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Continuity or Regime Change in the Netherlands

In *On Toleration* Michael Walzer argues that there is not a single metric for the comparison of regimes of toleration. There is no golden standard for us to evaluate the way in which different states deal with cultural and religious diversity. Thus, in the messy world of real-life political systems he distinguishes at least five ideal-typical “regimes of toleration,” that cannot be ranked as better or worse (Walzer 1997: p. 4-5).¹ One of the least common of these regimes — the consociation — is the paradigmatic Dutch regime. The Netherlands pioneered this model in the early 20th century to mediate its deep religious and ideological divisions. Consociationalism is still the template of the Dutch political system today, even though in recent decades the Netherlands has moved in the direction of more commonplace regimes of toleration like the “immigrant society” and the “nation-state”. Clearly, arrangements for the toleration of minorities depend heavily on the social and historical context. This context has changed in the Netherlands and is now again shifting. In many ways Dutch society has become more typical, because it has overcome the entrenched religious and socio-political divisions that gave rise to consociationalism and it is now mainly characterized by a cultural diversity that results from mass immigration — a common experience all over the Western world. Nevertheless, the Netherlands is still formally a consociation, a distinct regime of toleration that remains underreported in legal theory. This makes the Netherlands an interesting case. The argument below will focus on the way the Netherlands has dealt with diversity in the past and how it is adjusting to the challenges of the 21st century, a time of increasingly interconnected minorities in a globalized world. The paper will argue that there are similarities between the present and the conditions that once gave rise to “consociationalism,” and will suggest ways in which this peculiar regime of toleration can inform an approach to deal with diversity in the 21st century.

Central to Walzer’s approach is the notion that the choice for a particular regime of toleration depends on the social and historical context. This does not only relate to the make-

up of the religious or cultural minorities that would be the focus of the regime of toleration, but also to the particular set of historical circumstances in which their toleration takes place. Walzer's analysis is not supposed to yield an authoritative judgment. Rather, the comparisons of the different arrangements, he states, "are morally and politically helpful in thinking about where we are and what alternatives might be available to us" (Walzer 1997: p. 4). This deviates markedly from more mainstream models of toleration, which often are not based on an understanding of the shifting historical and social context, but on an analytical model of cultural and religious diversity. Will Kymlicka's influential conception of liberal multiculturalism is a good example. With respect to multicultural arrangements, Kymlicka distinguishes between three distinct objects of toleration: (1) indigenous peoples, (2) substate, or minority, nationalisms and (3) immigrant groups. When a liberal democracy devises ways to relate to these different types of minorities, different types of policies are appropriate (2009 [2007]: p. 66-77). This set of categories provides a relatively static framework for Kymlicka to address questions of multiculturalism. Kymlicka does take historical trends into account like globalization and the increasing role of supranational institutions and international law in the promotion of multicultural arrangements. Yet, this barely affects his basic categorization of minorities and the menu of multicultural policies it calls for.

Walzer's typology of regimes of tolerance suggests that such a static analytical approach is not adequate, because it leaves out fundamental changes in the way minorities exist in the world. Walzer self-consciously tries to avoid such historical myopia and includes regimes of toleration in his taxonomy that have all but disappeared, such as multi-cultural empires and the millet system. These systems thrived under a certain constellation of circumstances, but have since been abandoned. This does not mean that they are simply of antiquarian interest, lost in an irretrievable stage in the evolution of society. On the contrary, for Walzer they remain part of the repertoire of solutions. They have informed practices in the past and may very well inspire solutions and yield insights again. Old solutions may be put to new use. The western political tradition offers a range of possibilities that can hone our thinking about toleration and suggest ways to deal with minorities. Primarily, this is what Walzer's taxonomy of regimes of toleration contributes. It is a set of models that provides flexibility in the way present-day cultural and religious diversity is mapped out.

This loose heuristic is useful, because something seems to have changed fundamentally in the existential setting of religious and cultural minorities. Globalization is not only, or even primarily, a matter of states cooperating on a supranational level, it is also a fundamental shift in the way people organize and communicate. As Nezar AlSayyad and

Manuel Castells note “we seem to be heading toward a placeless culture that is created through the increasing interconnectedness of local and national communities (2002: p. 4). The nation state is loosing its grip on the way common identities are reproduced. The mass media are becoming global in reach, as well as fragmented into a multiplicity of channels serving niche markets. The Internet has turned people from simply news consumers to news providers and is breaking the grip of the traditional news media on the representation of a common reality. Moreover, the Internet has made new communities possible, irrespective of national borders. As a result, immigrants today can stay in contact with their country of origin in ways that would be unimaginable in the 19th century. Political activists and religious believers can form communities and organize across borders in ways that were impossible only two decades ago. Under these circumstances it is becoming increasingly difficult for nation states to project a common national culture.

This basic shift in the ecology of cultural and religious communities creates problems for traditional liberal multiculturalism. Kymlicka’s discussion of the recent Dutch experience offers an illustration of these problems. Kymlicka is highly critical of the Netherlands. According to him, the Netherlands failed to integrate immigrants effectively, and failed for two reasons. First, the Dutch approach to immigrants was initially conceived as a “returnist” policy. It was a policy aimed at helping immigrants — who were primarily thought of as temporary “guest workers” — to retain their culture. This was not done out of respect for diversity, but as a way to make sure that immigrants could more easily return to their country of origin. Second, the Dutch approach failed because it then proceeded to fit immigrant communities atavistically into the traditional consociational system. This system, Kymlicka states, was developed for the religious divisions of Dutch society and is inappropriate for immigrants. Kymlicka, in effect, claims that the Dutch authorities made a category mistake by treating new immigrant groups as if they were indigenous, substate minorities. Kymlicka suggests that if the Netherlands had followed the example of the multiculturalism policies of Canada or Australia, its accommodation of minorities would probably have been more successful (2009 [2007]: p. 158n20).

