Nazis in the Netherlands: A social history of National Socialist collaborators, 1940-1945
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Family fights can have different causes: eating preferences, the in-laws, or political standpoints regarding the neighboring Nazi army that occupies your country. The last caused ongoing arguing between members of the family of Willem Hoebee. Hoebee was a director of a large company in Amsterdam. In May 1940, the Hoebee family members started an enduring family fight. Mr. Hoebee had sympathized with the Nationaal-Socialistische Beweging (National Socialist Movement, NSB) in the 1930s but turned against the NSB when National Socialist Germany invaded the Netherlands. However, his wife, daughter and son continued to actively support the NSB throughout the German occupation. One might say that the Hoebee family would constitute an “unhappy family” in its own particular way. At one moment during an argument, Mrs. Hoebee even threw a silver pitcher at her husband’s head. On top of that, Mr. Hoebee’s daughter expressed the hope that her father would be arrested as soon as possible. When Mr. Hoebee’s health deteriorated significantly in 1944, his wife announced that she would rather see him “die today than tomorrow.” The hatred was mutual. At the end of the occupation and of his life, Mr. Hoebee wished to name one of his friends as his heir, instead of his family members.¹

I have found this information in the postwar files of the NSB members within the Hoebee family, collected after the liberation for the purpose of their prosecution on grounds of collaboration. These files included letters and testimonies of the suspects, neighbors, friends, and of Hoebee’s housekeeper, who followed the family disputes closely. The story of the Hoebee family reveals the devastating dynamics of NSB membership on family relations and brings up many new questions about the social history of NSB members during the German occupation.

During the German occupation, NSB members were in general unpopular in the Netherlands. They were mocked in rhymes, such as:

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‘NSB’er, traitor,
Job-hunter, hypocrite,
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¹ National Archives The Hague, Centraal Archief Bijzondere Rechtspleging (NA-CABR) file 17828; Josje Damsma and Erik Schumacher, Hier woont een NSB’er. Nationaalsocialisten in bezet Amsterdam (Amsterdam 2010) 53.
Members of the NSB were generally perceived as traitors, opportunists and social degenerates. In the literature about Dutch National Socialists, their “isolated position” is often mentioned. As a group, the NSB members may have been outcast; however, it is unclear whether and how this general rejection determined interactions in individual cases.

Most of the Dutch historiography of this period has focused on collective isolation, but stories of individual NSB members such as the Hoebee family raise many more questions about the interactions of NSB members with their social environment. Take for example another NSB member, Johannes Oldenbroek, an accountant living in Woerden, a small town in the central Netherlands. He actively participated in the NSB during the German occupation. In an internal NSB report from 1942, he was characterized as a “very diligent National Socialist […] Therefore some people blackened his name and thwarted him.” He had many fights with his wife – they separated for a while during the occupation – and often quarreled with both NSB members and NSB opponents. Thus, he was unpopular inside and outside the NSB. The last sentiment may lead to the impression that general rejection by their social environment led to isolation of individual NSB members. Still, the question remains: not if, but how did these “fractured” relationships develop? There is a possibility that some of the people who joined the NSB were already “social outsiders” before their membership; they were already “rejected” people. Thus such rejection can be seen as independent of their NSB membership. Besides, not all NSB neighbors were rejected. For example, Hendrik Schuilenberg, an active NSB member who founded the National Socialist museum, managed to keep in touch with his neighbors throughout the

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occupation. They even visited “his” NSB museum. It is still unclear what determined which relationships endured and which fractured over NSB membership.

How did members of this small contested group function in a hostile society? Both NSB members and nonmembers shaped their mutual interactions. Interactions are not one-way social contacts. Interactions are dynamic, reciprocal social actions between individuals or groups. People interacting cause a two-way effect on the two (or more) people who participate in the interaction: thus, between NSB members and nonmembers. In the interaction between individuals belonging to these groups, there may have been repetitive patterns: the patterns of interaction. The patterns of interaction are related to the issue of the mindsets and actions of NSB members during the German occupation.

