

# Introduction

**Abstract:** Religious coexistence was an urgent problem facing post-Reformation Europe. This monograph aims to rethink early modern religious coexistence from the bottom-up perspective of Catholics in the Dutch Republic, in particular in the city of Utrecht during the seventeenth century, offering a theoretical reassessment of the public/private distinction. The Introduction articulates the main argument concerning Catholic agency in the process of delimiting the public. After describing how Utrecht developed into a stage of religious diversity, it offers a historiographical analysis of the early modern Dutch history of coexistence, focussing on Catholics and the public/private distinction. Finally, it introduces the methodology of this study within a civic community framework, and outlines its two-part structure on, respectively, Reformed governing strategies and Catholic survival tactics.

**Keywords:** coexistence, Catholic, the Dutch Republic, public/private distinction, agency, early modern

Throughout his entire life, Johannes Wachtelaer (1581–1653), a priest born into an elite Catholic family in the Dutch city of Utrecht (Fig. 1), would never see his faith publicly, officially, and openly embraced in his hometown, which had outlawed Catholicism the year before his birth. In spite of this, he grew up a devout Catholic citizen of the former episcopal city, and was to become one of the leading ecclesiastical figures of the Catholic Church in the Northern Netherlands, whose legitimacy had been denied by the Dutch Protestant government. In 1639 Wachtelaer was, in the end, prosecuted by the Utrecht city court for numerous crimes relating to his Catholicism. Facing severe repression and persecution, he did not, however, yield to his Protestant aggressors. Mobilizing his elevated social status and various networks, he began petitioning the politico-judicial authorities to prove his innocence, to defend the new sacred spaces inside private homes of Catholics, and to secure toleration and further liberties for his co-religionists in the Dutch



Fig. 1 Cornelis Visscher (II), after Frederick Bloemaert, Portrait of Johannes Wachtelaer, c. 1653–1658, etching and engraving, 45.6 x 31.7 cm, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam

public sphere. Wachtelaer was one of many Dutch Catholics struggling to survive in the multi-confessional Republic, resisting religious discrimination.

Religious coexistence was a serious challenge to be navigated in early modern Europe, where religious diversity was commonly seen as a major threat to public order and politico-social stability. Early modern Europe still embraced the medieval ideal of the *corpus christianum*. Based on the notion of the body of Christ (*corpus Christi*), this physical metaphor for the Christian social community represents an organic totality of a sacral society united by shared religious rituals. Backed by this ideal, the Protestant and Catholic/Counter-Reformations launched what might be called 'Europe's first grand project in social purification'.<sup>1</sup>

Against this background, historians have traditionally represented the Dutch Republic as an exceptional case of religious coexistence. The 'Dutch Golden Age', a term used nearly synonymously for the seventeenth century, has thus been depicted as a herald of modernity,<sup>2</sup> in which Dutch religious toleration is understood to constitute a significant part.<sup>3</sup> In such narratives, Dutch Catholics are commonly represented as a passive entity, as placid recipients of the toleration bestowed on them by Erasmian, pragmatic regents. As such, the history of coexistence has typically been portrayed from the top-down perspective of the repressing and tolerating party, echoing modernization models such as the secularization thesis, the rise of toleration, and the privatization of beliefs. In these models, commonly related to the Western-centric history of liberalism, the religious persecution, discrimination, and intolerance of 'infant' societies are believed to have been overcome by religious freedom, equality, and tolerance of 'mature' civilizations in the course of the modernization process.<sup>4</sup> However, if we wish to

1 Terpstra, *Religious Refugees*, here especially pp. 1, 7, 21.

2 E.g., Frijhoff and Spies, *Bevochten eendracht*, especially p. 221; Israel, *Radical Enlightenment*; Vries and Woude, *The First Modern Economy*. Maarten Prak intentionally distances himself from these studies which argue the alleged modernity of the Dutch Republic, putting less emphasis on the Republic's 'relationship to the future (the Republic as precursor)' but more on 'the unique position of the Republic in the seventeenth century itself'. Prak, *The Dutch Republic*, pp. 1–4, especially p. 4; Idem, *Nederlands Gouden Eeuw*, pp. 7–11, especially p. 11.

3 For critical reviews on the national mythologization of Dutch toleration, see Gijswijt-Hofstra, 'Een schijn van verdraagzaamheid'; Kaplan, *Divided by Faith*, pp. 1–10; Idem, 'Dutch Religious Tolerance'; Idem, *Reformation*, pp. 204–22.

4 E.g., Forst, *Toleration in Conflict*; Kamen, *The Rise of Toleration*; Troeltsch, *Protestantism and Progress*; Weber, *The Protestant Ethic*; Zagorin, *How the Idea of Religious Toleration*. For a recent example of this narrative in early modern Dutch history, see Kooi, *Calvinists and Catholics*. For criticism of the modernization models, see, e.g., Clark, 'Secularization and Modernization'; Dixon, Freist, and Greengrass, *Living with Religious Diversity*; Grell and Scribner, *Tolerance and Intolerance*; Hsia and Nierop, *Calvinism and Religious Toleration*; Kaplan, *Divided by Faith*;

critically rethink the historical narrative on coexistence and, ultimately, the modernization models of Western liberalism themselves, it is the repressed and tolerated party that we must place in the foreground.

The present monograph therefore adopts the bottom-up perspective of the Catholic politico-religious minority in the Dutch Republic.<sup>5</sup> These Catholics, including Wachtelaer, may themselves provide us with examples for deconstructing the triumphal narratives of modernization. To achieve its goal, the present study offers a theoretical reassessment of the public/private distinction, which has long been regarded as a core concept of modern Western liberalism<sup>6</sup> and has recently attracted the attention of historians of early modern religious coexistence. It will seek to demonstrate that existing interpretations of the early modern public/private distinction have led us to underestimate the agency of such repressed and tolerated parties as Dutch Catholics in the history of coexistence. It will shed light on an alternative aspect of the early modern public/private distinction, that is, the 'delimitation of the public', defined as a constant, communal process in which people defined what the 'public' was, drew the border of the public, and created norms for how people could and should behave in public. I shall argue that Catholics, by participating in the process of delimiting the public and deploying their own understandings of publicness, not only actively enabled their survival in the Dutch Republic, but also played an indispensable role in fashioning a multi-religious society in the Northern Netherlands. Through the present study, I will seek to establish an analytic framework for the delimitation of the public for future comparative studies on religious coexistence in the early modern world, critically rethinking the teleological modernization thesis.

To better understand religious coexistence in the Dutch Republic, which acknowledged provincial sovereignty and embraced urban particularism, we must focus social-historically on a local community. For this study, we

Kaplan and Geraerts, *Early Modern Toleration*; Longfellow, 'Public, Private'; Plummer and Christman, *Topographies of Tolerance and Intolerance*; Safley, *A Companion to Multiconfessionality*; Spohnholz, *The Tactics of Toleration*; Walsham, *Charitable Hatred*; Idem, 'The Reformation'.

5 Dutch Catholics as a community were deprived of many politico-religious rights in the public sphere, forming a politico-religious minority group in the Republic. I call their perspective 'bottom-up' with a view to their discriminated politico-religious status in the public sphere. As I will note in this monograph, this does not mean, however, that they represented a socio-economically monolithic entity or that they only included people of lower socio-economic capital. Rather, it was Catholic members of the socio-economic elite that played crucial roles in the bottom-up survival tactics deployed by the politico-religiously discriminated Catholic community.

6 E.g., Weintraub and Kumar, *Public and Private*.

have chosen to delve into the city of Utrecht, for the period from 1620 to 1672. Utrecht represents a suitable case study since by the early seventeenth century it had become a stronghold for the Reformed and Catholic Churches alike in the Dutch Republic. The resultant rivalry between the two confessional groups provoked numerous conflicts, which have left their traces in various primary sources, including legal records, allowing us to assess Catholics' agency in realizing religious coexistence in the urban public sphere.

### Utrecht as the Stage of Religious Coexistence

From times of old, when St Willibrord (c. 658–739) came from the British Isles to Christianize the Low Countries, Utrecht was one of the region's major political and ecclesiastical centres. During medieval times, it enjoyed a position as the only episcopal city in the Northern Netherlands, with many churches, monasteries, convents, and hospices, all of which were regarded as sacred spaces.<sup>7</sup> Yet the Protestant Reformation and the Dutch Revolt against the Habsburg monarchy drastically changed this medieval Catholic topography. While Utrecht was to develop into the bulwark of Dutch Reformed orthodoxy, the city remained the centre of – a now outlawed – Catholicism in the Northern Netherlands.

