EDITED BY
SARAH
DE LANGE
TOM
LOUWERSE
PAUL
'T HART
CAROLIEN
VAN HAM

The Oxford Handbook *of* DUTCH POLITICS

THE OXFORD HANDBOOK OF

DUTCH POLITICS

THE OXFORD HANDBOOK OF

DUTCH POLITICS

Edited by

SARAH DE LANGE

TOM LOUWERSE

PAUL 'T HART

and

CAROLIEN VAN HAM

OXFORD
UNIVERSITY PRESS

OXFORD
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Great Clarendon Street, Oxford, OX2 6DP,
United Kingdom

Oxford University Press is a department of the University of Oxford.
It furthers the University's objective of excellence in research, scholarship,
and education by publishing worldwide. Oxford is a registered trade mark of
Oxford University Press in the UK and in certain other countries

Published in the United States of America by Oxford University Press
198 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10016, United States of America

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

Data available

Library of Congress Control Number: 2024937087

ISBN 978–0–19–887549–9

DOI: 10.1093/oxfordhb/9780198875499.001.0001

Printed and bound by
CPI Group (UK) Ltd, Croydon, CR0 4YY

Contents

Contributors

Loes Aaldering Associate professor at the Department of Political Science and Public Administration, Free University Amsterdam

Ellis Aizenberg Assistant professor at the Institute of Public Administration, Leiden University

Rudy B. Andeweg Professor emeritus at the Institute of Political Science, Leiden University

Edwin Bakker Professor at the Institute of Security and Global Affairs, Leiden University

Harmen Binnema Senior consultant at Berenschot

Arjen Boin Professor at the Institute of Political Science, Leiden University

Marcel Boogers Professor by special appointment at the Utrecht University School of Governance, Utrecht University

Paul Bovend'Eert Professor at the Department of Constitutional Law, Radboud University

Caelesta Braun Professor at the Institute of Public Administration, Leiden University

Gerard Breeman Assistant professor at the Institute of Public Administration, Leiden University

Koen Caminada Professor at the Department of Economics and Vice-Dean at the Faculty of Governance and Global Affairs, Leiden University

Paul de Beer Professor by special appointment at AIAS-HSI, University of Amsterdam

Lisanne de Blok Assistant professor at the Utrecht University School of Governance, Utrecht University

Beatrice de Graaf Distinguished faculty professor at the Department of History and Art History, Utrecht University

Léonie de Jonge Assistant professor at the Faculty of Arts, University of Groningen, and researcher at the Documentation Centre for Dutch Political Parties (DNPP), University of Groningen

Sarah de Lange Professor in the Department of Political Science, University of Amsterdam

Josje den Ridder Senior scientific employee at the Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau

Jasper Deuten Coordinator at the Rathenau Instituut

Jouke de Vries Professor of Public Governance and President of the Executive Board of the University of Groningen

Karwan Fatah-Black Assistant professor at the Institute for History, Leiden University

Kees Goudswaard Professor at the Department of Economics, Leiden University

Lisanne Groen Assistant professor at the Department of Environmental Sciences, Open Universiteit

Armèn Hakhverdian Associate professor at the Department of Political Science, University of Amsterdam

Eelco Harteveld Associate professor at the Department of Political Science, University of Amsterdam

Teun Havinga Former research assistant, University of Groningen

Frank Hendriks Professor at the Department of Public Law and Governance, Tilburg University

Marlies Honingh Associate professor at the Department of Public Administration, Radboud University

Dave Huitema Professor at the Public Administration and Policy Group, Wageningen University

Galen A. Irwin Professor emeritus at the Institute of Political Science, Leiden University

Kristof Jacobs Associate professor at the Department of Political Science, Radboud University

Giedo Jansen Assistant professor at AIAS-HSI, University of Amsterdam

Patrick Jeurissen Professor at RadboudUMC, Radboud University

Joachim A. Koops Professor at the Institute of Security and Global Affairs, Leiden University

Sanne Kruikemeier Professor at the Strategic Communication Group, Wageningen University

Sanneke Kuipers Professor at the Institute of Security and Global Affairs, Leiden University

Lauren Lauret Assistant Professor at the Institute for History, Leiden University

Tom Louwerse Associate Professor at the Institute of Political Science, Leiden University

Hans Maarse Emeritus professor at the Department of Health Services Research, Maastricht University

Ank Michels Associate professor at the Utrecht University School of Governance, Utrecht University

Liza Mügge Associate professor at the Department of Political Science, University of Amsterdam

Erwin R. Muller Professor and Dean of the Faculty of Governance and Global Affairs, Leiden University

Gert Oostindie Professor emeritus at the Institute for History, Leiden University

Simon Otjes Assistant professor at the Institute of Political Science, Leiden University

Klaartje Peters Professor by special appointment at the Department of Political Science, Maastricht University and an independent researcher

R. A. W. Rhodes Professor at the Department of Politics and International Relations, University of Southampton

Matthijs Rooduijn Associate professor in the Department of Political Science, University of Amsterdam

Zahra Runderkamp Doctoral researcher at the Department of Political Science, University of Amsterdam

Wouter Schakel Former postdoctoral researcher in the Department of Sociology, University of Amsterdam

Thomas Schillemans Professor at the Utrecht University School of Governance, Utrecht University

Peter Scholten Professor at the Department of Public Administration and Sociology, Erasmus University Rotterdam

Niels Spierings Professor at the Department of Sociology, Radboud University

Lars Stevenson PhD candidate at the Department of Public Administration, Radboud University

Henk te Velde Professor at the Institute for History, Leiden University

Paul 't Hart Professor at the Utrecht University School of Governance, Utrecht University

Jacques Thomassen Emeritus professor at the Faculty of Behavioural, Management and Social Sciences, University of Twente

Arco Timmermans Associate professor at the Institute of Public Administration, Leiden University

Margo Trappenburg Professor by special appointment at the University of Humanistic Studies and associate professor at the Utrecht University School of Governance, Utrecht University

Wouter van der Brug Professor at the Department of Political Science, University of Amsterdam

Henk van der Kolk Associate professor at the Faculty of Behavioural Management and Social Sciences of the University of Twente

Tom van der Meer Professor at the Department of Political Science, University of Amsterdam

Daphne van der Pas Associate professor at the Department of Political Science, University of Amsterdam

Reinout van der Veer Assistant professor at the Department of Political Science, Radboud University

Erik-Jan van Dorp Assistant professor at the Utrecht University School of Governance, Utrecht University

Erika van Elsas Assistant professor at the Department of Political Science, Radboud University

Femke van Esch Professor at the Utrecht University School of Governance, Utrecht University

Rinie van Est Professor by special appointment at the Department of Industrial Engineering and Innovation Sciences, Eindhoven University of Technology and coordinator at the Rathenau Instituut

Carolien van Ham Professor at the Department of Political Science, Radboud University

Joop J. M. van Holsteyn Professor at the Institute of Political Science, Leiden University

Franca van Hooren Associate professor at the Department of Political Science, University of Amsterdam

Julien van Ostaaijen Professor of law and safety at the Centre of Expertise Safe and Resilient Society at Avans University of Applied Sciences and assistant professor of public administration at the Department of Public Law and Governance, Tilburg University

Philip van Praag Retired associate professor at the Department of Political Science, University of Amsterdam

Olaf van Vliet Professor at the Department of Economics and at the Institute of Public Administration, Leiden University

Cynthia van Vonno Assistant professor at the Institute of Political Science, Leiden University

Wouter Veenendaal Associate professor at the Institute of Political Science, Leiden University

Bertjan Verbeek Professor at the Department of Political Science, Radboud University

Barbara Vis Professor at the Utrecht University School of Governance, Utrecht University

Rens Vliegenthart Professor the Strategic Communication Group, Wageningen University

Hans Vollaard Associate professor at the Utrecht University School of Governance, Utrecht University

Annemarie Walter Assistant professor at the School of Politics and International Relations, University of Nottingham

Jeroen Wolbers Associate professor at the Institute of Security and Global Affairs, Leiden University

Andrej Zaslove Associate professor at the Department of Political Science, Radboud University

Stavros Zouridis Professor at the Department of Public Law and Governance, Tilburg University

Figures and Tables

Figures

Tables

Acknowledgements

This Handbook bears witness to the dedication and hard work of many. We are deeply grateful to the dozens of colleagues around the country who responded enthusiastically to our call—placed when Covid-19 was still wreaking havoc on everybody's lives. They submitted their early outlines, came to the workshop to discuss them, drafted their chapters, responded to feedback, and in the end delivered their fully formed chapters, all with exemplary professionalism. It has been a joy to work with you all. Now that the Dutch political science community has joined up to produce this common pool resource, let's keep collaborating to make sure it gets used widely, and gets updated over time. Our editor at Oxford University Press, the indomitable Dominic Byatt, deserves a big thank you for his faith in the project and his unwavering support throughout the process of bringing it to fruition. Our research assistant Teun Langeveld was of immense help in the final stages of beating the manuscript into shape.

While proofreading this book, we learned the sad news of the passing of our colleague Rudy B. Andeweg, who was also a contributor to this handbook. We shall dearly miss him as a leading social scientist in the study of Dutch politics, and even more as a mentor and friend.

CHAPTER 1

STABILITY AND CHANGE IN DUTCH POLITICS

Introduction to the Handbook

SARAH DE LANGE, TOM LOUWERSE, PAUL 'T HART, AND CAROLIEN VAN HAM

Vale, the Dutch Politics of Accommodation?

Once upon a time, the Netherlands held a special position in the study of politics on the wings of Arend Lijphart's (1968) classic portrayal of its distinctive formula of elite accommodation, which helped turn a country with a social structure that might leave it bitterly divided and politically paralysed into a stable and well-functioning consensus democracy. Its way of making democracy work in a divided society made it an intriguing case within the empire of mainstream comparative politics, posing an implausible yet vigorous challenge to the then conventional understanding that (a) a majoritarian electoral system delivering two-party competition provided the most robust and effective form of 'polyarchy' (Dahl, 1971); (b) democracy/polyarchy stood little chance of survival in any country with deeply entrenched and mutually reinforcing social cleavages (Almond & Verba, 1963; Kriesi, 1998).

Though not without its critics (e.g. Daalder, 1974; Lijphart, 1984; Van Schendelen, 1983, 1984), Lijphart's gripping case study of the 1917 'grand bargain' between the key political groupings in the Netherlands, and his analysis of the subsequent decades of institutionalization of elite concertation as a political safety valve on top of entrenched pillarization of society along religious, class, and regional lines, which survived the Second World War and delivered prosperity in the first few post-war decades, became

a kind of bedrock political-science narrative about Dutch politics in the twentieth century. And although the sociodemographic and sociocultural basis underpinning the pillar system crumbled during its later decades, the system of centripetal elite bargaining and consensus seeking, buffeted by mechanisms and arenas for depoliticizing tricky issues, and intricate juggling of front-stage political posturing and back-stage pragmatist deal making, was largely maintained until well into the first decade of the twenty-first century (Timmermans & Andeweg, 2000).

Meanwhile, deep and rapid technological, ecosystemic, geopolitical, economic, and sociocultural changes have come to the fore, and have challenged the narratives, institutions, and practices of the Dutch political system. Voter behaviour has become more volatile than in the heyday of pillarization as voters have 'begun to choose' (Mair, 2008; Thomassen & Van Ham, 2014). Likewise, political trust in elites and institutions, traditionally very high by comparative standards, has moved up and (recently mostly) down (Bovens & Wille, 2008; De Blok & Brummel, 2022; Den Ridder et al., 2023; Snel et al., 2022). The Dutch party system has been in a state of flux, with numerous newcomers and breakaways, and a clearly discernible hollowing out of what was once its centrist core (Kessenich & Van der Brug, 2022; Pellikaan et al., 2018). These developments have led to unprecedented levels of political fragmentation, which have created renewed challenges to keeping the country governed.

Under the record-length prime ministership of Mark Rutte (2010–2024) these challenges have been managed by shifting the political composition of governing coalitions and by extremely tight coalition management practices (Louwerse & Timmermans, 2021). Critics allege the latter have undermined the dualist structure of the Dutch political system, in which there is an institutional separation between the legislature and the executive (Voermans, 2021). Under Dutch dualism, cabinet members are not members of parliament and are overwhelmingly recruited from outside parliamentary ranks. It presupposes that governments govern and that parliaments deliberate about the executive branch's legislative proposals, put forward proposals of their own, and hold governments to account—and also that parliamentarians form their views without fear or favour. In practice, monist pragmatism and coping mechanisms have always muddied the waters, though to different extents and in different ways at different points in time (Andeweg, 1992).

With parliamentary majorities in both houses of parliament having become elusive as of the 2010s, monism has made a comeback. Party discipline among MPs of governing parties has been high for several decades, and their political leaders in cabinet and parliament have been increasingly pre-cooking deals on every controversial item on the agenda. Moreover, they have also been reaching out to leaders of parties in opposition that are needed for upper house majorities. With its co-legislative and co-steering activities largely pre-empted by these practices, critics argue that the Dutch parliament has largely become a venue for vacuous political posturing and ever more exacting accountability rituals (Andeweg, 2008; Voermans, 2021). The traditionally subdued and business-like tone of parliamentary deliberations has been challenged by a higher incidence of straight-talking among MPs and members of government.

Polarizing figures have rattled the political establishment and challenged the implicit consensus about the bandwidth of what is considered acceptable political discourse. In the 2000s alone, these have included Pim Fortuyn, who was assassinated by an animal rights activist in 2002 on the eve of what looked like an electoral triumph that could have seen him become prime minister; Thierry Baudet, who characterized the European Union (EU) as a 'cultural-Marxist' project and who has been accused of a range of political sins including anti-Semitism, misogyny, and taking money from Putin; and above all, anti-Islam, anti-immigration nationalist crusader Geert Wilders, who has lived under permanent police protection for two decades, has been convicted up to the Supreme Court for 'the insulting of social groups', and yet managed to score a resounding shock victory in the November 2023 parliamentary elections that set his party up for forming a rightist government coalition which took office in mid-2024.

In addition to these populist radical-right leaders, other new parties also entered parliament, such as an animal rights party, a farmers' party, a minority rights party, a pan-European party, and a social justice party. These parties reflect and politicize fault lines between the centre and periphery, urban and rural areas, lower- and higher-educated citizens, younger and older generations of citizens, and citizens with and without a migration background, and thereby also change parliamentary dynamics.

Clearly there are pressures upon and within the Dutch polity to move away from its tried-and-tested twentieth-century formula, but it is as yet unclear what it is gravitating towards. Are we witnessing the end of Dutch politics of accommodation, and a change towards a more politicized/competitive form of Dutch politics? It is hard to answer these questions in a simple and straightforward manner.

This Handbook is born out of the recognition that the cocktail of contextual and endemic changes may impinge differently on various Dutch political institutions, actors, arenas, and processes. It seeks to provide a comprehensive collection of thematic reviews investigating the trajectory of the many building blocks that make up the Dutch political system. For the overwhelming majority of the nearly 50 chapters in the Handbook, the big question in the background is whether, when, and where the system has faced critical junctures at which the once path-dependent 'way we do things around here' could be challenged, ditched, adapted, or reinvented.

In the remainder of this introductory chapter, we set the stage for this venture. We begin by offering two 'snapshots' of Dutch society and its political system—one from the heyday of the politics of accommodation and one from the present moment, 60 years on. This provides the reader with a first and admittedly broad-brush picture of what might be the combination of stability and change in the key features of Dutch political life. We then survey how the study of Dutch politics—conducted mainly but certainly not exclusively by political scientists—has evolved over this same period. In the final part of this opening chapter, we present the design of this volume, the considerations that have gone into it, and the strengths and limitations of the exercise that flow from it. We shall also briefly showcase what is to come in each of the book's six constituent thematic parts.

Stories of Stability and Change

To paint a picture of the trajectory that Dutch society, its political system, and the process of governing the Netherlands has been on, we take two moments in time as markers: May 1963, when the first televised parliamentary election took place; and November 2023, when a campaign that was fought in both traditional and online social media landed the populist radical-right Freedom Party (PVV) an unprecedented quarter of the votes. At these two points in time, what mindsets and 'rules of engagement' shaped the political process? Comparing the two, what has endured, what has fallen away, what has been transformed, and what has evolved incrementally? We will begin by juxtaposing the two snapshots as stories, and then we will get on the balcony and take a more systematic look at the broader patterns that can be discerned.

May 1963: Still the Politics of Pillarization and Accommodation

In May 1963, the overwhelming proportion of the population had grown up in a small country that as a colonial power had been generating part of its wealth from exploiting its overseas 'assets'. They had live memories of the Second World War, though these experiences were preferably not talked about either in private or in the public realm. They had seen their country shrink on the world stage and suffer an ignominious loss of its colonial 'jewels in the crown' (Indonesia, in 1949, and Papua New Guinea, in 1962). They had had to come to terms with the post-war reality of American hegemony: the game of holding on to those colonial possessions was essentially up when the Americans withdrew their support for doing so.

With the advent of a bipolar international system dominated by the so-called Cold War between the superpowers, the Dutch along with the other states of western Europe had chosen to live under the American nuclear umbrella and had collided in dressing it up as a multilateral collective defence effort, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. They had gasped for breath in October 1961 when the Soviets tested the American resolve to defend West Berlin and then again in October 1962 during the Cuban missile crisis. Meanwhile, the Dutch had embraced American hegemony as a fact of life in other ways, too. Economically, the country had benefited immensely from Marshall Plan financial aid for its post-war reconstruction and from the rapid economic growth and prosperity that had ensued. Culturally, it had started to take to Hollywood, jeans, and rock and roll—an influence that was strengthened further as television had just begun to find its way into Dutch living rooms (television viewers had access to two channels that broadcast from 6.45 p.m. to midnight, in black and white only). Uncle Sam felt unblemished and strong: Vietnam, Watergate, the assassinations of John F. Kennedy, Martin Luther King, and Robert F. Kennedy, the big race riots, and other indications of American fallibility had not yet happened.

At the same time, the Dutch government had been an enthusiastic supporter of western European cooperation, and among the six signatories to the 1957 Treaty of Rome that founded the European Economic Community (EEC), the precursor to the EU. Integrating post-war (West) Germany into a free-market and liberal-democratic order rooted in Franco-German collaboration was a major objective of Dutch foreign policy. The EEC was seen as a principal gateway to continued peace and sustained economic growth on the continent. It reflected a widespread belief in the possibility of progress—through international collaboration, state-directed welfare capitalism, and modernist planning.

The national calamity of the flood disaster of 1953—as a result of which 1,835 people and nearly 50,000 cattle lost their lives, and 1,500 km^2 of agricultural land was laid to waste—was still etched in public memory. By 1963, the country was in the midst of an all-out effort to finally win the battle against the low-lying country's historical nemesis: the North Sea. An ambitious 'Delta Plan' was being executed, which envisaged a system of dams and dikes that should prevent recurrence of flooding forever. A sustained effort across more than four decades, finally completed in the mid-1990s, it would become an iconic achievement of robust government commitment and innovative civil engineering.

In May 1963, the Dutch population was ethnically highly homogenous, of the northern European variety. There were small groups of repatriated Indo-European, Moluccan, Papuan, and Chinese people as part of the decolonization process of the Dutch East Indies, while 90% of the Jewish citizens had been led away and exterminated by the Nazis during the German occupation of 1940–1945. The much bigger inflows of so-called 'guest workers' from the Mediterranean and from the western part of the Dutch colonial empire, which would sow the seeds of demographic and sociocultural upheaval, had not yet arrived. It was also a relatively uneducated society. Though illiteracy had fallen off sharply, only about 3% of the adult population had enjoyed tertiary education. Less than one-third of women of working age held jobs. The contraceptive pill became widely available that year, which heralded the sexual revolution and changed the position of women in society.

If not from long formal educational journeys, where did the Dutch acquire their beliefs, values, and identities? The year 1963 lies at the tail end of a period in which Dutch people grew up to be socialized into a community still shaped by the four so-called 'pillars': the Catholic, Protestant, socialist, and liberal communities. For those born into the 'red pillar' in that year, for example, this meant that their parents subscribed to a social-democratic newspaper and preferred to listen to and watch the programmes of the Society of Worker Radio Amateurs (VARA) public broadcasting association. They would send their children to a secular public primary school (*algemeen openbaar onderwijs*), making sure to pick a school that lay within their lower-middle-class suburban neighbourhood, so as not to have to mingle with the teachers and parents of a public primary school in a neighbourhood of high socio-economic status (SES), which was thus overwhelmingly 'liberal'. In the run-up to the parliamentary election of 15 May 1963, they would proudly display the campaign poster of the Dutch Labour

Party (*Partij van de Arbeid*) on their street-facing sitting-room window. Most of their neighbours would do the same, though not necessarily for the same party. These unmistakeable displays of political partisanship would influence their choices of whom to befriend and whom to be more reserved with in their apartment building. For those born into Catholic, Protestant, or liberal 'pillars', their lives equally would unfold in specific schools, media, and civil society organizations where they were most likely to meet citizens sharing their political views.