Undoubtedly, Kymlicka has a point when he explains that a policy aimed at sending immigrants back cannot also be expected to somehow succeed in accommodating them as a minority. Yet, it is not at all clear that the Netherlands applied the wrong model when it eventually decided to integrate their immigrants, as he suggests. Kymlicka seems to assume that, globalization notwithstanding, immigration will follow the same universal pattern that has been repeated many times in the classic waves of immigration to countries like the United

States, Canada and Australia. Since this is a well-known phenomenon, the tried-and-tested methods of liberal multiculturalism will be effective in dealing with it. The question is, however, whether the opportunities for minorities to take shape and interact as well as the grip of the nation state on the process of cultural reproduction, have not changed so fundamentally, that regimes of toleration can no longer simply be picked from Kymlicka's menu. For immigrants, leaving their country no longer involves the kind of break experienced by many earlier immigrants. Nor are individual immigrants simply condemned to struggle in isolation, to become specs of dust overwhelmed by the surrounding culture of the host country. Diasporic communities are increasingly overcoming their territorial dispersal, because of the ready availability of satellite television, telecommunications and the Internet. Sources of information have become ubiquitous and democratized. Under these conditions groups can form spontaneously and create and maintain their own culture, their own religious community, or their own view of reality, despite the territorial dispersal of their members. As a result, states, and national elites, are increasingly losing their grip on the reproduction of a common national identity. With respect to religious and ethnic communities we are entering a "post-sedentary age."²

This suggests that the Dutch model of consociational democracy might not be such an inappropriate regime after all. The Dutch model was extraordinarily successful in bringing together entrenched and independent communities. It succeeded in mediating the differences between the parallel religious and socio-political communities, or "pillars," that made up Dutch society. If it succeeded in providing a common roof on the historical pillars of the past, then perhaps now it could be deployed to provide one for the virtual and deterritorialized communities of the globalized world. This is a pragmatic argument, of course, that mainly emanates from an assessment of present conditions. In other words, the argument is not that the consociational model is appropriate for today's immigrants, because the Netherlands has a compelling duty to foster the development of their cultural or religious communities within the Netherlands, or because those immigrants can claim a fundamental right to the continued survival of their cultural or religious identity. Rather, the consociational model is appropriate because those new immigrants can recreate their communities and pass on their identities on their own, whether the Dutch state facilitates that process, or not. Under these circumstances it may be better to connect communities to Dutch society through the consociational model, whenever they achieve a certain critical mass, than to attempt to change their members into model Dutch citizens. In a globalized world it is becoming increasingly important for nation

states to find ways to reconnect with the unrooted communities of the 21st century. It is in this context that the consociational model may again be of topical interest.

This will demand a rethinking of consociationalism, of course. Current multicultural diversity is very different from the type of pluralism that produced Dutch consociationalism. The traditional system of consociationalism provided a *modus vivendi* for established indigenous communities; it provided a pragmatic solution for the political stalemate of religious and ideological segmentation. The situation of the current, mainly Muslim, minority is very different. It is not an indispensable group that needs to be tied into the system on equitable terms to prevent the Netherlands from falling apart. Rather, it is a minority that needs to be tied into the system to prevent it from opting out. In short, the animus is not to prevent a break-up of society, but to prevent the development of an unattached parallel community. Moreover, the traditional “pillars” were products of a collectivist era and often trampled on the freedoms of their individual members. The virtual and deterritorialized communities, on the other hand, are much more fluid, loose and casual. The same processes that undermine the authority of institutions and elites at the national level, also undermine the authority of organizations and leaders at the level of religious and ethnic minority groups. The worry is not primarily that these communities will become too tight and box their members in, but that they will remain too ephemeral and fail to voice their interests effectively. If minority needs do not find a focus and are not taken into account, they may well become a source of frustration and alienation. This was precisely what consociationalism was designed to prevent. Indeed, you could take the abiding concern of consociationalism to be that, in the end, it is in everybody’s interest that the concerns of minority groups are articulated and recognized.

The article will try to address these topics and discuss what a consociational approach in the 21st century might look like. The argument will be chronological. It will start with a general description of the emergence of nation states as a result of modernization and industrialization in the 19th century and how the Netherlands is anomalous in the way it organized itself around so-called “pillars,” or religious and sociopolitical divisions. Then, the way the Netherlands started to become a more mainstream nation-state will be described as a result of the “de-pillarization” of Dutch society. Finally, the present condition of the Netherlands will be discussed in a time of globalization.

The Nation State as a Product of Modernity

The nation state is commonly treated as a basic and enduring part of the social universe. Yet, that is almost certainly a mistake. The nation state is not that old. The emergence of the nation state is closely tied to the emergence of democracy (Walzer 2004 [1995]), industrial society (Gellner 2006 [1983] and Hobsbawm 1994 [1990]), and print capitalism (Anderson 2006 [1983]). The development of a shared national identity among groups of people who are too big to maintain close personal contact with each other presupposes means to disseminate the notion of a shared national identity. Pre-modern society with its cumbersome means of travel and transport and poor lines of communication was primarily focused on the local and provided a poor habitat for nation states to grow and thrive. The kinds of social environments in which nation states can emerge and prosper are ones in which there are at least basic print media and preferably — to really get things going — also electronic mass media. These are necessary to project what Benedict Anderson termed the “imagined community” of the nation. Much like the point Stephen Crane alluded to in his poem “A Newspaper Is a Collection of Half-Injustices,” newspapers have the power to focus the attention of the community. A newspaper, Crane poeticized irreverently, is “A collection of loud tales / Concentrating eternal stupidities, / That in remote ages lived unaltered, / Roaming through a fenceless world.”

Moreover, nation states thrive in societies that can provide a standardized school curriculum, not only to ensure that people can draw on a shared cultural canon and a shared national history, but also to guarantee that people will develop standard habits of speech and can actually understand each other. They thrive in societies in which people can travel and move around with relative ease, so that they can experience the larger social world they are part of. As Gellner sums up, the maintenance of a unified national culture, “requires protection by the state, a centralized order enforcing agency or rather group of agencies, capable of garnering and deploying the resources which are needed both to sustain a high culture, and to ensure its diffusion through an entire population, an achievement inconceivable and not attempted in the pre-industrial world” (2006 [1983]: p. 135). In short, the nation state, at least in the way we understand it today, is a relatively new construct. It could not, and did not, emerge until the 19th century and it only really came to its own in the 20th century.

