On Belgian Pillarization: changing perspective

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65. D. A. Rustow, Scandinavia: Working Multiparty Systems, in: S. Neumann (ed.), *Modern Political Parties*, Chicago, 1956; K. C. Wheare, *Legislatures*, Oxford, 1963.

66. M. Duverger, *Les Partis Politiques*, Paris, 1951; S. Neumann, *Modern Political Parties*, Chicago, 1956; Sartori, 1966.

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68. See for earlier examples Rustow, 1955; Eckstein, 1966 and the various chapters in the Dahl, 1966 *Oppositions* volume (see note 14 above).

69. W. Kornhauser, *The Politicis of Mass Society*, Glencoe, 1959.

70. G. A. Almond and S. Verba, *The Civic Culture*, Princeton, 1963.

71. See note 13 and 14 above.

72. Lijphart, 1968-C.

73. For a summary of Lijphart's arguments, see Van Schendelen in this issue and the summary of the general consociational democracy argument in Daalder, 1974-B.

74. Daalder, 1971; 1974-B; 1981.

75. Wolinetz, 1973; Houska, 1979; Lepszy, 1979; Rochon, 1980; Scholten, 1980; Bakvis, 1981.

On Belgian pillarization:

Changing perspectives*

J. Billiet

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

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

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pillarization is defined by sociologists. Answering this question also implies a political analysis of pillarization. Therefore, in the second part I will examine the role assigned to pillarization in political science studies. The conclusion is that, in view of the development of pillarization in the present phase of the welfare state, the phenomenon can be approached best from a complex organizations' perspective.

Pillarization in a sociological perspective

Pillarization, according to the sociologists, refers to a structure of parallel, mutually segregated, and polarized organizational complexes, each with a specific philosophical (the *Weltanschauung*) or ideological foundation, active in spheres that are considered primarily secular within a society that has recognized in principle the rights of philosophical and ideological pluralism.[7] Anyone familiar with the sociological literature on pillarization will note that this definition, along-side a number of ever-recurring elements, has been significantly altered at two points. The mention of 'philosophical or ideological foundations' makes the concept applicable to Belgium and avoids tedious discussions on the question of whether or not there can be a socialist or liberal pillar.[8] I mentioned spheres that 'are *considered* to be primarily secular'. The secular or religious nature of the spheres is the object of changing societal definitions. A great deal of controversy has arisen on this point within society. Concerning the elements common to all definitions, I will only note that polarization and segregation indicate potential conflict, while the term 'organizational complexes' suggests mechanisms of cohesion and integration. Noteworthy is that the political dimension is not included at all, except as an external condition ('recognition of pluralism in principle'). The stress is on 'the philosophical-ideological foundation' of the externally separated and internally integrated 'worlds'. Therefore it is not surprising that changes affecting this foundation make the survival of pillarization problematic.

The problem formulation: secularization and pillarization

In 1976, K. Dobbelaere and I conducted a study on the involvement of the Flemish population in the Catholic Church and in the Christian pillar structures. We determined that church involvement had declined drastically but that pillar commitment had been very stable over the preceding decade. This evolution continued during the second half of the seventies and was also observed in Wallonia.[9] The secularization process, conceived

as declining participation in church practices, ethical change, and a rejection of religion as an overarching meaning system[10], affects by definition the philosophical-ideological foundation of pillarization. How then could these two phenomena occur simultaneously? The conjunction of pillarization and secularization is not only challenging from the standpoint of sociological theory. At the end of the sixties, among Socialists, Liberals, and Christian intellectuals of the 'breakthrough movement' there was the expectation that the religious and ecclesiastical changes would in the long run automatically lead to a structural depillarization and consequently also to a total redrawing of the political map. It was assumed that a Christian party would lose all meaning and support. This did not happen.