The Dutch Revolt broke out in the turbulent period of the Reformations. Despite fiery appeals from reformers, including Martin Luther (1483–1546), the Renaissance popes refused to convene an ecumenical council to inaugurate needed reforms. The Council of Trent, which was finally convened in 1545 and eventually concluded in 1563, aimed not only to launch the Church's reform programme, renewing the intermittent efforts of the Catholic Reformation, but also to frame theological answers to meet the Protestant challenge in what is now known as the Counter-Reformation.<sup>8</sup> In the Low Countries, the Tridentine reform initially occurred hand in hand with the Habsburg monarchy's attempt at political centralization. In 1559 King Philip II of Spain (1527–1598) gained patronage rights from Pope Paul IV (1476–1559) over all the bishops in the Low Countries, and reorganized the bishoprics there. The diocese of Utrecht, which up to then had fallen under the authority of the archbishop of Cologne, was now elevated to the rank of an archdiocese with five suffragan dioceses covering the entire

7 Bogaers, *Aards*.

8 E.g., Hsia, *The World of Catholic Renewal*, pp. 10–12; O'Malley, *Trent and All That*, pp. 1–45.

Northern Netherlands. Philip II installed new, reform-minded bishops, expanded their ecclesiastical power and provided each diocese with Inquisitors to eliminate the heresy. As a devout Catholic, he tried to advance the Counter-Reformation cause through a hierarchical politico-religious system which included the harsh Inquisition. Yet, in the end, all these measures pushed the people of the Low Countries, including Catholics, to stand up for their local faith and liberties. The outbreak of the Dutch Revolt therefore represents a failure of top-down, state-sponsored Catholic renewal in the Low Countries.<sup>9</sup>

Protestants could be found in Utrecht as early as the 1520s, which, like other parts of the Low Countries, fell victim to iconoclasm in 1566. Then, in 1576, the Provincial States of Utrecht accepted the Treaty of Ghent, joining the States General in its battle against the King of Spain.<sup>10</sup> In Utrecht the Protestant Reformation assumed a specific form, as those who supported the new evangelical ideas were divided into two different groups, the Libertines and the Calvinists, who both regarded themselves as Reformed Christians. Libertines, whose main proponents included Hubert Duifhuis (1531–1581), pastor to the parish church of St Jacob in Utrecht, upheld Erastianism, accepting secular authority over the church, and rejected the strict ecclesiastical discipline by which Calvinists, in their theocratic vision, attempted to maintain the public order. While Calvinists tried to form a radically disciplined religious community connected to the Dutch national Reformed Church, Duifhuis refused to impose strict oversight on his parishioners and sought to keep his St Jacob Church as an independent, local church.<sup>11</sup> On the national level, the Union of Utrecht, established in January 1579, affirmed what Libertines demanded, that is, the right for each sovereign province to carry out its religious policies independently.<sup>12</sup> Moreover, in reaction to the Habsburg Inquisition, article thirteen of the Union guaranteed freedom of conscience for anyone living in the rebel territories, stating that ‘every individual shall remain free in his religion, and no one should be singled out or interrogated because of his religion’.<sup>13</sup> That same month the Utrecht

9 Janssen, *The Dutch Revolt*, pp. 17–19; Kaplan, *Calvinists and Libertines*, pp. 8–12; Parker, *Faith on the Margins*, pp. 24–27; Pollmann, *Catholic Identity*, pp. 74–78.

10 Kaplan, *Calvinists and Libertines*, pp. 20–25.

11 *Ibidem*, pp. 25–110. See also Spohnholz and Veen, ‘Calvinists vs. Libertines’.

12 Kaplan, *Calvinists and Libertines*, p. 77.

13 *G.P.U.*, I, p. 60 (29 January 1579); Groenveld and Leeuwenberg, *De Unie van Utrecht*, p. 35; Groenveld, Leeuwenberg, and Weel, *Unie – Bestand – Vrede*, p. 65: ‘yeder particulier in syn religie vry sal mogen blyven ende datmen nyemant ter cause vanden religie sal mogen achterhaelen ofte ondersoecken’.

magistrates, following a plan suggested by William I of Orange (1533–1584), had introduced ‘religious peace’ (*religievrede*) into the city. Under this bi-confessional system, public church buildings were distributed among Calvinists, Libertines, and Catholics alike. Besides, all public offices and benefices were assigned irrespective of confessional convictions.<sup>14</sup>

However, the religious peace was short-lived. While many Catholic individuals did support the Revolt, as a group Catholics came to be regarded as potential traitors to the rebels. As early as 1572 Catholic clerics had been martyred by the rebels in Gorkum, Alkmaar, and Roermond. For its part, the Catholic Church saw the rebels as traitors to the Roman cause, as Pope Gregory XIII (1502–1585) had threatened Catholics with excommunication in 1578 if they joined the Revolt.<sup>15</sup> After the ‘treason’ of George de Lalaing (c. 1550–1581), Count of Rennenberg and Catholic stadholder of Friesland, Groningen, Drenthe, and Overijssel, in March 1580, anti-Catholic sentiment spread like wildfire throughout the United Provinces. Consequently, by 1581 Catholicism had been outlawed in all the rebel territories, including Utrecht (June 1580). From then on, Catholics were prohibited from practising their faith anywhere. Public church buildings and chapels inside hospices were allocated exclusively for the use of Reformed religious services, while monasteries and convents were secularized.<sup>16</sup> Meanwhile, all five bishoprics in the Northern Netherlands fell vacant and the archbishop of Utrecht died in 1580, but the king of Spain refused to appoint replacements in the rebel provinces.<sup>17</sup> All of this meant the disintegration of the official Catholic hierarchy in the Northern Netherlands.

At the same time, Utrecht was gradually turning into one of the headquarters of the strict Calvinists. The Calvinist-Libertine conflict in Utrecht ended in or around 1610, when Libertines realized that they too needed some form of the church discipline insisted on by Calvinists. However, the line of conflict was partly resumed in the Remonstrant controversy which troubled the Reformed Church during the 1610s. Once again, Utrecht was initially dominated by a disciplinarily moderate and Erastian group, the so-called Remonstrants or Arminians. This second controversy was brought to a political end in 1618, when Stadholder Maurice (1567–1625) completed a successful coup d’état against Johan van Oldenbarnevelt (1547–1619). The triumph of the

14 G.P.U., III, pp. 4–12; Kaplan, *Calvinists and Libertines*, pp. 262–64. For bi-confessionalism in the Low Countries in general, see idem, ‘In Equality and Enjoying the Same Favor’; Idem, *Reformation*, pp. 254–78.

15 Rogier, *Geschiedenis*, I, pp. 76, 494–95, 503, 626, II, pp. 31–32.

16 G.P.U., III, p. 466 (18 June 1580); Kaplan, *Calvinists and Libertines*, pp. 12, 264.

17 Parker, *Faith on the Margin*, pp. 30–31.

Contra-Remonstrants or Gomarists was confirmed at the national Synod of Dordrecht.<sup>18</sup> Through the Calvinist-Libertine conflict and the Remonstrant controversy, Utrecht grew to become a stronghold for strict Calvinists, whose bulwark became the university of Utrecht, initially established as an *Illustre School* in 1634. The influential professor of theology, Gisbertus Voetius (1589–1676), promoted his rigorous notion of Reformation in an authoritarian manner, even earning himself the moniker of the ‘pope of Utrecht’.<sup>19</sup>

Meanwhile, Dutch Catholics did not stand by passively, especially after Pope Clement VIII (1536–1605) established the Holland Mission (*Missio Hollandica*) in 1592 in response to their ardent appeals. For the Roman Curia, the period from the late sixteenth to the early seventeenth centuries was crucial for implementing the Tridentine reforms in different local contexts and promoting missions to regions controlled by European heretics and non-European heathens under its supervision, taking the lead from the Catholic secular authorities.<sup>20</sup> As part of this global campaign for Catholicization, the Curia licensed the Holland Mission to launch its operation for the re-Catholicization of the Northern Netherlands, promoting the Catholic Reformation or Counter-Reformation in the Protestant state.<sup>21</sup> The Mission was an ecclesiastical organization led by the apostolic vicar, who was entrusted by the pope with ecclesiastical jurisdiction over the former church province of Utrecht and expected to head secular priests there. The apostolic vicar also received from the pope the title of archbishop *in partibus infidelium*, a titular see in a region in which Christians had once established bishoprics but which were now under Muslim control. The episcopal consecration that came with this nominal title made it possible for the apostolic vicar to administer such sacraments as ordination and confirmation that were reserved to bishops, although he was still not allowed to assume the official title of archbishopric of Utrecht. Under the apostolic vicar, each diocese (Utrecht, Haarlem, Middelburg, Leeuwarden, and Groningen) was served by a *provicaris* as vicar general, in the place of the former bishop. Initially, the Mission was placed under the guidance of the papal nuncio in Cologne, then, from 1596, the papal (inter)nuncio in Brussels and, finally, from 1622, the newly created Congregation of *Propaganda Fide* of the Curia in Rome which aimed to take over responsibility for missionary work around the world from the Spanish, Portuguese, and French empires.<sup>22</sup>