Hence, the common belief in the venerable lineage of the nation state, especially in the way we conceive of it today as the natural home of a unified people with a shared history and distinctive cultural traits, is something that needs to be treated with a degree of skepticism. As Anderson states in his famous study on imagined communities, one of the perennial

paradoxes for scholars of nationalism is the “objective modernity of nations in historian’s eye vs. their subjective antiquity in the eyes of nationalists” (2006 [1983]: p. 5).³ As opposed to the nationalist viewpoint, historians have found that the states of the past were not characterized by a cultural harmony and cohesion going back to the mists of time. On the contrary, states were often culturally diverse. They were multicultural empires consisting of different cultural groups, or eclectic dynastic kingdoms organized around a culturally remote monarchical court, often occupied by a royal family from another part of the world altogether. Thus, there was no warm, familiar social harmony of culturally identical people on the scale of the state. On the contrary, there was a hotchpotch of local and regional cultures, of proud urban centers, of many different languages and dialects, and of religious sects and Diaspora Jews. In his study of nations and nationalism Hobsbawm found that the notion of a “nation” as a collective with a shared cultural and historical identity did not appear in dictionaries until the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century.⁴ Even in a state that became unified relatively early like France, many Bretons still had to learn French when they were mobilized to fight in the trenches in World War I. In many ways the world of today is a much blander and more uniform place than the folkloristic fairground that existed in Europe well into the 19th century.

To be sure, Manuel Castells has recently cast doubt on the link between nationalism and the state, posited by people like Anderson, Hobsbawm and Gellner. He believes that nationalism has a life of its own, independent of statehood. Castells mainly takes issue with Gellner, whom he accuses of claiming that nationalism is merely an arbitrary historical invention constructed by elites to create the kind of unified nation state necessary for the running of a capitalist economy (2004 [1997]: p. 30). Gellner’s theory, according to Castells, has been fatally undermined by recent events: “The explosion of nationalisms at this turn of the millennium, in close relationship to the weakening of existing nation-states, does not fit well into this theoretical model that assimilates nations and nationalism to the emergence and consolidation of the modern nation state” (2004 [1997]: p. 30-1). Castells critique is unfair, however. Gellner certainly does not argue that national cultures are simply concocted by elites. For instance, he makes a distinction between “wild cultures,” cultures that emerge and thrive freely in the social world, and “garden cultures,” cultures that can only survive in the artificial environment of the nation state, and that are more coherent, unified and widely held than any of the wild variety (Gellner 2006 [1983]: p.). That Gellner is specifically interested in the “garden cultures,” does not mean that he denies that groups can have cultures without a state.

The recent surge in nationalism under conditions of globalization, in turn, does not invalidate Gellner's thesis either. The connection between nationalism and the state in the work of Gellner should not be taken too literally. Gellner's main point is that the flourishing of nationalism presupposes a number of conditions that only came into existence with the emergence of the modern state — a high-skill economy, centralizing institutions, a national school curriculum. These do not disappear with globalization. Globalization is not a return to a pre-modern, agrarian society, but a progression into an even more organized, connected and intertwined world. The new networked communities of the Internet, for example, are a radically new phenomenon. With respect to these communities William Mitchell notes that: “physically, spatially, and morally it is a thing of a new kind — differing as profoundly from the civic arrangements we have known as *Gesellschaft* does from *Gemeinschaft*” (2003: p. 207). Yet, this has not led to the “death of distance,” he claims, “local cultures and advantages still matter” (Mitchell 2003: p. 210). Rather, it superimposes a new way of connecting and interacting on top of the institutions and organizations of the nation state, which are still there, which are still important and which are still able to project a sense of national community. These institutions and organizations have not become irrelevant, in other words. Yet, they do compete with new ways of organizing and connecting, which have supercharged the ability of marginal groups to construct alternative identities.

The Dutch State as a Product of Division

With a correlation of such generality as the one between the nation state and nationalism, there are bound to be exceptions. One notable example of a country that did not conform to the general rule is the Netherlands. In the 19th century the Netherlands was split geographically into a Catholic South and a Protestant North. Moreover, its secular population was split in a Socialist working class and a Liberal middle and upper class. These splits were never transcended to form a unified Dutch national identity, which subsequently could form the basis for a unified Dutch nation state. On the contrary, the religious and sociopolitical divisions became the focal point of the Dutch system, the givens around which the Dutch political system was organized. This system, which in the Netherlands has come to be known as the “*Verzuiling*” (i.e. the pillarization, or vertical segmentation, of society), is usually referred to internationally as “consociationalism”. A consociational society is a society divided into parallel communities that all have their own schools and universities, their own

clubs and unions, their own newspapers and broadcasting companies, and their own political parties and youth organizations.⁵

In a system of consociationalism the state operates on the principle of inclusive neutrality.⁶ This means that the state is not organized around some shared national or constitutional ethos over and above the religious and ideological divisions of society, but that it embraces and internalizes these divisions by giving every group its due. In a consociation, Walzer points out, “the different groups are not tolerated by a single transcendent power; they have to tolerate one another and have to work out among themselves the terms of their coexistence” (1997: p. 22). For example, there is no system of state schools that observe strict neutrality with respect to the religious convictions of citizens. Rather, the state funds both religious and secular public schools roughly in proportion to the relative sizes of the religious groups and the secular population. The state does not provide a public radio and television service that is neutral with respect to religious and ideological convictions. Rather, it divides public broadcasting time proportionally between different religious and socio-political public broadcasting societies, roughly equal to the size of their membership.

Of course some overarching framework was necessary. Several supplemental characteristics of the Dutch consociation kept it from breaking up and falling apart. Political elites were discreet and willing to compromise. Politics was deliberately technical and dull in order to keep citizens passive and peaceful. Even though people were split on many substantive issues, they remained committed to the principles of the consociational process. Some limited symbols and focal points of national unity were crucial, too, like the royal family and the shared language. Nevertheless, compared to regular nation-states the Dutch consociation provided a rather anemic notion of shared national identity. There were only a few institutions that promoted a generic Dutch identity, while the identity of the particular religious or sociopolitical community you belonged to was reinforced in the papers you read, the schools you went to, the clubs and organizations you joined, the particular version of national history you were exposed to, the television you watched and the radio programs you listened to.

The heyday of the Dutch consociation was in the first half of the 20th century. This was a time of collectivism and mass movements and a time when the nation state experienced its finest hour (See, for instance: Hobsbawm 1994 [1990]: p. 131). In some ways these are parallel phenomena. The conditions that created nationalist movements and unified, homogeneous nation-states — controlled and oligopolistic mass media, faith in organization and a culture of collectivism — also made for homogeneous “pillars.” This may cast some

doubt on the common assumption that the consociation is an inherently paternalistic model that inevitably promotes docility among its citizens and forces them into a stifling religious and sociopolitical mold. The proverbial collectivism and conformity of the Dutch pillars may simply be the form consociationalism took in an age of mass movements, collectivist state programs, and totalitarian experiments.