During the 1963 campaign, for the first time Dutch voters were able to see the contending party leaders locked in debate on their television sets. The main issue during the campaign was who would go into coalition with whom. Over the previous four years, the Labour Party had waged hard opposition to the Christian-Liberal coalition. It maintained its oppositional stance during the campaign, speculating that discontent with some of the governing coalition's policies would see voters shift their allegiances towards them. This turned out to be a miscalculation. The fact that in a 2.25% vote change, the Labour Party lost five of its 48 seats at that election was seen as a major upset by the commentariat in the days and weeks following the election. Apparently, standing outside the centrist consensus of the era was an electoral liability.

What was deemed unremarkable then, but looked at from a late 2023 vantage point seems otherworldly, was the fact that the political parties associated with the four pillars obtained 135 out of 150 seats. Though entirely in keeping with the pattern of the preceding elections, to the twenty-first-century observer of Dutch politics it nevertheless evidences a staggering display of electoral loyalty to the pillars and to the particular form of political stability their well-rehearsed interplay provided. What the voters and commentators of 1963 did not realize at the time was that this pillarized world, and the political system that was built around it, was about to be exposed to manifold forces of change, whose political impact would begin to be felt at the next election in 1967 and would continue to resonate in the decades to come.

November 2023: A Realignment Election?

Sixty years later, the Netherlands prepared for another, but unplanned, general election. By then, the country and its politics had changed in profound ways. The population had increased to almost 18 million, and around a quarter of these inhabitants were born outside the Netherlands (15%) or had at least one parent born abroad (12%) (Statistics Netherlands, 2023). The largest groups of those with a migration background had roots in Europe (outside of the Netherlands), Morocco, Turkey, Indonesia, Surinam, and the Dutch Caribbean, reflecting the influx of migrant workers and their families, as well as migration related to the Dutch colonial past. That colonial heritage continued to play a role in politics and society, now mostly centring on questions of continued racism and discrimination in society, the government's apology for slavery, and the not-yet-completely abolished tradition of Black Pete (*Zwarte Piet*) during Saint Nicolas celebrations.

Education levels had increased substantially, with 35% of the population over 15 years of age having completed tertiary education. Almost two thirds of women between 15 and 75 years of age were working outside of the home, less than 10 percentage points lower than men—compared to a gender gap of about 50% in the late 1960s. Still, many more women than men were working part time, especially when they had (young) children. At the same time, fertility rates had been declining for decades until well below replacement levels, and the Dutch population was ageing rapidly, with on average 20% of the population over 65 years old, and this figure is expected to rise still further as the baby-boom generation is retiring (Statistics Netherlands, 2023).

Growing up in the Netherlands in 2023 no longer means living within your pillar. Though Protestant and Catholic schools still exist, and other religious schools are now also available, many schools are defined by their educational approach (e.g. Dalton, Montessori) rather than their religious affiliation. Likewise, while public media still provide space for the media organizations that originated from the pillars, many of these have since merged, and many new public and commercial channels have become available. Civil society organizations and unions are largely detached from their pillars too: soccer, tennis, and hockey clubs are no longer Catholic or socialist, but just sports clubs. All in all, there appears to be more choice to live one's life according to personal values and preferences.

But segmentation remains present in daily life. While income inequality has been kept relatively in check in the Netherlands, wealth inequality has risen sharply since the 1980s. People living in high-SES neighbourhoods rarely interact with people living in low-SES neighbourhoods, and social networks are structured on the basis of individual characteristics (e.g. education, profession, social class) and characteristics of the environment (e.g. region, urbanization level). This segmentation is also correlated to political preferences. Neighbourhoods can be classified on the basis distinct voter profiles, and geographical divides increasingly structure social and political attitudes and behaviours. Moreover, citizens experience feelings of hostility towards social and political groups, a phenomenon also known as affective polarization.

These profound societal changes are combined with numerous successive external challenges. While the threat of flooding from the North Sea was substantially reduced years before, many new crises present themselves: the climate crisis, the Covid crisis, the cost of living crisis, the migration crisis, the housing crisis—almost all major policy areas seem to suffer some kind of crisis. At least, that is how those concerned about the various issues like to present them, but also in objective terms most of these provide a continued challenge to society and government.

These challenges are further compounded by administrative and political changes in recent decades that have undercut the capacity of government and local, provincial, and national bureaucracies to adequately respond to these challenges. Extensive decentralization of public services to local governments, combined with substantial budget cuts, has undermined the quality of public service delivery; shifting policy implementation outside of ministries to implementing agencies has limited the degree of oversight and the 'steering' capacity of national governments when things go wrong; and

the emergence of a de facto fourth layer of regional governance in the form of regional partnerships without any formal democratic legitimation has created vast uncertainty about who is to be held accountable for decisions made.

Politically, increasing fragmentation of the Dutch party system has made coalitions larger and more ideologically heterogeneous, and shifting majorities in the House of Representatives and the Senate mean more extensive bargaining needs to take place to pass government plans. Governments are increasingly also bound by European and international commitments that, while in part shaped and influenced by those governments, are often presented as having descended from heaven as undisputed facts, rather than as decisions that are the product of extensive intergovernmental negotiations. In this context of governments with limited policy discretion and administration with limited capacity, the 2023 elections were held.

At the start of 2023, the House of Representatives—the primary parliamentary arena—counted no fewer than 21 political groupings. Nearly one third (44 out of 150) of its seats were held by challenger parties, all but two of which had been in existence for less than five years. Meanwhile, the 75-seat Senate contained 16 political groupings. The four-party governing coalition that was formed after a tortuous, record-breaking nine-month formation process following the 2021 parliamentary election combined secular and Christian, conservative and progressive, as well as socio-economically centre-left and centre-right parties. It had a meagre two-seat majority in the House of Representatives and lacked a Senate majority, in common with most governments in the previous decade.

The four-party governing coalition, also known as the fourth Rutte government (Rutte IV), which had taken office in January 2022, was to deliver hitherto elusive progress on big-ticket reforms, such as speeding up measures designed to meet its climate policy targets in areas including sustainable energy and land use practices. But even more, it was to forge a path towards a new 'governance culture'—more transparent, more citizen-centric, more mindful of propriety in executive–legislative relations. This had become a top priority after Rutte's previous government had resigned amidst widespread media and public indignation following a damning inquiry report about sustained callous and allegedly discriminatory hounding of tens of thousands of citizens by the Dutch tax office in an effort to reclaim allegedly fraudulently obtained childcare benefits.

The uneasiness of the Rutte IV formation process continued into its day-to-day governance. Large problems remained unresolved, such as the shortage of shelters for asylum seekers and a reduction in nitrogen emissions. In June 2023 the coalition parties tried to resolve some of their policy differences on migration, but ultimately came up short, which led to the government's resignation. To the surprise of many, shortly afterwards, Rutte announced that he would not lead his party into the early elections that were scheduled for November. At the end of the summer, another shock to the Dutch party system occurred when Pieter Omtzigt, a well-known member of parliament (MP) who had left the Christian Democrats in 2021, finally founded his own political party that became one of the electoral frontrunners overnight.

The biggest surprise had yet to happen, though. While the populist radical-right PVV had been slowly recovering from some polling losses since the summer, only in the last week before the election did Wilders' party skyrocket in the opinion polls. Final polls before the election suggested that the PVV, the conservative-liberal People's Party for Freedom and Democracy (VVD), and the newly formed alliance between the Greens and Labour were virtually tied for the top spot, but on election night the PVV came out clearly on top with 37 seats, compared to 25 and 24 for the other two parties. While some observers had pointed out that a campaign that focused on migration and in which the VVD no longer excluded the possibility of forming a coalition with the PVV would be beneficial to the latter, only in the last week of the campaign was this reflected in the polls—and the PVV did even better on election day than the polls indicated. Explaining these developments and exploring their consequences—the first PVV-led four-party coalition government took office in July 2024—will consume scholars of Dutch politics in the upcoming years.

A Polity in Flux?

Table 1.1 juxtaposes and expands the two snapshots presented above. It tells a story of a country experiencing deep changes that have found their way into its political system, and that have challenged key tenets of the politics of accommodation. These changes have partly been the product of political choices about the content of public policies, the role of the state in society, and the organization of public policymaking and service delivery. Path-forging examples of the former include choices about increasing access to secondary and tertiary education, labour market policies, infrastructure and economic development, and migration policies. Choices about the organization of public governance with similarly profound societal and political impacts have included the commitment to deepening European integration and expanding EU membership, the embracing of neo-liberal economic thought about rolling back the state and harnessing the power of markets through deregulation and privatization, and moves in the mid-2010s to decentralize large swathes of social policy execution to the municipalities.

At the same time, pivotal underlying drivers of change in Dutch society, politics, and government originated outside the country. There were technological breakthroughs such as television, personal computing, mobile phones, the internet, and most recently biotechnology and artificial intelligence that transformed the economy and the communication environment. A number of fateful global shifts occurred, such as the end of the Cold War and its impacts on Germany and the former Soviet-dominated central and eastern European states, '9/11' and its aftermath, the rise of China, and the formidable growth and power of a handful of tech companies.

Furthermore, the so-called 'new despotism' (Keane, 2020), a political formula pioneered in countries like Singapore, the United Arab Emirates, and Jiang Zemin's China, had gained traction. It offered an alternative social contract to citizens: 'we will deliver prosperity and shopping malls; you will do as you are told and ask no questions'.

Its increasing appeal challenged the naïve post-1989 presumption that liberal democracy would become the only game in town. It created significant tensions within the EU and presented foreign policy dilemmas for countries like the Netherlands, as fellow member states such as Hungary and Poland began to veer towards new despotism. Compounding these challenges, in the early 2010s Putin's Russia undertook a form of revanchist expansionism culminating in the February 2022 invasion of Ukraine that rocked all of Europe both militarily and, through the use of its 'gas weapon', economically. Soaring energy prices pushed inflation up to levels not seen since the 1970s and raised the spectre of stagflation.

Like many of its northern European counterparts, the Dutch government, already reeling from unprecedented emergency outlays of dozens of billions in response to the 2020–2021 Covid-19 pandemic, responded by forking out similar amounts to offer short-term energy price compensations and fund consumer price ceilings. Meanwhile, eco-systemic changes such as accelerating human-made climate change and biodiversity loss were having increasingly visible and profound impacts, including projected sea-level rises and extreme weather events. These confronted the 'Low Country' that is the Netherlands with existential questions and an urgent need to contemplate climate adaptation measures that would potentially entail further astronomic expenditures and intense conflicts between different interests, values, groups, and regions within Dutch society. All in all, from the vantage point of the changes and challenges confronting the Dutch polity in 2023, the predicaments of 1963 feel, by comparison, less 'wicked'.

Table 1.1 contains rough-and-ready characterizations of how the populace, the organization of political life, and the manner in which citizens bestow legitimacy on political elites and institutions have evolved. With its emphasis on stark contrasts, the table tells only a part of the story. As readers will discover when delving into the chapters of this Handbook, the full story is not one of wholesale change and renewal. On the contrary, it is more about how societal changes and adaptive pressures in some ways *did* and in other respects *did not* affect the mindsets and routines of the politics of accommodation with which this chapter began (cf. Andeweg et al., 2020).

Though the societal foundations upon which it was built have changed, the institutional architecture of governing and the political playbook of the Netherlands have only partially been redrawn. For example, its electoral system of extreme proportional representation keeps on throwing up complex coalition-formation puzzles that have continued to be solved in the tried-and-tested manner: behind closed doors, taking plenty of time, facilitated by 'wise persons'. Likewise, although on the surface the 2010–2024 Dutch prime minister Mark Rutte presented as a thoroughly modern, communication-savvy, and ruthlessly pragmatic politician, he still operated in a largely unaltered constitutional context that bestows little or no 'hard power' on the Dutch prime minister, and therefore had to rely on more or less the same set of soft-power repertoires and relational work that his 1963 predecessors Piet de Quay and, following the May election, Victor Marijnen deployed.

Furthermore, though since the early 1980s an alleged 'chasm' between what Dutch citizens like to see from their politicians and how the Dutch political system operates

Table 1.1 Changes in Dutch society and politics

	1963	2023
Population, size	11.97 million	17.94 million
Population, median age	32	42.5
Population, ethnicity	Homogenous (< 8% migrant)	Diverse (26.4% migrant)
High-profile social cleavages	Religion and class	Education and geography
Sociopolitical organization	Stable party system: 'pillars'	Volatile party system: 'ideological blocks' and 'newcomers'
Party affiliation	Medium levels of membership and long-term loyalties	Low levels of membership and fleeting 'likes'
Political style	Pacification of inter-pillar tensions Accommodation Technocracy	Politicization of social differences Polarization Contested expertise
Political transparency	Opaque: backroom deals and government secrecy	Legible: mediatized politics and 'open government'
Political legitimacy	Promises-based: elections and representative democracy; institutional authority	Performance-based: watchdogs and monitory democracy; transactional authority
Policy style	Proactive: long-term orientation and planning Government: state-centric hierarchies	Reactive: issue management and improvisation Governance: de-centred networks
Governing structure	Three-tier 'Huis van Thorbecke', driven by national government	Multilevel 'spaghetti', driven by Europeanization and decentralization
Political risk: main causes of ministerial turnover and cabinet crises	Inter- and intraparty conflicts, breakdown of elite concertation	Implementation failures and critical inquiry reports

Source: authors.

has been repeatedly signalled, and disputed (Andeweg, 2018; see also Van Ham et al., 2017), no major institutional reform has been undertaken since to build new bridges between the electorate and its representatives. This has not been for want of ideas. In fact, many proposals to adapt Dutch political institutions and processes have been launched by various committees and think tanks across the decades (Hout & Andeweg, 1993; Raad voor het Openbaar Bestuur, 2010). The 2018 report of a blue-ribbon 'state commission' for the parliamentary system offered a smorgasbord of pathways to reinvigorate Dutch democracy (Staatscommissie Parlementair Stelsel, 2018). Like many of its predecessors, it was received with a warm glow of verbal appreciation by the government of the day but has since met the same fate: limited momentum in a political system seemingly unwilling to make up its mind about itself.

Therefore, many of the contributions to this Handbook face the task of shedding light on what seem to be dramatic changes at surface level, but upon closer inspection are often subtler and sometimes ambiguous patterns of stability and change. They will demonstrate that in some instances, political change was not straightforward, unidirectional, and linear albeit incremental, but rather involved pendulum swings, policy reversals, and crisis-driven improvisations that became path-dependent more by accident than by design.

Ebbs and Flows in the Study of Dutch Politics

In 1963 the study of Dutch politics was a small enterprise within the academy, comprising just four professorial chairs all held by White males (H. Daalder at Leiden University; H. Daudt at the University of Amsterdam; G. Kuypers at the Free University in Amsterdam; and G. Schichtling at the Catholic University in Nijmegen) (Hoogerwerf, 1981). Political historians and constitutional lawyers outnumbered 'empirical' political scientists by a considerable margin. Intellectually, classic institutionalism and the modernist 'policy sciences' reigned, while the behavioural, rational choice, and (neo-)Marxist perspectives that would gain prominence in the 1970s and 1980s (e.g. De Swaan, 1973; Stuurman, 1983; Van Putten, 1981) were still in their infancy.

Since then, Dutch political science has expanded numerically and geographically, the outlook and composition of research staff has diversified, and technological advances have made new approaches possible. This has led to a considerable expansion of the range of questions political scientists have asked about Dutch politics, the research methods they bring to bear on investigating these questions, and the insights they are able to produce. The field has been transformed since then. Rather than studying Dutch politics as a case *sui generis*, subsequent generations of scholars have followed Lijphart's and his contemporary Hans Daalder's lead and have increasingly studied 'the Dutch case' as part of thematically driven cross-national comparative research designs that were primarily aimed at contributing to middle-range theories and general political science models (Andeweg & Vis, 2015). To some degree, therefore, Dutch political scientists have left part of the work to contemporary political historians, who however rely on their own periodizations and diachronic comparisons and make limited use of and do not contribute to the stock of theories, typologies, and cross-national comparisons of their political science colleagues (e.g. Bosmans & Van Kessel, 2011; De Rooy, 2014; Te Velde, 2002).

The traditional lenses used to study Dutch politics and government have been complemented by perspectives such as intersectionality (Celis et al., 2012; Leyenaar, 2013; Mügge, 2016; Mügge et al., 2019), postcolonialism (Jones, 2012; Oostindie, 2011; Sharpe, 2022), political leadership (Karsten & Hendriks, 2017; Swinkels et al., 2017; 't Hart & Schelfhout, 2016; 't Hart & Ten Hooven, 2004), policymaking and policy

networks (Hufen & Ringeling, 1990; Kickert & Van Vught, 1995; Kickert et al., 1997; 't Hart et al., 1995); and multilevel governance (Geuijen et al., 2008; Groenleer & Hendriks, 2020; Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2014; Scholten, 2012; Witteveen et al., 1995). Moreover, Dutch political scientists have not just focused their energies on penetrating the columns of leading international academic journals but have breached new ground in contributing to public debates about Dutch politics through a variety of channels: online magazines (e.g. stukroodvlees.nl), custom-made voting assistance tools (e.g. kieskompas.nl), op-ed articles in leading newspapers, and election commentator roles with prime news channels.

Design and Core Themes of the Handbook: A Preview

The Handbook provides comprehensive coverage of the state of the art in research on Dutch politics. It is composed in five parts.

Part I presents four chapters discussing the *historical trajectories of key elements of the Dutch political system*. Chapter 2, written by historian Beatrice de Graaf, covers the formation and institutionalization of the Dutch state as a provider of internal and external security. In Chapter 3, fellow historian Henk te Velde provides a periodization of Dutch political history by analysing evolving political styles—that is, how Dutch politicians discussed the problems they were faced with and how they tried to solve them. In Chapter 4, the doyen of the study of Dutch politics, Rudy Andeweg, continues the main thread of this introductory section by probing deeply into the characteristics, emergence, consolidation, and decline of Dutch consociationalism. Part I is closed out by Franca van Hooren and Barbara Vis, who in Chapter 5 trace the political lineage, distinctive features, and reform pathways of the Dutch welfare state.

Part II tracks four *core institutions making up the Dutch trias politica*. The characteristics, functions, and contemporary challenges of the Dutch monarchy are discussed by Paul Bovend'Eert in Chapter 6. In Chapter 7, Tom Louwerse and Cynthia van Vonno discuss the key organizational features of parliamentary politics and zoom in on three areas of parliamentary research: executive–legislative relations; the organization of parliament and the behaviour of parliamentary party groups; and the roles of individual MPs. Stavros Zouridis in Chapter 8 follows suit with an analysis of the Dutch judiciary. It begins by describing the enablers of the longstanding peaceful coexistence of politics and the judiciary in the Netherlands: its constitutional design and the prevailing political and legal cultures. The second part of the chapter describes how this coexistence gave way to increased unease in the relationship, and documents the rise of 'judicial politics'. Closing out Part II, in Chapter 9 Erik-Jan van Dorp and Rod Rhodes present the institutional landscape of the executive branch of Dutch government, particularly cabinet government and the senior civil service. After placing the

Dutch executive in a historical context, they review research on its inner workings by discerning five forms of 'executive politics' in the Netherlands: budgetary politics, turf politics, silo politics, court politics (i.e. inner circles around prime ministers), and accountability politics.

Part III takes a *territorial perspective on the Dutch political system*, looking in particular at five tiers other than the national where politics takes place. Starting at the 'coalface', in Chapter 10 Lisanne de Blok, Giedo Jansen, and Hans Vollaard discuss municipal politics, focusing on three key clusters of relationships: (1) between municipal governments and citizens, local civil society, and the private sector; (2) within municipal governments between legislative, executive, and administrative actors, and (3) between municipal governments and other levels of governance. In Chapter 11, Marcel Boogers and Klaartje Peters discuss regional politics as both politics *about* the region and politics *in* the region. They examine the recurrent and as yet unresolved debates about whether and how there should be a regional tier of government 'in between' the local and provincial tiers. Notwithstanding the absence of a formalized regional tier, the chapter documents the rich array of regional-level political processes, often constituted by institutionalized forms of intermunicipal cooperation. Chapter 12 by Harmen Binnema and Hans Vollaard covers two other 'intermediate' tiers: the provinces and the uniquely Dutch system of regional water authorities, one of the oldest continuous institutions of government worldwide. The chapter discusses the historical development and institutional organization of both, with a particular focus on their scale, tasks, and finances. It furthermore analyses their institutional resilience, their effectiveness in polycentric multilevel networks, and their democratic quality.