The main question of this study is: what was the influence of NSB membership on a members’ life and on his or her social relationships? In order to answer this question I will study different themes. First, I will analyze the mindset of NSB members; the ideology of the party and the influence of ideology on individual members. Second, I will study the participation of local members and the local party organization: did all NSB members express their membership as openly as did Johannes Oldenbroek? In other words: were they committed to the NSB? The issue of participation is related to the level of organization. How was the organization internally organized; how were the relationships between local members and party leaders? Third, what was the role of violence? And finally: how did these different themes work out in the final phase of the occupation, with an impeding National Socialist defeat? These questions will in the end lead to answers on the level of politicization of NSB members on a local level.

Studying the daily life of Dutch Nazis in the occupied Netherlands is a study not only about Dutch Nazism but also about Dutch society, and the level of politicization on a local level. One of the key terms describing Dutch society in the first half of the 20th century is “verzuiling” (pillarization). Pillarization is a description of Dutch society in which almost all Dutch citizens were more or less locked into various ideological or religious segments of society. They were divided into roughly four groups: Catholics, Protestants, socialists, and liberals. One might say that pillarization depoliticized Dutch citizens because people who

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5 NA-CABR, file 64233.
belonged to a certain group bonded with other people of the same group but failed to bridge to other groups. Thus, members had to mobilize their own group because reaching out to other groups was very difficult. This pillarized society is interesting for the study of Dutch Nazis, who lacked a natural constituency. Moreover, fascists tried to abolish all divisions in society.

The structure of the introduction is as follows: first I will briefly present a historiography of the NSB. Then I will explore the international debates about fascism and National Socialism. After the international debates, I will present a brief overview of the history of the NSB before May 1940, and of the political history of the NSB under German occupation. Hereafter, I discuss analyzing patterns of NSB members.

**Historians and the NSB**

During the NSB’s existence, contemporary historians had already begun to interpret the party and its members. In the 1930s the writer Menno ter Braak explained the NSB as a movement full of resentments. He described the typical NSB member as follows: “He is quasi-heroic, he's quasi-public, quasi-decent he is, he's quasi-Germanic ... but behind all these quasi’s resentment howls.” During the occupation, the Communist Theun de Vries published a novel about a member of the paramilitary division of the NSB. De Vries too named resentment as the main motive behind Dutch National Socialism. He gave a Marxist interpretation about a young man who was attracted to National Socialism, not out of political reasons, but out of frustration about his own place in society.

After the downfall of the NSB, historians analyzed the NSB from different perspectives. Historian Loe de Jong wrote about the NSB in his *magnus opus* about the Dutch occupation. One may say he incorporated a history of the NSB into his books. His study is based on a wide range of archival material from the NSB itself and from individual members. Therefore, his study remains one of the most important contributions to the

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history of the NSB. Like Ter Braak and De Vries, De Jong saw the NSB as a party full of resentment and failures.\(^9\)

De Jong’s study is not the only one on the NSB bookshelf. From the 1960s until the 1980s several studies on the NSB were published.\(^10\) A.A. De Jonge studied the prewar history of the NSB. De Jonge focused mainly on the ideological developments of national propaganda.\(^11\) Others studied the local level. G.A. Kooy analyzed the nazification and denazification of NSB members in Winterswijk, a village close to the German border. The study focuses on the reasons for joining and leaving the NSB. It offers many interesting insights about NSB members: it reveals the great extent to which the local dynamics depended on the capacities of local NSB leaders. However, it deals to a lesser extent with the actions of NSB members during their membership.\(^12\)

Other researchers analyzed the political and social backgrounds of people who voted for the NSB. They revealed a pattern of NSB voters who were mostly loosely attached to political or religious groups. Plus, they argued that NSB members came from all socio-economic backgrounds.\(^13\)