At any rate, the most interesting aspect of consociationalism, at least for the purposes of this argument, was not how it fostered conformity — something that in today's loose communities could never be repeated, — but how it managed to pacify the antagonism between the different communities, especially the Catholic and Protestant “pillars”. This pacification was quite astute and highly successful. It managed to provide terms for diverse groups to coexist peacefully and succeeded in tying them into a common framework of endeavor that finally resulted in good social relations. It is important to realize that similar divisions in other countries have often led to instability, violence and civil war. The Dutch system provided a transparent and equitable arrangement for groups that thoroughly distrusted each other. It was a system that enshrined the principle of proportionality and provided mechanisms to adjust the arrangements for shifts in the relative sizes of the different groups. It is these principles and the system of power-sharing they enable, not the culture of collectivism and paternalistic control, that is still of interest.

From Consociationalism to Multiculturalism

Lijphart's seminal study of Dutch consociationalism was conceived as a description of the end of an era. The politics of pacification had been so successful that the ideological and religious divisions started fading away by the end of the 1960s. As a result, Dutch society was becoming more harmonious. This process was helped along by the secularization of the Netherlands and by the individualization of the mass followings of the different religious and socio-political subdivisions.⁷

The structure of the political system, however, for the most part remained unchanged. Thus, in the 1979 Dutch edition of his work, Lijphart concluded that all the arrangements to provide for proportional representation of the pillars were still there. Political elites still ran the government and still bargained with each other to achieve broad based consensus. However, the parallel communities that had defined Dutch society since the 19th century were only faint memories of what they had once been. The formal structures of consociationalism largely remained intact, but the social formation that once gave rise to these structures faded

away. This remains true to this day. Indeed, a recent report of the Council for Public Administration, an advisory body of the Dutch government, concluded that Dutch government still operated along the same vertical, hierarchical lines that were common in the heyday of consociationalism (ROB 2010: p. 21).

This is not to say that nothing changed. With the waning of religious and socio-political differences a different type of political discourse became important. For many Dutch political and legal thinkers the state came to be seen not so much in the consociational tradition as an equitable and depoliticized arrangement struck between parallel communities, but as a Weberian agent of rationality and modernization. The Netherlands was a frontrunner in the universal process of transformation from a traditional, deferential society to a free and modern society. In this process of modernization, the state was increasingly conceived of as an emancipatory body that would move us out of the world of time-honored custom and away from the cultural idiosyncrasies of tight-knit communities, into a world of progress, reason and universality. The “pillars,” the religious and socio-political segments of society, in this view, were seen as formations of the past, as outmoded forms of association that needed to be superseded. The process of modernization would free people from their restrictive religious and ideological collectives and would turn them into free and autonomous individuals. What good was a religious pillar, after all, when people were being liberated from their religious superstitions in a historical process of secularization? What use was a collective ideology, when people were becoming more autonomous in a historical process of individualization?

This waning belief in consociationalism and growing trust in the state as an agent of modernization resulted in a number of modest changes to the Dutch system. In the 1980s it led to attempts to disentangle the state from the church, for instance. The separation of church and state was never, and is not now, a formal constitutional requirement. Yet, in 1983 Dutch parliament adopted the *Wet beëindiging financiële verhouding tussen Staat en Kerk*, or law ending the financial relationship between State and Church. This meant that the erection of church buildings or the hiring of ministers could no longer be financed with public money. This prohibition was aimed at the primary religious function of churches, but did not prohibit the funding of religious activities that served a general public function. These could still be subsidized. Hence, the state reduced its involvement in the church to a certain extent, in line with secularist notions about the separation of church and state, but the basic consociational set-up remained in place.

Thus, in effect, there were two rival notions of what Rawls would call “public reason” in the Netherlands. Consequently, when the Netherlands became a diverse multi-cultural and

multi-religious society at the end of the 20th century as a result of immigration, there were two basic models on how to deal with it: one that built on the consociational traditions of the Netherlands and another that stressed the state and its mission to modernize Dutch society and emancipate its citizens. Even though the institutional framework of consociationalism was still there and still informed policy with respect to Islamic schools, many scholars and intellectuals argued for a rejection of the Dutch tradition of consociationalism as a model for the integration of the Muslim minority (See: Nickolson 2008).

It is mainly in the analyses of the so-called crisis of multiculturalism that this Hegelian/Marxist conception of modernization is potent. It is central to the widespread belief that the Netherlands is a “Gidsland” a guiding nation. We have moved from the feudal, to the modern, to the postindustrial stage, and where we go the less developed nations will follow. We have replaced religious superstition with science and secularism, suffocating social ties with individualism, and authority and deference with individual freedom. In many of these accounts the West leads the rest of the world towards the kind of societies they are destined to develop into.⁸ Non-Western nations remain outside of this historical trajectory unless they emulate the example of the West. In the Hegelian/Marxist conception, as Walzer argues, “the histories of others are so many chronicles of ignorance and meaningless strife.” In a way they have no history at all, he proceeds “since nothing of world historical significance has happened to them” (Walzer 2007, p. 185).

This notion of the Guiding nation informs a number of perspectives on the so-called crisis of multiculturalism. The prominent Dutch sociologist of law, Kees Schuyt, for instance, claims that when you deal with multiculturalism you should make a distinction between “culture” and “cultures”, between the grand historical process towards reason, science, universal rights, on the one hand, and the evanescent temporal froth of particular ethnic, religious and national cultures, on the other (2008, p. 79). Paul Scheffer who provided an early and influential diagnosis of the “multicultural tragedy” in the Netherlands basically also fits the Hegelian/Marxist scheme. He describes vividly how people stuck in an agricultural, pre-modern stage of development, ride to the airport on a donkey and fly to a modern western metropolis bypassing several stages of development (Scheffer 2007, p. 21). Now that immigrants from an earlier stage of development are becoming a major presence in the Netherlands, questions that Dutch society seemed to have settled long ago — the position of women or freedom of speech — suddenly become problematic again (Scheffer 2007, p. 14). In a similar vein, the late Pim Fortuyn, a left-wing ideologue turned rightwing firebrand, famously quipped with respect to the Muslim community, that he did not want to go through

the emancipation process of women and gays all over again. The influx of traditional Muslims was dragging the Netherlands back to an earlier stage of development when women were oppressed and homosexuality was a problem. With the influx of traditional folk, the Netherlands was regressing to a less enlightened age (*Volkskrant* February 9 2002; See also: Buruma 2010b, p. 96-7). Geert Mak, an influential commentator, finally, believes that the problems of immigration should be seen as an aspect of the great transformation from a rural to an urban world. The problems that Dutch people experience with respect to immigrants from rural areas in Turkey or Morocco are the same problems that city dwellers in Turkey and Morocco experience with their rural compatriots. They are to a large extent the problems of traditional rural people adapting to a modern urban world (Mak 2005, p. 32).

