with the utmost precisions', concluding that 'politics and administration became almost indistinguishable in this way'.[44] Verkade wrote a substantial article on domestic politics for a two-volume work *Nederland tussen de Natiën*[45] which in its very title: '*Eigengereidheid en Samenwerking: Schets van de Nederlandse Binnenlandse Politiek*' (Selfwilledness and Cooperation in Dutch Politics) comes near the paradox tht the consociational democracy model attempts to solve. (Verkade was later to attempt a large-scale comparative study *Democratic Parties in the Low Countries and Germany*[46] which probably because of its narrative character and laborious language never had the analytical impact his Dutch article conveyed).

If one seeks for contributions in the way of themes, rather than of authors, two issues stand out during the 1950s and early 1960s. First, there was the debate (instigated notably by the new *Partij van de Arbeid*) on the continued justification of religious parties.[47] Typically, the new Labour Party consciously established different groupings within its fold, catering for different ideological families. Second, a discussion developed on what Prime Minister Willem Drees was to castigate as the political schizophrenia

of decision-making in Parliament. This consisted in his view of the tendency of specialized members of Parliament to plead for higher expenditures on sectoral policies, while at the same time financial spokesmen of the same parties were wont to reproach ministers of finance for being insufficiently strict in restraining government outlays.[48] Such a reproach was formalized in a specific view of the policy process in the dissertation of his son and budget director W. Drees Jr.[49] who spoke of 'closed circuits', and by a younger political scientist Joop van den Berg who coined the phrase *ijzeren ring* (iron ring) to characterize the role of sectoral interest politics[50].

Finally, a new empirical tradition began to be established in Dutch political science, under the impact of the behavioural revolution generally. One early influence on this development was S. J. Eldersveld, who spent a year as visiting professor at the University of Amsterdam in the mid-1950s. Under the auspices of the Dutch *Kring voor Wetenschap der Politiek* an electoral survey was carried out in 1956 in an Amsterdam Suburb, on the model of Lazarsfeld's Erie County Study of 1940 (see J. J. de Jong 1956 and the mimeographed report, published after a rather chequered course of events, by a team of younger staff members of the Amsterdam Institute of Political Science under the title *Kiezer en Verkiezing* in 1963.) Two years earlier, Hans Daudt had delivered his onslaught on American voting studies in his dissertation *Floating Voters and the Floating Vote* (1961).

Through studies such as these, questions of political participation (or should one say: political apathy?) came to the fore in Dutch political science, adding fuel to a debate on the actual working of democracy in the Netherlands so far carried on mainly in institutional or processual terms. In 1966 new initiatives were taken by the four holders of Chairs in political science in the Netherlands by then active, to ensure regular voting surveys at each election, starting with the Free University survey of 1967. But is good to remember that the major results of these studies were to come in only after Lijphart had already finished his manuscript.

A personal intellectual biography

Against the background of such analyses my own contribution to the interpretation of Dutch politics before Lijphart may become clearer. As my work apparently figures as part of the consociational democracy 'school', I cannot help giving a rather extensive (not to say: immodest) intellectual autobiography. One of my oldest articles discussed the ideological factor in conceptions of Dutch foreign policy.[51] Another early article commissioned by Verkade analyzed the degree of representativeness of Dutch parties.[52] Studying in London in 1954 I was asked to write a general

article in English on the Dutch political process for the British Journal *Political Studies*.[53] This request forced me for the first time to think through the phenomenon of Dutch politics in the terminology and operative ideals of another political system. In it one finds many of the themes which have concerned me ever since; e.g. the manner in which Dutch political parties crystallized around the three issues of the suffrage, the control of schools and class conflict; hence, the growth of what I termed two party systems: one formed on the progressive-conservative dichotomy, one on differences in *Weltanschauung*; the fargoing autonomy of electoral politics on the one hand and government policy making on the other, with rigid party relations and heavy ideological political dialogues leading in practice to a considerable freedom for governments to engage in matter-of-fact politics; the central position in Dutch politics of the Catholics (Romme figuring as the *Kat van de Kinderdijk'* in J. H. Scheps' telling characterization, jumping from left to right to balance the party), the Catholic party having numerical power but little unity except for a minority cause; the paradox of long cabinet crises with reasonably stable cabinets, possibly explained by a certain de-emphasis of careerist parliamentary politics due to the list-system of PR, a small egalitarian Parliament and ministerial recruitment outside parliamentary ranks; the continuing dualism between government and parliament and its possible explanations[54]; the effect of social segmentation characterized by a strong insistence on autonomy for each subculture, but also causing a situation in which all state activity had to be founded on – or at least to take into account – the constituent groups through collegial forms of representation in all relevant sectors; and the ensuing tendency of what one was to call later policy-making in a depoliticized manner.