18 Kaplan, *Calvinists and Libertines*, pp. 224–28, 257.

19 On Voetius and his followers, see, e.g., Duker, *Gisbertus Voetius*; Lieburg, *De Nadere Reformatie*.

20 Châtellier, *The Religion*, 12–36; Ó hAnnracháin, *Catholic Europe*, pp. 1–8, 21.

21 *Ibidem*, pp. 14, 62–63; Parker, ‘Heretics at Home’.

22 *Idem*, *Faith on the Margins*, pp. 29–33; Rogier, *Geschiedenis*, II, pp. 31–32.

By the early seventeenth century, Dutch Catholics had succeeded in largely restoring their pastoral infrastructure using their international networks. Although around 10,000 priests (both secular and regular) are said to have lived in the early sixteenth-century church province of Utrecht, the first apostolic vicar, Sasbout Vosmeer (1548–1614), reported in 1602 that he could only find seventy secular priests still active in their pastoral charges. Later on, the Holland Mission started sending its prospective secular priests to Catholic territories for their theological training, in the meantime receiving support from missionaries dispatched from religious orders abroad.<sup>23</sup> Although the apostolic vicars preferred quality over quantity, the number of secular priests did grow from seventy in 1602 to 360 in 1642, when the total number of clerics, including regular priests, working in the Northern Netherlands amounted to 500.<sup>24</sup> More than half of the secular clergy of the Holland Mission are estimated to have come from patrician or noble families, which could afford to send their sons to study abroad.<sup>25</sup> Despite numerous discriminatory edicts against them, Dutch Catholics constituted between a quarter and a third of the total population of the mid-seventeenth-century Republic (300,000 or 450,000), excluding the Generality Lands – that is, the southern area incorporated into the Republic from the Habsburg Netherlands – which had approximately 300,000 Catholic inhabitants, even though the confessional distribution among local populations differed significantly from province to province and from city to city.<sup>26</sup>

Within this reviving Dutch Catholic community, Utrecht maintained a central position. The apostolic vicars regarded Utrecht as a bastion in their battle against the 'heretics'.<sup>27</sup> Indeed, they preferred to send secular priests to areas with dense Catholic populations, such as Utrecht, to fortify their strongholds. Although Catholics in other areas of the Republic, including the eastern and northern provinces, experienced discontinuity in pastoral care, for the Catholics in Utrecht religious services continued uninterrupted. Around forty Catholic priests, both secular and regular, lived in the city without interruption from the early seventeenth century onwards. In the second half of that century, Utrecht boasted 12.7 secular priests per 1,000 Catholics, while the ratio for Haarlem was 5.2 and for Amsterdam 3.7, even

23 Parker, *Faith on the Margins*, pp. 73–74.

24 Spiertz, 'De katholieke geestelijke leiders', p. 20.

25 Ackermans, *Herdens en huurlingen*, pp. 54–55, 101.

26 Frijhoff and Spies, *Bevochten eendracht*, p. 354; Kaplan and Pollmann, 'Conclusion', pp. 251–52; Kok, *Nederland op de breuklijn*, p. 248; Parker, *Faith on the Margins*, p. 17. Cf. Faber, Woude, Roessingh, and Kok, 'Numerieke aspecten'.

27 Lommel, 'Verslag', p. 214.

though the latter two cities likewise had large Catholic populations.<sup>28</sup> Besides, more than half of the secular priests working in Utrecht in 1622 had university degrees, and this ratio rose to three-quarters by 1638.<sup>29</sup> In short, Utrecht's Catholics enjoyed an abundance of priests, most of whom were highly qualified and came from well-to-do families. In 1633, the second apostolic vicar, Philippus Rovenius (1573–1651), together with his vicar general, Johannes Wachtelaer, established a clerical council called the *Vicariaat* in Utrecht with communal funds to compensate for the loss of the ecclesiastical function of the chapters that had already been secularized.<sup>30</sup>

By around 1620 or, at the very latest, the mid-1630s, Utrecht had thus developed into a stronghold for the Reformed and Catholic Churches in the Dutch Republic alike. The two confessional communities also competed in size. In the mid seventeenth century, Utrecht's total population of 30,000 is estimated to have had 12,000 Reformed full communicant members (40.0%), 10,000 Catholics (33.3%), 2,250 Lutherans (7.5%), 500 Anabaptists (1.7%), 200 Remonstrants (0.7%), and 5,000 undecided or 'sympathizers' (*liefhebbers*) of the Reformed Church (16.6%), that is, people who outwardly conformed to Reformed religious practices, but refrained from becoming full communicant members liable to the strict discipline of the church.<sup>31</sup> Calvinists attracted independent guild craftsmen as communicant members, but farmers and unskilled workers seem on the whole not to have joined their communion. Many Calvinists lived in areas populated by craftsmen, shopkeepers, and the poor, but few could be found living in the city's suburbs. Judging by contemporary testimonies, the ratio of members from the social elite was higher among Libertines, Remonstrants, and Catholics.<sup>32</sup> It should therefore be noted that Catholics did not form a numerical minority in Utrecht, and that a substantial number of them belonged to the higher social strata of the civic community.

During the period from 1572 to 1620, Utrecht's magistrates are said not to have been overly eager to repress Catholics, and, when they did repress them, they usually targeted priests, not laypeople.<sup>33</sup> Remarkably, until 1620,

28 Ackermans, *Herders*, p. 48; Rogier, *Geschiedenis*, II, pp. 386–95.

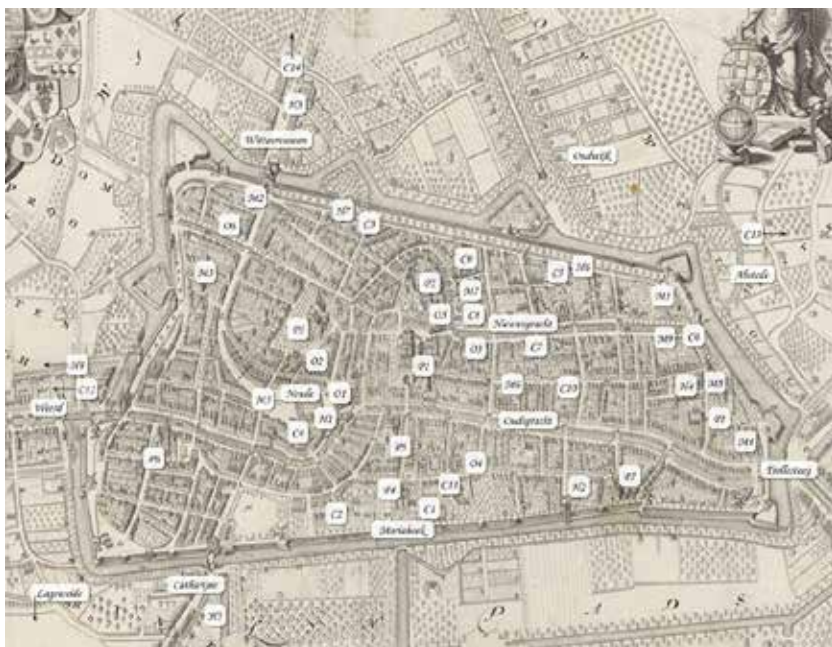
29 Kaplan, 'Confessionalism and Its Limits', p. 65.

30 Hallebeek, 'Godsdienst(on)vrijheid', pp. 127–28; Hewett and Hallebeek, 'The Prelate', pp. 130–31; Jong, 'Het Utrechtse vicariaat', pp. 161–69; Knuif and Jong, 'Philippus Rovenius', pp. 103–25; Ven, *Over den oorsprong*, pp. 89–115.