Sometimes this basic paradigm is changed to stress the quintessentially Western character of the process of modernization and the near impossibility of people from non-western or Islamic cultures to fit into a modern Western mold. This, in effect changes Western culture and Western democracy from something that immigrants have to catch up with, into something that they are culturally unsuited to understand. The analyses from this perspective emphasize the differences between the cultural worlds and particularly Islam. This leads to a focus on essential historical stages that are absent from the Islamic experience. The Islamic world never went through an equivalent of the Enlightenment; it never developed a notion of the separation of church and state; or it abandoned the culture of critical debate (See e.g.: Hirsi Ali: 2002, p.36-7; Bolkestein: 2008, 171-2.).

There are significant differences between these different analyses of the problems attributed to multiculturalism, but the implicit continuities are striking. There is an assumption that modernization will equal secularization. The secular culture of Dutch society is not some historical coincidence; it is the product of a universal, World-historical process of modernization. The consequence of Muslims evolving into, or being forced or coached into becoming, free and autonomous citizens of a modern Western society is that they will inevitably experience a weakening, or even a loss, of faith. Strong religious conviction and modernity do not mix. Living in the Netherlands will involve a radical privatization of belief and a loosening of religious norms. Moreover, there is an assumption that Muslim communities will naturally fade into Dutch society, or that they can successfully be forced to fade into Dutch society, much like earlier waves of immigrants have done. The recent arrival of immigrants from Muslim countries follows the familiar pattern of individual, one-by-one immigration. Immigrants migrate to the Netherlands individually and voluntarily. They make a free choice to move to a modern western society, like the Netherlands. Consequently, they

should adapt to the secular, Western and liberal democratic culture that is current there. There is no need to treat Muslim communities as groups, or to allow them special allowances as groups. In short, there is no need to conceive of them in a consociational framework.

Problems with the Modernization Framework

The nation state, we saw, is a formation that seeks to unite the people by making them more culturally homogeneous. It seeks to create a common culture, a nation, through the maintenance of shared symbols and common values and through the construction and stewardship of traditions and myths of origin. In the Netherlands this was a process that was never very successful. In the period of the “Verzuiling” the different segments of society primarily focused on their own particular identity as Catholics, Protestants, Socialists or Liberals. When these religious and socio-political segments faded, there was little effort to replace these traditional cultural identities with a common Dutch national identity. Indeed, a common complaint by critics of Dutch multiculturalism in recent years was that the Netherlands had failed to define what immigrants were supposed to integrate into when they settled in the Netherlands. There is no tradition of *laïcité* in the Netherlands, nor are Dutch citizens Constitution worshippers. The one thing that could serve as a notion of a common identity was the Netherlands as a “Gidsland,” as a trailblazer nation that had made substantial strides on the path towards modernization. This focused the attention primarily on the achievements of the Netherlands since the waning of the pillars: the permissiveness and liberality with respect to individual lifestyles, the equality of gays and lesbians, the decriminalization of soft drugs, and the acceptance of euthanasia. Yet, this constitutes a rather threadbare notion of Dutch cultural identity. As Michael Merry and Jeffrey Milligan point out: “contrary to what many now would like to believe, Dutch society has arguably never been socially cohesive.” This severely complicates the demand that the newly immigrated Muslim minority should integrate, because it is integration into “a national or cultural identity that is itself nebulous” (Merry and Milligan 2009: p. 318).

Nevertheless, the expectation in many contemporary discussions in the Netherlands is that immigrants who hold traditional views will shed these and embrace modernity, i.e. all the liberal shibboleths of Dutch society. That immigrants will go where the Netherlands as a Guiding nation has ventured. Three decades ago that might have been a plausible prospect. It was not unreasonable to expect that immigrants holding traditional views would integrate into mainstream society in one or two generations. Yet, there may be reasons to doubt whether this

integration will proceed as a matter of course, today. Two trends in particular may keep immigrants from simply merging into secular, liberal Dutch society. The first is globalization. If, in the heyday of nationalism, the nation state and national media had a firm grip on the way citizens viewed their world, that grip has loosened considerably with the blurring of national borders, the enormous rise in sources of information, and the increasing interconnectivity of the world. The second is the increasingly doubtful relationship between modernization and secularization. Outside of Europe and beyond the international subculture of academia, the world is getting more, not less, religious, regardless of the process of modernization many countries are experiencing. Indeed, many religious groups seem to thrive under conditions of modernity. These trends affect European democracies like the Netherlands mainly in an indirect fashion. For one thing, because they bring in immigrant groups for whom it is not self-evident that modernity should mean loss of faith or a weakening of faith. For another, because the religious groups that are resurgent are not the traditional institutionalized religions and state churches, but tend to be loose religious groups of the born-again variety. These can and will establish communities of their own outside of the scope of the nation state altogether. Hence, the question is whether it would be better to tempt them into some sort of consociational arrangement.

Globalization and the World Wide Web

To understand how today's conditions are different from the ones that existed in the heyday of the nation state, imagine what the world was like for the classic immigrant of the 19th century and the immigrant of today. In the 19th century leaving your country of origin largely meant cutting yourself off from your native culture. Travel was cumbersome. Often it meant a long journey across the ocean by boat. Sometimes there were immigrant communities or church congregations in the country of arrival that kept cultural traditions alive, but many immigrants were thrown in at the deep end and had to fend for themselves in an alien world. It was unimaginably more difficult to stay in contact with your home culture. Periodicals or books in your native language were hard to come by. Contact with the people back home was mostly maintained through mail correspondence. It is the immigrant experience as described vividly by Oscar Handlin in his classic study *The Uprooted*; it is the story of alienation, of "broken homes, interruptions of familiar life, separation from known surroundings, the becoming a foreigner and ceasing to belong" (1973 [1951]: p.4). Even though Handlin probably over-

dramatized the shock of emigration, there was undoubtedly an element of dislocation, of being uprooted, in the experience of emigration.

The world for the immigrant of today is very different. An immigrant can read the newspapers from his country of origin on the Internet on the same day as his former compatriots at home. An immigrant can see the same soap operas, the same news programs and the same television discussions as they do with satellite television. Travel is easy and cheap. There is e-mail contact and instant mobile phone access. Digital pictures and movies can travel the globe with the click of a button. Immigrants can come into contact and organize with compatriots from their host country easily through the World Wide Web. Moreover, they do not have to remain just consumers of information and news; they can also become their own alternative source of information, set up their own website and reach audiences all over the world at relatively low cost. This has shifted the balance considerably in the way the social world is represented. Even an authoritarian theocracy like Iran has lost its sole control over the way reality is constructed to the virtual social networks and tweeting multitudes.