The NSB leader Mussert was analyzed by three scholars: Ronald Havenaar in 1978, Jan Meyers in 1984, and Tessel Pollmann in 2012. Havenaar portrayed Mussert as an ideologically “empty” man, a colorless man.\(^14\) In 2012, Tessel Pollmann wrote a debunking


study of Anton Mussert and his surroundings, showing how corrupt and unconventional Mussert actually was.\textsuperscript{15}

The new study by Pollmann is one of the many studies recently written on the NSB: the NSB seems to have become a trending topic.\textsuperscript{16} Historian Gertjan Broek studied paramilitary groups in Amsterdam, from the party’s emergence until 1942. Broek revealed the violent character of members of these groups.\textsuperscript{17}

In 2009, Edwin Klijn and Robin te Slaa produced the most important recent contribution to the history of the NSB. They analyzed local and national party archives from 1931 until 1935, presenting a rich study of that period. They convincingly argued that the NSB was already radical and fascist in its first years of existence.\textsuperscript{18} Klijn and Te Slaa also broadened their scope from ideological developments to organizational structures and practices of local NSB members, an approach which is still underexplored for the wartime NSB.

The recent studies show that there is a basis for a new study on NSB members during the German occupation. In addition, recent international perspectives on indigenous fascist organizations have led to new questions regarding the Dutch case.\textsuperscript{19} Scholars of fascism\textsuperscript{20} have broadened their scope from the political elite to the local members and the man in the street. In their studies of fascism, the behavior of individual fascists takes a central place. One of these authors, sociologist Michael Mann, points to the need to explain fascism by understanding fascists. He states that a sociology of the party’s members is

\textsuperscript{15} Tessel Pollmann, \textit{Mussert & Co. De NSB-leider en zijn vertrouwelingen} (Amsterdam 2012) 25-27.
\textsuperscript{16} In 2001 Chris van der Heijden wrote a controversial study on the Second World War with an underlying assumption regarding the role of chance in the choice for or against the NSB; Chris van der Heijden, \textit{Grijs verleden. Nederland en de Tweede Wereldoorlog} (Amsterdam 2001).
\textsuperscript{17} Gertjan Broek, \textit{Weerkorpsen, verantwoording}, (forthcoming, AUP).
\textsuperscript{18} Robin te Slaa and Edwin Klijn, \textit{De NSB. Ontstaan en opkomst van de Nationaal-Socialistische Beweging. 1931-1935} (Amsterdam 2009) 782-784.
\textsuperscript{19} From for example Aristotle Kallis, Michael Mann, Roger Paxton and Roger Griffin. The most important English contribution is Gerhard Hirschfeld, \textit{Nazi rule and Dutch collaboration. The Netherlands under German occupation, 1940-45} (Oxford 1988).
\textsuperscript{20} I use fascism with a capital letter F for Italian Fascism and without referring to the ideology.
necessary as well as taking into account their ideological motives.\textsuperscript{21} From a different perspective, Robert Paxton focuses on the practices of fascists. Thus, the latter “socio-political” approach has changed its focus to a more bottom-up methodology. This methodology is closely connected with Alltagsgeschichte, or microhistory, which has become popular in the study of National Socialists in Nazi Germany.\textsuperscript{22} This approach of bottom-up methodology should produce new insights about the NSB members and about the Dutch occupied society.

Studying the NSB is also related to international studies on fascism. Since the turn of the 21\textsuperscript{st} century, the study of fascism has been booming. Many handbooks were published: in 2003 Aristotle Kallis completed The Fascism Reader, in 2009 Richard Bosworth published the Oxford Handbook of Fascism, and Constantin Iordachi Comparative fascist studies: new perspectives in 2010. Also Robert Paxton, Michael Mann, and Roger Griffin added new perspectives on the study of fascism.\textsuperscript{23} These authors discuss how to approach the subject: as a cultural, political, or social history.