31 Forclaz, *Catholiques*, p. 87. On the 'sympathizers', see, e.g., Deursen, *Bavianen en slijkgeuzen*, pp. 13–33, 128–60.

32 Kaplan, *Calvinists and Libertines*, pp. 143–54.

33 *Ibidem*, pp. 223–24, 276.



J. van Vianen, Map of Utrecht (*Urbis Traiecti ad Rhenum novissima et accuratissima delineatio*), 1695, brush on copperplate, 48 x 56.5 cm, Het Utrechts Archief, Utrecht (I would like to thank Joris van Dam for his help in the creation of this map)

#### Public churches

(P1) Dom; (P2) St Pieter; (P3) St Jan; (P4) St Marie; (P5) Buur; (P6) St Jacob; (P7) Nicolaï; (P8) Geerte

#### Monasteries and convents

(M1) St Servaas; (M2) Wittevrouwen; (M3) Beguinage; (M4) St Nicolaas; (M5) Cecilia; (M6) Abraham Dole; (M7) Jeruzalem; (M8) Agnieten; (M9) Arkel

#### Hospices

(H1) St Barbara and St Laurens; (H2) St Bartholomew; (H3) Holy Cross; (H4) *Dolhuis*; (H5) St Job; (H6) Leeuwenberch; (H7) Apostle; (H8) St Anthony

#### Catholic clandestine churches

(C1) St Gertrudis (secular); (C2) Maria Minor Achter Clarenburg (secular); (C3) St Nicolaas Achter de Wal (secular); (C4) St Jacobus in Drakenburgersteeg (secular); (C5) St Marie Op de Kamp alias Soli Deo Gloria (secular); (C6) St Servaas Onder de Linden (secular); (C7) St Catharijne in Catharijnesteeg (Jesuit); (C8) St Martinus in Herenstraat (Jesuit); (C9) St Augustinus in Hieronymussteeg or Jeruzalemsteeg (Augustinian); (C10) Onze Lieve Vrouw Rozenkrans in Dorstige Hartsteeg (Dominican); (C11) St Dominicus in Walsteeg (Dominican); (C12) St Jacobus in the suburb of Buiten de Weerd (secular); (C13) St Martinus in the suburb of Abstede (secular); (C14) in the suburb of Wittevrouwen (secular)

#### Other buildings

(O1) City Hall; (O2) Provincial States (former Franciscan monastery); (O3) Provincial Court (former Paulus Abbey); (O4) Teutonic Order's House; (O5) Pope's House; (O6) House of Hendrica van Duivenvoorde

when the internal conflicts within the Reformed Church had finally subsided somewhat, the reviving Catholic community had never been looked upon as an urgent task for the magistrates, who ended up overlooking the crucial role which the laity played in the Catholic restoration. Like their counterparts who found themselves under the yoke of heretics or heathens abroad, Dutch Catholic priests depended on the generous patronage of lay elite families, who harboured priests and paid for their upkeep, negotiated with local magistrates on behalf of the confessional community, and even hosted Catholic assemblies in their houses.<sup>34</sup> Around 1620 Catholics in Utrecht, as in other Dutch cities, began renovating some of those houses, turning them into 'clandestine churches' (*schuilkerken*) or 'house churches' (*huiskerken*) equipped with altars, religious paintings, and liturgical objects.<sup>35</sup> By the second half of the seventeenth century, Utrecht had no fewer than fourteen clandestine churches, eleven within the city walls and three outside, around which crypto parishes called 'stations' (*staties*) were formed.<sup>36</sup>

By 1620 the stage had therefore been set for religious coexistence in the city of Utrecht, where orthodox Calvinists were securing their political power, while Catholics worked strenuously to revive their confessional community (map). How, then, can coexistence in post-Reformation Utrecht be understood from the Catholic viewpoint?

### Historiography: Early Modern Dutch Catholics and the Public/Private Distinction

Historians have shown themselves particularly fascinated by the apparent paradox involved in the religious situation of the Dutch Republic. On the one hand, during the Dutch Revolt, the Reformed Church became the only 'public church' (*publieke kerk*) – not a state church, since membership was voluntary. As the public church, the Reformed Church had to serve everyone regardless of their confessional affiliation. At the same time, as a Calvinist Church, it required communicant members to exercise discipline according to a high, Calvinist moral standard. Consequently, many remained 'sympathizers' of the Reformed Church, even though communicant members still comprised just less than half of the total

34 Parker, 'Cooperative Confessionalisation'; Idem, *Faith on the Margins*, passim.

35 Eck, *Clandestine Splendor*, pp. 23, 27. For the debate on the terms 'clandestine church' and 'house church', see Dudok van Heel, 'Amsterdamse schuil- of huiskerken?', especially, pp. 6–10.

36 Rogier, *Geschiedenis*, II, pp. 395–96.

seventeenth-century Dutch population.<sup>37</sup> In the background, the Union of Utrecht has been regarded as the constitutional basis for freedom of conscience, not for particular dissenting groups as privileged corporations but for everyone living in the Dutch Republic, irrespective of their faith, in marked departure from other parts of post-Reformation Europe, where this right was rarely guaranteed to individuals.<sup>38</sup> However, because the clause had no legally binding power, stipulating no clear provisions for protection and building up no politico-judicial systems for its practical enforcement, the Union could not prevent Calvinists from outlawing Catholicism throughout the United Provinces, meaning that Catholics were prohibited from practising their faith and excluded from a growing number of public offices.<sup>39</sup> Under pressure from the public church, magistrates began to issue anti-Catholic edicts, representing Catholics as potential traitors to the Protestant government and casting doubt on their political loyalty, although in practice they did not always strictly enforce the edicts.<sup>40</sup> The Dutch Republic was, therefore, a multi-confessional society characterized by both tolerance and discrimination.

The multi-confessional Republic has long been regarded as an exception within early modern confessional Europe and a precursor to modern liberal Europe. Following a long debate on the 'Protestantization' (*protestantisering*) of the Republic, scholars came to argue that the Dutch gradually accepted Reformed Protestantism, while Erasmian regents succeeded in reining in radical Calvinists.<sup>41</sup> As such, historians showed themselves unwilling to apply the 'confessionalization' (*Konfessionalisierung*) thesis as defined by such German historians as Heinz Schilling and Wolfgang Reinhard to the Dutch Republic.<sup>42</sup> According to this thesis, one of the most famous modernization models in early modern historiography of the past decades, confessional churches collaborated with secular authorities in Europe from around 1560 to 1650 to promote political centralization, the

37 E.g., Deursen, *Bavianen*; Pollmann, *Religious Choice*; Tracy, 'Public Church'; Woltjer, 'De plaats'.

38 Deursen, 'Tussen eenheid en zelfstandigheid'; Jong, 'Unie en religie'.

39 For the province of Utrecht, see *G.P.U.*, I, pp. 158–60, 350–51, III, pp. 466–67.

40 On anti-Catholic edicts in general, see, e.g., Enno van Gelder, *Getemperde vrijheid*, pp. 111–50; Knuttel, *De toestand*.

41 E.g., Duke, 'The Ambivalent Face'; Idem, *Reformation and Revolt*, pp. 269–93; Enno van Gelder, 'Nederland geprotestantiseerd?'; Kok, *Nederland op de breuklijn*. Cf. Geyl, *Verzamelde opstellen*, I, pp. 205–18; Rogier, *Geschiedenis*. For the discussion on Protestantization, see also Elliott, 'Protestantization', pp. 1–74.