The World Wide Web, in other words, makes it possible for trans-national communities to organize outside of traditional government and media institutions. If the community of the nation is at heart an “imagined community,” as Benedict Anderson put it, then the World Wide Web has unshackled the communal imagination that creates it. As a result, the cultural boundaries of nation states are becoming fuzzier and many minority groups are forming, “imagining”, cross-border communities. If the 20th century marked the high point of the nation state, then the 21st century may very well see an eclipse of the nation state as a focal point of cultural identity. The French social scientist and Islam expert refers to this trend as “deterritorialization”. Roy claims “globalization has developed not only transnational, particularly religious, communities but also virtual communities through the Internet, communities that have grown outside the territory of the nation-state” (2007, p.72-3).

Even though these trends bring people into contact in unprecedented ways, they also seem to lead to a degree of compartmentalization and polarization. To understand this process it may be helpful to think of the rise of the information age in economic terms as a change from so-called producer sovereignty to consumer sovereignty. Producer sovereignty exists under conditions of scarcity. “Any customer can have a car painted any color that he wants so long as it is black,” Henry Ford said famously of his Model T Ford. For most consumers, his was the only car they could afford. Hence, people had to take what they were given. In the early 20th century this was also true about the media. There was little choice and the public had to make do with the content they were provided with. Under such conditions it is much

easier for national elites to create a sense of a national community. People will end up listening to, watching and reading the same news stories and enjoying the same entertainment, at the same time. This is exactly what creates the imagined community of the nation state. It makes people feel they are all sharing in a common experience, that they are all part of an unfolding story.

Conditions of producer sovereignty do not only ensure that most people will mostly be confronted with the same information, however, they also make sure that people are exposed to views and information that — like the black Model T — they would not necessarily have chosen themselves. General all-purpose media channels cannot cater to niche groups and end up offering content that some groups may disagree with or find distasteful. This is something that is lost when media multiply and conditions of consumer sovereignty are created. Consumer sovereignty exists under conditions of plenty. Abundance makes producers compete and give consumers exactly what they want. A multiplication of information media, all trying to please their viewers and listeners, Cass Sunstein has argued, can lead to a polarization of views. When there are many radio and television stations that all promote a well-defined point of view, at first this might seem to enrich society's pool of arguments and opinions. Yet, when the media are fragmented and start to serve niche audiences, this will have a very different effect. Under those circumstances, according to Sunstein: “a wide variety of issues-oriented programming — expressing strong, often extreme views, and appealing to dramatically different groups of listeners and viewers — is likely to create group polarization” (2001: p. 73-4). Audiences will divide and fall apart into insular groups. As a result, public opinion will start to fragment over polarized views. In a similar vein, Bill Bishop has argued that the enormous explosion of consumer choice in all aspects of social and economic life is leading to “the Big Sort” the disaggregation of the demos in a patchwork of distinct cultural groups that live in separate social universes and have difficulty in understanding each other (2008).

These effects play themselves out on the Internet with much more clarity. Hence, Sunstein can state with much more conviction that “group polarization is unquestionably occurring on the Internet.” This effect is a consequence of the facility with which people can focus on the kind of opinions and beliefs that they already believe in. People have to filter their information to make it manageable. Through this innocuous process they tend to end up with information that fits their preferences and that reinforces their opinions. As a result, according to Sunstein, the Internet is serving “as a breeding ground for extremism, precisely because like-minded people are deliberating with greater ease and frequency with one

another, and often without hearing contrary views” (2001: p. 71). There no longer is the check of a counterargument when opposing views can easily be filtered out. Internet sites become echo chambers in which opinions primarily reinforce one another and in which nothing is gainsaid. Caldwell also voices this concern about the polarization that takes place on the Internet: “Muslim websites are no less marked by slapdash verification and an incendiary political idiom than their counterparts in the non-Muslim world. One of the paradoxes of the Internet is that this most modern of media has brought new power to premodern habits of discourse: rumor, gossip, urban myths, old wives’ tales” (2009: p. 131).

Taken together these trends present an altogether different challenge for societies with cultural and religious diversity, than simply the problem of the integration of individual newcomers. The national government and the national media are no longer the only institutions that represent reality. People can easily organize and provide alternative understandings of events. Moreover, there are many transnational groups and foreign sources of information that are readily accessible. As a result, the nation state is no longer the unchallenged focal point of cultural identification. Especially with respect to minority groups and minority faiths there are many alternative communities to join and alternative sources of information to consult. Michael Merry and Jeffrey Milligan, for instance, claim that among Muslim immigrants in the Netherlands identification with the country of origin remains strong and religiosity remains high. They note that the “availability of inexpensive satellite dishes and the Internet, as well as television and radio programming from the Middle East, only strengthens the cultural and political ties outside of the Netherlands” (Merry and Milligan 2009: p. 315). This situation is unprecedented. Yet, in many ways it is a situation that resonates more with the vertical fragmentation of consociational democracy, with its rival religious and sociopolitical “pillars,” than with the unity and cultural cohesion of the nation state. In the heyday of Dutch consociationalism people talked about “sovereignty within your own circle.” To a certain extent this has become a reality for minority groups as a consequence of the revolution in information technology. This correspondence between the present diversity and the consociationalism of old is also reinforced in the reaffirmation of religion among immigrants. Stories of the demise of religion have been greatly exaggerated. This casts a different light on the supposed nexus between modernity and secularization as we will see below.

Modernity and Secularization

For a long time the received wisdom was that modernization would lead to secularization. Yet, in recent years this relationship has been called into question. Already at the end of the 1990s Peter Berger — an eminent sociologist of religion and one of the central defenders of secularization theory — reversed his view on secularization. What the world was witnessing was not secularization, Berger claimed, but desecularization. The rise of religion all over the globe, according to Berger, provided “a massive falsification of the idea that modernization and secularization are cognate phenomena” (1999, p. 6). The two exceptions were Europe, where church attendance had dropped dramatically, and the international community of academics, which constituted a culturally powerful bulwark of secularism. More recently, Michael Minkenberg claimed that: “Empirically, numerous indicators point to the persistence or return of religion in the realm of politics and the reformulation of the relationship between those spheres.” This empirical evidence, he asserted, raised “questions about the classical liberal and secular paradigm of a privatization of religion in a democratic setting” (Minkenberg 2007: p. 904). Veit Bader, in turn, criticized the “twin myths” of secularization and strict separation of state and religion in theories of modernization and the sociology of religion. In most western liberal democracies there was no clear process of secularization and in almost all there were collaborative arrangements between state and religion (Bader 2007: p. 24). Hence, Bader argues for a rejection of these myths so that political and legal theory can address the question of religious diversity more adequately.