Moving beyond the national level, in Chapter 13 Reinout van der Veer and Femke van Esch discuss the body of research on the relationship between Dutch politics and the EU that has evolved along with the growing importance of the EU itself. The profound importance of European integration for Dutch politics has inspired political scientists to examine a flurry of questions. The authors group the state of the art along two overarching themes. One relates to the role of the Netherlands in the EU, studying for example how, as a 'small' state, the Netherlands wields influence in European politics. The other concerns the role of the EU in the Netherlands, looking at how EU-related issues have permeated Dutch elections and political debates, and how EU outputs (policies, regulations) have affected Dutch political realities. Finally, Chapter 14 by Gert Oostindie and Wouter Veenendaal covers research on the Kingdom of the Netherlands as a transatlantic entity located both in Europe and in the Caribbean. The chapter discusses the historical origins of the present Kingdom relations; the legal architecture of the Kingdom; the significance of the Caribbean and the transatlantic Kingdom relations in contemporary Dutch politics; evaluations of the current postcolonial arrangement in the Dutch Caribbean islands; and Dutch Kingdom relations in a broader international perspective.

Part IV explores *key social cleavages and prominent political issues in which social fault lines become apparent*. The 'classic' cleavages of religion, class, and place have long been the key shapers of voter attitudes and behaviour in Dutch politics. In Chapter 15, Galen Irwin and Joop van Holsteyn race their historical roots and the evolution of their prominence

in Dutch politics. Chapter 16, by Eelco Harteveld and Daphne van der Pas, juxtaposes and examines the evidence for key emergent cleavages that have supplemented and, to a considerable extent, supplanted these classic cleavages: age, gender, urbanity, race/ethnicity, and educational attainment. The authors show how these new social divisions have contributed to a realignment in Dutch politics. Wouter van der Brug and Erika van Elsas continue the analysis in Chapter 17 by examining the development of Dutch public opinion on key political issues and the extent to which citizens' opinions are structured by a limited number of ideological dimensions. They show how the left–right ideological spectrum remains an important structuring element in voter attitudes.

In Chapter 18, Carolien van Ham and Jacques Thomassen study citizens' legitimacy beliefs and political support for the political system and its institutions. They map the development of political support in the Netherlands over time and comparatively, and signal growing gaps in political support between citizens from different social groups, as well as increasing politicization of political support. In Chapter 19, Josje den Ridder and Julien van Ostaaijen document and interpret the evolution of political participation in the Netherlands. Voting in elections remains by far the most common form of participation, and turnout rates in national elections in particular remain high. While there is no decline in overall levels of participation, inequality in who participates remains high, with important consequences for the quality of representation in the Netherlands.

Then follow three chapters in which authors examine three key issues that continue to dog Dutch politics. Firstly, in Chapter 20, Margo Trappenburg documents the evolution of 'morality politics'—questions concerning the governance of the beginning and end of human lives (specifically the regulation of abortion and euthanasia) and people's gender and identity. She shows how for a long time the consociational formula of Dutch political problem solving was applied to forge regulatory compromises, but since the 1990s there has been a rise in the active politicization of morality issues at both ends of the political spectrum. In Chapter 21, Lauren Lauret and Karwan Fatah-Black discuss the chequered history of how Dutch political parties and governments have dealt with the country's colonial past. Focusing on the issue of inequality in citizenship status within the Dutch empire, they show how Dutch policymakers sought to emancipate their colonial subjects according to European norms of political participation and yet not grant them full citizenship. This course of action, the authors show, sowed the seeds of current, ongoing frictions between Dutch governments and citizens with ties to the former colonies. Finally, in Chapter 22 Léonie de Jonge, Matthijs Rooduijn, and Andrej Zaslove trace and interpret the emergence of populism as an issue in Dutch politics, arguing that it followed a unique trajectory of a comparatively late rise and yet a relatively quick firm integration of populist parties into the partisan arena.

Part V contains reviews of a wide range of *pivotal political structures and processes that make the Dutch political system work*. In Chapter 23, Henk van der Kolk discusses the origins and remarkable endurance of the Dutch electoral system, which is one of the most purely proportional systems worldwide. Allowing maximum access to parliamentary seats for new parties, the system has had a profound effect on the composition and functioning of parliament and on the felt legitimacy of elements of the political system.

In Chapter 24, Annemarie Walter and Philip van Praag discuss the evolution of political campaigning. Long a comparatively placid and low-key affair, this has changed considerably in recent decades. Adoption of modern techniques such as use of voter data for microtargeting has led to parties' growing need for money. Parties' lack of financial transparency, acceptance of foreign donations, aggressive campaign practices (e.g. uncivil negative campaigning, demonization, and the spread of disinformation), and the lack of transparency in advertising strategies challenge the integrity of the electoral process and have triggered new legislation curtailing some of the most problematic practices. In Chapter 25, Tom van der Meer and Wouter van der Brug discuss voting patterns. Long a bulwark of stability, at the dawn of the 2000s the Netherlands moved towards levels of electoral volatility and electoral fragmentation that are among the highest in western and central Europe. Over time, the most stable and structural predictors of party choice have become less important, while short-term factors such as political issues and party leadership have become more important. Yet, ongoing stability underlies the high levels of volatility. Fragmentation has largely taken place within rather than between distinct clusters of parties.

In Chapter 26, Simon Otjes and Sarah de Lange explore what these changes mean for the Dutch party system. They observe continuity, most notably in the absence of wholesale alternation in the Dutch party system, and change, in the form of new and successful political party families, such as the populist radical right, the prominence of the cultural dimension in Dutch politics, and increased fragmentation. In Chapter 27, Simon Otjes and Leonie de Jonge discuss how political scientists have changed their toolkits for understanding historical, current, and potential future organizational aspects of political parties in the Netherlands. In the past, scholars employed thick and holistic typologies such as the cadre party and the mass party to characterize and describe what parties are. These typologies covered various aspects, including the parties' electorate, organizational structure, programmatic positioning, and campaign strategies. This has shifted towards the use of more focused typologies concentrating on what parties actually do—specifically, the niche versus the mainstream party, and the challenger versus the dominant party.

In Chapter 28 the focus shifts towards a central feature of Dutch politics: the formation, management, and termination of governing coalitions. Tom Louwerse and Arco Timmermans discuss how the electoral system's indirect link to government formation complicates the translation of election outcomes into coalitions. It necessitates often lengthy post-election negotiations and intricate management of coalition dynamics once governments have been formed. With political fragmentation on the rise, the number of coalition parties has increased compared to the 1980s, increasing the political complexity of the work.

Meanwhile, notwithstanding its proportional representation system, Dutch politics historically has been dominated by White, heterosexual men. Liza Mügge, Zahra Runderkamp, and Niels Spierings demonstrate in Chapter 29 that groups that do not fit this norm—women, citizens with a 'migration background', lesbian, gay, bisexual, and trans citizens, and disabled citizens—are still systematically underrepresented (in

descriptive terms) in political institutions, but some more so than others. Continuing on the theme of representation, in Chapter 30 Wouter Schakel and Armèn Hakhverdian examine research on the link between public preferences and political outcomes—that is, substantive representation. They find that in terms of ideological congruence there are relatively high levels of overlap between mass- and elite-level attitudes, although representatives tend to be more economically right wing and culturally left wing than the general electorate. In terms of political responsiveness, public policy choices do respond to public opinion, albeit considerably more so to the preferences of richer and highly educated citizens.

Chapter 31 by Rens Vliegenthart, Sanne Kruikemeier, and Loes Aaldering focuses on how Dutch politicians make strategic use of the opportunities that mainstream and social media offer. They demonstrate how media coverage deeply affects politicians' communication efforts and behaviour, and show how Dutch politicians have begun to make more deliberate use of strategies to exploit the opportunities that social media offer them. In Chapter 32, Gerard Breeman and Arco Timmermans explore the evolution of Dutch research on agenda setting—that is, the process of selecting and prioritizing policy problems and the impact of stakeholders on these processes. They document the waxing and waning (and reframing) of attention to issues such as safety and security, democratic reform, and EU affairs. In Chapter 33, Ellis Aizenberg and Caelesta Braun review the evolving nature of Dutch interest representation, applying a conceptual framework that segments the process of interest representation into interest mobilization, the impact of interest communities and organizational environment, lobby strategies, and political and policy influence. After discussing the strengths and limitations of the iconic Dutch 'Polder model', they highlight three core characteristics of contemporary interest representation: a close bond between government and a few selected interest organizations; closed networks of societal and political elites; and the disruptive and innovative potential of new modes of interest mobilization.

In Chapter 34, Thomas Schillemans examines patterns of accountability in Dutch politics and public administration, where accountability is understood as a relational mechanism linking power holders as account givers to power controllers as account holders. He discerns three overarching trends: a rising number of account holders and account givers, following various sidewards and downwards shifts in the structures of Dutch governance; an increase and tightening of accountability standards in terms of legal requirements and financial management; and greater activism and a more critical stance on the part of account-holding entities ranging from the European Parliament to local councils to voters. In Chapter 35, which concludes Part V of the Handbook, Arjen Boin, Sanneke Kuipers, and Jeroen Wolbers discuss the evolution of crises and crisis management in the Netherlands. Exploring the recent history of various types of crises and patterns of political responses to them, they conclude that there is little to support the notion of a country that is now 'ridden by crises' (as some commentators would have it). What is clear, however, is that the crises that do occur tend to be more prone to politicization in both the acute and post-acute response phases.

Finally, Part VI of the Handbook considers the political dynamics of public policymaking across a wide range of policy domains. Each chapter discusses key policy challenges, the actors and arenas involved in policymaking, pivotal policy commitments, and emerging pressures to adapt and reform them. By way of introduction to this section, Chapter 36 by Paul 't Hart takes a helicopter view, mapping the cross-cutting institutions and mechanisms that provide rules of the game and structure interactions, and assessing key recurrent characteristics of Dutch policymaking processes. He observes that although it has become progressively more difficult during the last decade, forging compromises on contentious issues across political divides and with regard for minority viewpoints has continued to be the oil that lubricates the fractured and potentially fractious arenas of Dutch policymaking.

That introductory overview chapter is followed by 11 contributions zooming in on the distinctive challenges, arenas, actors, and pathways of particular policy domains. Each of these at times has been politically complex and contentious, and some still are to date. These chapters cover: economic policy (Chapter 37, by Olaf van Vliet, Koen Caminada, and Kees Goudswaard); labour market policy (Chapter 38, by Paul de Beer); education policy (Chapter 39, by Marlies Honingh and Lars Stevenson); health care policy (Chapter 40, by Hans Maarse and Patrick Jeurissen); agriculture policy (Chapter 41, by Jouke de Vries and Teun Havinga); climate mitigation policy (Chapter 42, by Lisanne Groen and Dave Huitema); internal and external security policy (Chapter 43, by Joachim Koops, Erwin Muller, and Edwin Bakker); migration policy (Chapter 44, by Peter Scholten); foreign policy (Chapter 45, by Bertjan Verbeek); innovation and technology policy (Chapter 46, by Rinie van Est and Jasper Deuten); and finally Chapter 47 on democratic reform policy, by Frank Hendriks, Kristof Jacobs, and Ank Michels.

All in all, the Handbook offers a comprehensive and longitudinal examination of Dutch political institutions, processes, and practices, and of the ways in which researchers have documented and interpreted both stability and change in Dutch political life. It is important to note that the chapters of this Handbook have been finalized in the summer of 2023, thus stopping short of covering the 2023 parliamentary election and its political impacts. The Dutch polity remains in flux, as that election has once again demonstrated. As editors, we hope therefore that a decade from now, a fresh team of editors and authors will once again take stock of what may well have been a significantly changed lie of the political land.

References

Almond, G. A., & Verba, S. (1963). *The civic culture: Political attitudes and democracy in five nations*. Princeton University Press.

Andeweg, R. B. (1992). Executive-legislative relations in the Netherlands: Consecutive and coexisting patterns. *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, *17*(2), 161–182.

Andeweg, R. B. (2008). Coalition politics in the Netherlands: From accommodation to politicization. *Acta Politica*, *43*(3), 254–277.

Andeweg, R. B., Irwin, G. A., & Louwerse, T. (2020). *Governance and politics of the Netherlands*. Red Globe.

Andeweg, R. B., & Vis, J. J. (Eds.). (2015). *Politicologie in Nederland: Van politisering naar professionalisering*. NKWP.

Bosmans, J., & Van Kessel, A. (2011). *Parlementaire geschiedenis van Nederland*. Boom.

Bovens, M., & Wille, A. (2008). Deciphering the Dutch drop: Ten explanations for decreasing political trust in the Netherlands. *International Review of Administrative Sciences*, *74*(2), 283–305.

Celis, K., Outshoorn, J., Meijer, P., & Motmans, J. (2012). Institutionalizing intersectionality in the Low Countries. In A. Krizsan, H. Skjeie, & J. Squires (Eds.), *Institutionalizing intersectionality* (pp. 119–147). Palgrave Macmillan.

Daalder, H. (1974). *Politisering en lijdelijkheid in de Nederlandse politiek*. Van Gorcum.

Dahl, R. A. (1971). *Polyarchy: Participation and opposition*. Yale University Press.

De Blok, L., & Brummel, L. (2022). *Gefundeerd politiek vertrouwen? Onderzoek naar de relatie tussen overheidsprestaties en het vertrouwen in politieke instituties*. USBO Advies.

Den Ridder, J., Van 't Hul, L., & Van den Broek, A. (2023). *Burgerperspectieven, bericht 1/2023*. https://www.scp.nl/onderzoeksprogramma/continu-onderzoek-burgerperspectieven/documenten/publicaties/2023/04/20/burgerperspectieven-2023-bericht-1

De Rooy, P. (2014). *Republiek van rivaliteiten: Nederland sinds 1813*. Boom.

De Swaan, A. (1973). *Coalition theories and cabinet formations*. Jossey-Bass.

Geuijen, C. H. M., 't Hart, P., Princen, S. M. P., & Yesilkagit, A. K. (2008). *The new Eurocrats: National civil servants in EU policy making*. Amsterdam University Press.

Groenleer, M., & Hendriks, F. (2020). Subnational mobilization and the reconfiguration of central-local relations in the shadow of Europe: the case of the Dutch decentralized unitary state. *Regional and Federal Studies*, *30*(2), 195–217.

Hoogerwerf, A. (1981). Schets van de Nederlandse politicologie. *Ons Erfdeel*, *24*, 39–46.

Hout, W., & Andeweg, R. B. (1993). Sleutelen aan het systeem: Institutionele vernieuwingsvoorstellen in de Nederlandse politiek. *Acta Politica*, *28*(3), 241–249.

Hufen, J. A. M., & Ringeling, A. B. (Eds.). (1990). *Beleidsnetwerken*. VUGA.

Jones, G. R. (2012). Dutch politicians, the Dutch nation and the dynamics of postcolonial citizenship. In U. Bosma (Ed.), *Post-colonial immigrants and identity formation in the Netherlands* (pp. 27–48). Amsterdam University Press.

Karsten, N., & Hendriks, F. (2017). 'Don't call me a leader, but I am one': The Dutch mayor and the tradition of bridging-and-bonding leadership in consensus democracies. *Leadership*, *13*(2), 154–172.

Keane, J. (2020). *The new despotism*. Harvard University Press.

Kessenich, E., & Van der Brug, W. (2022). New parties in a crowded electoral space: The (in) stability of radical right voters in the Netherlands. *Acta Politica*. doi-org.proxy.library.uu.nl/10.1057/s41269-022-00269-0.

Kickert, W. J. M., Klijn, E. H., & Koppenjan, J. F. M. (Eds.). (1997). *Managing complex networks: Strategies for the public sector*. Sage.

Kickert, W. J. M., & Van Vught, F. A. (Eds.). (1995). *Public policy and administration sciences in the Netherlands*. Prentice-Hall.

Kriesi, H. P. (1998). The transformation of cleavage politics. *European Journal of Political Research 33*(2), 165–185.

Leyenaar, M. (2013). Netherlands: Gender balance here to stay? In D. Dahlerup & M. Leyenaar (Eds.), *Breaking male dominance in old democracies* (pp. 172–196). Oxford University Press.

Lijphart, A. (1968). *The politics of accommodation: Pluralism and democracy in the Netherlands*. University of California Press.

Lijphart, A. (1984). The politics of accommodation: Reflections fifteen years later. *Acta Politica*, *19*(1), 9–18.

Louwerse, T., & Timmermans, A. (2021). The Netherlands: Old solutions to new problems. In T. Bergman, H. Bäck, & J. Hellström (Eds.), *Coalition governance in western Europe* (pp. 448–481). Oxford University Press.

Mair, P. (2008). Electoral volatility and the Dutch party system: A comparative perspective. *Acta Politica*, *43*(3), 235–253.

Mügge, L. M. (2016). Intersectionality, recruitment and selection: Ethnic minority candidates in Dutch parties. *Parliamentary Affairs*, *69*(3), 512–530.

Mügge, L. M., Van der Pas, D. J., & Van de Wardt, M. (2019). Representing their own? Ethnic minority women in the Dutch parliament. *West European Politics*, *42*(4), 705–727.

Oostindie, G. (2011). *Postcolonial Netherlands: Sixty-five years of forgetting, commemorating, silencing*. Amsterdam University Press.

Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. (2014). *Water governance in the Netherlands: Fit for the future*. OECD Publishing.

Pellikaan, H., De Lange, S. L., & Van der Meer, T. W. G. (2018). The centre does not hold: Coalition politics and party system change in the Netherlands, 2002–12. *Government and Opposition*, *53*(2), 231–255.

Raad voor het Openbaar Bestuur. (2010). *Vertrouwen op democratie*. ROB.

Scholten, P. W. A. (2012). Agenda dynamics and the multi-level governance of intractable policy controversies: The case of migrant integration policies in the Netherlands. *Policy Sciences*, *46*(2), 217–236.

Sharpe, M. O. (2022). Extending postcolonial sovereignty games: The multilevel negotiation of autonomy and integration in the 2010 dissolution of the Netherlands Antilles and Dutch kingdom relations. *Ethnopolitics*, *21*(3), 299–324.

Snel, E., El Farisi, B., Engbersen, G., & Krouwel, A. (2022). Sociaaleconomische status en institutioneel vertrouwen in een tijd van Corona. *Tijdschrift Sociologie*, *3*(March), 30–52.

Staatcommissie Parlementair Stelsel. (2018). *Lage drempels, hoge dijken: Democratie en rechtsstaat in balans*. Boom.

Statistics Netherlands. (2023). https://opendata.cbs.nl/#/CBS/nl/dataset/83752NED/table?dl=17E05

Stuurman, S. (1983). *Verzuiling, kapitalisme en patriarchaat: Aspecten van de ontwikkeling van de moderne staat in Nederland*. SUN.

Swinkels, E. M., Van Zuydam, S., & Van Esch, F. A. W. J. (2017). Modern prime ministerial leadership in the Netherlands: Consensus or confrontation? In M. Bennister, P. 't Hart, & B. Worthy (Eds.), *The leadership capital index: A new perspective on political leadership* (pp. 164–182). Oxford University Press.

Te Velde, H. (2002). *Stijlen van leiderschap: Persoon en politiek van Thorbecke tot Den Uyl*. Wereldbibliotheek.

't Hart, P., Metselaar, M., & Verbeek, B. (Eds.). (1995). *Publieke besluitvorming*. VUGA.

't Hart, P., & Schelfhout, D. (2016). Assessing prime-ministerial performance in a multiparty democracy: The Dutch case. *Acta Politica*, *51*(2), 153–172.

't Hart, P., & Ten Hooven, M. (2004). *Op zoek naar leiderschap: Regeren na de revolte*. De Balie.

Thomassen, J., & Van Ham, C. (2014). Failing political representation or a change in kind? Models of representation and empirical trends in Europe. *West European Politics*, *37*(2), 400–419.

Timmermans, A., & Andeweg, R. B. (2000). The Netherlands: Still the politics of accommodation? In W. C. Muller & K. Strøm (Eds.), *Coalition governments in western Europe* (pp. 356–298). Oxford University Press.

Van Ham, C., Thomassen, J., Aarts, K., & Andeweg, R. B. (Eds.). (2017). *Myth and reality of the legitimacy crisis: Explaining trends and cross-national differences in established democracies*. Oxford University Press.

Van Putten, J. (1981). *Haagse machten*. Staatsuitgeverij.

Van Schendelen, M. P. C. M. (1983). Critical comments on Lijphart's theory of consociational democracy. *Politikon*, *10*(1), 6–32.

Van Schendelen, M. C. P. M. (1984). The views of Arend Lijphart and collected criticisms. *Acta Politica*, *19*(1), 19–56.

Voermans, W. (2021). *Het land moet bestuurd worden: Machiavelli in de polder*. Prometheus.

Witteveen, W. J., Bovens, M., Derksen, W., Kalma, P., & Becker, F. (1995). *De verplaatsing van de politiek: Een agenda voor democratische vernieuwing*. Wiardi Beckman Stichting.