In 2012 Aline Sax defended her thesis on Flemish collaborators under German occupation. Her study was on a broader group: that of collaborators instead of only on members of the National Socialist movement. She studied a group of more than 300 collaborators, and used letters and judicial material as sources. Her main focus is on the worldview and motives of these people. She concludes that many Flemish collaborators were indeed ideologically committed. She also argues that most networks of collaborators were

\textsuperscript{21}Michael Mann, Fascists (New York 2004) 1-3, 140-147.


closed; only in a few cases did people break out of these closed networks.\textsuperscript{24} This evidence, of course, makes it interesting to see how the social dynamics functioned in the Dutch case.

\textit{International debates about fascism and National Socialism}

The German Nazi occupation impacted many aspects of the social and personal lives of Europeans.\textsuperscript{25} Inhabitants of occupied countries had to make up their minds about whether to support, ignore, or resist the German occupier. Support for the occupying regime took different forms: collaboration by officials, economic collaboration, or political collaboration. In Western Europe, fascists had the choice to actively collaborate with Nazi Germany (in Eastern Europe the German Nazis left ample room for political collaboration).\textsuperscript{26} All collaborating fascists had to maneuver within the context of an – in their eyes – ideologically friendly occupying regime, which was unpopular in the collaborators’ society.

I will briefly elaborate on the (dis)similarities between fascism and National Socialism. Fascism and National Socialism have many – but not all - characteristics in common. National Socialism used to be seen as the most radical expression of fascism. Ernst Nolte’s radicalization theory implies a logical development from fascism to National Socialism, which is a rather deterministic and finalistic approach.\textsuperscript{27} Recently, scholars have examined National Socialism much more as a specific type of fascism. Thus, fascism is the overarching term and Nazism the outstanding example.\textsuperscript{28} Nazism distinguishes itself by its racial-biological anti-Semitism, whereas fascism (in first instance) aims at a national unity and a purified race without specifically defining it by the exclusion of Jews. However, many fascist parties gradually adopted anti-Semitic and racial-biological language.\textsuperscript{29} I will use this debate to pose a questions as: did NSB members accept or embrace racial theories in general and anti-Semitism in particular?

\textsuperscript{24} Aline Sax, \textit{Voor Vlaanderen, Volk en Vaderland}, 381-393.
\textsuperscript{25} Gildea, Wieviorka, and Warring, \textit{Surviving Hitler and Mussolini}, 1-15.
\textsuperscript{28} Mann, \textit{Fascists}, 9, 44-47; Kallis, \textit{Genocide and Fascism}; Roger Griffin, Werner Loh and Andreas Umland, eds, \textit{Fascism past and present, west and east: an international debate on concepts and cases in the comparative study of the extreme right} (Stuttgart 2006) 29.
\textsuperscript{29} Kallis, \textit{Genocide and Fascism}, 117, 121.
The definition of fascism is highly debated, but there are some overarching elements. Looking at the core of fascism, one should focus not only on the things fascists were fighting against; one should primarily focus on everything they fought for. Putting together elements proposed by the historians Roger Griffin, Aristotle Kallis, Robert Paxton and Mark Mazower and the sociologist Michael Mann, I define fascism as:

A revolutionary ideology, originated in the first half of the 20th century, which rejects the old order, and aims to rebuild a completely new national community, based on a corporatist economy, the struggle of a hierarchy of race, with a focus on empire and with paramilitarist groups using violence means.

Fascism is revolutionary. Fascists tried to radically reshape society and politics by radical means. With these radical means fascists aimed at unifying the community. The fascist revolutionary faith in a unified community is the key for understanding fascist élan. In order to create the revolutionary shift in political structures, the fascist movements needed manpower. To be more precise: they needed revolutionary men and women. Revolution involves an emphasis on youth. Fascism in all countries made a “fetish of youthfulness.”