The United States for a long time was a glaring problem for the secularization thesis, of course. It was both a quintessentially modern *and* a highly religious society. Consequently it was often treated as an anomaly, an exception to an otherwise universal process of secularization. John Micklethwait and Adrian Wooldbridge in their recent book *God is Back*, reverse this assessment. Large parts of the globe are now going through a process of modernization, but it is the American, not the European experience, that is repeated. Everywhere, in Africa, in Asia, in South-America, modernization is accompanied by religious revival, and: “It is no just that religion is thriving in many modernizing countries; it is also that religion is succeeding in harnessing the tools of modernity to propagate its message” (Micklethwait and Woolbridge 2009, p. 12).⁹ According to Micklethwait and Woolbridge it is mainly the establishmentarian character of European religious experience that explains the difference. It is institutionalized religion that is in decline, not just in Europe, but also in the United States. The type of religion that is on the rise is religion of the born-again and fundamentalist variety, not just in the Christian, but also in Muslim and Jewish world. The European model of institutionalized state religion lacks incentives to adapt to the wishes of

the believers and leads to churches that are out of touch with their base. As a result these churches have become sclerotic and are in rapid decline. Ironically, they are also typically the type of religious denominations that have tried hardest to adapt their faith to the realities of modern life and the insights of modern science. The American model involves a strict separation of state and church and creates a lively market for religious belief. Churches have to fend for themselves in this free market. This leads to churches that make every effort to connect with their flock and attract new converts. Consequently, the religious scene in the United States is much more vibrant and churches are much more successful in appealing to people. Unlike the institutionalized churches typical of Europe, they make no effort to fit in with modernity or the insights of modern science. They often offer literalist interpretations of the religious texts, hold traditional views and reject evolution. Yet, even as they reject modernity these fundamentalist churches are quite at ease with the modern world. They use marketing techniques, modern media and the Internet to proselytize.

Hence, it would be wrong to equate this Muslim and Christian fundamentalism with traditionalism. Roy speaks tellingly of the “modernity of an archaic way of thinking,” when he discusses neofundamentalism of both the Muslim and Christian variety (2004: p. 232). Traditionalist religion is rooted in a community, in a traditional cultural setting, in established rituals and habits. Fundamentalist religious experience, on the other hand, is cut loose from this social setting. It is a rethinking of the religion outside of its context of origin. This leads to a much more individualized religion that is focused on texts, on a quest for self-realization and on a personal relationship with the deity. This decontextualized religion lends itself much better to the realities of globalization. The same advances in communication technology that make it possible for immigrants to keep in touch with their home country, also facilitate the great religious revivals on all the continents of the world, save Europe.

Hence, with respect to Islam we see many of the same processes that characterize the virtual communities of the internet. For instance, the Internet is changing the terms under which Muslims relate to each other. Leni Brouwer has observed that the anonymity of the Internet makes it possible to transcend the traditional gender boundaries of the real world. It allows the diaspora community to “articulate their Muslim identity on their own terms, independent of the older generation” (Brouwer 2004: p. 54). As a result there has been a bypassing of traditional hierarchies. In her study of fundamentalist Muslim groups in Britain and Denmark Kristine Sinclair suggests that these groups “are experiencing a deterritorialization of Islam and a transnationalization of the individual in their focus on a global network of Muslims rather than a focus on specific Middle Eastern or Asian nation states. The groups are

turning to an Islam that is detached from the migrant generations' Muslim homelands, just as they construct transnational identities and networks" (Sinclair 2008: p. 51).

This independence, moreover, is boosted by the fact that newly immigrated religious minorities experience many difficulties in receiving equal treatment vis-a-vis established religious denominations in European countries. In Europe, as Klausen notes, "church and state are still intertwined in ways that secular Christians hardly notice but which nonetheless penalize religious minorities" (2007 [2005]: p. 136). Hence, many Muslim communities in Europe find it difficult to fund and organize church activities. With respect to the Netherlands, for instance, Merry and Milligan note that there are some formidable difficulties for Muslims to fit into the existing consociational framework. There has been resistance from Dutch society against Islamic institutions like Mosques and schools and there has been lack of fluency in the Dutch language which makes it difficult for Muslims to navigate the complexities of Dutch law and government procedures (Merry and Milligan 2009: p. 314).

This often makes Muslim communities dependent on funding from foreign nations for the hiring of imams, the building of Mosques, and the acquisition of teaching material for Islamic schools. The role of Saudi Arabia in supporting Wahhabist interpretations of Islam is well known. Yet, there are also other examples. For instance, the Diyanet, the Turkish Directorate of Religious Affairs, as Yukleyen observes, funds a great many mosques, imams, and Qur'an schools. Its aim is to "prevent opposition forces from exploiting the religious needs of Turkish migrants and mobilizing them against the interests of the Turkish republic" (Quoted in: Yukleyen 2009: p. 297). The Diyanet was an instrument of the former secular military leadership in Turkey and was set up to counterbalance the dissident Islamist movements abroad. It runs the largest number of mosques in the Netherlands and promotes what it calls "official Islam" a form of Islam that does not challenge state power and accepts the tenets of the Turkish secular tradition.

These developments create a new set of problems. The idea that there is some law-like correlation between modernity and secularism has been undermined. Hence, the notion implicit in many secularist arguments that religion is a vestige of the past, that it is something that needs to be tolerated for the time being to enable a peaceful transformation into a fully secular world, but not something that deserves to be fully acknowledged as a reasonable and equal world view, is a notion that has become questionable. In many places, religion is still thriving under conditions of modernity. This renaissance affects European states mainly indirectly through their immigrant communities. The religiosity of immigrant communities presents European democracies with problems that are very different from the classic issues

of the relationship between church and state. The classic problems of church and state hark back to the time when established churches were powerful institutions that rivaled the state and its control over people's lives. This is not the issue, here. The question is not how to deal with powerful and imposing religious institutions, but how to deal with loose movements and networks and the influence of foreign nations on their development. The resurgent religion of today does not seek to dominate the state and rival its sovereign power. On the contrary, it seems more apt to withdraw and turn its back on the state. The challenge is not how to rein in religious institutions, but how to engage them. Hence, again there may be an argument to redeploy the machinery of consociationalism to tie these groups into Dutch society. Among the elites of immigrant communities, according to Klausen: "There is [...] a widespread feeling that Europe's Muslims should not rely on foreign Islamic funding of local institutions but be able to practice their faith in mosques built with local funding and with the assistance of imams certified and educated at European universities and seminaries" (2007 [2005]: p. 3-4). Such an accommodation of religious groups may be a much more sensible option than an unyielding, principled stand for the separation of church and state.