PART I

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES

CHAPTER 2

THE FORMATION AND CONSOLIDATION OF THE DUTCH NATIONAL SECURITY STATE

BEATRICE DE GRAAF

Introduction

The history of the Netherlands, in particular the history of its polity, including the institutions, state formation, and political culture, is generally told as a story of 'negotiation and deliberation' (see Te Velde, *this volume*). The narrative of the Dutch polity as a consociational or consensus democracy (Daalder, 1984; Lijphart, 1968) has been embraced as the common thread that runs through Dutch early modern and modern history, at least up until the 1990s (see Andeweg, *this volume*). Within these narratives scant attention has been paid to the fact that upholding consensus, negotiation, and tradition, or at least upholding the myth of their preponderance, presumes that society was protected from both external and internal threats to the political order. In fact, apart from the German invasion and the perennial threat posed by the rising waters, most other threats (discontent, foreign interference) are conspicuously absent in the dominant national stories about the politics of the Netherlands. Meanwhile, Dutch history since the seventeenth century abounds with pitched battles on religious issues, republican discord, and anti-Orangist polarization. The eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were, in fact, not nearly as complacent, peaceful, and devoid of political uprisings as conventional accounts would have it (see e.g. Huizinga, 1941). Institutions of domestic and foreign security had to work hard to keep the peace and consensus intact.

This chapter puts the flipside of the Dutch consociational and consensus democracy centre stage by exploring how the formation of the institutions, culture, and practices of a Dutch national security state took shape. It retraces the historical trajectory from

the inception of the first nation state around 1800 up until the 1940s, when Dutch national security was subsumed in the international and collective security institutions and organizations of the Western military and economic alliances.

Inception and Evolution of the Dutch National Security State

How did the current Dutch national security state develop? To answer that question, the concepts 'state' and 'state formation' need to be defined first. With Dryzek and Dunleavy (2009), we conceptualize the state as the unit that came into existence in the form as we know it today and that displays a combination (in various dimensions) of the following characteristics: 'A set of organized governing institutions which are formally connected to each other and have some cohesiveness', operating 'in a particular territory, where a substantial population lives as a distinct society' and where 'collectively binding decisions are made', which are upheld by a claim to national 'sovereignty' as well as by 'the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force' within that territory, and through which both a 'public realm' and a body of 'citizens' are defined (Dryzek & Dunleavy, 2009, pp. 2–4). More features could be added, including the rather salient one that such a 'state' should be considered legitimate by its citizens and should be recognized as a state by other states within the international arena (Dryzek & Dunleavy, 2009, pp. 5–6).

The formation of these features can be considered from a top-down and a bottom-up perspective; both perspectives are applicable to most modern nation states, including the United Kingdom of the Netherlands. The top-down view focuses on the 'behaviour and skill of ruling political elites (in the past, often generals, monarchs, or aristocrats) as the key determinant of a state's survival and growth in the context of competition with other states or proto-states'. The bottom-up perspective sees 'the emergence of states as a process of securing a progressively better fit between political structures and an underlying pattern of human societies, each shaped by a common language, culture, religion, ethnicity or historical experience' (Dryzek & Dunleavy, 2009, pp. 8–12). Here, ruling elites do have some impact, but the long-term endurance of state formation rests on its mobilization of the resources of the existing society.

Once one investigates the process of nation state formation in the realm of security using both these perspectives, it quickly becomes apparent that the history of Dutch state building and the core feature of the nation state—its monopoly on the legitimate use of violence domestically and in the projection of force abroad—is not a straightforward one to reconstruct. 'The Netherlands' is an amalgam of provinces that came together in the wake of the Eighty Years' War against Spain (1566–1648); it retained its bottom-up, loose, federative culture up until the nineteenth century. Even today,

police, security regions, water boards, and crisis management institutions follow to some extent the loose, regional path dependencies that were carved out in the Middle Ages.

Although constituting a relatively small country on the European continent, the Netherlands maintained, up until the twentieth century, a large colonial empire and accompanying maritime force outside of Europe. Meanwhile, as a result of the Fourth (and last) Anglo-Dutch War in 1780–1784 (won by the British), the Dutch prominence on the open seas had long since come to an end. From that moment onwards, the Netherlands could be considered a 'net receptor' (rather than a co-instigator) of international ruptures and crises (De Graaf, 2018).

Below I will, however, trace the story and institutional patterns of the contemporary Dutch state—including its national security institutions—back to the formative years around 1800, when the period of the Republic of the United Netherlands (1648–1795), the period of the Batavian Republic (1795–1806), the interlude of the Napoleonic Kingdom of Holland (1806–1810), and the incorporation into Imperial France (1806–1810) caused those loose federative segments to forge an alliance. After, and as a result of, this period of French influence and rule, the United Kingdom of the Netherlands was proclaimed on 20 November 1813. Forged in a top-down manner as a geopolitical 'buffer state', it had the characteristics of a centralized and modern nation state (De Haan et al., 2013).

After Napoleon's brief resurgence in 1815, the fledgling Dutch government was very much aware that its autonomy and national independence hinged on the goodwill of the allied powers of Europe and their protection of a system of collective security in which the Netherlands would be protected as a 'bulwark of Europe' and junior partner of Britain. Between 1813/15 and 1830, the Netherlands was an active member of the (anti-Napoleon) Quadruple Alliance. After losing what is now Belgium in 1830, the country withdrew into commercially informed 'aloofness and neutrality' (Wels, 1982), while fully embracing constitutional democracy at home and an active, middling position of neutrality (between the continental and maritime powers) abroad from 1848 onwards (De Graaf, 2020).

In the twentieth century, it was gradually sucked back into the vortex of international conflict. It barely managed to stay neutral during the First World War, and the Second World War propelled the Netherlands into the arms of the allied powers once again, this time institutionalized after 1945 with a permanent membership in both a military alliance, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), and an economic one (the European Economic Community, subsequently the European Union). These internationally delineated ruptures were also formative for the development of the institutions of the Dutch national security state (De Graaf, 2012).

Following Dryzek and Dunleavy's distinction, I will focus on *both* top-down and bottom-up initiatives that facilitated the emergence of the institutions that became responsible for maintaining national security in the Netherlands around and after 1800. I will do so by adhering to the received periodization of the Netherlands as it has been

demarcated by large shifts and ruptures in the international and geopolitical constellation (Hellema, 2016; Van Staden, 1991; Voorhoeve, 1979).

National Security and the Dawn of Monarchy, 1813–1848

The newly formed Kingdom had no official, centrally conceived and defined national security strategy (it wasn't until 2007 that one came into being (Ministry of Security and Justice, 2012, p. 3)). Security as a policy objective was mostly regulated in a fragmented, decentralized way, with each department, region, and organization involved in upholding domestic or international order (police, intelligence, armed forces) wielding its own definition of security and developing its own practices. Yet at the same time, national security was, in the Netherlands as much as in any other nation state, very much one of the functions by which the modern state legitimized and expanded its authority (Conze, 1984; Van Zuijlen, 2008).

Unlike in Austria under Chancellor Klemens von Metternich, in Prussia, or in France, central authority in the Netherlands was not enforced in a top-down way, nor was it accompanied by a culture of submission to a form of supreme government (Liang, 1992, pp. 18–82; Siemann, 1985). Only in times of duress and direct threat (from foreign invasions, for example, such as in 1572, 1618, 1672, and 1787) had the Dutch provinces and the States-General reluctantly put the reins of national security in the hands of the stadtholders, who were descendants of the prince of Orange. Yet, Stadtholder (and King of Britain) William III's extravagant spending on the armed forces and his expansion of his intelligence networks in the late seventeenth century plunged the country into such a state of bankruptcy that after his demise and the subsequent Spanish Wars of Succession, the States-General scurried back into a state of complacency and submitted to the Barrier Treaties of 1709 and 1713, effectively tying their security to British support on the waters and Austria's and Britain's protection against France (Onnekink, 2007, pp. 21–22; Van Deursen, 2000, 2005, pp. 241, 272, 337).

The French invasion of 1795 brought the Netherlands under French control. During this spell, which lasted over two decades, the loosely knit network of the Seven Provinces was transformed into a modern and centrally governed republic. During the French era, a common construct of national security emerged in the Netherlands as well. The French Declaration of the Rights of Man of 1789 introduced the concept of *sureté* in a paragraph that was adopted almost verbatim in the Dutch Declaration of 1795 and the Batavian State Regulations of 1798 (Van Zuijlen, 2008, pp. 43–44, 47–51). As a vassal state of the French Republic, the Batavian Republic, the Batavian Commonwealth, and the Kingdom of Holland (the subsequent versions of the French satellite state of the Netherlands) adopted a nationwide system of tax collection, conscription, central currencies and weights, a legislative body, and a first central government, consisting

of five departments. During this period, the Batavian Republic also gained a national structure for the police, devised by the French minister of police, Joseph Fouché. After the French had been driven out, all of these constitutional reforms and new government structures remained intact.

On 30 November 1813, the son of former stadtholder William V, Willem Frederik, set foot on Dutch soil again. Swapping the adjective 'imperial' for 'royal' or 'national', he kept the new security institutions of the Kingdom intact. His constitutions of 1814 and 1815 repeated the principle laid out in the 1798 Regulation of the State for the Batavian People, which proclaimed: 'The object of social union is security of person, life, honour and property, and civilization of mind and morals' (Article 1, Dutch Constitution, 1798, 1815). Article 4 of the 1815 constitution reads: 'All who are in the territory of the realm, whether residents or aliens, have equal claim to the protection of person and property' (Dutch Constitution, 1815). This article was retained in the 1848, 1887, and 1972 constitutions, and only disappeared in 1983 (Van Hasselt, 1987, p. 198; Van Zuijlen, 2008, pp. 19–27, 58–63).

According to Jeroen van Zanten (2004, p. 104), the Kingdom under William I could to some extent be understood as a 'liberal police state'. The monarchy gave great priority to aspects of internal and external security and defence. For King William I, security was, moreover, also a matter of political obedience to his will, as expressed in suppression of opposition. Together with his long-serving minister of justice Cornelis Felix van Maanen, he enacted a riot law, curbed the press, dismissed his critics, and put alleged 'radicals' in prison (Van Velzen, 2005, pp. 33–34). A. W. Philipse, the attorney general at the Supreme Court (a legacy institution from the French rule), presided over the national police. He developed numerous secret means of control and assured the king 'that the police have now made it their special duty to observe the public spirit' (Philipse, 1815). Lingering French Bonapartists, Dutch pundits, and Catholic bishops were caught by the small but diligent espionage network run by Van Maanen and Philipse.

Although defending national security did entail protecting the administration against revolutionary unrest and radicalism, it was also cast in moral-ideological terms as the protection of public morals. For example, the Ministry of Justice made an active effort to round up vagrants and kept a close eye on misbehaviour by officials, including officers (Ministry of Justice, 1813–1816). This moral direction had a twofold purpose. On the one hand, the unity of the fledgling nation had to be formed and enforced top-down. On the other hand, the powers of the Congress of Vienna had to be convinced that the Dutch people were an 'industrious and peaceful nation' that deserved its place in Europe. After all, the great powers had only very recently granted William of Orange the right to proclaim his sovereign kingdom—on 16 March 1815, just days after Napoleon's return from Elba. After painstaking negotiations in Vienna, they had allowed the Netherlands to be augmented with the territory of the Habsburg Netherlands, Belgium, and some French cities, and the Prince of Orange to join the German Confederation, via the Duchy of Luxembourg and Limburg, lifting the Netherlands in terms of people, wealth, and trade almost to the rank of Prussia. In the words of the Austrian chancellor Metternich, the new Kingdom was the 'lapdog of the Congress System' (De Graaf, 2020, p. 136).

That came at a price: the Netherlands had to function as a bulwark and a string of fortresses were built, ranging from Ostend on the North Sea coast via Antwerp to Bouillon and Mainz, to provide both military and political support against any future encroachments of France (De Graaf, 2020, pp. 320, 364–371). The country and its defence works thus formed the linchpin in the defensive European Alliance, geared together against future French aggression, with the Netherlands being the conduit between Britain and Prussia. The way in which the Netherlands gave shape to the 'constitutional principles' did not just shape the national unity of the new Kingdom, it also had to be compatible with 'the repose of Europe', the stability and peace on the continent (Déclaration, 1816). The new Dutch national security state was thus largely a product of the allies' collective security policy.

This period came to an end with the Belgian Revolution and subsequent secession of the Southern Provinces in August 1830. Now, Belgium became the buffer state (vis-à-vis France), and the barrier of fortresses that had been conceived and erected as the concrete translation of the Boulevard de l'Europe principle in stone and defence works was demolished. The Netherlands lost its pivotal role in European collective security schemes. After years of recalcitrance about the Treaty of London and the separation articles, William I accepted the new situation, only to abdicate immediately afterwards. Under William II, the Kingdom withdrew into a de facto state of neutrality on the continent, while focusing on its colonial possessions in the regions that are now Indonesia and the Caribbean.

Security of the Liberal-Democratic State, 1848–1914

Between 1848 and 1914, the coordinates of national security policy changed fundamentally. After Belgian independence, Dutch aspirations to participate in European collective security were exchanged for small-scale ambitions. National security became a matter of public safety, was primarily directed inwards rather than outwards, and was delineated in political rather than military terms in both the Netherlands proper and its colonies overseas. Foreign and domestic security were, moreover, administratively separated when royal prerogatives in the realm of security were increasingly transferred to ministers and professional departments. This process accelerated in 1848, the year of Europe's 'revolutionary spring' (Clark, 2023).

When in 1848 Europe was engulfed by insurrections, rebellions, and revolutionary struggles, both king and cabinet were terrified that these revolts would also prompt revolutionary riots in the Netherlands. Probably motivated in part by extortion (by some radicals over his alleged sexual escapades), William II agreed to adopt a new constitution in 1848 that effectively took away his absolutist power and transformed the Netherlands into a constitutional democracy with a monarch as head of state (Van

Zanten, 2004). Conscription remained, but the army was now put under the authority of the minister of war instead of residing under the monarch or his brother.

In comparison with surrounding countries, the Netherlands went against the grain of centralizing powers to national government. As a response to the chaos and revolutions of 1848 and 1849, the Prussian Constitution of 1851 now contained an extensive passage stating that, through the instrument of the state of emergency and emergency ordinances, the monarch or the administration could unilaterally rule by executive decree (Lüdtke & Wildt, 2008, pp. 14–15). In the Netherlands, by contrast, the Municipality Act of 1851 fundamentally restricted the power of the police apparatus at home. No state of emergency provisions was laid down in the constitution until 1887, except in a reference to the state of war. Moreover, the Municipality Act enshrined and reinforced ancient Dutch regime traditions of localism, in which cities and municipalities were prevalent vis-à-vis a relatively weak central government. It kept the Dutch police system fragmented and largely decentralized up until 2011 (Fijnaut, 2007).

This is not to claim that Dutch security policies were in any way 'soft'. In times of crisis, the army was regularly deployed in quelling uprisings. Paradoxically, this occurred precisely because there was no centrally regulated police system and because the municipalities did not provide enough money and men when such force was needed. In these years, civil authorities in the big cities still relied largely on the national army to restore order in crisis situations. In the 1840s, the army provided such assistance 20 times a year on average (Fijnaut, 2007, pp. 73–74). But even after this period, the army was repeatedly deployed, such as during major riots in Amsterdam in 1886, which left 25 citizens dead.

Yet, by and large, security remained an apolitical instrument of low-profile state authority. Tranquillity, order, and avoidance of chaos were the watchwords. For a state that wanted to be outwardly neutral and aloof, and inwardly mainly liberal, it was a matter of navigating between the Scylla of revolutionary chaos and the Charybdis of a modern police state along French or Prussian lines. Only after 1890, with the emergence of political parties, did the concept of (national) security become an object of ideological conflicts. Liberal governments worried about revolutionary radicals and anarchists, while fretting over the threat of state repression. With the Paris Commune in the back of their minds, members of the Protestant Anti-Revolutionary Party (ARP) saw the 'red spectre looming from the abyss' and waxed lyrical about the South African Boers and, sometimes, about Bismarck's alleged Protestant reign of 'blood and iron' (Te Velde, 1992, pp. 32–36).

National security policies and activities remained in keeping with the minimalist foreign policy that nineteenth-century cabinets maintained. Security of and within the colonies and not getting drawn into mainland European turbulences were paramount. Enforcement and control of domestic disturbances, spies, and anarchists served a foreign and/or colonial purpose. Neutrality and peace had to be guaranteed. This meant, however, that neutrality had to be defended more proactively in order to present the Netherlands to its diverse trading partners—be it continental Germany or maritime Great Britain—as a reliable, dependable state. This went hand in hand with the national

self-image of a 'disciplined' and 'orderly' nation ruled by liberal virtues (Te Velde, 1992, p. 205).

The Interwar Period: Conservation and Expansion, 1914–1940

The (preparations for the) First World War functioned as a kind of pressure cooker for Dutch security policy. The more that Dutch neutrality came under pressure externally, the greater the government's interest became in maintaining a grip on domestic security and national defence. National defence had already been upended with the army laws of Hendrikus Colijn, ARP minister of war, in 1912. The neutrality of the Netherlands had to be preserved and guarded at all costs. Security meant that the Netherlands had to remain neutral under all circumstances, 'like an eye in the storm of tension' between England, Germany, and France (Klinkert & Teitler, 2003; Schuursma, 2005, p. 21). Therefore, Dutch defences had to be up to standard, while at the same time none of the warring parties should take offence at actions carried out on or from Dutch territory.

To identify and suppress political threats to armed neutrality, the Dutch government first invested in the creation of a series of new security services. Their task was to safeguard neutrality, prevent uprisings and uproar, proactively uphold the democratic order, and perform a precarious multiparty balancing act. In 1917, a military police service was established side by side with the Royal Netherlands Marechaussee to maintain order within the armed forces (Smeets, 2007, pp. 127–132). After a failed revolution attempt on 12 November 1918, the Third Section of the General Staff of the Armed Forces was reorganized and transformed into the first Dutch Central Intelligence Service. The service was tasked to monitor morale in the country as well as track down foreign spies. The string of security innovations culminated in a much more militarized police force. During times of unrest, a veritable *cordon sanitaire* of national security services could now be dispatched to the major cities in order to suppress any instance of uprising or quell extremist activities (Engelen, 1995, p. 13; Smeets, 2007, pp. 144–145, 168–169).

The embodiment of the expansion of these new security arrangements was the previously mentioned orthodox Calvinist Hendrikus Colijn (Puchinger, 2008), a former colonial officer who as minister of war modernized the armed forces between 1910 and 1913 in such a way that they would prove capable of rapid mobilization in 1914. From 1925 to 1926 and again between 1933 and 1939, he served as prime minister. An agrarian's son and an upright, even rigid, figure, Colijn satisfied the Depression-fuelled desire for a 'strong man' in charge of the state, owing his position to the so-called 'conservative reflex' that emanated from a society whose main pillars were formed by the bourgeoisie (Blom, 1989, p. 29).

The expansion of the security state in the Netherlands was a function of its main overarching interest, namely to remain neutral in the eye of the storm that was building

up on the continent. This policy of safeguarding the position of neutrality was not a passive but a proactive position that triggered a range of security-related measures intentionally designed to quell and suppress any form of extremism and uprisings. It was also a highly conservatist position, in the sense that it was engineered to keep the major confessional partners in their seats.

The 1930s put this policy to the test. 'The nature of the Dutch people is such that it is not prone to react as strongly to various stimuli as other peoples abroad', the Dutch Central Intelligence Service remarked on 24 November 1933. 'Yet, we have to admit that in our country, too, we can witness a major turnaround in the people's soul.... A cry can now be heard, a cry for order and strong authority in state and society' (Central Intelligence Service, 1933, pp. 2–3). Dutch historian Johan Huizinga, already famous in his own time, also issued a warning in 1933 against the rise of 'contemporary nationalism', which he regarded as a 'grave threat suspended over Europe' (Huizinga, 1933; cited in De Voogd, 2005).

The Colijn-led government won the elections of April 1933 with its promise to keep the Netherlands calm and orderly in the face of economic and sociopolitical turbulence. It made sedition a criminal offence and curtailed the press. The above citation from the Central Intelligence Service fitted that pattern: the Dutch security institutions were there to protect the democratic order—critics would say, the conversative establishment's version of the democratic order—and Dutch interests against extremists of all kinds (De Rooy, 1999, pp. 211–213). For that reason, in July 1933, the government issued a civil service ban that prohibited government personnel from enlisting or participating in extremist organizations. Military personnel were prohibited from being active in the Social Democratic Workers' Party and the associated Dutch Trade Union Association, as these organizations advocated unilateral disarmament (Central Intelligence Service, 1933, pp. 20–21).