With regards to Belgium, the hypothesis of a gap between rapid cultural transformations and retarded structural change may be attractive but does not seem plausible. The structural depillarization resulting from a crisis in the philosophical core that was noted by Thurlings in the Netherlands was not observed in Flanders.[11] Not only did the Catholic organizations remain attractive, there were also no mergers as in the Netherlands.[12] Their specific identity was even stressed more strongly. Moreover, pillarization seemed not only to survive the profound political transformation that resulted from the linguistic tensions but it also affected the outcomes. In this respect I may refer to the development of the cultural policy under the regime of cultural autonomy during the seventies.[13]

Given the concern of sociologists of religion for social cohesion, i.e., the degree to which group members share a common meaning system, the dirction in which the answer was initially sought is obvious. Since the Catholic Church's meaning system has lost its integrative power over the not church going Catholics who still continued to participate in Catholic organizations, a new meaning system must have replaced the strict Catholic one. We then hypothesised an internal shift from church religiosity to socio-cultural Christianity, which means a secular adaptation in the symbolic universe. Most of the attention went to rituals, symbols, beliefs, and values that could provide a cohesive meaning system also attractive to not church going Catholics.[14]

The question of the continuing attractiveness of Catholic socio-cultural organizations elicited several answers. These organizations are considered to provide better services. They represent numerous material interests via savings banks, insurances, social housing, and the incomes of tens of thousands of personnel and their families. The extensiveness of the services and provisions creates more chances for employment and promotion, which is augmented by the decline of religious personnel.[15] One feels at home in a familiar world to which friends, acquaintances, and relatives also

belong. Nevertheless, as noted, the answer was sought primarily in a secular adaptation of the philosophical-ideological themes.

The *first facet* of the meaning system concerns the legitimation of vertical pluralism, for individuals are confronted with a supply of diverse parallel associations from which they can and sometimes must choose. On the Catholic side, the pillar system is legitimated by four principles that have no reference at all to religion but rather originated in the free-market economy: free choice, private initiative, subsidiarity, and efficiency. It is contended that, in a situation where the choice is free, actual participation in Catholic organizations of itself sufficiently legitimates their right to exist. Moreover, private initiative is able to satisfy needs better and more economically than the public sector. In other words, the State should not take initiatives but should confine itself to the financial support of private initiatives. Not only do these principles legitimate pillarization in a way that is acceptable to the not church going Catholics, in addition they are manifested in the policy on such things as education, welfare, health, and culture.

Second, Catholic organizations and services remain attractive because a subtle shift occurred from the narrowing concept of '*Catholic*' to the broader term of '*Christian*', which means the 'deeper', the 'stauncher', and the 'fuller' human, encompassing the fundamental and 'general' values of Western civilization. Closely related to this is the translation of 'Christian' into '*Gemeinschaft*', a special type of human relations. Gemeinschaftlichkeit, i.e. tolerance, respect, dedication, friendliness, concern, good atmosphere, proper upbringing and the like, is the characteristic that is transmitted by the public image of Christian services. These services predominate in the welfare service, for example, in the care for the physically, mentally, and socially handicapped, in family counseling, in psychiatric and medical care, and in the care of the elderly.[16] The Catholic predominance in education and welfare – two sectors that have expanded enormously in the last thirty years – not only has an integrative effect for the Catholic 'world' because of the expansion of job opportunities in the Catholic organizations, but also the ethos of *Gemeinschaftlichkeit* is made credible by the public presence of all these activities. It is an ethos that must serve as a counterweight for bureaucracy, secularization, and anonymity in the world 'outside', and as such it is not a residue from the past but a remedy par excellence for the future.

Third, socio-cultural Catholicism contains an *ideology* centered around concepts such as democracy, vertical pluralism, solidarity between social classes and strata, cooperation, and reconciliation of oppositions and interests. All of this is tied together by a personalistic philosophical view

based on an essential harmony between the individual and the collectivity. The Christian Democrats (CVP; Christelijke Volkspartij) present themselves as a 'party of solidarity', which is different from the 'equality party' (the Socialists) and the 'freedom party' (the Liberals). According to its spokesmen, Christian Democracy is not a way between the 'out-of-date' categories of left and right, but a specific political formation that even transcends these opposites. It is striking that this identity is expounded primarily by the political elite and by the leadership of the Christian labor movement and the other professional organizations. In spite of the fierce linguistic conflicts, Christian democracy remained a succesful political formation during the seventies.

Critical reflections

Up to this point, the answer to the question of the continued existence of pillarization in spite of increasing secularization was sought primarily in an adaptation of the meaning system to the altered beliefs, values, and preferences of the individual members. For several reasons, this answer does not completely satisfy.

First, the given explanation is too partial. The answer can only be relevant to the Catholic pillar because it is implicitly assumed that secularization only causes integration problems for the Catholics and not for the secular ideologies of the Socialists and the Liberals. Now it is true that the Catholic world best fits the definition given and that, because of its strategies and its size, it is the primary pillar in Belgium, but an explanation must still be given for pillarization as a continuing political strategy. For this purpose, the approach sketched above is inadequate.