Fascist movements demanded total dedication and subjection of the individual to politics. Members of fascist parties not only had to believe in fascist political ideology, they also had to act according to it. Fascism is more than a policy; it is a style, a way of being, and

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30 Koonz, Nazi Conscience, 3, 5.
31 “Fascism is the pursuit of a transcendent and cleansing nation-statism through paramilitarism.” (Michael Mann), “Fascism is a genus of political ideology whose mythic core in its various permutations is a palingenetic form of populist ultra-nationalism.” (Roger Griffin 1991) “Fascism is a form of programmatic modernism that seeks to conquer political power in order to realize a totalizing vision of national or ethnic rebirth. Its ultimate end is to overcome the decadence that has destroyed a sense of communal belonging and drained modernity of meaning and transcendence and usher in a new era of cultural homogeneity and health.” (Roger Griffin 2007); “Fascism may be defined as a form of political behaviour marked by obsessive preoccupation with community decline, humiliation, or victimhood and by compensatory cults of unity energy, and purity, in which a mass-based party of committed nationalists militants, working in uneasy but effective collaboration with traditional elite groups, abandons democratic liberties and pursues with redemptive violence and without ethical or legal restraints goals of internal cleansing and external expansion.” (Robert Paxton), all in: Iordachi, ed., Comparative fascist studies, 19-27
34 Mosse, Nazi culture, xxxiii.
a way of behaving or reacting to the circumstances of life.\textsuperscript{35} In the words of historian George Mosse in his study of Nazi culture: “the boundaries between public and private were abolished, just as the dividing line between politics and the totality of life had ceased to exist.”\textsuperscript{36} All individuals had to be brought under control of the party as the representative of state and nation. This aspect of totalitarianism is, as Mosse explains, very visible in the German Nazi state. In Germany, the party was the spider at the center of the web. Attaining such a position was far more difficult in an occupied society, where the nazification largely came from outside.

In the occupied Netherlands nazification was more problematic than in Germany. Initially, the opportunities for nazification were far more limited than in German society, and one of the assignments of National Socialists would be to establish Nazism’s grip on society. In addition, the Netherlands had a political culture that is generally perceived as moderate and pragmatic or even as nonviolent.\textsuperscript{37} Thus, was the NSB revolutionary, and if so, did the non-NSB members recognize the party’s revolutionary character?

Another essential element in fascism is the idea of a: “volksgemeenschap,” a national community.\textsuperscript{38} Fascists maintained a collectivist view of society and the economy: the collective was more important than the individual. Creating a unified national community was a fundamental purpose of fascism. Unlike in liberalism, individuals were not the key components of society. The party was of all-embracing importance, more important than individuals, and than the state. One could say that the party fused with the state and in the end made it wither away. However, this also meant that the non-party members were seen as less important than members or as outsiders. They did not belong to the revolutionary vanguard movement.

Fascists aimed at a unified and purified national community, which in the case of the NSB became complicated because the NSB depended on a foreign power; the Nazi regime

\textsuperscript{35} Eugen Weber, ‘Extract from Varieties of Fascism (1964) in: Griffin and Feldman, Fascism, 76.
\textsuperscript{36} Mosse, Nazi culture, xx.
\textsuperscript{38} Fritzsche, Life and Death in the Third Reich 17, 38-56; Te Slaa and Klijn, De NSB, 792; Frank Bajohr and Michael Wildt, ed., Volksgemeinschaft. Neue Forschungen zur Gesellschaft des Nationalsozialismus (Frankfurt am Main 2009).
facilitated the position of the NSB. For a fascist organization in theory this was complicated because of its “hyper nationalist” nature. 39 Fascist movements glorified their own national past and included these into their national myths in order to serve national regeneration. This distinction made it, in theory, even more difficult for indigenous collaborating fascist movements to formulate their ideas about loyalty towards a foreign occupier. The closeness of indigenous fascist parties to the occupier required compromises. To what extent could the NSB still propagate a Dutch national united community?