The civil service ban also extended to soldiers and members of reserve troops. Moreover, the Colijn cabinet introduced a ban on uniforms in order to ensure that black-uniformed officers of the *Weerbaarheidsafdeling*—the Dutch micro-version of Hitler's Nazi hit squads—disappeared from the streets. National Socialist Union Party (NSB) members could no longer hold marches or stroll around and canvass in uniform. Both measures dealt a heavy blow to the NSB's social standing: it was no longer considered a 'decent' political party (Smeets, 2007, p. 172). Only the governmentally approved Special Voluntary Landstorm, established in 1918 as a kind of civil paramilitary organization, was allowed to organize training, shooting practices, and conventions. With approximately 90,000 members in 1939 and based in over 1,300 cities and towns, the Special Voluntary Landstorm became increasingly popular in the 1930s and, thus, also served to derail the appeal of extremist party organizations.

After July 1934, the strikes and riots decreased in number and size, as the Central Intelligence Service reported with some satisfaction, and the trade unions lost members (Blom, 1989, pp. 3–5; Central Intelligence Service, 1933, p. 21). This confirmed the belief, expressed in a debate in the Dutch first chamber of parliament, that with 'correct use of our constitutional state institutions', political extremism would peter out of its

own accord (Handelingen der Eerste Kamer, 1934, p. 16). Both the Central Intelligence Service and the government hoped that this withering away of extremist positions would hold true in the international arena as well. Even in 1939, while preparing once again for mobilization, Prime Minister Colijn expressed his hope that the Netherlands 'were not under any direct threat' (of political extremism; Nuij, 2000, pp. 39–40).

Post-Second World War: Security through the Atlantic Alliance

The Second World War turned Dutch national security doctrine on its head. During the wartime years, the government in exile in London had laid the groundwork for a new strategic security policy. The cabinet abandoned its policy of detached neutrality and opted for commitment to the allied powers, most notably the United Kingdom and the United States. After all, only the United States could offer a lasting rebuttal to Germany. Anti-totalitarianism (first against the Nazis and after 1945 increasingly against the Soviet Union) became a guiding principle behind the new security architecture of the liberated Netherlands. The country consequently became a founding member of NATO.

With the help of the British and Americans, the Bureau of National Security—later renamed the Dutch Domestic Security Agency (BVD)—was established in May 1945 to counter espionage, sabotage, subversion, and extremism. In addition, the Dutch Foreign Intelligence Service (BID, later renamed IDB) was established in 1946. These agencies reflected the gradual integration of the Dutch state and society in the Western alliance. Indeed, in the run-up to the 1948 elections, the fight against communism was perceived as the most urgent threat by 48% of voters (public opinion poll, cited in Blom, 1989, pp. 187–189, 214–215). This did not yet translate into a political priority to join the fight against communism on the continent with all means. Dutch military, international, and national security still had a colonial dimension. In 1949, 29% of the population gave priority to solving the question of Indonesian independence, whereas 'sound defence politics' only gained 3% of the vote in 1950 (Opinion poll, 1950).

Around 1966, however, a new generation of citizens, born after the Second World War, started to assert themselves more prominently on matters of security and international politics. Protest groups voiced their criticism regarding the country's loyal participation in American-dominated security. Anti-militarist organizations of the left protested against institutions of authority and order. For some of the new political parties launched in these years, such as the Pacifist Socialist Party and the progressive Political Party of Radicals, NATO membership became a bone of contention. Stronger than in the interwar period, opposition to the official security discourse grew from within the organs of authority and from civil society itself, leading to stricter parliamentary control over the BVD and IDB.

In marked contrast to the governments of West Germany and France, the Dutch government did not politicize the battle for security and order during the early 1970s. It deliberately tried to keep direct attacks on state security, such as the terrorist actions of the South Moluccans in 1970 and the 'city guerrilla' bombings perpetrated by a Marxist splinter group, out of the public eye. Rather than repression, the Dutch policy combined outward silence with inward mediation and patronage (Abels, 2007; De Graaf, 2011a). A 'regent mentality' of restraint and patronage, on the one hand, and after 1973, a social-democratic unwillingness to be identified with repression, on the other, ensured that security policy never was—and never should be—perceived as 'too harsh' to the outside world. 'The government believes that for that fight [against terrorism] no form should be chosen that would affect the open character of our society', Prime Minister Biesheuvel stated in his proclamation of the first Dutch counterterrorism programme in early 1973 (Handelingen der Tweede Kamer, 1973). Although an additional provision concerning the declaration of the state of exception was included in the 1983 constitution, it was never used in response to, for example, terrorist attacks, whereas in the Federal Republic of Germany and in Italy such decrees were issued multiple times.

Security policies became more contested and more strongly embedded at the same time. Domestic security, intelligence, and military intelligence agencies remained small and kept a low profile, while subordinating themselves to the Atlantic alliance and to a pro-Western, anti-communist view on defending the democratic legal order. The BVD continued to monitor alleged communist agents up until the 1980s, including alleged influence operations directed from the Warsaw Pact against the western European and Dutch peace movement (Boot & De Graaf, 2011). Yet, its apparatus did not expand much further. The national security state remained a function of the Dutch position as a loyal NATO ally, outsourcing its security to the Atlantic partners throughout the Cold War years. Only with the splintering and fragmentation of the bipolar world order after 1990 did national security undergo new tectonic shocks.

Conclusion

In comparison with surrounding countries, Dutch security policies have been low-key, decentralized, and directed more to the protection of trade and colonial wealth than to expansion or mobilization of the nation through a martial spirit. Bloody military campaigns in Indonesia, such as during the Aceh War, were hushed up rather than brandished as national moments of pride and heroism.

Fascism and National Socialism were frowned upon not so much because of ideological aversion, but because these ideologies were considered 'uncivil'. Security had to serve the Dutch self-image of an orderly, 'civil' nation (Blom, 1989, 16–17; 1975, pp. 24–35). Moreover, it should not cost the government too much. In the words of historian Johan Boogman, the Dutch commercial-maritime tradition held sway over rising continental-expansive ones abroad (Amersfoort, 1982; Boogman, 1982, pp. 147–161).

In the twentieth century, security policy was primarily an attempt by the elites to protect a 'pillarized' society from such extremist troublemakers as communists and fascists, in the hope that problems at home and abroad would blow over. In contrast to its German neighbour, where law and security were placed in the service of National Socialism, the Dutch government took measures to ensure that security was primarily concerned with order, peace, and authority. Maintaining security in the Netherlands was about orchestrating the absence of public displays of political extremism, as defined by bourgeois elites.

Looking back, we see some notable moments when the national security state was expanded, usually due to foreign threats and developments: the French era, the rise of anarchism and communism between 1880 and 1900, the First World War, and the period just after the Second World War. There were, however, also periods of *de*-securitization. The abdication of William I paved the way for the advent of a constitution. The liberal police state became a parliamentary democracy in which arbitrariness and the will to power were curbed, and the second half of the Cold War saw a diminished sense of urgency, with the early 1990s even heralding a period in which claims to cash in the 'peace dividend' led to the dissolution of the IDB in 1994.

The current national security architecture and strategy of the Dutch state continues to be rooted in the experience of German invasion and occupation, which propelled consecutive governments to pursue an active role in the Atlantic alliance. National security was outsourced to that alliance, on the one hand, while it led to a more proactive democratic-ideological interpretation of it inwardly, on the other. Starting in the late 1960s, an increase in the number of actors in the security field—from anti-militarists to peace demonstrators and anti-imperialist saboteurs—caused a 'democratization' of security policy. These trends of 'horizontalization' and 'domestication' of security and foreign politics also opened the door to populism and politicization. In the early modern Netherlands, security interests had been dictated by the merchants and reined in by their purse. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, citizens, with all their feelings and moods, fears, and nightmares, are once again at the centre and demand limitless security.

Moreover, an important historical factor that put a brake on securitization has slowly disappeared: the municipal autonomy that remained intact in security matters for almost two centuries and was only eroded by the French and German occupations has, from the 2010s onwards, been given up in favour of a centralized, national police force, a national security 'coordinator', and a national security committee of cabinet. Dutch minimalist and compartmentalized security thinking, originating from a combination of regent mentality and the disinterestedness of the population, as described by political scientist Hans Daalder (1990, p. 180), had now truly lost its appeal. The trends of depillarization and the rise of broad, populist movements accelerated in the years after '9/11' and the Pim Fortuyn-led revolt against centrist-technocratic government in the Netherlands. Local deradicalization programmes were launched that tapped into the global threat of jihadism and terrorism in the 2000s. For the Netherlands, this had the effect that questions of religious organization and minorities, which had always been an

issue of social or cultural policy in the post-war period, now became treated as matters of national security. Specific religious groups, most notably Salafist ones, but sometimes also extended to orthodox Christian groups (with regard to their alleged suppression of civil liberties), were increasingly securitized—particularly after the 2004 assassination of libertarian film-maker and commentator Theo van Gogh by a radicalized young Muslim and the foiling of a terror attack plot by the Islamist 'Hofstadgroep'—and made the object of security policy (De Graaf, 2011b).

The question still remains how the Netherlands, as a net receiver of foreign threats and with its path dependencies of bottom-up security provisions, will face the transboundary crises and threats that are looming on the horizon of the twenty-first century. King William I initiated a first set of national security policies, aiming to defend the country, raise dykes, and restore good morals. He just lacked the resources required to put that authoritarian ideal into practice. Only in times of direct foreign threat were new institutions created and budgets augmented. That set the pattern for the nineteenth, twentieth, and early twenty-first centuries: only in the aftermath of major disruptions, invasions, wars, or global crises did the Dutch government find enough support or clout to expand its security institutions. And whenever another such leap in expanding the national security state occurred, Dutch democracy hopped after it, trying to keep hold of the reins of constitutional control. Further research would be necessary to investigate how effective this blanket democratic control has been in times of crises and disruptions to the fabric of both national security and its institutions. Another key question is how such a hybrid, non-centralized state model responds to the threat of the new fragmented world order and the situation of permanent polycrisis—and how this will affect the Dutch state and the country's open democratic society.

References

Abels, P. (2007). 'Je wilt niet geloven dat zoiets in Nederland kan': Het Nederlandse contraterrorisme beleid sinds 1973. In I. Duyvesteyn & B. de Graaf (Eds.), *Terroristen en hun bestrijders, vroeger en nu* (pp. 121–128). Boom.

Amersfoort, H. (1982). Voor Vaderland en Oranje: Een verkenning naar de wederzijdse betrokkenheid van natie en leger. *Mededelingen van de Sectie Militaire Geschiedenis van de Landmachtstaf*, *5*, 111–154.

Blom, H. (1989). *Crisis, bezetting en herstel: Tien studies over Nederland 1930–1950*. Rotterdam: Nijgh & Van Ditmar Universitair.

Boogman, J. C. (1982). *Van spel en spelers*. Nijhoff.

Boot, C., & De Graaf, B. (2011). 'Hollanditis': Die Niederlande als 'schwaches Glied in der NATO-Kette'? Niederländische Proteste gegen den NATO-Doppelbeschluss 1979–1985. In P. Gassert, T. Geiger, & H. Wentker (Eds.), *Zweiter Kalter Krieg und Friedensbewegung: Der NATO-Doppelbeschluss in deutsch-deutscher und internationaler Perspektive* (pp. 345–362). Oldenbourg.

Central Intelligence Service. (1933). Nr. 06632, 24 November, 2–3. www.inghist.nl/pdf/cid/1500-1599/1555.pdf.

Clark, C. (2023). *Revolutionary spring: Fighting for a new world, 1848–1849*. Allen Lane.
Conze, W. (1984). Sicherheit, Schutz. In O. Brunner, W. Conzo, & R. Koselleck (Eds.), *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe: Historisches Lexikon zur politisch-sozialen Sprache in Deutschland* 5 (pp. 831–862). Klett-Cotta.
Daalder, H. (1984). On the origins of the consociational democracy model. *Acta Politica*, *19*, 97–113.
Daalder, H. (1990). *Politiek en historie: Opstellen over Nederlandse politiek en vergelijkende politieke wetenschap*. Bert Bakker.
De Graaf, B. (2011a). *Evaluating counterterrorism performance: A comparative approach*. Routledge.
De Graaf, B. (2011b). Religion bites: Religieuze orthodoxie op de nationale veiligheidsagenda. *Tijdschrift voor Religie, Recht en Beleid*, *2*(2), 62–80.
De Graaf, B. (2012). Nationale veiligheid in Nederland: De geschiedenis van een ordeningsprincipe. In E. Muller (Ed.), *Veiligheid: Veiligheid en veiligheidsbeleid in Nederland* (pp. 199–225). Kluwer.
De Graaf, B. (2018). 1815: Nederland ontstaat uit het 'concert van Europa'. In L. Heerma van Voss, M. 't Hart, K. Davids, K. Fatah-Black, L. Lucassen, & J. Touwen (Eds.), *Wereldgeschiedenis van Nederland* (pp. 373–378). Ambo Anthos.
De Graaf, B. (2020). *Fighting terror after Napoleon: How Europe became secure after 1815*. Cambridge University Press.
De Haan, I., Den Hoed, P., & Te Velde, H. (Eds.). (2013). *Een nieuwe staat: Het begin van het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden*. Prometheus/Bert Bakker.
De Rooy, P. (1999). Een zoekende tijd: De ongemakkelijke democratie, 1933–1949. In R. Aerts, H. de Liagre Böhl, P de Rooy, & H. te Velde (Eds.), *Land van kleine gebaren: Een politieke geschiedenis van Nederland, 1780–1990* (pp. 195–282). Boom.
De Voogd, C. (2005). Johan Huizinga en de Coopération intellectuelle internationale: 'Een intellectueel ambassadeur' van Nederland in de crisisjaren. *De Gids*, *168*, 165–166.
Déclaration. (1816). From the Viennese court to the Council, annex 50 to the protocol of 24 August. The National Archives, Foreign Office, 146/14, Kew/London.
Dryzek, J. S., & Dunleavy, P. (2009). *Theories of the democratic state*. Red Globe.
Engelen, D. (1995). *Geschiedenis van de Binnenlandse Veiligheidsdienst*. SDU.
Fijnaut, C. (2007). *De geschiedenis van de Nederlandse politie: Een staatsinstelling in de maalstroom van de geschiedenis*. Boom.
Handelingen der Eerste Kamer. (1934). Bijlagen, Rijksbegroting voor het dienstjaar 1934, Bijlage A, 2, I (pp. 13–24).
Handelingen der Tweede Kamer. (1973). Brief van de minister-president, minister van Algemene Zaken, 22 February. Rijksbegroting voor het dienstjaar 1973, 12.000, nr. 11.
Hellema, D. (2016). *Nederland in de wereld: De buitenlandse politiek van Nederland*. Spectrum.
Huizinga, J. (1933). Discours sur l'avenir de l'esprit européen. Lecture held at a conference of the Cooperation intellectuelle internationale, October.
Huizinga, J. (1941). *Nederland's beschaving in de zeventiende eeuw: Een schets*. Tjeenk Willink.
Klinkert, W., & Teitler, G. (2003). Nederland van neutraliteit naar bondgenootschap: Het veiligheids- en defensiebeleid in de twintigste eeuw. In B. de Graaff, D. Helleman, & B. van der Zwan (Eds.), *De Nederlandse buitenlandse politiek in de twintigste eeuw* (pp. 9–36). Boom.
Liang, H. (1992). *The rise of the modern police and the European state system from Metternich to the Second World War*. Cambridge University Press.

Lijphart, A. (1968). *The politics of accommodation: Pluralism and democracy in the Netherlands*. University of California Press.

Lüdtke, A., & Wildt, M. (2008). Einleitung. In A. Lüdtke & M. Wildt (Eds.), *Staats-Gewalt: Ausnahmezustand und Sicherheitsregimes—Historische Perspektiven* (pp. 7–38). Wallstein.

Ministry of Justice. (1813–1816). Circulaires over het bestrijden van landloperij; berichten over misdragingen van officieren, etc. Archive MinJus 1813–1876. Toegangsnr. 2.09.01, inv.nr. 454. National Archive, The Hague.

Ministry of Security and Justice. (2012). *Strategie Nationale Veiligheid: Bevindingenrapportage*. The Hague.

Nuij, N. (2000). *'Gaat u maar rustig slapen': Colijn en de mythe van mei '40*. Verloren.

Onnekink, D. (2007). *The Anglo-Dutch favourite: The career of Hans Willem Bentinck, First Earl of Portland (1649–1709)*. Ashgate.

Opinion poll. (1950). Opinieonderzoek van de Nederlandse Stichting voor Statistiek naar de Nationale Reserve, maart 1950. Kabinet Minister-President, 2.03.01, inv.nr. 11807. National Archive, The Hague.

Philipse, A. W. (1815). Brief van the Procureur Generaal bij het Hoog Geregtshof, A. W. Philipse aan de koning, 17 maart 1815. Toegangsnr. 2.02.01, inv.nr. 5654. National Archive, The Hague.

Puchinger, G. (2008). Colijn, Hendrikus (1869–1944). In *Biografisch woordenboek van Nederland*. https://resources.huygens.knaw.nl/bwn1880-2000/lemmata/bwn2/colijn

Schuursma, R. (2005). *Vergeefs onzijdig: Nederlands neutraliteit 1919–1940*. Matrijs.

Siemann, W. (1985). '*Deutschlands Ruhe, Sicherheit und Ordnung*': *Die Anfänge der politischen Polizei 1806–1866*. Max Niemeyer.

Smeets, J. (2007). *De geschiedenis van de Nederlandse politie: Verdeeldheid en eenheid in het rijkspolitieapparaat*. Boom.

Te Velde, H. (1992). *Gemeenschapszin en plichtsbesef: Liberalisme en nationalisme in Nederland, 1870–1918*. SDU.

Van Deursen, A. (2000). *Maurits van Nassau 1567–1625: De winnaar die faalde*. Bert Bakker.

Van Deursen, A. (2005). *De last van veel geluk: De geschiedenis van Nederland, 1555–1702*. Bert Bakker.

Van Hasselt, W. J. C. (1987). *Nederlandse staatsregelingen en grondwetten*. Samson.

Van Staden, A. (1991). De rol van Nederland in het Atlantisch Bondgenootschap: Wat veranderde en wat uiteindelijk bleef. In N. C. F. van Sas (Ed.), *De kracht van Nederland: Internationale positie en buitenlands beleid* (pp. 219–231). Becht.

Van Velzen, P. (2005). *De ongekende ministeriële verantwoordelijkheid: Theorie en praktijk, 1813–1840*. Wolf Legal.

Van Zanten, J. (2004). *Schielijk, Winzucht, Zwaarhoofd en Bedaard: Politieke discussie en oppositievorming 1813–1840*. Wereldbibliotheek.

Van Zuijlen, R. W. (2008). *Veiligheid als opdracht: Een onderzoek naar veiligheid als fundamenteel recht en als positieve verplichting van de staat in het licht van de politietaak tot strafrechtelijke rechtshandhaving*. WLP.

Voorhoeve, J. J. C. (1979). *Peace, profits and principles: A study of Dutch foreign policy*. Martinus Nijhoff.

Wels, C. B. (1982). *Aloofness and neutrality: Studies on Dutch foreign relations and policy-making institutions*. HES.

CHAPTER 3

CHANGE AND CONTINUITY IN THE STYLE OF DUTCH POLITICS SINCE 1800

HENK TE VELDE

Introduction: Traditions in Dutch Politics

The Netherlands has always been a country of minorities as well as of accommodating but firm rule by political elites. As will become clear, this was in a certain sense already true of the period of the Dutch Republic, but certainly for the nineteenth and most part of the twentieth centuries. The country was split between Catholics, orthodox Protestants, social democrats and liberals, who maintained a sometimes precarious balance. Political scientists have contributed to the study of this history by introducing concepts such as consociational and consensus democracy (e.g. Lijphart, 1968, 2012). While Lijphart was interested in designing a conceptual model to be used in the comparative study of democracies, his colleague Hans Daalder was first and foremost interested in the evolution of the Dutch polity in its own right, and consequently had more eye for historical nuances (e.g. Daalder, 1984, on Lijphart; Daalder, 1995). Daalder was interested in the historical traditions that gave birth to the politics of pacification rather than focusing, as Lijphart had done, on the contemporary choices and manoeuvring of political elites. Daalder showed political scientists that they could not neglect the impact of history if they wanted to understand the way politics worked in the Netherlands. However, in his hands history almost became a force of its own that determines the course of political developments.

Traditions do not live all by themselves, though. According to more recent literature, traditions involve the handing down of ideas, narratives, and practices (e.g. Bevir & Rhodes, 2010; Otto & Pedersen, 2005; Phillips & Schochet, 2004). Traditions

do not just self-perpetuate; people actually have to believe in them, emulate them, safeguard them, and pass them on to the next generation. Traditions have always been at least partly invented, in the sense of being actively reconstructed. They are flexible, never unchanging; handing them down involves a distinct effort. Since the 1980s, approaches concentrating on discontinuity and 'the invention of tradition' (Hobsbawm & Ranger, 1983) have dominated the historiography of the revolutionary period around 1800 and the modern age. This has been true for the international literature, but certainly also for the Netherlands where the ruptures of the revolutionary age and the late nineteenth century—from republic to kingdom and the advent of modern party politics respectively—have been underlined since the late 1980s (Van Sas, 2004, is the most prominent example). Quite recently, the pendulum of historical research has begun to swing back to interest in the continuities of Dutch politics over a long period of time, with a focus on the mechanisms of handing down traditions (Pollmann & Te Velde, 2018, and the accompanying special issue).