Second, it must be noted that the themes of socio-cultural Christianity are certainly present on the level of public language, in the statements of the elites, in documents and manifestos of organizations, in program points, and in the themes of congresses. In this sense, it is an objective meaning system. How far this 'faith' is subjectively accepted and confessed by the individual members, however, remains largely undetermined. Presumably, this is the case for a number of members, but research shows that there are parts of the Catholic world where these themes are questioned.[17] Moreover, one may assume that a number of participants in Catholic, Socialist, and Liberal organizations and services behave more like clients than like 'loyal members'. From a sociological point of view, one may rightly ask whether a common meaning system suffices to integrate organizational complexes. Such complexes also need mechanisms of organizational control. Is the common meaning system a necessary condition? In

other words, what are the conditions under which 'belief' is replaceable by other forms of commitment?

One may assume that, with declining social cohesion, a form of integration is possible by means of the provision of services and by material and immaterial rewards and sanctions. For this reason, the organizations can continue to count on a clientele in spite of changes in religious or ideological convictions. For these organizations, nevertheless, it is important that the philosophical-ideological identity be preserved on the organizational level because this is precisely what legitimates the replication of the institutions and services. Client commitment goes hand in hand with organizational control. Such control is related in particular to the selection of the managerial staff and to the occupants of strategic positions in the hierarchy, and not to the admission of ordinary members or clients. As such it is *selective*. In addition, a distinction can be made between the internal and the external surveillance of the pillar.

There is a very great deal of tolerance toward individual participants in organizations and clients of services. The object is to acquire or preserve as many clients as possible without supervision of convictions or private lives. Professional standards are applied in the individual services, in the relationships between the 'professional' (physician, social worker, therapist) and the client. In interpersonal relationships, a wide range of behavior and ideas is allowed so that the services remain attractive. Simultaneously, however, any threat to the interests and the identity of the organizations and services is fended off by surveillance of the loyalty of teachers, social workers, professionals, and managerial staff. The specificity of the services is particularly emphasized.[18] This is certainly the case in the public representation of the organizations and their services. The organizational control of the strategic positions is intended to safeguard the identity of the organizations in situations in which they are increasingly dealing wth 'clients'.

Alongside the internal control over the identity of the pillar organizations, 'external' surveillance is also exercised over all those who represent the organizations and services in the numerous consultation and advisory organs that are actively involved in policy making and implementation. In this way, the elites of the pillar organizations, which are institutionally involved in the decision-making subsystem, are able to block regulations detrimental to their own organizations and to promote policies favorable to the pillar organizations. Alongside this institutionalized consultation, the implementation organs, i.e., the ministerial cabinets and the higher levels of the governmental administration and public services, are also populated with recognizable members of the various pillars.[19]

In summary, one may say not only that the philosophic-ideological foundation has changed in content in the direction of secular adaptation, but also that its modality has fundamentally altered. To a certain point, a cultural assimilation has taken place in the philosophical field, while the structural pluralism remains undiminished.[20] Hence, there is the necessity for more efficient mechanisms of boundary maintenance on organizational levels. In the relationship between the elites and their adherents, ideological commitment has been replaced by clientelism. While this does not permit massive ideological mobilization, such is no longer necessary. By the pacts (School pact, Culture pact), mobilization has been made superfluous, and the mobilization capacity of the citizens has been exchanged for agreements and arrangements on the organizational level, i.e., within permanent consultation organs in the output zone of the policy.[21] Under such circumstances, surveillance of the members' ideological loyalty is redundant and also too expensive for the organizations because their market share in the distribution of scarce goods would then decline. The legitimacy of the multiplicity of structures is no longer assured by reference to the subcultural identity of the members but by reference to the market share (the number of clients) of the organizations and services. The specific identity of the organizations is safeguarded by selective control of the managerial staff, professionals, spokesmen, and representatives in the public sphere.[22] Organizational control and ideological legitimation are terms which van Doorn already used in his 1956 definition of pillarization.[23] Note that it is not argued here that there would be no 'believing' members or that the transmission and protection of the cultural uniqueness via pillar organization would belong to the past. It is only stated that the continued existence of pillarization cannot primarily be explained on the level of the individual members' religious or ideological convictions.