In the early 1960s I returned to these themes in three publications.[55] In my 1964 inaugural address I attempted to explain the low esteem of politics and widespread political apathy in the Netherlands through five propositions: the historical regent tradition; the separate organization of ideological families in Dutch society; the diffuse nature and hence low degree of political accountability in Dutch politics; the depoliticization of the two major cleavages of class and religion in Dutch politics; and in actual policy-making the simultaneous existence of rule by an anonymous empire of pressure groups (the term is of course S. E. Finer's[56]), and the rather incidental comings and goings of individual politicians.

At about the same time I worked on my inaugural address and a somewhat earlier lecture on similar themes,[57] I wrote the rather longer paper 'The Netherlands: Opposition in a Segmented Society' for the Dahl *Oppositions* volume.[58] Generally the themes are similar to the two contemporary

Dutch lectures, but the tone is different. For Dutch audiences I spoke and wrote in the critical vein which was soon to become the new orthodoxy (Cf. Glastra van Loon[59]; the D'66 programme; the Labour Party report *Een Stem die Telt* (1967), with political scientists such as H. Daudt, J. Kooiman en E. van Thijn as members; E. van Thijn[60]; the Cals-Donner Committee 1971; for critical evaluation by foreign observers see Geismann and Gladdish[61]). My *Oppositions* article, on the other hand, was concerned with explaining the slow, but in a comparative perspective very peaceful development of a pluralist democratic system. For those who tend to regard my analyses and those of Lijphart as close or even interchangeable, it might be instructive to compare pp. 216-220 of this *Oppositions*-chapter with Lijphart's 1968 book – both analyses having been written and completed without either of us knowing the other's manuscript.

Not accidentally, – given the theoretical environment to which both Lijphart and I were exposed at the time – the question is the same: 'In view of these sharp divisions, what have been the factors that have prevented the social system from flying apart? What has restrained any subculture, or any two subcultures in coalition, from destroying potential adversaries by political weapons?'

Part of the explanation, I suggested, should be historical:

– political elites historically were in a strong position so that they had little fear for the danger of total challenge or replacement and hence showed a degree of permissiveness which lessened the chances of violence and minimized political repression in Dutch history;

– throughout Dutch history elite groups were never completely closed or homogeneous. As no single group had a chance to impose its will, this nurtured a climate of mutual tolerance and accommodation, and made people ready to leave others alone provided they were left alone themselves;

– reciprocal prejudices notwithstanding, natural pluralism caused differences of opinion to generate relatively little heat; there tended to be a difference of tactics between those working for reform from within and those who sought to challenge the system; but even among the latter there was widespread awareness that at most power might be shared rather than conquered;

– older traditions of compromise were transferred to newcomers into the political process;

– against the emancipationist pressures of Calvinists, Catholics and Socialists, which were successful at the level of the electorate and Parliament, certain government institutions (e.g. the Cabinet, the judiciary and the bureaucracy) retained some degree of unity above the groups;

– the need for coalition government forced groups to enter into transactions on matters of common concern. The bureaucracy, for all its increasing diversity of recruitment, retained a common tradition – facilitating it to play a brokerage function. The Monarchy remained above party, although political groups differed historically in their relation to it;

– one might speak of an effect of accumulating experience, a learning process suggesting that a recognition of claims for autonomy need not conflict with practical cooperation among groups.

In addition to these historical factors I singled out certain contemporary forces sustaining the system:

– it was impossible for any single subculture to obtain an independent majority, and there was little lasting advantage for any two subcultures to unite against a third;

– the absence of stable majority positions for either the religious groupings or the non-confessional ones forced both camps to dampen old antagonisms on the clerical-anticlerical front;

– socio-economic tensions were simultaneously moderated because of the brokerage position of the socially heterogeneous religious parties;

– interest groups operated across subcultures, or at least forged confederal links among them;

– finally, the need to take many interest groups into account necessitated 'considerable discretionary authority for the leaders of the interest groups involved ... strong centralization of power at the top ... [enabling leaders] to take the responsibility for farreaching decisions'. This put a premium on complex compromises. 'To make them digestible for widely different ideological groupings, [such compromises] are often couched in highly abstract, quasi-scientific terms. Thus many issues are consciously depoliticized, paradoxically as a result of ideological divisiveness, but also as a means to offset its centrifugal tendencies'. (p. 220).