Historical analysis inspired by new or historical institutionalism, concentrating on institutions such as guilds, has proven fruitful in the case of the Netherlands (Prak & Van Zanden, 2013). An analysis of political culture can also detect continuities when there is a discontinuity in this type of institution, as was the case in the Netherlands around 1800 (Bevir & Rhodes, 2010). One of the central traditions of Dutch politics is to be found in the meeting and discussion practices and in the strategies of gaining stakeholder and popular support and acceptance for political decisions. These traditions contrast with the American and British debating styles which have been the—not always acknowledged—starting points of theoretical approaches such as 'deliberative democracy' (Bächtiger et al., 2018; Floridia, 2017). 'Deliberative democracy' has been criticized for not considering the truly agonistic nature of politics, and for over-accentuating respect, harmony, and consensus (e.g. Chambers, 2004; Mouffe, 2009; Young, 2000, pp. 36–51). Dutch political history, however, provides many empirical instances of that latter attitude: the benefit of comparatively reasonable discussion as well as the downside of excluding clamorous minorities and favouring those who already sit at the conference table.

This chapter about the continuities and periodization of Dutch political history focuses on political discussion, meeting, and ruling practices. Why and how people pass on traditions and adjust them—as each generation does—must be analysed separately for different historical periods. Lijphart set out to do this for the period between the First World War and the 1960s. Even though his analysis has clear limitations, combining Lijphart's concentration on elite behaviours and the incentives for their choices at a critical historical juncture, followed by a period shaped by these choices, and Daalder's focus on long-term historical traditions provides us with a useful starting point for analysing the continuities as well as the changes in the development of meeting and discussion practices in Dutch politics over two centuries.

I will concentrate my analysis on the way Dutch politicians discussed the problems they were faced with and how they tried to solve them. I focus mainly on governing

elites, parliaments, and political parties. Based on the conventions of historiographical overviews (e.g. Aerts et al., 1999; Blom & Lamberts, 2006; De Rooy, 2015; Kennedy, 2017; Kossmann, 1978) as well as on constitutional developments and the main issues on the political agenda, I distinguish between different periods in Dutch political history. Transitions from one period to the next have been invariably marked—though perhaps not always caused—by dramatic events. Each period has had its own distinctive practice and style of deliberating as well as its political problem-solving strategies. But overall, change has been incremental, not radical. At each transition, the quiet, consensual traditions of discussion and problem solving have been reinvented in a recognizable but modified shape.

The Dutch Republic until the Batavian Revolution of 1795

The Netherlands started as a decentralized confederal republic of sovereign provinces, resulting from the Dutch Revolt of the sixteenth century. The western province of Holland was the richest and most powerful by far. In the decentralized Republic, the towns—and in particular the large city of Amsterdam—dominated. Politics was first and foremost urban politics, and a tradition of rule by a broad urban elite of local notables or 'regents' living in close connection with the local population was handed down from the Dutch Republic. Until the end of the Republic, official politics was not public and took place behind closed doors. The central institution of the States-General was not a parliament or public meeting, but a rather formal sitting or 'vergadering' of a committee of representatives of the provinces. They met in The Hague around a large table to deliberate, in the sense of quietly arguing and bargaining in private rather than debating on a stage (cf. Van Vree, 1994, 1999).

From a Revolutionary Age towards a United Kingdom, 1795–1830/1848

Besides the closed meetings of the States-General and the executive politics led by the prince of Orange and a Grand Pensionary, there was no national politics to speak of. The prince of Orange was powerful but formally just the highest civil servant: he held the office of stadtholder, and he was commander in chief of the army. A public representative system at the national level was only established after the fall of the Dutch Republic in 1795. French revolutionary armies entered the Netherlands and Dutch supporters of revolutionary politics forced out the prince of Orange.

The new Batavian Republic introduced the first national parliament based on the first national elections (1796), and also the first formal constitution (1798). Overnight, politics became a public affair, and anyone who wanted to succeed in the National Assembly had to be a master of debating in public. The popularity of debating was short-lived, though. Citizens tired of referendums and constant voting. More importantly, it transpired quickly that the new ruling elite preferred government *for* the people to government *by* the people. The Netherlands was one of the countries where the clarion call of 'democracy' was uttered very early, but only to fade rapidly. From 1798 onwards the role of the French became more important, and after a number of coups, regime changes, and even a brief kingship—held by Napoleon's brother Louis—by 1810 the country had been incorporated in the Napoleonic French empire (e.g. Grijzenhout et al., 2013; Van der Burg, 2010).

After the fall of Napoleon, the country regained its independence. In 1813–1815 the United Kingdom of the Netherlands and Belgium was founded with King William I at the helm. That was not the end of constitutional changes, as the Belgian Revolt of 1830 led to the creation of a separate Belgian kingdom. Meanwhile, the Dutch Restoration had been quite successful. Although the republic gave way to monarchy and the national politics of a unitary kingdom had replaced the largely decentralized administration of the Dutch Republic, crucial elements of the political style of the old republic were handed down to the new kingdom.

Despite almost complete institutional discontinuity at the national level, the open and lively debating culture of the National Assembly of 1796–1798 remained the exception, and the meeting style of the old States-General was more or less resumed in the new parliamentary assembly of 1814—which at first was not even public. After 1813, Dutch elites kept harping on about the crucial importance of low-key deliberation, public harmony, and the repudiation of revolutionary politics. Dutch parliamentarians consciously rejected the heritage of the National Assembly—which, as a result, disappeared almost without a trace—and embraced the heritage of the 'vergadering' (Lauret, 2020; Te Velde, 2015, 2020).

The nineteenth-century unitary monarchical state neglected or suppressed local autonomy, and the liberal elite emphasized the importance of the rule of law instead of embracing the prospect of the messy and potentially unruly 'democracy'. A liberal though often paternalist system was maintained.

The Liberal and Constitutional Age, 1848–1880

The liberal revision of the constitution of 1848 established the principle of ministerial responsibility and direct elections of the Dutch House of Representatives. This heralded the advent of a truly parliamentary form of government. The king was made politically

inviolable and his role was, at least in theory, reduced to that of a constitutional monarch without executive power. Even though he retained some executive power in practice and remained influential, liberals were confident that the revision would be the beginning of an era of rational debate and open exchange of arguments. The effects of the revision indeed warrant labelling 1848 as a new start. The revision of the constitution has remained a touchstone for constitutional development and liberal values. At the time, conservatives experienced it as somewhat of a revolution, and there was certainly a notable change of tone in parliamentary and public debate. Harmony was less appreciated, authority less respected, and open debate was valued more.

Conservatives branded the main architect of the revision, liberal leader Johan Rudolf Thorbecke, a revolutionary, but that was greatly exaggerated. He had been professor of constitutional law and if he wanted a revolution, it was a revolution of constitutional rules and norms, a reorganization of the state rather than a revolution of society. He resembled doctrinaire liberals in France and Germany, who were close to conservatives (Aerts, 2018; Craiutu, 2003; Te Velde, 2008;). Thorbecke was not a conservative, but he was quite a formal statesman. He was a man of government and administration rather than opposition, let alone mobilization of the common people. His political project was designed to strengthen rather than threaten executive government. He profited from the fact that the Netherlands had always been a 'liberal' country with the rule of law but not democracy, and a strong civil society but no great predilection for 'politics' (Aerts, 2010; for contemporary developments, see Dekker, 2019).

Though Thorbecke attacked the arrogance and complacency of the old elite and advocated critical reasoning, eventually he became part of a new elite. After his death in 1872, his liberal faction increasingly joined forces with notables who had conservative roots. In the 1870s they aligned to form a national elite, tied by joint university experiences, board memberships, and frequent attendance at local men's clubs. According to the famous dictum of Giuseppe di Lampedusa in his novel *The Leopard* that 'everything must change for everything to remain the same', political culture had become more open, but political debate still retained elements of the polite conversation of an elite of notables.

The Advent of Mass Politics, Political Parties and Electoral Democracy, 1880–1917

In many countries, social democrats were the first to start what became the modern political party: extra-parliamentarian social movements that put up candidates for elections. In the Netherlands, however, the orthodox Protestant or neo-Calvinist *Antirevolutionaire Partij* (ARP), the 'anti-revolutionary party' directed against the ideas of the French Revolution, founded in 1879, became the first modern political party of

this kind. Mobilization on the basis of religious preferences proved more successful than mobilization on the basis of class differences.

The country was split between, on the one hand, a Protestant majority and, on the other, a large Catholic minority, which over the years varied between one third and two fifths of the population and was primarily but not exclusively based in the southern, less prominent provinces. According to the majority, the country was Protestant by nature and the Catholics were guests, if not intruders, who should be modest in their claims. The Protestant majority was also split, however, between liberal and orthodox Protestants. The ARP mobilized orthodox Protestants and used new methods. Both the liberals and orthodox Protestants were emancipation movements, but the latter did not conceive of emancipation as a process in which they just learnt to behave as properly educated liberal citizens. On the contrary, emancipation should entail putting religious issues on the political agenda—politics should listen to the (religious) voice of the people, rather than the other way round. In 1878, a petition against a new liberal primary education bill was signed by about 450,000 people—a remarkable number in a country of just 4 million inhabitants.

At face value, the petition did not have the desired effect. The bill was carried and signed into law in that same year. However, Abraham Kuyper, the leader of the ARP, did achieve his other objective. In his hands, the petition was mainly an instrument to mobilize the hitherto complacent and internally divided orthodox Protestant constituency. To that end, he tried to use every means at his disposal. At some point, following the example of the German anti-Semitic Protestant party, he even tried anti-Semitism, but he concluded that anti-Semitism did not work in the Netherlands (Kuyper, 1878; Schöffer, 1987; Van Klinken, 1999). He was also tempted to appeal to anti-Catholic 'no popery' sentiments among the Protestant population. His conservative-liberal opponents deemed him a new American-style politician, a demagogic opportunist or populist. In fact, he saw the importance of appealing to the emotions or 'pathos' in political language. He preferred Protestant vernacular pathos to elitist liberal rationalism, even though he was very good at using *logos* or arguing, too. Kuyper was not the only one using pathos.

The leader of Catholic emancipation, the priest Herman Schaepman, started as a poet and wrote one of the most famous Catholic songs of the period, but later became a member of parliament. He was a magnificent orator, a nineteenth-century spoken-word artist, who used his eloquence to move his Catholic constituency and overwhelm his political opponents. Soon, orthodox Protestants and Catholics joined forces in their fight against liberal education politics; the petition of 1878 had already been signed by a large number of Catholics. In 1888, the denominational parties succeeded in forming a joint orthodox Protestant–Catholic government and they introduced a new primary education law to protect the needs of their constituencies.

The tone of Dutch politics would change even more with the advent of a socialist party in the 1880s. When Max Weber imported the term 'charismatic' from religious studies in order to describe the intense, almost sect-like relationship between a new type of leader and their adherents in late nineteenth-century Europe, he had the British liberal William Gladstone in mind (e.g. Matthew, 1995, pp. 49–51). He could just as well

have taken Abraham Kuyper as a case study, and an even better candidate would have been the Dutch socialist leader Ferdinand Domela Nieuwenhuis, who was hailed as a socialist Christ by his adherents. Just like Gladstone, he was not a simple demagogue, in that he took his constituency very seriously, used arguments instead of just battle cries, and practised a quiet, argumentative sort of eloquence. His main weapon, though, was pathos.

Public speech of the period was much more characterized by pathos than that of the previous liberal era. Even parliamentary speech was touched by pathos. Domela was a man of public meetings, in large halls or in the open air, and mostly with kindred spirits. He did not feel at home in the Dutch House of Representatives, which was dominated by liberal reasoning, and he only spent one term there. In the 1870s, Kuyper had also been an outsider in the house, but later he would dominate parliament with brilliant oratory. Schaepman was even an instant success when he entered parliament in 1880. The small public galleries had always been quiet, but now parliament was the talk of the town and people would be queuing to attend debates and get a glance of the heroes of the day. It seemed that political and parliamentary life had changed forever. The Netherlands had been a 'liberal' country with the rule of law and a relatively peaceful public life, but now the era of 'democracy' was upon it. For a short period in around 1800, the concept of democracy had been popular, but until the last part of the nineteenth century, and more so than in countries such as Belgium, France, and Germany, democracy had been rejected and identified again with demagoguery. Now it finally seemed to be knocking on the doors of parliament (Palmer, 1953; Te Velde, 2019a).

The revisions of the constitution in 1917 and 1922 could be seen as the conclusion to this period, and the revisions indeed established male and female general suffrage. The revision of 1917 also confirmed and solidified the dominance of party organizations by introducing proportional representation and party electoral lists at the national level. The religious and social-democratic parties would henceforth dominate parliament, and in the interwar period the religious parties would constantly have a majority of the seats in the House of Representatives and during that period all prime ministers would belong to those parties. By contrast, the hitherto dominant liberals were relegated to a marginal position in parliament.

The political situation had changed dramatically, in terms of institutional arrangements as well as the balance of power between political forces. One would assume, then, that the tone of political life would have become completely different as well. That was not the case. As it turned out, before electoral democracy and the rule of parties had been established, mainstream politicians had already begun to argue that the emerging situation did not call for pathos any more, but rather administration and piecemeal engineering of social and other legislation. The time of 'lyrical' speeches was over, they said; what was needed now was a cool head and determination. Moreover, under the proportional system no party would be able to govern by itself, any government would be a coalition government, and coalition governments called for negotiation and bargaining instead of playing to the galleries and mobilizing the people. The time of mobilizing pathos was over (Te Velde, 2015).

Consociational Democracy, 1917–1967

The combination of proportional representation and electoral democracy turned the Netherlands into a country of political minorities that had to negotiate and reach compromises. The Social Democratic Workers' Party (SDAP) was still excluded from participating in government, partly because its leader contributed to a Dutch version of the wave of revolutionary fervour in Europe in November 1918. The démarche was held against the social democrats. Even though they gained between a fifth and a quarter of the vote, the other parties did not entrust them with playing a part in any of the coalition governments of the 1920s and 1930s. It would take until 1939 before the first social democrats entered government.

Forming a government was laying a complicated jigsaw puzzle. Common ground had to be found between orthodox Protestants and Catholics—who just 50 years earlier had been quasi mortal enemies—and between the religious parties and the liberals, who had been facing off right up to 1917 in the battle over the governance of primary education. In society, these groups did not mix much. They organized their own more or less closed world of associations, institutions, and political parties. All the groups taken together constituted a society that was famously dubbed 'pillarized'. In particular, the orthodox religious groups and social democrats formed a pillar, a kind of 'total institution'. People were educated, socialized, recreated, consumed news, found partners, and formed their political beliefs and loyalties within the array of civil society associations each of the pillars had.

A party democracy combined with associations was not an uncommon feature in Europe at the time. Germany had so-called *Milieuparteien*, Austria different *Lager*, and Belgium and Switzerland also knew a pillarized society. In the Netherlands, there were more pillars, though, not only Catholic versus socialist, as in most other countries, but also an orthodox Protestant pillar. Moreover, the political parties were perhaps less dominant in the Dutch pillars than elsewhere and, finally, not all pillarized countries were dominated by the type of consensual deliberation that was rather prominent in the Netherlands.

The pillars and their affiliated political parties maintained a high profile. For a large part of the electorate, the vote therefore became a form of 'identification' and an expression of their 'social identity' (Manin, 1997, p. 210). Party rhetoric was often fierce because there were not many floating voters and no real catch-all parties, and the voters expected rather explicit expressions of the party's 'faith'. Polarization came naturally to party politics, but in the actual running of the administration it was eschewed. This was partly for practical reasons: no single party could ever hope to win a majority by itself, all governments were coalition governments, and if parties had the ambition to stay in government or become part of government, they could not afford to offend their coalition partners too much. There was a clear incentive for (potential) government politicians to restrain their rhetoric. As Prime Minister Willem Drees would put it in 1959: you should

not hurt your adversaries by violent language; sooner or later you will have to collaborate again (*Het Vrije Volk*, 12 February 1959).

The practical incentive explains the continued prominence of consensual discussions in twentieth-century Dutch politics. The revision of the constitution in 1917 had removed the biggest bone of contention between liberals and religious parties: government funding for denominational primary education. The polarizing figure of Abraham Kuyper had stepped down. It was much easier now to form liberal–religious coalition governments, which was what happened during the interwar period. The remaining revolutionary aspirations of the social democrats were used as an argument to exclude them from government until 1939. A clear example of the political exigencies of coalition government on party language can be found in the restyling of the SDAP during the 1930s. In an attempt to gain standing as a responsible, non-revolutionary, trustworthy potential coalition partner, it not only toned down its language but even changed its platform—among other things, now accepting on principle the constitutional monarchy and the House of Orange.

There was an additional reason why polarization between parties did not have such a dominant effect on Dutch politics. Since the Republic, Dutch politics had centred not on mobilization but on administration. The Republic had been ruled by a rather large but still closed elite of local notables who had to pay attention to the wishes of the (local) population, since they lived in close contact. Except for the reign of the authoritarian King William I in the first part of the nineteenth century, rule by a more or less paternalist elite of notables of different kinds had remained the dominant mode of governance in the Netherlands.

This was still the case in the 1930s, and the liberal-paternalistic political tradition was shaken but not eradicated by the experience of the occupation during the Second World War. It could even be argued that the political reaction to the German invasion underlined this Dutch tradition. When the German armies entered the Netherlands, the Dutch parliament met one last time and then closed for the whole period of the war (1940–1945). Only a government in exile in London remained in place. Belgium, which also had a pillarized system and was also invaded by the Germans, made a different choice. Since it fought to retain its liberal democracy, its leaders decided to uphold a parliament even in exile. This difference epitomizes the pragmatic nature of Dutch politics: when the chips were down, having competent and legitimate administration rather than political representation was what mattered. After the end of the war, it took six months before the House of Representatives met again, and it was more than a year until the first parliamentary elections (cf. Beyen & Te Velde, 2016).

After the war, social democrats had become a natural coalition partner, and the social democrat Willem Drees became prime minister for ten years, from 1948 to 1958. The years 1945–1967 were the period Lijphart based his analysis of consociational democracy upon—when the social democrats had fully become part of the system and parliamentary democracy had finally become undisputed, which had not really been the case before the war. The outcome of the war and the atrocities of the Nazis had given a boost to liberal democracy; anything remotely resembling Nazi political practices—including

populism, noisy street demonstrations, and even some aspects of direct democracy—became suspect. The taboo on populism would last until the early 2000s and was reinforced by the consensual discussion tradition. Noisy politics had already been seen as improper and disturbing, and after the war it was seen as undemocratic, too. In this way, the memory of the war was a disciplining force in Dutch representative politics. Meanwhile, the distribution of the seats in the Dutch House of Representatives remained remarkably stable from 1917 until 1967. The Catholics had the largest share of the vote and occupied almost a third of the seats in the House of Representatives, the social democrats generally held almost as many, the two main Protestant parties together had just over a quarter of the seats, and liberal and small parties the rest.

From Managerial Politics to Polarization, 1967–2002

The electoral and sociocultural stability collapsed in the 1960s. The sixties were roaring in the Netherlands. New creativity and individualism shook up Dutch culture and society in general, and Amsterdam in particular. The dramatic elections of 1967 heralded the disappearance of the Catholic, orthodox Protestant, and social-democratic 'pillars' in Dutch society and politics, which would disintegrate in just a few years. In ten years' time, the main religious parties combined would hardly have as many seats as only the Catholics had held until 1963, and in the long run previously stable social identities would disappear.

Because of the taboo on loud politics and noisy demonstrations, it proved to be quite easy to defy and provoke authorities in general. In the 1960s, the authorities had a hard time deciding how to respond to groups of so-called 'Provos' who were teasing and provoking them by, on the whole, quite innocent public actions. Moreover, in the Dutch tradition of accommodating change by depoliticizing and bending to the winds of change, the old elite did not really resist but quickly accepted the demands for freedom and democracy, without really adapting institutions (Kennedy, 1995, 1997). Politically speaking, the New Left entered the social-democratic party and a few small new parties emerged. They introduced new styles of debate, but the House of Representatives did not change radically. In particular, new social movements promoted a culture of lively debate, polarization, sit-ins, and other new forms of protest. In 1973, a centre-left coalition government led by social democrat prime minister Joop den Uyl took office—often dubbed the most leftist government in Dutch history. Before it could really implement its ambitious reform agenda, the oil crisis set in and ended a long period of economic growth. The momentum for change had gone, although that would only become really apparent in the next decade.