A necessary condition for the proper functioning of pillarization is that the State itself does not become directly involved in the distribution of scarce goods but that this occurs via the pillar channels. In Belgium, the organized intermediary field between citizens and authorities is institutionally involved with the expansion of the welfare state. Access to public goods such as education, health care, culture, social housing, and government employment proceeds largely via the pillar organizations and services. A portion of the funds remains inside the organizations to cover personnel and operating costs. The political strategy of subcontracting and the support from the clients coincide. In the policy options of the political elites, the pillar organizations are not only active as distribution channels, they are also involved in policy making and implementation. As such they form a policy making circuit that is parallel to the parliament. Regarding

matters that touch on the interests of the organizations, the parliament acts as notary and banker; it ratifies the compromises between the pillars and provides the money to implement their policies. Not the Constitution, but a number of pacts determine the rules, consultation organs, and the consultation techniques.[24] Here, of course, rises the question of the actual role of the political elites in the pillarization process. The answer lies in the political science tradition.

Pillarization in political perspective

Pillarization received special attention in comparative political studies concerned with conflict regulation in states that are marked by sharp subcultural segmentation. In those studies, the theoretical status of the pillarized structures is very ambiguous.[25] On the one hand, emphasis is placed on the aspect of compartmentalization, a structural factor that is extremely threatening for political stability and that consequently elicits a response from the political elites. On the other hand, however, some studies are stressing the supportive functions of pillarization as a stabilizing instrument used by the political elites.

In the consociational democracy tradition, segmented pluralism is considered to be a threat to political stability. The paradoxical situation that political systems, in spite of far-reaching subcultural segmentation, still seem stable, is attributed to the prudent leadership of the political elites.[26] Consociational democracy has thus been described as the response of political elites to the challenge of strong subcultural segmentation. Conflict within the 'fragmented political culture' is settled by bargaining among the top leadership of social groups.[27]

Without going into the rules and the additional conditions of consociational democracy, and abstracting from the question of whether the actual strategies can be best interpreted in this way[28], it is interesting to see why segmented pluralism should be dangerous for political stability. The explanation originates from the social psychology of smallgroup memberships, and it reached the consociational democracy tradition through the work of Truman, Bentley, Lipset, and Rokkan. Persons' memberships of groups sharing the same interests would promote polarization and extreme positions, while their memberships of groups with divergent interests would give rise to moderate positions because of the psychological counterpressure.[29] There are clear traces of this in the analyses of A. van den Brande and L. Huyse as regards the Belgian situation. On the one hand, the danger of memberships of similar interest groups is reversed by the elites'

political strategy, precisely because the separation among the mass makes possible the successful negotiations on the top. These are the themes of political apathy and the self-denying prophecy. On the other hand, however, the incompleteness of pillarization, i.e., the crosscutting of religious, ideological and linguistic cleavages provides counter pressure and multiple solidarities so that a permanent mobilization around one line of conflict is avoided.[30] As an ideal type, pillarization would be dangerous, but in the actual development, where the Christian workers belong to Christian organizations and thus develop solidarity with the other social strata, where the free thinkers are divided between liberals and socialists on the basis of socio-economic oppositions, and where the linguistic divisions permeate the entire structure, the conflicts are tempered.[31]

When one interprets the origin of pillarization exclusively as a defensive reaction of the ecclesiastical hierarchy and the clergy against the secular state and industrialization[32] and consequently omits the political elites as active forces, then conflict regulation is reduced to a postfactum answer. Nevertheless, in the political tradition, there are sufficient indications for the supportive functions of pillarization being a structuring of the 'field' controlled by the political elites.

The authors who study pillarization in relation to the development of some Western democracies conceive it as a special case of institutionalized cleavages, particularly when the religious cleavage was decisive in the institutionalization process.[33] Cleavages are institutionalized if the political organizations that resulted from them were capable of satisfactorily articulating, aggregating, and defending the rival interests of their followers within the framework of the legitimate common institutions and political rules.[34] This means that the conflicting groups in society are brought by the political and social elites to accept the State as a market within which group objectives can be attained. Thus, in the period of 1884-1914, the Catholics and the Socialists accepted the liberal State in exchange for modifications in it. The Catholics demanded a certain limitation of the authority of the State on the basis of the subsidiarity principle and the Socialists wanted a redistribution of power through the implementation of universal suffrage.[35]