The revolutionary ideals included restructuring the economy into a corporatist system. Corporatists interpret the community as an organic body, in which everybody – employees, employers and state officials – had a fixed place. In fascist corporatism the state controlled the economy from the top down but left space for private enterprise. Consequently, fascists fought against communism, which aspired to abolish classes and the state. At the same time, they contested capitalism because it undermined, weakened or marginalized the state. 40 The corporatist element of fascist ideology is particularly interesting in the Netherlands when one thinks of the specific, divided structure (the pillarization) of society during that time. The Dutch fascists saw this pillarization as a body in which every limb worked separately instead of as a collective. Thus, they had to fight against the specific and strong divided structures in Dutch society. In fact, Dutch historians perceived pillarization as one of the main limitations working against a vital fascist movement because people were already locked into groups and were not interested in new political movements. 41

The fascist concept of restructuring state and society involved a constant “struggle”, one of the key terms of fascism. 42 The term is derived from the social Darwinist discourse of survival of the fittest. This struggle was related to the party’s hierarchical view of society and the aim for a “purified” race. According to fascists, society was by nature hierarchical and should be hierarchically organized. In order to build this ideal, hierarchical state, they had to

40 Kallis, Fascism Reader, XV; Mann, Fascists, 6.
struggle. The struggle included race “purification.”[^43] The (re-) establishment of the *hierarchy of races* was a central revolutionary ideal of fascism: the superior race (the Germanic one) was supposed to struggle to establish its domination over all other races.[^44]

Fascist parties were in favor of a national community; however, not all subjects belonged to that community. Some were considered superior to others; they were more “national” than others. For that reason, one common element in all fascist movements was the enforcement of “us” versus “them.”[^45] National Socialist movements were exclusivist parties in the extreme. The inequality of people was one of the main principles of National Socialism.[^46] The main target of National Socialists was the Jews. The targeting of the Jews transformed an abstract ideology into a fighting movement with concrete aims.[^47] In constantly repeating claims about the inferiority of the Jews, fascists placed them outside society. It was not only about excluding one group; fascists in fact propagated physical removal by means of violence.[^48] Exclusion and violence were not just venerated theoretical concepts; they were brought into practice. Fascism required total dedication towards the fascist goals: a unified community where all members actively participated in creating a new fascist society or were excluded from society.[^49] With its demands for members’ dedication to the struggle, fascism lays a claim on the lives of fascists. If Dutch fascists were indeed dedicated strugglers for the New Order, they had to actively exclude everybody who did not support or fit in with that aim.

The principal violent actors were members of the *paramilitary* organizations of fascist movements.[^50] In sociologist Michael Mann’s definition of fascism, the paramilitary element is essential: “Fascism is the pursuit of a transcendent and cleansing nation-statism through paramilitarism.”[^51] Thus, the paramilitary groups are supposed to play an important role in every fascist organization. Members of this group are the ones who actively show their

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[^48]: Kallis, *Genocide and Fascism*, 137.
political choice and bring their ideas into practice. They were the ones who, in the words of historian Michael Howard “would wrest the destiny of mankind from the frock-coated old dodderers round their green baize tables and shape a cleaner, more glorious future”.

The paramilitary groups were very visible in Italy and Germany, but how visible were the paramilitary men in the Netherlands? And how did such units contribute to the image of Dutch National Socialists?

The fascists’ wish for national unity and a purified race coincided with their wish to build an empire. Fascists looked back on glorified pasts and believed strongly in expanding the current nation state. Mark Mazower convincingly stated the central importance of the Nazi’s imperial fantasy.