In 1982, neo-liberalism Dutch style took over. Ruud Lubbers had been a member of the Den Uyl cabinet, but now became the leader of quite a different government, a

Christian–liberal coalition. *Time Magazine* of 23 January 1984 compared him to Margaret Thatcher and called him 'Ruud shock'. In the Dutch vein, he presented neo-liberalism in a depoliticized and managerial shape, though. The time of political mobilization and polarization was over and the country needed business-like administration—that was the message. In Dutch coalition politics, 'scientific' economic reasoning had helped before in depoliticizing debates, but now high civil servants played an even larger part in the turn to quasi technocracy—quasi because, in fact, neo-liberalism now ruled supreme (Mellink & Oudenampsen, 2022). Lubbers indeed introduced a much more managerial style of politics and rule which would last after he left office in 1994 and social democrat Wim Kok took over. Kok became known internationally as a protagonist of the Third Way, close to the American Democrats of Bill Clinton and the New Labour of Tony Blair, but he basically continued Lubbers' agenda with more attention on the important issue of employment. Kok had already served as minister of finance in the previous Lubbers cabinet, continued his seemingly apolitical management style, and wanted to show that social democrats were as solid administrators as Lubbers and his like had been. Only when Kok left in 2002 would things change again.

Populism versus the Persistence of Managerial Politics, Post-2002

'9/11' did not only change New York and the world; the 2001 attack on the Twin Towers also changed the Netherlands. Radical Islamism now also seemed a real threat to the Netherlands, or so it could at least be presented. The strange elections of 2002 saw the rise and murder of Pim Fortuyn and the sudden breakthrough of populism in the Netherlands (see De Jonge, Rooduijn, & Zaslove, *this volume*). Out of nowhere, in a House of Representatives of 150 seats Fortuyn's party gained a staggering 26 seats with an anti-Islam and protest agenda. The Social Democratic Party of Prime Minister Kok, who had announced his departure as prime minister only weeks before 9/11, lost almost as many seats. Dramatic electoral instability had already set in in 1994, when the religious parties collapsed after their (Catholic) leader Lubbers had left office. The Christian Democratic Party had been a stable centre party since it had resulted from a fusion of three religious parties in the late 1970s, but in 1994 the party lost 20 of its 54 seats. As from 2002, electoral instability became the new norm. In 2002 the Christian Democratic Party profited and bounced back, but the party has since lost most of its seats in parliament. Almost all elections since 2002 have shown the same picture of dramatic change, and time and again new populist right-wing leaders and parties have emerged: Rita Verdonk, Geert Wilders, Thierry Baudet, and, more recently, the Farmer–Citizen Movement led by Caroline van der Plas. Mainstream parties have lost much electoral support, and populist parties have changed the Dutch political agenda, which is now much more critical of immigration, the integration of refugees, and the role of the

European Union. Populism has also changed the face of Dutch politics by introducing violent and often ad hominem rhetoric in the Dutch parliament. The reactions of mainstream parties characterize the style of Dutch politics: even more than by the content of populist politics, they were offended by the tone of its abusive language—as if decency was the thing that mattered most (Te Velde, 2019b).

Dutch parliamentary politics had always integrated newcomers by isolating them—as in the case of the National Socialists and communists in the 1930s, a Farmers' Party in the 1960s or the extreme-right party of Janmaat in the 1980s. If that did not work and the newcomers were successful, the established parties had taken over part of their agenda and tried to accommodate them, as had happened with the left-wing liberals of Democrats '66 in the 1960s. Geert Wilders proved to be a hard nut to crack (Vossen, 2016). After the murder of Fortuyn, Dutch parties had decided that the old strategy of condemning populism by implying that it was close to fascism no longer worked. Democracy now demanded that everyone was free to say what they wanted, including voicing controversial ideas about immigrants and Islam. Wilders did just that and refused to become part of the club. Overall, Dutch parliamentarians had always watched their language carefully, as part of their consensual debating style. Wilders refused to play by the codes of that tradition, and the other parliamentary parties, which had decided that he should be free to say what he wanted, hardly had an answer to the insults and verbal provocations he used to propagate his ideas in parliament, besides expressing helpless indignation. In this way, Wilders has managed to acquire between 15 and 24 seats at the national elections between 2006 and 2021.

Mainstream Dutch politicians have always been very critical of, if not obsessed by, improper language and behaviour, sometimes to the detriment of the actual issues at stake. Despite the shock of the 2002 Fortuyn-dominated election campaign, his assassination, and the election results, the subsequent provocative anti-cosmopolitan populism of Wilders, and the marked influence of its right-wing anti-immigration agenda on mainstream political parties, the culture of Dutch politics has remained much the same. There have been many complaints about the noisy, loud, and disrespectful debating style of Wilders, the brutalization of parliamentary language, and the weakening of the role of parliament as a result of the onslaught of populism. Seen from a historical perspective, however, the practice of Dutch politics rather looks like business as usual. In crucial respects, Dutch politics has been ultra-stable: only two long-serving, middle-of-the-road prime ministers between 2002 and 2023, and a policy style that despite repeated professed intent to make it more responsive to the lived experiences of citizens, has remained steadfast in its paternalist managerialism. In fact, the paradoxical effect of the rise of populism in parliament has been that government seems to take even *less* heed of the voice of the people as it has been expressed in parliament.

Governments have to respond to all that is said in parliament, and increasingly so now that two consecutive minority governments have struggled to get budgets and bills passed in the two houses of parliament, since the comfortable heyday of large vote shares for less than a handful of mainstream parties has passed. Though having to make complex compromises more frequently than they used to, contemporary Dutch

governments can still fall back on a robust consensual, centripetal, and technocratic streak in Dutch politics. They can dismiss populist protests as 'unreasonable'—and of late have been inclined to include every form of principled opposition in this category—accusing their harshest critics of 'abdicating responsibility' and 'screaming from the sidelines'. 'Polarization' should be avoided, they say, but what that implies is that managerial language and politics needs to continue (e.g. Koole, 2021).

The Evolving Dutch Political Tradition: Conclusions

The Dutch electoral system is one of the purest examples of proportional representation in the democratic world. It makes it easy for newcomers to enter parliament, but hard for them to become part of governing coalitions. Since the Second World War, three (very) short-lived participations by really new parties—including the ten months of the party of the deceased Fortuyn—have shown how difficult it is for them to enter government.[1] There has only been one exception: over time, and not without suffering considerable electoral losses after episodes of coalition partnership, the social-liberal Democrats '66 party has managed to become a 'natural' candidate for inclusion. The Democrats were a centre-left party, almost immediately adopted the civilized language of the ruling elite, and adapted easily to the habits of Dutch coalition politics.

Over the course of more than two centuries, political agendas, political moods, and political preferences have changed, but by and large Lampedusa's dictum has still proven to be an apt descriptor of the Dutch polity: despite all the upheaval, the moderate, paternalist Dutch political negotiating and discussing culture has proven resilient. That said, recent developments provide another test of its longevity. Since 2002, between about one sixth and one fifth of parliament has rejected mainstream politics—and it seems that the support for (semi-) populist parties is growing. However, if these parties want to be part of government, they will have to adapt to a certain degree to the existing tradition of negotiation and deliberation. In the long run, it is still more likely that the political agenda rather than the Dutch tradition will change. This has happened before. The Netherlands is a country of consensus. The political wind will blow in a certain direction for some time—usually about two decades—and then the time for change will come and the wind will change direction, as has happened almost every 20 years in the past century: after 2002, 1982, 1967, 1917–1919, and partly in 1945. If Dutch history has its peculiarities, we should probably not look for them in the periodization of Dutch politics—which largely resembles the periodization of political history in the surrounding European liberal

[1] Democratic Socialists '70 (1971–1972), Political Party of Radicals (1973–1977), and List Pim Fortuyn (2002–2003).

democracies—but rather in the continuities of Dutch deliberative practices and quasi-depoliticized administrative politics.

In a study of discussion practices and administrative politics, it is not per se illuminating to label the Netherlands as one of the 'consociational democracies'. Belgium has been a consociational democracy, but its political culture has been centrifugal and much less consensual than the Dutch culture (Beyen et al., 2021; Beyen & Te Velde, 2016). Moreover, since the demise of the old Dutch 'pillars', deliberative practices have not changed permanently, at least not at the time of writing. There is no guarantee, though, that these practices will continue indefinitely. I started this contribution by arguing that traditions matter in politics, but depend on active maintenance and support. There is an element of path dependency in the relative continuity of deliberative practices, but they will only be supported if there is a clear incentive to do so; continuity is not self-evident. For decades, consociational democracy provided the incentive to maintain a quiet deliberative style. In recent years, populists have discovered that it can be electorally and politically rewarding to abandon harmony, provoke mainstream parties, and act as outsiders. In this vein, from Pim Fortuyn onwards, they have also criticized the increasingly managerial style of established politics and administration, which seemed to ignore, if not harm, ordinary citizens. Only if populist parties feel that it is profitable to soften their tone and adapt to the sober and respectable style of Dutch parliamentary reasoning will they consider such an electorally risky option. Whether this option will materialize also depends on the readiness of the mainstream parties to abandon their complacent managerial style. It is not self-evident that old deliberative traditions will survive, even in a new form.

References

Aerts, R. (2010). Civil society or democracy? A Dutch paradox. *BMGN—Low Countries Historical Review*, *125*(2–3), 209–236.

Aerts, R. (2018). *Thorbecke wil het. Biografie van een staatsman*. Prometheus.

Aerts, R., de Liagre Böhl, H., de Rooy, P., & te Velde, H. (1999). *Land van kleine gebaren. Een politieke geschiedenis van Nederland 1780-1990*. SUN.

Bächtiger, A., Dryzek, J. S., Mansbridge, J., & Warren, M. E. (Eds.). (2018). *The Oxford handbook of deliberative democracy*. Oxford University Press.

Bevir, M., & Rhodes, R. A. W. (2010). *The state as cultural practice*. Oxford University Press.

Beyen, M., Pollmann, J., & Te Velde, H. (2021). *De Lage Landen: Een geschiedenis voor vandaag*. Rekkem, Ons Erfdeel.

Beyen, M., & Te Velde, H. (2016). Passion and reason: Modern parliaments in the Low Countries. In P. Ihalainen, C. Ilie, & K. Palonen (Eds.), *Parliaments and parliamentarism: A comparative history of a European concept* (pp. 81–96). Berghahn.

Blom, J. C. H., & Lamberts, E. (2006). *Geschiedenis van de Nederlanden* (4th ed.). HB Uitgevers.

Chambers, S. (2004). Behind closed doors: Publicity, secrecy, and the quality of deliberation. *Journal of Political Philosophy*, *12*(4), 389–410.

Craiutu, A. (2003). *Liberalism under siege*: *The political thought of the French doctrinaires*. Lexington.

Daalder, H. (1984). On the origins of the consociational democracy model. *Acta Politica*, *19*, 97–113.
Daalder, H. (1995). *Van oude en nieuwe regenten: Politiek in Nederland*. Bert Bakker.
De Rooy, P. (2015). *A tiny spot on the Earth: The political culture of the Netherlands in the nineteenth and twentieth century*. Amsterdam University Press.
Dekker, P. (2019). From pillarized active membership to populist active citizenship: The Dutch do democracy. *Voluntas*, *30*, 74–85.
Floridia, A. (2017). *From participation to deliberation: A critical genealogy of deliberative democracy*. ECPR.
Grijzenhout, F., Velema, W., & Van Sas, N. (Eds.). (2013). *Het Bataafse experiment: Politiek en cultuur rond 1800*. Van Tilt.
Hobsbawm, E., & Ranger, T. (1983). *The invention of tradition*. Cambridge University Press.
Kennedy, J. C. (1995). *Nieuw Babylon in aanbouw: Nederland in de jaren zestig*. Boom.
Kennedy, J. C. (1997). New Babylon and the politics of modernity. *Sociologische Gids*, *44*, 361–374.
Kennedy, J. C. (2017). *A concise history of the Netherlands*. Cambridge University Press.
Koole, R. (2021). *Twee pijlers: Het wankele evenwicht in de democratische rechtsstaat*. Prometheus.
Kossmann, E. H. (1978). *The Low Countries, 1780–1940*. Oxford University Press.
Kuyper, A. (1878). *Liberalisten en Joden*. Kruyt.
Lauret, L. (2020). *Regentenwerk: Vergaderen in de Staten-Generaal en de Tweede Kamer, 1750–1850*. Prometheus.
Lijphart, A. (1968). *The politics of accommodation: Pluralism and democracy in the Netherlands*. University of California Press.
Lijphart, A. (2012). *Patterns of democracy: Government forms and performance in thirty-six countries* (2nd ed.). Yale University Press.
Manin, B. (1997). *The principles of representative government*. Cambridge University Press.
Matthew, H. C. G. (1995). *Gladstone 1875–1898*. Oxford University Press.
Mellink, B., & Oudenampsen, M. (2022). *Neoliberalisme: Een Nederlandse geschiedenis*. Boom.
Mouffe, C. (2009). *The democratic paradox*. Verso.
Palmer, R. R. (1953). Notes on the use of the word 'democracy' 1789–1799. *Political Science Quarterly*, *68*, 203–226.
Otto, T., & Pedersen, P. (Eds.). (2005). *Tradition and agency: Tracing cultural continuity and invention*. Aarhus University Press.
Phillips, M., & Schochet, G. (2004). *Questions of tradition*. University of Toronto Press.
Pollmann, J., & Te Velde, H. (2018). New state, new citizens? Political change and civic continuities in the Low Countries, 1780–1830. *BMGN—Low Countries Historical Review*, *133*, 4–23.
Prak, M., & Luiten van Zanden, J. (2013). *Nederland en het poldermodel: Sociaal-economische geschiedenis van Nederland, 1000–2000*. Prometheus.
Schöffer, I. (1987). Abraham Kuyper and the Jews. In *Veelvormig verleden: Zeventien studies in de vaderlandse geschiedenis* (pp. 159–170). Bataafsche Leeuw.
Te Velde, H. (2008). The organization of liberty: Dutch liberalism as a case of the history of European constitutional liberalism. *European Journal of Political Theory*, *7*, 65–79.
Te Velde, H. (2015). Staten-Generaal en Parlement: De welsprekendheid van de Tweede Kamer. In R. Aerts et al. (Eds.), *In dit huis: Twee eeuwen Tweede Kamer* (pp. 167–191). Boom.

Te Velde, H. (2019a). The emergence of the Netherlands as a 'democratic' country. *Journal of Modern European History*, *17*(2), 161–170.

Te Velde, H. (2019b). De taal van Geert Wilders en de parlementaire cultuur. In G. Voerman & K. Vossen (Eds.), *Wilders gewogen: 15 jaar reuring in de Nederlandse politiek* (pp. 231–249). Boom.

Te Velde, H. (2020). 'De eeuw van Leeuw der Palm!' Publieke welsprekendheid en de politieke cultuur van de Restauratie in Nederland. *BMGN—Low Countries Historical Review*, *135*(1), 3–30.

Van der Burg, M. (2010). Transforming the Dutch Republic into the Kingdom of Holland: The Netherlands between republicanism and monarchy (1795–1815). *European Review of History*, *17*(2), 151–170.

Van Klinken, G. (1999). Abraham Kuyper and the 'Jewish Question'. In C. van der Kooi & J. de Bruijn (Eds.), *Kuyper reconsidered: Aspects of his life and work* (pp. 293–298). VU Uitgeverij.

Van Sas, N. C. F. (2004). *De metamorfose van Nederland: Van oude orde naar moderniteit 1750–1900*. Amsterdam University Press.

Van Vree, W. (1994). *Nederland als vergaderland: Opkomst en verbreiding van een vergaderregime*. Wolters-Noordhoff.

Van Vree, W. (1999). *Meetings, manners, and civilization: The development of modern meeting behaviour*. Leicester University Press.

Vossen, K. (2016). *The power of populism: Geert Wilders and the Party for Freedom in the Netherlands*. Routledge.

Young, I. M. (2000). *Inclusion and democracy*. Oxford University Press.

CHAPTER 4

THE RISE AND FALL OF DUTCH CONSOCIATIONALISM

RUDY B. ANDEWEG[†]

> The Netherlands is the first case of consociationalism. It was the first country where cooperation among political elites was identified as a crucial factor in maintaining a stable system in a divided society, making democracy possible. And, if the so-called Pacification of 1917 is viewed as the starting point, it is also the first country in modern history to become consociational, predating other classic cases such as Austria, Lebanon, and Switzerland.
>
> Bogaards (2021, p. 19)

The Nature of Dutch Consociationalism

A Brief History

Consociationalism is a theoretical construct; it is an interpretation of a political situation characterized by intense social segmentation, threatening political stability, and elite cooperation, mitigating that threat. The first analyses of Dutch politics using this perspective are by Daalder (1966) and, more explicitly, Lijphart (1975, first edition published in 1968). The gradual enfranchisement of the population in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries led to a segmentation of society along religious and class cleavages: Catholics, Protestants, the secular working class, and the secular middle class (also see Irwin & Van Holsteyn, *this volume*). These

[†] Sadly, Prof. Andeweg passed away in summer 2024 during the production of this book.

segments developed into veritable subcultures, each with an organizational network encapsulating the social and economic activities of its members: education, media, health care, housing, interest representation, politics, etc. The Dutch terms for this social segmentation (*verzuiling* or pillarization) and for the individual subcultures/networks (*zuilen* or pillars) became household terms both in Dutch society and in comparative politics.

The term 'pillarization' is apposite because the pillars are standing well apart, while at the top the leadership of the various pillars cooperate with each other, thus forming the architrave that supports the Dutch state like the roof of an ancient Greek temple. In Dutch this cooperation or 'politics of accommodation' is referred to as *pacificatiepolitiek*, so named after the Great Pacification of 1917—a political package deal which resolved longstanding conflicts about the financing of religious schools and extending suffrage. All major parties were involved in drafting this agreement. From these and subsequent interactions, 'rules of the game' evolved that facilitated the requisite elite cooperation: summit diplomacy, often in secrecy, without undue interference from parliament, treating politics as a serious business rather than as a political game, resolving conflicts about the distribution of resources by the principle of proportionality, depoliticizing political conflicts when necessary, and agreeing to disagree if no compromise can be found (Lijphart, 1975, pp. 122–138).

Lijphart (e.g. 1977) characterized elite cooperation by four basic principles: delegating authority to the pillars whenever possible (segmental autonomy), granting the pillars a veto over common policymaking when delegation is not possible (minority veto), including as many of the pillars in policymaking as possible (grand coalition), and distributing resources to the pillars in proportion to their numerical strength (proportionality). There is clear overlap between these four generic principles and some of the 'rules of the game' (grand coalition/summit diplomacy, proportionality). Other rules of the game are complementary (e.g. depoliticization, treating politics as a serious business). The rule of 'agreement to disagree' and the principle of 'minority veto' seem contradictory, but may be reconciled if minorities use their veto only on issues that are of fundamental importance to them and merely register their disagreement on other issues.

The Nazi occupation (1940–1945) strengthened the common national identity, and after liberation an attempt was made at dissolving pillarized institutions and practices, but by and large this initiative (the so-called *Doorbraak*) failed. In fact, the two immediate post-war decades are often seen as the high point of pillarization and elite accommodation. However, from the 1960s, social segmentation started to erode. Secularization reduced the reach of the Catholic and Protestant pillars, as did social mobility for the secular working class. Moreover, among the remaining members loyalty to the pillarized organizations weakened, and in the face of competition from new non-segmental organizations, many of them merged or folded. At the same time, attempts in the 1960s and 1970s, particularly from the left, to replace elite cooperation by political polarization largely failed.

Capturing the Dutch Case: Contending Approaches

Consociationalism is related, but not identical, to concepts such as 'consensus democracy' and '(neo-) corporatism', or in the Dutch context, *poldermodel*. The relationship between consociational democracy and consensus democracy is particularly close, and not only because Arend Lijphart is the main theorist of both concepts (see in particular Lijphart, 1977, for consociational democracy, and Lijphart, 2012, for consensus democracy).

As Table 4.1 shows, both consociational democracy and consensus democracy are characterized by political elites sharing power through various formal and informal institutions. The most important difference between the two concepts is that consociationalism is confined to segmented societies and consensus democracy is not. Consensus democracy is defined by ten features that set it apart from the contrasting majoritarian democracy, and only two of these overlap with characteristics of consociational democracy (oversized coalitions and proportionality). There is also partial overlap on some other aspects (e.g. minority veto and entrenched constitutions, or federalism and segmental autonomy if the segments are geographically concentrated), but institutions such as bicameralism and Central Bank independence are absent in consociational theory. As a result of these differences, countries such as Belgium and Switzerland are showcases of both consociational and consensus democracies, while the Netherlands is a classic case of consociationalism, but only partially qualifies as a consensus democracy: judicial review, for example, is not allowed by the Dutch

Table 4.1 Characteristics of consociational and consensus democracy

	Consociational democracy	Consensus democracy
Society	Segmented	–
Politics	Grand coalition	Broad coalition cabinets
	Proportionality	Proportional representation
	Segmental autonomy	–
	Mutual (minority) veto	–
	–	Executive–legislative balance of power
	–	Multiparty system
	–	Interest group corporatism
	–	Federalism
	–	Bicameralism
	–	Constitutional rigidity
	–	Judicial review
	–	Central Bank independence

Source: author.