Conclusion: The Promise of Consociationalism

The problem for liberal democracy is how to deal with the deterritorialized immigrant and religious communities. Under conditions of globalization it is not clear whether diaspora communities will simply adapt and adjust to life in modern western society over time. The effort to domesticate them through an education program, or discipline them with strict rules, may put too much faith in the ability of the state to create model citizens. Moreover, from a liberal democratic point of view it is quite problematic to have the state define and enforce an ideal of the well-adjusted citizen (Gunsteren: 2008, p. 32-6).

The consociational model may be a better way to tie the unrooted religious and immigrant communities into the framework of western society. The consociational model may do more justice to the hybrid nature of people's identities and the hybridity of the processes that shape them. For, however much people are involved in the virtual communities of the Internet, or tied to the national communities of their country of origin, they still wake up in a Western society, where they work and where their children go to school. Giving people a stake in their actual community and a say over their services through the power-sharing arrangements of consociational democracy, may be a better way to moor them into modern western society, than threats and lectures.

This will also draw them out of their niche communities and connect them with people that hold alternative perspectives. Even on a modest scale this may be beneficial. If Muslims want to start an Islamic school, for instance, this will already involve Muslims from many parts of the world, who will all have very different ideas about their faith. Consequently, there will have to be compromises and bargaining, even within the Muslim community. It will also involve them with the institutions of the Dutch state and its requirements and demands for educational standards. Yukleyen argues that Islam is not hostile to Western, secular, liberal democracy. Indeed in his study of the Turkish community in the Netherlands he found that many of the different religious groups within the Turkish community indeed were “localizing.” The consociational tradition of the Netherlands was providing “the ‘opportunity space’ for Islamic organizations and Muslim identity to be recognized within the public sphere” (Yukleyen 2009: p. 293).

This is not to say that the Dutch model is currently running smoothly. There is certainly hostility to the idea of Muslims making use of the consociational arrangements of Dutch society. The shift to stricter notions of the separation of church and state has tended to foreclose opportunities for Muslims that had been open to other religious groups before (Klaussen 2007 [2005]: p. 146). This shift has not managed to change the basic template of the Dutch consociational model, but it has raised the question whether it should still be given full-blown application when it comes to the Muslim minority. In other words, also in the Netherlands there has been a growing tendency to respond to the arrival of practicing Muslims with a new found faith in secularism and a strict observance of the principle of separation of church and state.

There are also problems with a strict separation of state and church, however. It is good to remember that a principled stand in the separation between church and state also carries costs. Soper and Fetzer, for instance, note that in the last decade of the 20th century hundreds of young Muslim women in France were expelled from state schools for refusing to remove the hijab. These girls had to rely on correspondence courses, on private tutors, or simply abandoned their education altogether (Soper and Fetzer 2007: p. 935). This is not exactly a great blow for the emancipation of Muslim women.

Moreover, the growing secularism of European publics should not be misunderstood. This secularism cannot simply be taken as evidence that Europeans are ready to embrace the secular age and chase religion out of the public square altogether. The growing secularism among the European populace does not necessarily translate into any great willingness to discontinue current links between church and state. Soper and Fetzer suggest that there is

“little public support for the elimination of existing ties between religion and public policy.” Consequently, they conclude that “[s]ecularism at the popular level may [...] coexist in an unusual way with continued institutional links between church and state” (Soper and Fetzer 2007: p. 940). This seems to be true for the Netherlands, as well. There is little appetite for scrapping the consociational set-up of the Dutch educational system with its religious schools, for instance, even though Church attendance is low and faith is declining.

If support for the institutions and systematics of consociationalism remains high in the Netherlands — albeit not so much for recent Muslim arrivals — there remains scope for the accommodation of Islam in the Dutch model. A policy of accommodation can appeal to the same basic standards and the same principles that inform the consociational institutions of the Netherlands to give all groups their due. Such an appeal to existing principles of proportionality and powersharing may become more successful as the Muslim community becomes a more commonplace element of the Dutch patchwork of religious and political identities. Moreover, it may help to moor this transnational community into Dutch society.

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¹ The five regimes listed by Walzer are: (1) multinational empires, (2) international society, (3) consociations, (4) nation states, and (5) immigrant societies (Walzer 1997: p. 14-36).

² The term is taken from William Mitchell (2003: p. 143).

³ Eric Hobsbawm concurs: "The basic characteristic of the modern nation and everything connected with it is its modernity" (1994 [1990]: p. 14). Even a critic of the theory, Aviel Roshwald, admits the thesis that nationalism is a quintessentially modern phenomenon is the reigning view among historians (2006, p. 1).

⁴ Of course the word "nation" existed before that date, but it connoted a political union of citizens not a cultural whole.

⁵ The standard work on consociationalism is Lijphart's *The Politics of Accommodation: Pluralism and Democracy in the Netherlands* (1968), known in the Netherlands as *Verzuiling, pacificatie en kentering in de Nederlandse politiek* (1992 [1968]).

⁶ The term was coined by Wibren van der Burg (2008: p. 45-7).

⁷ This did not mean that Dutch politics was calming down. If anything the opposite was true. When the divisions were serious, political disagreements could not be acted out in the public sphere because they could have torn the Netherlands apart. When the divisions faded, political disagreements could be brought to a head without endangering the stability of the system. Hence, paradoxically the Netherlands was peaceful when it was divided and full of political turmoil when it was more unified.

⁸ There is an evident religious animus in this view of the historical development of the Netherlands, with a chosen people leading the world to the promised land. Walzer clearly treats this conception as a form of secular religion (2007, p. 185). Ian Buruma has also commented on the thinly veiled religiosity of much Dutch secularism (2006, p. 69 and 2010a, p. 79).

⁹ For an evolutionary rather than an economic explanation see: Daniel Dennett (2006).