Habent sua fata libelli. A number of authors writing in English adopted my rather tentative descriptions and generalizations on Dutch politics as more authoritative than they were.[62] Lijphart's writings came as a relief because of the intelligence and freshness of his analyses alike. If he knew perhaps less of certain details of Dutch politics than some plodding workers in the Dutch vineyards, his general political science tools were greatly superior.

Some puzzles to be solved

The experience of war and of post-war reconstruction had led to a situation in which the major ideological groups in Dutch society recognized each

other's rights and claims for autonomy. But certain problems remained on the agenda:

– Was there a limit to the development of separate ideological organizations? Where did the 'particular' end, and the 'general', or at least the 'common', or at a minimum the 'confederal' begin?

– How were politics and policy-making to be conceived in a pluralist system of rigid ideological organizations?

– Given the need for compromise between plural interests, what was the place of leaders in the system and what the place of followers within organizations, let along of those less or not organized?

– The Dutch system, like any democracy, knew regular elections. But to what degree did these amount to a census, rather than choice? To what degree were politicians accountable to their own followers, and to a wider electorate?

– Given party relations, coalition government was inevitable. But how were cabinets and ministers to relate to Parliament, and to parties outside Parliament?

Puzzles like these made for an uneasy intellectual dialogue, which was soon to erupt in a loud-voiced debate on the need for 'more democracy' in the Netherlands. Lijphart's book was conceived before the full force of the reform movement in the Netherlands was felt. It was to appear in the middle of a new reform climate, and to be judged – anachronistically – in the light of a post-*vernieuwing* perspective.

The state of comparative politics before the mid-1960s

Traditionally, comparative politics writing consisted mainly of an historical-institutional approach, while geographic coverage tended to be limited to what Bryce called the *Modern Democracies* in Western Europe, the British Dominions and the USA. The bigger nations loomed particularly large in these studies. This inevitably coloured the few typological attempts to be found in the literature.[63] One standard theme was the confrontation of the British two-party model with what was easily termed the 'continental' model, of which the multiparty systems of Weimar-Germany and the French Third Republic apparently provided archetypes. If the British system, based on a single member plurality system, made for strong majority government, with the likelihood of alternation in government between a government *in esse* and a government *in posse* by His/Her Majesty's most Loyal Opposition, continental systems were thought to have fragmented party systems (fed by PR or comparable 'weak' electoral

systems), which made coalition government inevitable, to the clear disadvantage of both flexible government and democratic accountability. If such systems worked at all well, this was likely to be a happy circumstance (e.g. the privilege of smaller states which did not carry a heavy burden of decision-making in international politics, cf. Hermens, Friedrich).[64] Only few writers swam early against such prevalent currents.[65]

Some nuances were introduced in the literature through the writings of experts on comparative parties.[66] Coalition theorists and writers on comparative government-parliament relations (e.g. Von Beyme[67]) were to alert observers further to the variety of actual situations existing which did not fit the traditional British-Continental Europe dichotomy. But such developments came later than Lijphart's initial statement. One can point, however, to a growing body of monographic literature on and from countries which so far had not been too well represented in the dominant debates of the day. Of these Lijphart's study was to become a particularly prominent example.[68]

However, in the meantime comparative politics writing began to experience the effects of changes notably in American political science, perhaps too easily subsumed under the label of the behavioural revolution. Group theory and the findings of electoral research did much to discredit comfortable normative beliefs, paving the way for what was termed empirical democratic theory. Various theorems were developed as a result, including greater emphasis on the role of elites and of formal and informal groups, on different levels of participation in society, on attitudes towards the polity in general and authority in particular. At the same time, the desire to make political studies more scientific seemed to demand a greater role for formal theory including a replacement of the vocabulary of day-to-day political discourse with less ambiguous conceptualizations. This went together with the desire to test theories, both in time and space irrespective of particular nations, i.e., through cross-national as well as developmental studies.