Constitution, and the state is unitary rather than federal, even though Lijphart classifies the Netherlands as 'semi-federal' because he regards decentralization to pillarized organizations as a functional equivalent (Lijphart, 2012, p. 180).

Meanwhile, the Netherlands generally scores high on rankings of *corporatist* decision making (e.g. Siaroff, 1999) and corporatism is one of the ten characteristics of consensus democracy. However, it is not one of the five characteristics of consociationalism as listed in Table 4.1. If we define 'corporatism' as a system in which interest groups are incorporated into policymaking, coordinated by the government, it is also a form of power sharing, but the main actors are (economic) interest groups, not political parties. This is also true for the notion of the Polder model, which became fashionable in the final decades of the twentieth century (Hendriks & Toonen, 2001) and may be regarded as a form of corporatism.

However, in the Dutch case at least, the distinction between corporatism and consociationalism has not always been very clear, as the interest groups were closely related to the political parties and to the social segments they represented. This was the case with the Socialist, Catholic, and Protestant trade unions, and with the Liberal, Catholic, and Protestant employers' organizations. Corporatist and consociational power sharing reinforced each other. Hence, Lijphart regards the Social and Economic Council, the formal capstone of Dutch corporatist institutions, as 'the pinnacle of the institutionalization of the accommodation process' in general (1975, p. 114). Similarly, in their analysis of the Dutch Polder model and its predecessors, economic historians Prak and Van Zanden (2013, p. 12) explicitly apply that concept not just to the economic domain, but to society in general, and pay ample attention to pillarization and its consequences.

International Comparison

The Netherlands is but one of several countries that have been classified as consociational democracies. Whether it was actually the first country in which consociationalism emerged, and where consociationalism was 'discovered', is immaterial: the Belgian starting point of consociationalism, the 1918 'Loppem Pact', almost coincided in time with the Dutch Great Pacification, and the first publications on consociationalism in Austria, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Switzerland all appeared within a few years of each other in the late 1960s and early 1970s. What makes the Dutch case of special interest is not so much its timing, but the fact that the author whose study of Dutch consociationalism has been most influential, Arend Lijphart, went on to develop consociational democracy as a broader category in comparative politics research. Given its origins, Lijphart's model may well have been induced more from the Dutch experience than from the other classic cases.

This chapter is devoted to that Dutch experience, but it is important to keep in mind that consociationalism has not taken identical forms in all countries that combined social segmentation with elite cooperation. Most importantly, in the Netherlands accommodation has become much more institutionalized and engrained into the culture of

the political elites than has been the case in, for example, Belgium. There, elite competition remained the default option; only when this led to political deadlock did the party presidents hammer out a compromise. Thus, Belgium's 'Loppem Pact' was followed by many other pacts, whereas the Great Pacification remains the only grand compromise in the Dutch history books (Andeweg, 2019). Moreover, based on the Swiss experience, Steiner (1981) argued that it is better to use the term 'consociational' for individual instances of decision making rather than to characterize entire political systems as such. This suggests that consociationalism as an institutionally rooted mode of policymaking may not be as common generally as it has been in the Netherlands.

Debating Dutch Consociationalism

As a theoretical construct, consociationalism has given rise to, sometimes fierce, scholarly debate.[1] Though this chapter is not the place for a review of that debate in general (cf. Andeweg, 2000), it is worth noting that the debate has concentrated on the following four questions:

(1) The nature of pillarization: was the interpretation of social segmentation and the absence of cross-cutting cleavages in the period 1900–1965 correct?
(2) The pivotal role of elite cooperation: was the interpretation of elite cooperation as a prudent response to social segmentation correct?
(3) The nature of depillarization: why did social segmentation erode after 1965, and did it lead to a more homogeneous society?
(4) The nature of elite interactions in the post-pillarization era: what were the consequences of depillarization for elite cooperation?

The first two questions go to the heart of consociational theory. Consociationalism was introduced as an amendment to pre-existing democratic theory, which held that deep social divisions, or the absence of cross-cutting cleavages, pose a risk to democratic stability. Consociationalism suggests that this risk can be avoided if the political elites in such a segmented society do not compete for power, but cooperate and share power. The questions are whether pillarization did indeed pose a threat to the stability of Dutch democracy, and whether elite cooperation was essential to neutralizing that threat.

The third and fourth questions examine the period from the 1960s onwards, when pillarization was waning. If this process produced an easing of the deep divisions, elite cooperation was no longer necessary to safeguard stability. In fact, continued elite cooperation in a 'depoliticized' or 'cartel' democracy can even lead to a confidence gap

[1] This section draws on Andeweg et al. (2020, ch. 2).

between citizens and political elites (Lijphart, 1968, p. 38). The expectation was that prudent elites would now abandon their accommodationist practices and start to compete for the votes in the centre: a 'centripetal democracy'. Political polarization and calls for democratization in the late 1960s and early 1970s were interpreted as signs that Dutch democracy was moving in this direction, but soon elite cooperation reasserted itself.

The Nature of Pillarization

Critics of consociationalism cast doubt on the threat pillarization supposedly posed to the stability of Dutch politics. First, there has been considerable variation in the extent to which social segments were pillarized, and to which different regions were pillarized. Lijphart (1971) listed five criteria by which to measure the degree of pillarization: the role of ideology or religion within the pillar; the size and density of the pillar's organizational network; the cohesiveness of that organizational network in terms of coordination and interlocking directorates; the degree of social 'apartheid' (i.e. the absence of non-pillarized social and political behaviour); and the extent to which loyalty to the pillar was encouraged by the subculture's elites.

On each of these criteria, the Catholic pillar scored high. The Roman Catholic Church played a central role, and the pillar was to a large extent built and maintained by the clergy. Each and every Catholic organization was assigned a priest as 'spiritual adviser'. Few social domains remained without a Catholic organization, and these organizations enjoyed a monopoly. When rival Catholic organizations emerged, they would soon be 'persuaded' by the clergy to disband. Social *apartheid* was probably highest among the Catholics, if only because nearly half of them lived in the two southern provinces where few non-Catholics lived. As late as 1954, the Dutch bishops issued an episcopal letter forbidding 'sins' such as membership of the Socialist trade union.

Judged by Lijphart's criteria, the other pillars did not attain the same degree of pillarization, with orthodox Protestants (*Gereformeerden*) coming closest. The secular middle class hardly qualified as a pillar: 'it tended to be the place where those who could not be accommodated in the Calvinist, Catholic or Socialist pillars ended up, and in that sense might even be referred to as a pile or a heap rather than as a pillar' (Wintle, 2000, p. 142). These differences even led to confusion about the number of pillars: it is not clear whether we should speak of one or two Protestant pillars, and of one or two secular pillars. For some activities there was only one organization catering for all Protestants: broadcasting, trade union activity, health care, and education, for example. But for other activities such as religious services and political party activity, there were separate organizations, reflecting the fact that some orthodox Protestants had split away from the Dutch Reformed Church. The situation within the secular minority resembled that of the Protestants. Some authors speak of an *algemene* (general) pillar with the secular working class and secular middle class often using the same schools, health care organizations, and other public services, while they went their separate ways when it came to newspapers, broadcasting, and political parties.

Moreover, some social activities remained untouched by pillarization. There were no pillarized technical universities. Some professions, such as medicine and law, did not develop pillarized associations. Large companies, in particular multinationals, were 'pillar-blind' in their recruitment of personnel. And even in the heavily pillarized media world, the national newspaper with the largest circulation, *De Telegraaf*, was never affiliated to any pillar. The 'Amsterdam Pillarization Project', an historical analysis of pillarized organization at the local level, found so many exceptions that it led some historians to declare pillarization a myth, or at least a useless concept for scholarly enquiry (Blom, 2000; De Rooy, 1997). However, the study focused on developments until 1925 (i.e. before pillarization reached its zenith) and ignored local chapters of national organizations. Moreover, as Toonen (2000, p. 173) argues, 'one could expect the system to allow for the existence of non-pillarized structures when locally pillarized structures were either somewhat impractical, counter-productive or simply obsolete in the case of extreme local or regional homogeneity within the population'. This variety in the degree of pillarization, and the exceptions to pillarization, does call for caution in depicting Dutch society in those days as composed of three (or four, or five) monolithic blocs.

In addition to the strength of the pillars, the potential threat posed by social segmentation also depends on the cleavage structure. According to the pluralist theory of cross-pressures, the risks associated with social divisions can be mitigated if the cleavages cross-cut each other, so that social groups that are homogeneous with respect to one social cleavage are heterogeneous with respect to another. As an example: when the class cleavage cuts across the religious cleavage, a working-class church member interacts with secular comrades in the trade union, and in the church that same individual encounters middle-class brethren. Such contacts pull the individual in different directions; he or she is cross-pressured, experiencing cross-cutting loyalties, which are supposed to have a moderating effect, and thus reduce the intensity of political conflicts. When, on the other hand, the cleavages coincide and—in our example—all religious citizens belong to the working class and all secular citizens are middle class, the divisions reinforce each other, ingroup–outgroup differentiation is likely to increase, and the social groups develop into antagonistic subcultures (Lijphart, 1975, pp. 7–15).

In the Dutch case the cleavages did not completely coincide: neither the Catholic nor the Protestant pillar is homogeneous in terms of social class. However, to a large extent any cross-pressures that this could have produced were prevented by having separate Catholic and Protestant class-based organizations. In church, a working-class Catholic would still meet middle-class Catholics, but interaction with secular workers was minimized by membership of a Catholic trade union. In addition to cross-pressures at the level of individual citizens, cross-pressures may exist at the level of organizations. Huyse (1970) has argued that the existence of cross-cutting cleavages at the organizational level sets pillarization in Belgium apart from Dutch pillarization. In Belgium, for example, Socialist organizations defended both working-class interests and secularism, and often had to weigh these two causes against each other. For the first, it would be logical to team up with the Christian trade union, but for the second, a coalition with Liberal rather than Christian organizations would be called for. The Liberals faced

a similar dilemma. The situation was different for the Christian pillar, but they had to reconcile diverging socio-economic interests within their own network. Such organizational cross-pressures forced the pillars to moderate their positions.

Huyse makes a valid point, but the same logic can also be applied to Dutch pillarization where Socialist and Liberal elites had to make similar strategic choices, and where Catholic and Protestant elites also had to deal with class conflicts internally. The fact that in both countries there has been a cross-cutting cleavage at the mass level for Christian Democrats is already significant, but theoretically more important is the notion that the existence of more than one cleavage can have a moderating effect at the organizational level, and this effect was already recognized by Lijphart (1975, pp. 14–15). His argument is that the threat to stability posed by social segmentation is not a yes or no question but rather a matter of degree, and that the threat was substantially higher in the Netherlands than in some other countries.

How real did the threat feel to the political elites at the time? The years preceding and just after the Great Pacification of 1917 were certainly eventful: Prime Minister Cort van der Linden referring in 1913 to the conflict about state financing of religious schools as a 'wedge' splitting the nation; the Kuyper government sending the army to Amsterdam's railway stations in reaction to a call for a railway strike by the unions in 1903; Queen Wilhelmina not opening the parliamentary year with the Queen's Speech in 1911, supposedly because large demonstrations for universal suffrage would make it too dangerous for her to come to The Hague; the leader of the Social Democrats, Troelstra, announcing in 1918 that the Dutch working class would now seize power. But we do not know much about how such acts were perceived by the political elites.

The Origins and Functions of Elite Cooperation

That is not the only reason why some authors doubt that elite cooperation in the Netherlands was the result of a self-denying prophecy of prudent elites perceiving the risk of instability and therefore cooperating to safeguard stability. It is argued, for example, that pillarization was not a social problem to which elites responded, but rather a political strategy of the elites to strengthen and legitimize their own positions. In this interpretation, pillarization evinces top-down social control rather than bottom-up emancipatory movements organizing themselves to fight Liberal domination (e.g. Scholten, 1980; Van Schendelen, 1984). Marxist scholars also subscribe to this social control perspective, but argue that pillarization was primarily intended to frustrate the emergence of the class cleavage (e.g. Fennema, 1976; Kieve, 1981; Stuurman, 1983; but see also Bakvis, 1984). Industrialization came late to the Netherlands with the consequence that many citizens had already been mobilized along religious lines before social class became salient. Building on this historical advantage, Catholic and Protestant elites created religious trade unions in direct response to Socialist unionization efforts. This is well documented, but the case of the trade unions stands relatively isolated, and Stuurman (1983) is careful not to deny emancipatory aspects to pillarization.

The historical sequence of events plays a crucial role in the critique from a social control perspective: many pillarized organizations formed after the Great Pacification of 1917 established the cooperative mode of elite behaviour. If this Pacification was the successful solution to the problem created by pillarization, as Lijphart claims, is it not strange that the problem continued to aggravate after the solution had been applied? Daalder (2011, p. 239) alleges that Lijphart got 'the sequence of events wrong' and 'found a solution for a problem which did not exist'. Lijphart in turn never denied that pillarization reached its zenith only after the Pacification, but maintains that social divisions were already deep and potentially dangerous before the elites started to cooperate. That pillarization increased rather than decreased after 1917 was all part of the elites' peacemaking efforts: 'good fences make good neighbours'. Moreover, the motivation underlying pillarization need not have been the same for all pillars, nor constant over time. According to Hoogenboom (1996), along with safeguarding group identities, emancipation may have been a dominant motivation before 1920, in particular for orthodox Protestants and social democrats, while social control was more important for the Catholics, and later also for the other pillars.

From the social control perspective, it is a puzzle why the elites started to cooperate, unless we also deny that the interactions between the elites from the various pillars can be regarded as more cooperative than before, as Scholten (1980) does. But elite cooperation is also puzzling if we do accept that the emancipation of social groups exacerbated rather than attenuated potentially dangerous conflicts, at least initially. Lijphart's self-denying prophecy thesis hinges on the wisdom and courage of the elites to put the nation's stability above their own tribal interests. Suspecting that Dutch politicians are not inherently more prudent than their counterparts in Cyprus or the former Yugoslavia, the self-denying prophecy gives us a description of *what* happened, but not of *why* it happened.

In an attempt to answer that latter question, Daalder (2011, pp. 241–245) has drawn attention to the striking similarities between the rules of the game of consociational democracy, and the way politics was conducted in the much earlier days of the Dutch Republic. The pillars replaced the provinces, but the emphasis on elite bargaining and compromise, and on the autonomy of the constituent parts, can be found both before 1795 and after 1917. The very term 'consociationalism' is borrowed from Johannes Althusius (1995 [1603]), a seventeenth-century German political thinker who was very much influenced by the Dutch Republic's confederate structure. Calling the 1917 package deal an act of 'pacification' harks back to 1576 when the Dutch provinces agreed to respect their religious differences in the Pacification of Ghent. In this light, Daalder argues, elite cooperation is the continuation of traditional practices rather than a prudent elite reaction to a growing societal threat.

Others have gone even further back into history to find the roots of an elite culture of cooperation (Prak & Van Zanden, 2013), particularly to the creation of the water control boards in the thirteenth century—cooperative structures to tackle the common enemy in the low-lying delta. However, regardless of whether elite cooperation in the Netherlands has its roots in the Republic or in the drainage and reclamation projects of the late Middle Ages, the weakness of these historical explanations of consociationalism

is the miraculous re-emergence of an elite culture rooted in a long-gone republican political system in the context of an early twentieth-century rapidly modernizing unitary state. So, while '[i]t is not out of the question that the tradition of compromise contributed to the later "pillarized" compromises' (Blom, 2000, pp. 162–163), Dutch society, the state, and the political system in the twentieth century differ too substantially from those in Republican times to assume cultural continuity.

Moreover, even if the culture of cooperation had survived among the ruling classes, why would the leaders of the new emancipatory movements adopt the ways of those they were trying to replace? Only the advocates of the social control perspective on pillarization have no difficulty in explaining this anomaly: the leadership of the emancipatory movements was drawn from the ranks of the traditional elites, and they mobilized the pillars to defend their longstanding practice of consensual politics against the threat of an extended franchise and industrialization. To some extent this is true for the Catholic pillar and for the Dutch Reformed part of the Protestant pillar, but there seems to be considerably less evidence of continuity in elite recruitment if we look at the orthodox Protestants and the social democrats. Yet, even they conformed to the rules of consociationalism.

I offer a third explanation of elite cooperation that may have more mileage than elite prudence or tradition: all pillars were minorities in the population. The Catholics formed the largest minority, and their higher birth rate was cause for some concern in the other pillars, but at its high point (31.9% of the votes in the 1963 elections) even the Catholic Party was still far removed from a parliamentary majority. Until 1967, the three main Christian parties together controlled a majority of the seats in the House of Representatives, but their religious differences prevented them from forming a Christian majority coalition. When they finally joined forces in 1977 it was too late. In general, membership of a pillar was determined by one's religion or social class—attributes that are not easily changed. This severely reduced the chances of parties attracting voters from other pillars, and no party could realistically hope to win an outright majority in elections. Had that been different, Dutch politics would likely have taken a less consensual course. The social democrats, for example, occasionally left the fold of elite cooperation when harbouring majoritarian hopes. This happened in 1918 when, on the eve of the first elections under universal manhood suffrage, and with revolutionary events across the German border, leftist hopes for a majority were high. The reality of minority status of all the pillars, however, meant that militant intransigence would reduce one's influence to that of a voice in the wilderness, whereas by sharing power at least something could be gained. In this light, elite cooperation seems less a noble reaction to a threat to stability, or a revival of ancient elite customs, than rational behaviour by political leaders with an eye for the interests of their respective pillars.

The Nature of Depillarization

Lijphart's five measures of pillarization that were described earlier can also be used as measures of the process of depillarization that is generally seen as having started in the

second half of the 1960s. Using such measures shows differences between the pillars and across domains of social activity. The cohesiveness of the social-democratic network of organizations for the secular working class declined at least two decades earlier, when interlocking directorates (such as incorporating leaders of Socialist organizations in the parliamentary party) were phased out. The increase in non-pillarized behaviour, however, started with the Catholics, followed closely by the Protestants, while at least in terms of voting behaviour, the secular working class and middle class maintained their level of loyalty to the Social Democrats until the 1990s, and to the conservative Liberals still. As with pillarization, the Catholic subculture was affected most by depillarization, and the Liberal one least (see Irwin & Van Holsteyn, *this volume*).

The scholarly debate about depillarization mirrors that about pillarization to a considerable extent. For example, historians who saw pillarization more as a metaphor than as a reality on the ground now also doubt 'the narrative of depillarization'. Van Dam (2015) sees more continuity and gradual change, with the subcultures and their organizations at most changing from 'heavy' to 'light' group affiliations: party loyalty, for example, may have declined, but in terms of their political views, voters have not changed much. However, no one claims that depillarization resulted in a society composed of atomistic individuals, but it would nevertheless be a mistake to underestimate the abruptness and the saliency of many of the changes. Up until 1963 there was hardly any writing on the wall: in that year the Catholic Party obtained its best election result ever, while in the next elections it obtained its worst election result since the introduction of universal suffrage, only to see its support dwindle further. There were mergers of organizations across subcultural boundaries: of the Reformed and the orthodox Protestant churches, of the Catholic and Protestant political parties and broadcasting associations, of the Socialist and Catholic trade unions. Other organizations simply shed their ideological feathers, adding to the increasing number of new political and cultural organizations without any subcultural affiliation.

By the early 2020s, there were few exceptions to this comprehensive development: in particular among smaller orthodox Protestant churches, we may observe examples of strengthening pillarization with a new broadcasting association (Evangelical Broadcasting) and a new political party that later merged with an already existing party into the Christian Union. However, by and large the process has not reversed. The right-wing populist party Forum for Democracy has suggested the creation of its own pillar—for example, by setting up its own schools—but so far it has not been successful. Other than in Belgium, where the religious and class cleavages have been replaced by a cleavage between language communities, no new social cleavages have emerged around which a new pillarization could arise (see Harteveld & Van der Pas, *this volume*).

Nor have mass immigration and the subsequent development of a Muslim minority (5%) provided an impetus for new forms of pillarization. There are about 500 mosques, about 50 Muslim primary schools, and at least one political party in parliament (Think), but the many internal differences (theologically, ideologically, or based on country of origin) have so far prevented the emergence of an Islamic pillar (see e.g. Vermeulen et al., 2020). The fact that many Muslims do not have or do not want Dutch citizenship also