Institutionalization thus implies that the energy of social mobilization is controlled and channeled by the political elites. For S. Rokkan, this forms the core of his general concept of pillarization, and thus he brings the political elites into the center of the pillarization process. He distinguishes social mobilization (the corporate channel) and political mobilization (the electoral channel). There is pillarization if the cleavage-specific organizations are active in the two channels and if those channels interlock.[36] In this

way, internally cohesive and externally separated 'worlds' develop, each of which is linked to only one political party. According to D. Urwin, it is suggested here that where salient cleavage lines have been institutionalized, in that they form boundaries separating differing core bases of electoral support for the major political parties, the opportunities for the resolution of conflicts generated by the existence fo these cleavages are greater than where salient cleavage lines have not been institutionalized. Where parties are based upon organizational networks, then moderate and pragmatic leaders can more readily resolve conflicts arising from the cleavages because they can claim to represent and are believed to represent the organized social groups.[37] That the linguistic tensions, in contrast to the philosophical and ideological, cannot be contained in Belgium, should also be attributed to the lack of such an institutionalization.

Via pillarization, the forces were combined, but the conflicts were kept within the limits of the political system (legitimacy). The organizations established as channels for mass mobilization, emancipation, education, mutual solidarity, and participation in politics could also function as buffers for the political and economical establishment, which lost its power by universal suffrage. To the extent that the masses participated in politics, they were also taken up into organizations controlled by the political and other elites. Consequently, one can consider pillarization as a factor of ordered inclusion of a growing mass of voters in the political-economic system. The citizens participated in the State via the pillars.[38]

This view on pillarization, as has already been pointed out by Scholten, casts the paradox in the consociational democracy literature in a new light. Consociational democracy is not so much the post factum response of the political elites to a dangerous situation, but rather a simultaneous strategy insofar as pillarization can be conceived as a particular and 'ideal-typical institutional arrangement for linking the associationally organized interests of civil society with the decisional structures of the State'.[39] The transformations of pillarization sketched here must consequently be studied in interaction with the decision-making system.

In the period of a still undifferentiated decision-making system and increasing political participation, the emphasis is primarily on mass ideological mobilization via networks of voluntary associations connected with political parties. These networks continue to function as channels along which political demands are conveyed in the direction of the decision-making centers. They play an important role in the supply of demands and energy. Nevertheless, the decision-making system has been thoroughly altered, among other things because of the active involvement of political elites. It is characterized by high levels of participation, structural

elaboration, and differentiation. Interest groups, parties, executives, bureaucracies, judiciaries, role structures and intricate linkages between social, economic, and other types of political structures are highly developed and differentiated. Within this system, spokesmen of pillar organizations, agencies of socio-economic representation, governmental bodies, mixed or quasi-governmental agencies, and political parties participate in the decision-making process on a continuing basis.[40] Access is established, structured and controlled through complex organizational networks. In this period, it is recommendable to study pillarization from the perspective of interrelationships among complex organizations.

Conclusion: changing research perspectives

Pillarization and the decision-making system and processes must be distinguished analytically. It is still possible that compartmentalized disciplines in the social sciences will focus attention on one or another aspect. However, in the analytical problem delineation, the interaction of these separate phenomena must occupy a central place. From the review of the tradition of the sociology of religion, to which I belong, it appears that the classic approach stressing the philosophical-ideological foundation of externally separated and internally integrated organizational complexes is too limited to encompass the present significance of the phenomenon. However, with concepts such as client commitment and selective organizational control, the level of analysis shifts from individual participation to organizational networks in a complex decision-making system. In other words, the attention is on organizations in their context. Pillarization can then best be approached by models which will allow statements and conclusions about relationships between complex organizations.

Notes

1. Kruijt, 1957-B, p. 26.
2. Lijphart, 1968-A.
3. Pijnenburg, 1983, pp. 2-3.
4. Steininger, 1975, pp. 270 ff.; 1977, p. 247.
5. Schendelen, 1978, p. 43; 1983, p. 32.
6. Scholten, 1980, pp. 339-342, 351.
7. Kruijt, 1957-B, p. 15; Thurlings, 1971, p. 12; Dobbelaere, 1980, p. 6.
8. Gielen, 1965.
9. Billiet and Dobbelaere, 1976-B, pp. 59-78; Dobbelaere, 1979-A; Voye, 1979.