If one were to single out the dominant forces behind such movements in the 1950s and 1960s, these would be found partly in certain political science departments (that of Yale where Lijphart studied being particularly prominent), partly in certain organizational networks. Of the latter three are particularly important: the *Committee on Comparative Politics* of the American Social Science Research Council chaired for a considerable time by Gabriel Almond; the work of the *International Committee on Political Sociology* which had S. M. Lipset and Stein Rokkan as its chief officers in the first decade after its formation in 1960; and the work of various scholars engaged in the collection of cross-national political data (e.g. the *World*

Handbook originally pioneered by Karl Deutsch and his associates in the *Yale Political Data Program*, and the work of Arthur S. Banks and Robert B. Textor in the *Cross-Polity Survey* – not to speak of the efforts within a variety of international organizations like the UN, and its specialized agencies, the OECD and later the European Communities).

In the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s many writers were concerned with the conditions of stable democratic rule, a not unnatural preoccupation for a generation which had experienced the depression, the rise of fascism and national-socialism, world war, the continuing challenge of communism and the rapid multiplication of new nations which generally substituted – inherited or imposed – democratic constitutions by more or less oppressive authoritarian regimes. Preoccupation with the conditions of democratic rule put European countries in a new light: were not the greater number of countries with relatively peaceful political development and stable democratic rule to be found in Western Europa, and should one not study such societies in greater detail, both diachronically and synchronically?

Such, in very rough outline, was the background against which scholars such as Lijphart developed. Before writing *The Politics of Accommodation* he had completed a study of policy-making in the Netherlands in relation to New Guinea with Almond and Deutsch on his Thesis Committee. For that study he had returned for one year to the Netherlands, immersing himself in the writings of Dutch scholars in many disciplines. His new opus was the result of his newly gained knowledge of Dutch politics and society seen through the lenses of theoretical concerns of American political science in which he had been reared.

An evaluation of Lijphart's Politics of Accommodation

Any evaluation of Lijphart's book *The Politics of Accommodation* must start with two basic facts. The book has had a measure of influence and acclaim in the international world of comparative politics which is rarely the case for any so-called country study. And in the Netherlands itself success was equally immediate and long-lasting among scholars in very different disciplines as well as a wider intellectual public. These successes are due to a combination of factors: the book is lucid in style and argumentation; it deals with major normative and empirical questions which have occupied scholars in many countries; and as far as the Dutch public is concerned, it touched issues of great intellectual and even ideological concern.

Even a casual inventory of the theories and subjects treated offers ample evidence of its range. It singles out the importance of political elites, both in

their attitudes and modes of cooperation. As such it is important for elite analysis and the study of elite political culture. It focuses equally on mass attitudes, and discusses issues such as mass apathy and participation. It gives due attention to the importance of intermediate groups (in the Tocqueville-Kornhauser key). It also traces specific patterns of group organization and membership – facing various arguments which different theoretical schools have put forward on the importance of cross-cutting cleavages for moderate politics. It is equally clear about mass attitudes towards authority, dealing with both the Kornhauser accessibility theme[69] and Eckstein's congruence of authority postulates. It replicates for the Netherlands a number of survey questions of the famous Almond and Verba study.[70] The book presents a number of competing theories about the possibilities of stable democratic rule in strongly divided (in Lorwin's phrase: segmented) societies, and seeks to specify under what conditions stable democratic rule is yet possible in what Lijphart regards with many other theorists as unpropitious circumstances. He checks and challenges a number of alternative theories which might account for stable politics in the Netherlands and finds them wanting. He is particularly clear-minded on what he terms the 'rules of the game' which pervade policy-making in the Netherlands, and does so in a manner which is closely akin to conclusions arrived at by Dahl and others.[71]

The 1968 book, as much as the more explicit *Typologies*-article of the same year[72], challenges normative and empirical statements on the working of governmental systems and party systems, and raises important issues on majority rule and democratic theory generally. If one is to pare his contribution to its essentials, one may say that he combines two important, but distinct theorems in modern political science: the Schumpeter-Downs-Dahl emphasis on the importance of competitive elites with the Simmel-Coser-Almond stress on the importance of the degree of fragmentation of political culture. He accepts the conventional view that competitive elite politics is likely to work well in systems with a homogeneous political culture (Almond's Anglo-American systems). But he disagrees with the Almondian view that a fragmented political culture inevitably makes for unstable and immobilist politics – insisting that elite cooperation may counteract such potential dangers. But in such a case, certain normative assumptions, taken from the competitive elite model must be dropped, including such wide-spread beliefs as simple majority rule, the values of open politics, and the decisive role of electoral choice. Instead, other rules must be adhered to, including a recognition of autonomous rights and mutual vetoes for otherwise conflicting social groups, proportional representation, and the need to leave political decision-making to

leaders transacting in secret with one another in a conscious attempt to depoliticize conflict.[73]