42 E.g., Mörke, 'Konfessionalisierung'. See also, Kaplan, *Calvinists and Libertines*, pp. 5–8, 299–300; Idem, *Divided by Faith*, p. 369.

disciplining of ordinary people through confessional doctrines, and the formation of a homogeneous society unified in confession. In this, they connected the modernization process of state formation with 'confessional formation' (*Konfessionsbildung*), which was the term Ernst Walter Zeeden had coined to describe confessional identity construction within the various churches.<sup>43</sup>

Early modern Dutch society was, therefore, not confessionalized in Schilling and Reinhard's sense. Studies on urban Reformation in the Republic have, for instance, detected a supra-confessional civic culture, which halted Reformed confessionalization almost everywhere in Dutch cities. The medieval idea of the *corpus christianum* was applied classically to an urban polity, physically and symbolically walled off from the surroundings, where civic and religious memberships were inextricably intertwined.<sup>44</sup> The Protestant Reformation seems to have brought harm to the medieval unity of civic communities. In her study of post-Reformation Haarlem from 1577 to 1620, however, Joke Spaans demonstrated that magistrates promoted a civic culture that could not exclusively be connected with any one of the confessional churches, including the Reformed. In order to accomplish their duty as Christian rulers, following the ideal of the *corpus christianum*, Haarlem's magistrates attempted to establish a confessionally neutral, civic culture. As long as dissenters respected this supra-confessional civic culture, the magistracy was content to allow them to construct their own sub-cultures.<sup>45</sup> As for Utrecht between 1578 and 1620, Benjamin Kaplan likewise emphasizes that the political authorities maintained traditional notions of community, making no sharp distinction between the civic and the sacral. It was those magistrates who defended the civic community from the Calvinists' attempt at confessionalization and made religious coexistence possible. They not only preserved the "conservative" intermingling of civic and sacral' but also created 'a new distinction between public and private, a distinction that many people now consider one of the hallmarks of modernity'.<sup>46</sup> In her studies on seventeenth-century cities in the province of Holland, Christine Kooi also claims that the 'tolerationist' magistrates had exclusive agency in metaphorically distinguishing between public and

43 Reinhard, 'Pressures'; Idem, 'Reformation'; Schilling, 'Confessional Europe'; Idem, *Early Modern European Civilization*, pp. 11–32.

44 Moeller, *Imperial Cities and the Reformation*.

45 Spaans, *Haarlem*, especially pp. 191–225, 232–34. For similar arguments on two different visions of the Christian community as a confessionalized community and as a non-confessional civic community, see Parker, *The Reformation of Community*, especially, pp. 155–97.

46 Kaplan, *Calvinists and Libertines*, pp. 266, 277, 294–95.

private in the civic space, positioning conscience in the abstract realm of one's internal private sphere, whose freedom they gradually came to be expected to protect. Even though the border between public and private had initially been vague, the magistrates clarified the division, allowing both Reformed and Catholics to promote 'internal confessionalization' (or Zeeden's confessional formation), while accomplishing 'peaceful coexistence' between the two. Kooi even describes this development in a progressive vision as the 'evolution of the Reformed-Catholic relationship from confusion [from 1572 to 1620] to conflict [from 1620 to 1660] to coexistence [after 1660]', ultimately reiterating the nineteenth-century understanding of Erasmian regents and the rise of toleration as advocated by W. P. C. Knuttel, despite her criticism of the Whiggish narrative on toleration.<sup>47</sup> In these studies of urban Reformation, Catholics are therefore depicted as passive recipients of toleration, whose survival depended solely on the goodwill of the magistrates.

Recently, scholars have come to argue that it was not confessionalization in the sense of Schilling/Reinhard but multi-confessionalism, whether *de jure* or *de facto*, that was 'the rule rather than the exception for most regions and polities that experienced Reformation'. As such, the Dutch Republic is regarded as representative of multi-confessional Europe.<sup>48</sup> In their attempt to decipher the cultural mechanisms of confessional coexistence in the Dutch Republic and beyond, historians now focus on the public/private distinction. Among them, Willem Frijhoff and Kaplan have offered theoretical models of coexistence through the public/private distinction as it materialized in the phenomenon of the clandestine church. Frijhoff has argued that in the private sphere, everyone could behave as they wished in their conscience, freely expressing their confessional identity. In the public sphere, however, confessional behaviour was in principle considered improper. In order to realize religious coexistence, the 'ecumenicity of everyday life' (*omgangsoecumene*) was therefore required in liminal – i.e., semi-public, semi-private – spaces marked by the thresholds of homes. Drawing on a historical-anthropological approach influenced by the French *Annales* school, Frijhoff exposes the structurally – even a-historically – remaining

47 Kooi, *Calvinists and Catholics*, pp. 46–47, 90–129, especially, 95–96, 128–29. See also idem, *Liberty and Religion*, p. 193. Kooi agrees with Koselleck's argument in *Critique and Crisis*, in which he equates early modern conscience with an abstract realm of people's internal mental world where they possessed autonomy. In her discussion of anti-Catholic edicts and the laxity of their enforcement, Kooi at times simply cites Knuttel's work without criticism. Knuttel, *De Toestand*, I, pp. 122, 130–31, 151, 155, 257–59; Kooi, *Calvinists and Catholics*, pp. 112, 114–15, 118, 125.

48 Safley, 'Multiconfessionalism', p. 7. See also Dixon, 'Introduction', especially pp. 16–17 Kaplan, *Divided by Faith*; Spohnholz, 'Confessional Coexistence'.

vagueness of the liminal space between public and private.<sup>49</sup> Together with Marijke Spies, Frijhoff even identifies the ecumenicity of everyday life as an integral part of early modern Dutch national culture.<sup>50</sup> Likewise, Kaplan has offered a theoretical elaboration of his argument on the public/private distinction, which already appeared in an earlier study on the urban Reformation in Utrecht. He too regards the physical threshold of the family home as the boundary between public and private, rightly noting that this border was not rigid but negotiable. As long as dissenters duly refrained from intervening in the public sphere dominated by the politico-religious majority, the political authorities connived at the dissenters' exercise of their free conscience through their worship in the invisible, private, and domestic space of clandestine churches situated behind the thresholds of their homes. Early modern toleration therefore worked through 'a new distinction between public and private worship', that is, a sensory, symbolic distinction rather than the legal distinction of the modern era. In Kaplan's account, 'privacy' emerged as a fiction in the early modern era, in which the politico-religious majority and minorities played their roles, pretending not to notice the religious diversity that could threaten the peace of their local communities. He argues that phenomena comparable to the Dutch clandestine churches, and thus fictions of privacy, can also be detected in post-Reformation Europe more broadly.<sup>51</sup>

Owing to the past two decades of historiography inspired by Frijhoff and Kaplan, early modern Dutch Catholics are now considered a group of men and women who maintained their own confessional identity and sub-culture in the private sphere, while largely retreating from the public sphere.<sup>52</sup> In this historiographical development, Charles Parker's *Faith on the Margins* represents a pathbreaking work. Traditional Dutch national church historians dealt primarily with ecclesiastics, stressing the exceptional feature of Dutch Catholicism in the early modern era, which they located in an introspective piety characterized by a 'clandestine-church

49 Frijhoff, 'Dimensions', pp. 228–37; Idem, *Embodied Belief*, pp. 56–65. See also idem, 'Van "histoire de l'Eglise"'.  
 50 Idem and Spies, *Bevochten eendracht*, pp. 28, 50–51, 68, 178–82, 211, 358–59, 384–85, 393, 429, 443, 605.

51 Kaplan, *Divided by Faith*, pp. 172–97, here especially p. 176; Idem, 'Fictions of Privacy', here especially p. 1036; Idem, *Reformation*, pp. 164–203, here especially p. 170.  
 52 E.g., Caspers and Margry, *Identiteit en spiritualiteit*; Eck, *Clandestine Splendor*; Idem, *Kunst*; Kaplan, Moore, Nierop, and Pollmann, *Catholic Communities*; Margry and Caspers, *Bedevertplaatsen*; Monteiro, *Geestelijke maagden*; Mooij, *Geloof*; Mudde, 'Rouwen in de marge'; Spaans, *De Levens der Maechden*; Wingens, *Over de grens*; Verheggen, *Beelden*.

mentality' (*schuilkerkenmentaliteit*). Parker, in contrast, emphasizes lay-clerical cooperation, positioning early modern Dutch Catholicism within the international context of the Counter-Reformation. To his mind, Catholic revival in the Protestant Republic demonstrates that the Catholic renewal in the Tridentine spirit could take place without top-down, state-sponsored confessionalization. Parker argues that a 'cooperative confessionalization' through lay-clerical collaboration created a new Dutch Catholic identity and sub-culture in the private sphere, not from above, nor from below, but from the middle, while Catholics on the whole withdrew from the public sphere.<sup>53</sup>