10. See Dobbelaere, 1981-A; Dobbelaere, Billiet and Creyf, 1978-A.
11. Thurlings, 1971, pp. 133-181; Billiet, 1974, p. 349.
12. Thurlings, 1979.
13. Billiet, 1981-B; 1982-C; 1983.
14. Billiet and Dobbelaere, 1976-B, pp. 79-88; Billiet, 1981-A; 1982-A.
15. See Billiet, 1982-A, pp. 45-58; see also Dobbelaere, 1979-B; 1982.
16. See Dobbelaere, 1973-A; Billiet, 1977-B, pp. 172-182.
17. See Dobbelaere and Billiet, 1978-B, pp. 243-246; Billiet, 1981-C, pp. 1-20.
18. Dobbelaere, 1983-A; Dobbelaere and Billiet, 1983-B.
19. Winter, 1981.
20. See Thurlings, 1979, pp. 484-485.
21. See Heisler, 1974-B, pp. 181 ff.; Heisler and Kvavik, 1974-C, pp. 38-42.
22. See Scholten, 1982.
23. Doorn, 1956, p. 42.
24. Huyse, 1981, pp. 323-324.
25. Billiet, 1982-B, pp. 86-92; Huyse, 1975-A, pp. 414-425.
26. Lipset and Rokkan, 1967, pp. 13-14; McRae, 1974, pp. 2-4; Steiner, 1981-A, pp. 340-342; Lijphart, 1968-A; 1974, p. 71.
27. Lehmbruch, 1979, p. 53.
28. See Dierickx, 1978-B; 1979-B.
29. See D. B. Truman, *The Governmental Process: Political Interests and Public Opinion*, New York, 1951, pp. 508-511; A. F. Bentley, *The Process of Government: A Study of Social Pressures*, Evanston, 1955, p. 208; Lipset and Rokkan, 1967, p. 17.
30. Huyse, 1970, pp. 173, 192-195; Brande, 1963, pp. 3, 28-29.
31. Compare with Scholten, 1980, pp. 340-343.
32. Righart, 1981.
33. Lorwin, 1974-A, pp. 179-181; 1974-B, p. 34; Rokkan, 1975, pp. 568-569; Zolberg, 1978, pp. 99-138; Tilly, 1975, pp. 608-609.
34. Urwin, 1970, p. 321; S. P. Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies*, New Haven, 1968, p. 12; Tilly, 1975, pp. 616-617.
35. Witte, 1981-B, pp. 1-157, esp. 110-117, 130-132; Billiet, 1977-A; Dobbelaere, Billiet and Creyf, 1978-A, esp. 100-108.
36. Rokkan, 1977; see also Brande, 1973.
37. Urwin, 1970, pp. 321, 336.
38. Witte, 1981-B, pp. 92-96, 123-125; Art, 1982, pp. 11, 12, 16 esp. footnote 18; Isacker, 1969, pp. 43-141; Billiet, 1977-B, pp. 7-18; Schöffer, 1956, 1975.
39. Schmitter, 1979-A, p. 9.
40. Heisler, 1974-C, p. 43; 1974-D, p. 13.

Pillarization as a process of modernization*

J. E. Ellemers

Verzuiling or Pillarization is usually considered as the particular way in which Dutch society has been organized along denominational lines. The 'Pillars' (*Zuilen*), which form the basis of this system, are made up of different denominational groups. At first only the Catholics and orthodox Protestants, but later on also other ideological groups such as the Socialists and the (conservative) Liberals and even Jews and 'Humanists' were considered to form 'Pillars'. In due course the main Pillars established their own network of organizations, ranging from political parties, trade unions and educational systems (including a Catholic and a Calvinist university) to braodcasting corporations, welfare agencies, sport associations and even social research institutes.

When social scientists started to study this peculiar way in which Dutch society has been organized for almost a century now, they first looked at it as a more or less structural phenomenon. The leading Dutch sociologist J. P. Kruijt, who in the 1950s was one of the first to study *Verzuiling*, set out to describe it as a way in which a religion or denomination organized itself also in those institutional spheres which were not primarily connected with religion. Kruijt developed several 'measurements' to determine the degree of *Verzuiling* and established, among other things, that *Verzuiling* had increased from the beginning of this century through the late 1950s.[1]

Other scholars, in particular Calvinist and Protestant historians and sociologists, pointed out that one of the functions of *Verzuiling* has been that it provided a means of 'emancipation' for those groups of Dutch society (mainly Catholics and orthodox Protestants) which had for long been deprived or otherwise lagged behind.[2] Still other sociologists viewed

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