Is the influence of the book, then, all positive? I, too, continue to raise certain criticism against it notably as regards his use of the Dutch 'case'. The book is far from complete, and sometimes open to dispute, in its.

descriptive sections and specific interpretations of Dutch experiences. Perhaps the author seeks to squeeze too much by way of conclusions from one specific case, which he tends to treat in an overly systematic and static fashion. I have argued extensively elsewhere[74]; that Lijphart sees too much conflict, and hence must conjure up too prudent leaders, in the Netherlands of the first and second decades of this century. His study is mainly analytical rather than developmental. This accounts for the great clarity of his argumentation, but it makes him sometimes draw support from events and processes which probably cannot be taken out of context in the manner he does. It remains a matter of debate to what degree the Netherlands did have cross-cutting cleavages or not. In calling the different groups in Dutch society 'blocs', he tends to exaggerate both their likeness and their tightness – again paying too little attention to differences between groups and between time periods. In the hands of uncritical imitators, Lijphart's original and subtle analyses apparently lend themselves to arid simplifications, which causes uninformed observers to adduce the Dutch case in evidence of causes which the Dutch case cannot really support. It contributes to the development, also in the Netherlands, of inaccurate impressions about politics in successive decades of the 20th century before the onslaughts of the 1960s, which showed greater nuances than (non-)observers uncritically assume with the Lijphart-model in their pocket. Perhaps one reason for the attraction of the Lijphart model in the Netherlands has been that it seemed to legitimate the reform programme of those who wanted the Netherlands to be new and different, more 'democratic', away from consociational practices on the road to clear choices and causes.

Yet, at the same time the *Accommodations*-volume has had an immense effect on the manner in which both Dutch and foreign observers have interpreted Dutch experience. His work has raised interest widely in the further – comparative – study of Dutch politics. Without the book there would have been fewer studies by foreign Ph. D.-candidates whose work has done much to enrich our understanding of Dutch political life.[75] Nobody can neglect Lijphart's 'theoretical country study'. There are few authors (whether in Holland or in general comparative politics abroad) of whom the same can be said.

Notes

1. Lijphart, 1968-A, p. 15.
2. Almond, 1956.
3. Lijphart, 1968-C.
4. Lijphart, 1969-B.
5. Lijphart, 1969-A.
6. Lijphart, 1968-A and B.
7. Lehmbruch, 1967-A.
8. Lehmbruch, 1967-B, reprinted in McRae 1974.
9. Rokkan, 1967; 1968, 1970.
10. Lorwin, 1971.
11. Stiefbold, 1973.
12. Steiner, 1974.
13. R. A. Dahl, *Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition*, New Haven, 1971.
14. R. A. Dahl, *Political Oppositions in Western Democracies*, New Haven, 1966.
15. McRae, 1974.
16. Daalder, 1974-B.
17. Lijphart, 1977.
18. Van Schendelen, 1984 in this issue.
19. W. Drees Sr., *Van Mei tot Mei: Persoonlijke Herinneringen aan Bezetting en Verzet*, Assen, 1958; L. de Jong, *Het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden in de Tweede Wereldoorlog*, Den Haag, 1969; Bank, 1978; M. de Keizer, *De Gijzelaars van Sint Michielsgestel: Een Elite-Beraad in Oorlogstijd*, Alphen aan den Rijn, 1979.
20. J. Huizinga, *Nederland's Geestesmerk*, Leiden, 1935 (reprinted in J. Huizinga, *Verspreide Opstellen over de Geschiedenis van Nederland* (red. W. E. Kryl), Alphen aan den Rijn, 1982, pp. 282-315); J. Romein, *Beschouwingen over het Nederlandse Volkskarakter*, Leiden, 1942; A. J. C. Rüter, *De Nederlandse Natie en het Nederlandse Volkskarakter*, Utrecht, 1945; see also the recent survey article by Van Heerikhuizen, 1982 who treats both historians and sociologists, such as Steinmetz, Bouman, Bierens de Haan, Kruijt, etc.
21. Some notable examples of such emancipationist historiography are C. Smeenk and J. A. de Wilde, *Het Volk ten Baat: De Geschiedenis van de AR-Partij*, Groningen, 1949; N. de Rooy and L. J. Rogier, *In Vrijheid Herboren*, Den Haag, 1953.
22. Van Doorn, 1956; Ponsioen, 1956.
23. Schöffer, 1956, 1968, 1973.
24. Wels (ed.), 1980.
25. J. A. A. van Doorn, *Beeld en Betekenis van de Nederlandse Sociologie*, Utrecht, 1964.
26. Kruijt, 1933.
27. Kruijt, 1957-A-B, 1959; Kruijt and Goddijn, 1961.
28. W. Banning, *Hedendaagse Sociale Bewegingen: Achtergronden en Beginselen*. Arnhem, 1938 (many new editions and reprints).
29. Van Doorn, 1956; *Sociologische Gids*, 1956.