Recent cultural-historical studies based on ego-documents of Catholic individuals, in particular laity, have attempted to distil a Dutch Catholic identity in support of Parker's argument regarding the importance of lay-clerical cooperation and lay agency vis-à-vis the clergy. Drawing on ego-documents of the Catholic laity, Judith Pollmann examines how Catholics in the Northern Netherlands failed to resist Calvinists, while their counterparts in the Southern Netherlands succeeding in reviving Catholicism there from 1520 to 1635. Through the daily experience of encountering people of other confessions, 'traditional Christians' were transformed into self-conscious 'Catholics' with their own confessional identity, which was constructed 'from the middle', that is, through cooperation between (lower-ranking) priests and laypeople.<sup>54</sup> Similarly, Geert Janssen draws on ego-documents of the laity and identifies refugees of both faiths as an essential catalyst of the religio-cultural division between the Protestant North and the Catholic South. Janssen maintains that the successful Counter-Reformation in the Habsburg Netherlands was promoted mainly 'from the middle', where the lobby group of returning refugees played an important role.<sup>55</sup> While Pollmann and Janssen deal with Catholics in the Low Countries in the context of the Dutch Revolt, Carolina Lenarduzzi has recently examined Catholics in the Dutch Republic from c. 1570 to 1750. Lenarduzzi claims that early modern Dutch Catholicism was displaced from its former position as the main culture in the public sphere and relegated to a sub-culture in the private sphere. She persuasively shows how Catholic individuals cultivated their new confessional habitus creatively, sharpening their confessional identity in contrast to that of the heretics. Lenarduzzi argues that for some Catholics in certain specific contexts, the sub-culture was converted into a counter-culture in which they challenged the Reformed main culture in

53 Parker, *Faith on the Margins*. Cf. Rogier, *Geschiedenis*.

54 Pollmann, *Catholic Identity*, especially pp. 6, 201–2.

55 Janssen, *The Dutch Revolt*.

the public sphere.<sup>56</sup> As Bertrand Forclaz and Jaap Geraerts have convincingly argued, Dutch Catholics possessed multi-layered identities, preferring to interact with their co-religionists in some aspects of their life, while cultivating supra-confessional relationships in others.<sup>57</sup>

These influential accounts, and in particular the studies of the eminent historians Frijhoff and Kaplan, have fundamentally challenged the modernization narratives and the national-confessional historiographies of Dutch Protestantization, toleration, and Catholicism. However, they still have little to tell us about Catholics' agency in the realization of religious coexistence in the urban public sphere. Previous studies on the cultural history of coexistence do not adequately explore the tactics which politico-religious minorities employed to survive in the multi-confessional urban environment. Indeed, in his studies on Dutch Catholic utopian expectations and on local 'survival strategies' in Zutphen, Frijhoff depicts Catholics as a belligerent entity seeking an opportunity to overturn the public order.<sup>58</sup> His general survey of Dutch Catholics, however, indicates that they did not 'systematically oppose the surrounding Protestant context but used a consensus policy, asking for tacit accommodation and achieving an "ecumenicity of everyday life"'.<sup>59</sup> Kaplan rightly stresses that the boundaries between public and private were constantly negotiated and that the fluid and porous border caused constant struggles. However, he still maintains that 'dissenters participated in the fiction [of privacy] by refraining from challenging the monopoly over public religious life'.<sup>60</sup> His account unwittingly, and perhaps unwillingly, leaves us to embrace the narrative of the privatization of beliefs, equating the early modern new private sphere with the physical space of the family home, to which dissenters were forced to confine their religious beliefs so as to be tolerated.<sup>61</sup>

Moreover, in spite of their many virtues, a drawback of the recent cultural-historical studies on Dutch Catholic identity and sub-culture is that they are unable to pay sufficient attention to the social and judicial context

56 Lenarduzzi, *De belevingswereld*; Idem, 'Subcultuur en tegencultuur'.

57 Forclaz, *Catholiques*; Geraerts, 'The Catholic Nobility'; Idem, *Patrons*.

58 E.g., Frijhoff, 'Catholic Apocalypics'; Idem, *Embodied Belief*, pp. 111–213, 235–73; Idem, 'La fonction du miracle'; Idem, 'Katholieke toekomstverwachting'; Idem, 'Overlevingsstrategieën'; Idem, 'De paniek'.

59 Idem, 'Shifting Identities', p. 7.

60 Kaplan, *Divided by Faith*, pp. 176, 195; Idem, 'Fictions of Privacy', pp. 1036, 1061; Idem, *Reformation*, pp. 170, 199. See also his earlier account, which saw greater agency among the political authorities who 'engineered a system of religious toleration' by 'drawing a distinction between public and private realms'. Idem, *Calvinists and Libertines*, pp. 277, 302.

61 Idem, 'Fictions of Privacy', p. 1062.

of Catholic individuals in local settings, which may well have affected their survival tactics in the decentralized Dutch Republic. Nor do they adequately explore Catholic activities in and perceptions of the urban public sphere of coexistence, as their primary concern was to examine the internal development of the Catholic community and Catholic identity construction inside the Catholic private sphere. Forclaz's monograph indeed succeeds in demonstrating the vigorous nature of the Catholic sub-culture in the specific local context of Utrecht in the seventeenth century, especially in the second half. However, it approaches the matter of coexistence from the top-down perspective of the political authorities who, by distinguishing public and private, promoted civic concord based on the ecumenicity of everyday life. According to Forclaz's account, although Utrecht's Catholics sometimes transgressed the border between public and private, they had to conform to the existing norm of the public/private distinction under the control of the magistracy if they wished to survive as Catholics.<sup>62</sup>

To date, Dutch Catholics have thus been depicted as lacking agency in religious coexistence and the public sphere, with scholars showing themselves quick to highlight the private sphere, represented either by the physical space of the family home or the abstract realm of conscience, to which they are said to have withdrawn, developing their own confessional identity.<sup>63</sup> But were Dutch Catholics just obedient beneficiaries of the politico-cultural system of toleration engineered by magistrates through the public/private distinction? Did they, in order to survive the Reformed regime, duly withdraw from the urban public sphere and compliantly play their role in the cultural fiction assigned to them by the political authorities and the Reformed majority? I shall argue that this was not the case for Catholic Utrechters.

## Research Design: Catholic Agency in Coexistence and the Public Sphere

In this study, I will demonstrate, on a local, social-historical level, how Catholics tactically created room for their survival and contributed to the realization of a multi-confessional society by participating in the communal process of

62 Forclaz, *Catholiques*, especially pp. 101–42, 361–62. Cf. Boukema, 'Geloven in het geloof'.

63 Recent studies on early modern privacy led by the Centre for Privacy Studies at the University of Copenhagen attest to this tendency in scholarship; see Green, Nørgaard, and Bruun, *Early Modern Privacy*. See also the special issue of the journal *TSEG – The Low Countries Journal of Social and Economic History* 18 (2021).

delimiting the public in the Dutch Republic, and Utrecht in particular, while contesting their strategic exclusion from the public sphere by the efforts of the political authorities and the Reformed majority. 'Coexistence' is employed as a neutral analytic term, indicating the environment where people of different beliefs co-existed, sharing physical and objective spaces.<sup>64</sup> Religious coexistence as an environment was precarious as it was susceptible to changing circumstances surrounding people of different faiths at the local, national, and international levels. Relationships between people of different faiths in such environments could easily change from conviviality to conflict, or vice versa. Therefore, the political authorities devised their 'governing strategies' to manage and regulate this unstable environment of coexistence, while Catholics deployed their 'survival tactics' to appropriate the same environment for their cause. The present study understands 'survival tactics' as Catholics' individual and collective adaptations to and counter-interventions in the existing environment of religious coexistence which the Reformed political authorities attempted to control through their 'governing strategies'.<sup>65</sup> I will invoke flesh and blood entities, such as Catholic Utrechters, as dynamic agents for the making of coexistence, instead of portraying a static system of coexistence.

Rather than tracing internal developments of the Catholic community such as identity construction in their private sphere, this monograph will uncover the shifting relationships and interactions in the urban public sphere among the three groups of actors in the city of Utrecht, namely the political authorities (of the Utrecht city council as well as the Provincial States of Utrecht), the public Reformed Church (represented by the provincial synod, the regional classis, and the local consistory), and the Catholics themselves (both as individuals and as a community). While urban Reformation studies have focused mainly on the interplay between the first two groups, the present study will position all three groups in their local, politico-social, and judicial context of the civic community, which is often absent from cultural-historical studies on religious coexistence through the public/private distinction and on Catholic identity/sub-culture.<sup>66</sup> As its primary

64 For Frijhoff's call to use the more neutral term 'coexistence' rather than the ideologically laden term 'toleration', see Frijhoff, 'Dimensions', p. 217; Idem, *Embodied Belief*, p. 48.