30. Gadourek, 1956.
31. Kruijt and Goddijn, 1961.
32. Hendriks, 1971; D. Th. Kuiper, *De Voormannen: Een Sociaal-Wetenschappelijke Studie over Ideologie, Konflikt en Kerngroepvorming binnen de Gereformeerde Wereld in Nederland tussen 1820 en 1930*, Meppel, 1972.
33. Goddijn, 1957; Thurlings, 1971.
34. Verwey-Jonker, 1961.
35. Moberg, 1961 and 1962; Matthes, 1965; Goudsblom, 1967; and later Steininger, 1975; Coleman, 1978; Bakvis, 1981.
36. H. Dooyeweerd, *De Wijsbegeerte der Wetsidee*, 3 vols., 1938; see also the excellent survey of A. M. Donner, Grondwetsstudie in Nederland 1848-1948, in: J. Valkhoff (ed.), *Grondwet en Maatschappij in Nederland 1848-1948*, Den Haag, 1948, pp. 327-362.
37. P. Kamphuisen, *Koning en Minister*, Nijmegen, 1935; A. L. de Block, *Toeneming van de Macht der Kroon*, Tilburg, 1938; C. P. M. Romme, *Erfelijk Nationaal Koningschap*, Amsterdam, 1938.
38. Drees Sr., see note 19 above; L. de Jong, see note 19 above, vols. 9 and 10.
39. J. F. Glastra van Loon, Kiezen of Delen, *Nederlands Juristenblad*, 1964, pp. 1133-42; 1161-67; A. M. Donner, *Iets over Kiesstelsels*, Amsterdam, 1967.
40. A. L. de Block, *Samenwerking in Nederland als Staatkundig Vraagstuk*, Den Haag, 1955.
41. J. J. de Jong, *Politieke Organisatie in West Europa na 1800*, Den Haag, 1951; J. J. de Jong, *Overheid en Onderdaan*, Wageningen, 1956; J. J. de Jong, et al., *Pressiegroepen: De Invloed van Georganiseerde Groepen op het Maatschappelijk en Politiek Leven*, Utrecht, 1959.
42. For an early example see the Free University dissertation of Hoogerwerf, 1964.
43. J. J. Schokking, *In de Klem der Verdeeldheid*, Utrecht, 1939.
44. J. J. Schokking, The Netherlands in a Changing World, *International Affairs*, 1947, pp. 347-348.
45. W. Verkade, Eigengereidheid en Samenwerking: Schets van de Nederlandse Binnenlandse Politiek, in: J. S. Bartstra and W. Banning (eds.), *Nederland tussen de Natiën*, vol. 1, Amsterdam, 1948, pp. 13-60.
46. Verkade, 1965.
47. S. W. Couwenberg, *Het Nederlandse Partijstelsel in Toekomstperspectief*, Den Haag, 1960.
48. W. Drees Sr., *De Vorming van het Regeringsbeleid*, Assen, 1965.
49. W. Drees Jr., *On the Level of Government Expenditure in the Netherlands after the War*, Leiden, 1955.
50. Van den Berg and Molleman, 1974.
51. H. Daalder, Nederland en de Wereld: 1940-1945, *Tijdschrift voor Geschiedenis*, vol. 66, 1953, pp. 170-200; also in English translation in J. H. Leurdijk (ed.), *The Foreign Policy of the Netherlands*, Alphen aan den Rijn, 1978, pp. 49-87.
52. H. Daalder, De Politieke Partijen en de Democratie, *Het Gemenebest*, vol. 15, 1954, pp. 124-134.

53. Daalder, 1955.
54. H. Daalder, *The Relation between Cabinet and Parliament in the Netherlands*, paper presented to the Rome Congress of the International Political Science Association, 1958.
55. Daalder, 1964; 1965; 1966.
56. S. E. Finer, *Anonymous Empire: A Study of the Lobby in Great Britain*, London, 1958.
57. Daalder, 1965.
58. See note 14 above.
59. See note 39 above.
60. E. van Thijn, Van Partijvernieuwing naar Stembusaccoorden, in E. Jurgens et al., *Partijvernieuwing?*, Amsterdam, 1967, pp. 54-73.
61. Geismann, 1964 and Gladdish, 1973.
62. A. D. Robinson, *Dutch Organized Agriculture in International Politics*, Den Haag, 1961; Bone, 1962; Goudsblom, 1967; Weil, 1970, which contains pages of outright plagiarism of Daalder, 1958 (see note 54 above).
63. For critical assessments see: H. Eckstein, A Perspective on Comparative Politics, in H. Eckstein and David E. Apter (eds.), *Comparative Politics: A Reader*, New York, 1963, pp. 3-32; H. Daalder, The Comparative Study of European Parties and Party Systems: An Overview, in: H. Daalder and Peter Mair (eds.), *Western European Party Systems: Continuity and Change*, London, 1983, pp. 1-27.
64. F. A. Hermens, *Democracy or Anarchy? A Study of Proportional Representation*, South Bend, Ind., 1941; C. J. Friedrich, *Constitutional Government and Democracy: Theory and Practice in America and Europe*, Boston, 1941.
65. D. A. Rustow, Scandinavia: Working Multiparty Systems, in: S. Neumann (ed.), *Modern Political Parties*, Chicago, 1956; K. C. Wheare, *Legislatures*, Oxford, 1963.
66. M. Duverger, *Les Partis Politiques*, Paris, 1951; S. Neumann, *Modern Political Parties*, Chicago, 1956; Sartori, 1966.
67. K. von Beyme, *Die Parlamentarische Regierungssysteme in Europa*, Munich, 1973.
68. See for earlier examples Rustow, 1955; Eckstein, 1966 and the various chapters in the Dahl, 1966 *Oppositions* volume (see note 14 above).
69. W. Kornhauser, *The Politicis of Mass Society*, Glencoe, 1959.
70. G. A. Almond and S. Verba, *The Civic Culture*, Princeton, 1963.
71. See note 13 and 14 above.
72. Lijphart, 1968-C.
73. For a summary of Lijphart's arguments, see Van Schendelen in this issue and the summary of the general consociational democracy argument in Daalder, 1974-B.
74. Daalder, 1971; 1974-B; 1981.
75. Wolinetz, 1973; Houska, 1979; Lepszy, 1979; Rochon, 1980; Scholten, 1980; Bakvis, 1981.

On Belgian pillarization:

Changing perspectives*

J. Billiet

Since the middle of the fifties, pillarization in Belgium and in the Netherlands has attracted the attention of two separate disciplines in the social sciences. On the one hand, there is a sociological tradition that, following J. P. Kruyt, views pillarization as a structural phenomenon.[1] On the other hand, according to the work of A. Lijphart, there is a political science tradition that focuses attention on conflict regulation in a democratic system characterized by thoroughgoing segmentation.[2] Although the pillarized structures have been considered as providing opportunities and facilitating conditions for the pacification policy of the political elites, and in spite of the fact that the political parties are conceived as the most important pillar organizations, the two traditions developed considerably independently of each other.[3] Nevertheless, there are sufficient grounds to relate themes from the two approaches. R. Steininger, for example, points out the strategic role of the political elites in the creation of pillarization.[4] M. van Schendelen argues that pillarization should be analyzed as a dependent variable, i.e., as a result of political processes.[5] I. Scholten shows the negative consequences of the separate development when he contends that, in the consociational democracy school, the action of the political elites was evaluated erroneously because of an inadequate appreciation of the significance of pillarization. The 'self-denying prophecy' hypothesis, indeed, is only plausible if pillarization unleashes dangerous centrifugal forces. But if pillarization is a stabilizing instrument, there is no paradox that needs to be explained.[6]

In this paper, I will outline some connections between the two traditions. In the first part, the sociology-of-religion approach to Belgian pillarization will be discussed with particular attention to the underlying assumptions. The central question, namely how pillarization maintains itself in spite of increasing secularization, follows from the way in which

* I am very grateful to K. Dobbelaere, J. Aldous, P. Verstraete and J. Servaes for their suggestions.