65 Here I take inspiration from Michel de Certeau, who defines 'place' as an unambiguous static order and 'space' as a dynamic, multivalent unity of practices. According to Certeau, while the majority regulates 'place' by using 'strategies' to maintain their dominant position, minorities can practically create their own 'space' by using 'tactics' in accordance with dynamic moments of chance. Certeau, *L'Invention du quotidien*.

66 For a similar approach to early modern religious coexistence, focussing not only on the magistrates but also on individuals of various confessional groups within the framework of the

source materials, it will make qualitative and, if applicable, quantitative use of sequentially recorded sources, such as the minutes of the city council, the minutes of the Reformed consistory, and legal documents, in addition to correspondence and mission reports from Catholic priests, as well as family archives. Quantitative analyses of these materials will enable us to trace chronological developments of religious coexistence at the local level. Among these primary sources, the present study attaches great significance to the legal records of criminal cases tried in the city court of Utrecht, such as sentences, indictments, testimonies, and defendants' petitions. Over the past several decades, microhistorians have viewed legal records as rich sources for recovering the voices of ordinary people and reconstructing the world of their everyday life.<sup>67</sup> To date, however, no systematic analysis of Dutch legal records has been conducted by scholars of early modern religious history. When they do refer to lawsuits, they tend simply to make anecdotal use of a selection of such sources, leaving us with an impressionistic understanding of Dutch toleration.<sup>68</sup> The state of scholarship may have been partly the result of these specialists focussing primarily on extrajudicial facets of Dutch religious coexistence, including the ecumenicity of everyday life, practices of connivance, and fictions of privacy. The choice of Utrecht as a case study is essential for interpreting religious coexistence from the bottom-up perspective of politico-religious minorities, since it offers a significant number of legal records for criminal cases involving such minorities as the Catholics.

In departure from previous studies on early modern religious coexistence, which have focused mainly on the private sphere represented by the family home or conscience, the present study examines the communal process of the delimitation of the public, where, as we shall see, the various actors distinguished public from private in different ways, primarily defining the public rather than the private per se. I will argue that the Utrecht case witnesses multiple, competing, and sometimes even mutually opposing understandings of publicness. In this monograph, the public or the public

civic community of the German city of Wesel, see Spohnholz, *Tactics of Toleration*.

67 Classic microhistorical studies based on legal records include Davis, *The Return of Martin Guerre*; Ginzburg, *The Cheese and the Worms*; Le Roy Ladurie, *Montaillou*. See also Kaplan's *Cunegonde's Kidnapping*.

68 There is only one study that deliberately analyses legal cases against Dutch Catholics (in the province of Groningen). Vos-Schoonbeek, 'Roomsgezinden voor de rechter'; Idem, 'Hinderpalen'. Cf. Nierop, 'Sewing the Bailiff', which makes anecdotal use of legal cases against Catholics, not aiming to discover Catholic survival tactics there but to present an overview of toleration of Catholics and the law in Holland.

sphere is understood to have entailed two aspects, namely physical and abstract. On the one hand, the physical public was associated with epistemology and demarcated by human perceptibility, which established the openness or secretness of things or people's actions through visibility and audibility, as Frijhoff and Kaplan among others argue. It is also related to the materiality of religion, external or internal expression of beliefs, and the collective or individual nature of religious practices. On the other hand, the abstract public was bound by one's contribution and commitment to the public order and the common good of a shared community, such as the civic community where people of different faiths coexisted. It is also intrinsically connected with one's honour or shame in society, obedience to or challenges of the government or official rules, and the symbolic self-representation of power and status, that is, what Jürgen Habermas has called pre-modern 'representative publicness'.<sup>69</sup> I shall argue that it was not the private but the public that early modern people were keener to define when faced with the pressing problem of religious diversity.

Part I of this book discusses the Reformed governing strategies. Under pressure from the Reformed Church, which justified anti-Catholicism and tried to advance Reformed confessionalization, the political authorities intervened strategically in the environment of coexistence through 'repression' (Chapter 1) and 'toleration' (Chapter 2) as two forms of 'social engineering', in their attempts to preserve the public order of the *corpus christianum*.<sup>70</sup> Here, religious coexistence is narrated from the perspective of those who repressed and tolerated. To avoid impressionism, Part I approaches repression and toleration not just qualitatively but also quantitatively so as to be able to grasp how, when, and in what politico-religious and socio-economic contexts the magistrates deployed the two political measures. By doing so, it sheds light on how the political authorities took part in the delimitation of the physical and abstract public.

Chapter 1 will examine the Reformed repression of Catholics by analysing not only how the magistrates chronologically developed anti-Catholic legislation in Utrecht from 1620 to 1672,<sup>71</sup> but also, for the first time in a systematic manner, how those edicts were applied in practice to legal proceedings against Catholics. The Dutch word *vervolging* included and

69 Habermas, *The Structural Transformation*, ch. 1.

70 I borrow the term 'social engineering' from Spaans, 'De katholieken', p. 259.

71 For a general overview of legislation from 1528 to 1713 in Utrecht, see Bogaers, 'Een kwestie van macht?' For anti-Catholic legislation in seventeenth-century Utrecht, see also Forclaz, *Catholiques*, pp. 101–42.

still includes the twofold sense of 'prosecution' and 'persecution'. When the politico-religious authorities spoke of the *vervolging* of Catholics, they referred to the legal prosecution of these criminals. When Catholics referred to their own *vervolging*, they meant their persecution as innocent men and women. This double meaning of the term *vervolging* is exploited with a view to different representations of the same phenomenon by various stakeholders. The present study focuses on criminal cases where the defendants' Catholic faith was explicitly mentioned. The choice for this restriction was inevitable, for two reasons. First, it is difficult or even impossible to determine the religious affiliations of the majority of those who lived in the Dutch Republic, since there are no systematic records that would enable us to determine who belonged to which church. Although Dutch Catholics were taught in their catechisms to profess their religious affiliation openly when they were legally required to do so,<sup>72</sup> legal documents rarely refer to the faith of those who appeared in court, except for those being prosecuted for engaging in behaviour that was identifiably Catholic and as such constituted a punishable offence. Second, in order to grasp Reformed governing strategies vis-à-vis Catholic survival tactics, it is more effective only to analyse trials where defendants were accused of offences relating to Catholicism or where judicial officers felt obliged to note their loyalty to the Catholic Church in the legal records.

Chapter 2 will discuss not the degree of tolerance, but the strategic functions of the political practices of toleration. Historians need to offer a clear definition for their use of the term 'toleration', a core concept of modern liberalism, since they otherwise run the risk of unwittingly, but easily, reinforcing the teleological narrative of modernization as the rise of toleration, based as it is on the ideology and utopia of modern liberalism.<sup>73</sup> The present study defines toleration as a political practice of social engineering with two forms: 'limited recognition', which the political authorities bestowed publicly through official announcements; and 'connivance', which they exercised non-publicly without giving licence on paper. Previous studies have restricted themselves to connivance as the form toleration assumed in practice in Dutch history.<sup>74</sup> In our case, this form of toleration can only be detected on the basis of primary sources attesting to the illegal presence or

72 Geraerts, 'The Catholic Nobility', pp. 87–88; Idem, *Patrons*, p. 103.

73 Kaplan, *Divided by Faith*, pp. 6–7, 25–26; Idem, 'Dutch Religious Tolerance', pp. 25–26; Idem, *Reformation*, pp. 221–22.

74 For such an understanding of 'Dutch' toleration as a passive practice of connivance, see, e.g., Frijhoff, *Embodied Belief*, p. 40.

actions of Catholics who had no official permit, but were nevertheless not subjected to legal prosecution. It is the very absence of official documentation of recognition which has allowed historians to speculate that political authorities in practice connived at their behaviour or presence, illegal as it was on the level of theory given the existing policies. If such practices of connivance alone are taken into consideration and no room is left for quantitative analyses, the most scholars can offer is a simple impression of tolerance, so that they in the end – wittingly or unwittingly – only contribute to the mythologization of Dutch toleration. The present study, in contrast, argues that limited recognition, as another form of toleration, can also be traced in official government documents, enabling historians to offer a quantitative assessment of the frequency of and trends in the political practice of toleration.

For a better understanding of religious coexistence, we must examine not only the governing strategies of the Reformed from their top-down perspective, but also the survival tactics of the Catholics from their bottom-up perspective. Part II of this book therefore addresses Catholic survival tactics, arguing that Catholics tactically intervened in the environment of coexistence through ‘spatial practices’ (Chapter 4) and in ‘discourses of self-representation’ (Chapter 5), which they could both deploy on the basis of their ‘social status and networks’ (Chapter 3), in order to live as Catholic Utrechters in the city’s shared Christian social community (*corpus christianum*). Here religious coexistence is discussed from the perspective of those who were repressed and tolerated. Part II shall uncover two features of their survival tactics, which framed their engagement in the delimitation of the physical and abstract public: continuity from the medieval past, and adjustment to the early modern, multi-confessional reality.

Chapter 3 focuses on the social status of the repressed and tolerated Catholics, defined here as their public profile in the civic community based on birth, family connections, citizenship, economic capital, profession, neighbourhood, and individual networks of sociability. Besides, it will, for the very first time, shed light on the defenders of prosecuted Catholics. We define ‘defenders’ as those who negotiated with the city court for the sake of the prosecuted, testified on their behalf, or assisted them as scribes in writing petitions, regardless of any official legal capacity they might have had. Networks of repressed and tolerated Catholics, including their connections with defenders of elevated social status, good judicial knowledge, and close connections with the Reformed elite, were vital for their survival in multi-confessional Utrecht. The present study will bring these individuals out of the shadows and position them in the social context of not only

the Dutch or urban Catholic community but also the multi-religious civic community of Utrecht and the Dutch Republic more broadly.

Chapter 4 understands 'spatial practices' as tactical productions of physical and perceived spaces, through which Utrecht's Catholics attempted to challenge and appropriate the concrete places strategically dominated by the politico-religious authorities and the Reformed majority.<sup>75</sup> In comparison with the next chapter, this chapter gives greater prominence to Catholics as a confessional community than to individual Catholics. Historians now contend not only that space has shaped human experience, but conversely that human beings have also delineated, given meanings to, and appropriated space.<sup>76</sup> Space is no longer understood as an absolute and rigid entity, as an *a priori* condition for social relations, or as a blank canvas waiting to be coloured in. Rather, space is now conceptualized as a contingent and fluid entity, or 'a (social) product'.<sup>77</sup> The cultural-historical studies on clandestine churches referenced above can be situated in this historiographical development. They succeeded in unveiling an essential aspect of the cultural mechanisms of early modern religious coexistence; that is, physicality and materiality in the public/private distinction. They regard the physical threshold of private homes as a crucial indicator of the boundary between public and private, and demonstrate that perceptibility by the human senses – visibility and audibility – played an indispensable role when people distinguished public and private in their attempt to realize coexistence.<sup>78</sup> However, they do not pay sufficient attention to the spaces outside the thresholds, including urban spaces such as public church buildings, monasteries, convents, hospices, spaces between houses, and public streets. The present study will discuss how Catholics participated in the process of transforming the urban space as a whole, uncovering the spatial dimension of the delimitation of the public.

As for 'discourses of self-representation', Chapter 5 will analyse how Catholic Utrechters attempted to defy persecution and win toleration by constructing their self-representations in their petitions to the politico-judicial authorities. It highlights the variety of discourses Catholic individuals mobilized, not depicting them as a monolithic group. Over the

75 Here I derive inspiration from Certeau, *L'Invention du quotidien* and, to a lesser degree, from Lefebvre, *The Production*.

76 See the contributions in Stock, *The Uses of Space*, especially Kümin, 'The Uses of Space', pp. 227–30; Stock, 'History', pp. 4–10.

77 Lefebvre, *The Production*, p. 26.

78 Frijhoff, 'Dimensions', *passim*; Idem, *Embodied Belief*, pp. 39–65; Kaplan, *Divided by Faith*, pp. 172–97; Idem, 'Fictions of Privacy'; Idem, *Reformation*, pp. 164–203.

past several decades, studies in politico-social and criminal history have been utilizing legal and other petitions to assess the agency of ordinary people.<sup>79</sup> Through their petitioning activities, people could manage to make themselves heard in public. Plaintiffs and defendants in early modern Europe were well acquainted with the existing legal system, appropriating or exploiting it for their sake,<sup>80</sup> while discourses in petitions were crafted through the petitioners' self-representations.<sup>81</sup> The narratives of petitions were not monophonic but polyphonic in nature, since 'the content of a petition was usually translated from oral dialect to written and formalized language by a scribe'. For this reason, petitions should in many cases not be read as ego-documents, since '[p]rofessional scribes combined textbook advice on how to write a petition with the recipients' horizon of norms and values'.<sup>82</sup> In our case, we have to regard the survival tactics appearing in petitions as a hybrid, created cooperatively by the repressed or tolerated Catholics themselves together with their defenders, who included family members, neighbours, and professional lawyers. Moreover, the seventeenth century is said to have been the century of freedom of conscience, which developed in the context of religious diversity after the Reformations.<sup>83</sup> To avoid projecting our own notions and norms of public and private back onto the early modern era, I will adopt a terminological approach throughout the book, paying special attention to how seventeenth-century Utrechters utilized and gave meanings to the terms 'public' (in Dutch, *publiek*, *openbaar*, and *gemeen*) and 'private' (in Dutch, *privaat* and *particulier*).<sup>84</sup> Yet it is in this final chapter that I will conduct a discourse analysis, clarifying how Catholics understood and appropriated the concepts of 'public', 'private', and 'conscience' in their petitions for their tactical purposes, shedding light on the rhetorical dimension of the delimitation of the public.

Finally, the Conclusion will position the case of Catholic Utrechters within the history of religious coexistence in both the Dutch Republic and the wider early modern world. I will argue that the vigorous survival of

79 See the contributions in Heerma van Voss, *Petitions in Social History*, especially Heerma van Voss, 'Introduction' and Würgler, 'Voices'.

80 Dinges, 'The Uses of Justice'.

81 Natalie Zemon Davis pays attention to the 'fictional' aspects of petitions, which entailed 'the crafting of a narrative'. Davis, *Fiction in the Archive*, p. 3.

82 Würgler, 'Voices', p. 32.

83 Sorabji, *Moral Conscience*, p. 5.

84 As Mette Briekedal Bruun has reminded us, among the different ways of analysing early modern public and private, the terminological approach may be reductionist but is 'less exposed to anachronism'. Bruun, 'Towards an Approach', pp. 21–22. For a similar terminological approach to public and private in seventeenth-century England, see Longfellow, 'Public, Private'.

Utrecht's Catholics was crucial for the revival of the Catholic community in the Dutch Republic. Catholics manifested an untypically strong presence in seventeenth-century Utrecht compared to other early modern, politico-religious minorities. The Utrecht case is important for the wealth of primary sources it offers, among them legal records, thereby representing an unparalleled opportunity for reconstructing the body of Catholic survival tactics as an ideal basis for future comparative studies on coexistence from the bottom-up perspective of politico-religious minorities in early modern Dutch history and beyond. By comparing the Utrecht case with others in the early modern world, the Conclusion will identify the factors that determined the nature of the governing strategies of the majority and the survival tactics of the minorities. What mattered for the majority's strategies include their politico-religious structures, legal schemes as well as dynamic politico-religious and socio-economic circumstances. As for the minorities' tactics, those crucial factors pertain to their numerical, socio-economic, and historical presence within the local society, as well as the religious infrastructure at their disposal and the legal resources they could appropriate. Widening our scope from the previous focus on the private, the ecumenicity of everyday life, and the fictions of privacy so as to include the public and the delimitation of the public, I will argue that we can produce a more sophisticated critique of teleological narratives of modernization, allowing us to shed brighter light on politico-religious minorities and their agency in realizing religious coexistence through the public/private distinction. Delimiting the public and manifesting various, competing visions of publicness, early modern people, including Catholic Utrechters, wielded agency in creating a multi-religious society.

Each of the following five chapters will be introduced by the voice of Johannes Wachtelaer, a Catholic and native citizen of Utrecht who obtained a canonry of St Marie in 1593 and acted as vicar general in Utrecht from 1611. The vivid writings of this storyteller offer us hints for the governing strategies of the Reformed as well as the survival tactics of the Catholics, both of which shaped and coloured religious coexistence in post-Reformation Utrecht.

## Abbreviations

- A.G.K.K.N. *Archiefvoor de Geschiedenis van de Katholieke Kerk in Nederland.*
- A.A.U. *Archiefvoor de geschiedenis van het aartsbisdom Utrecht. Utrecht, 1875–1957.*

- G.P.U. Water, Johan van de. *Groot Placaatboek vervattende alle de placaten [...]* Staten 's lands van Utrecht, 3 vols. Utrecht, 1729.
- J.O.U. *Jaarboek Oud-Utrecht*.

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