In the case of the Netherlands, the indigenous aims clashed with the aims of Nazi Germany. The Dutch lost their most important colonial possession the Dutch Indies during the German occupation, as a result of the imperial hunger of Japan, an ally of Nazi Germany. Here is another problem the Dutch National Socialists had to solve in order to remain credible in their own eyes and in those of their fellow countrymen. How did the Dutch fascists cope with the ideological problem that the aim for a colonial empire was thwarted by Japan? Did they consider subscribing to the German Nazi ideal of colonization of Eastern Europe as a substitute or not?

The previous presented issues lead to questions about the “Dutch” versus the “fascist” character of the NSB and its members and about developments regarding this issue. During the occupation, the NSB was influenced by the Germans but at the same time struggled with its own interpretations of fascism. Collaboration with the Germans did not mean that NSB members thought and acted exactly in the same way as German Nazis. In the years before the occupation, the NSB built up its own ideology that it developed further during the years of collaboration with the Germans. The NSB had also developed its own organizational structure. Its members were part of an international fascist development and were at the same time indigenous National Socialists. The difference between the two lies in the origin of the political organization and ideology. The NSB was indeed inspired by the German

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52 Howard, War in European History, 119-120.
53 Mazower, Hitler’s Empire, 7, 12.
Nazis and the Italian Fascists; their collaboration was indeed based on feelings of mutual understanding. And because the NSB had developed its own ideas in the 1930s, the NSB had to maneuver between these ideas and the German ones during the German occupation.

**NSB before May 1940**

The largest group of Dutch fascists was organized in the NSB, an organization founded by civil engineer Anton Adriaan Mussert on December 14th, 1931. Thus, by May 1940, the indigenous fascists had been active within the Dutch political spectrum for more than eight years. These formative years were relevant for the wartime NSB in several aspects. The party had already experienced brief success. The prewar NSB peaked in 1935, when it succeeded in winning 7.94 percent of the popular votes in provincial elections, an unprecedented result for a newcomer party in contemporary Dutch parliamentary history. Thus, the NSB had been a political player, visible in the public sphere and represented in Parliament.55

In 1935, 50,000 Dutch citizens out of a population of nearly nine million aligned themselves with the NSB. Compared to the movement of the communists, who in its heyday of 1939 gained the support of 10,000 members, the National Socialists were quite successful indeed.56 The NSB attracted members from different strata of society57 and with different socio-economic backgrounds. The NSB also won the support from Dutch colonists in the Dutch East Indies, present-day Indonesia. In fact, in the first years 50,000 guilders came from overseas to the NSB in the Netherlands.58

The NSB constructed its ideological framework in the 1930s. The movement had to position itself in the national political discussions and in debates about international politics. The NSB had – like other fascist parties abroad – adopted a revolutionary program and ideology. Some Dutch historians considered the NSB to be a conservative petit-bourgeois

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55 In several towns NSB members used violence in their confrontations with opponents: Te Slaa and Klijn, De NSB, 21-23.
57 As the NSDAP was in Germany: Detlev J.K. Peukert: ‘Fascism and the crisis of modernity: NSDAP members and supporters’ in Kallis, The Fascism Reader, 401; Mann, Fascists, 20.
party.\textsuperscript{59} That image of a conservative party is challenged. Recently, several historians have pointed out that the NSB was radical or revolutionary from its early years onwards.\textsuperscript{60} According to them, the NSB was to a certain degree revolutionary in its propaganda in its first years.

NSB members expressed themselves openly on the streets. In order to overthrow the liberal, democratic political order, the NSB had established an active paramilitary organization: \textit{Weerbaarheidsafdeling} (referred to as WA). Members of the WA were looking for confrontations with their political opponents, such as communists.\textsuperscript{61} WA men –like the \textit{Sturmabteilung} of the Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei (NSDAP) – carried out many violent actions against Jewish people and others considered enemies of the movement. The paramilitary division fits into the central elements of fascism discussed above.

The relative success of the NSB was partly due to the same factors that had caused the rise of fascism in surrounding countries: the Netherlands had been hit by the Great Depression as well and suffered from an economic slump while the legitimacy of its democratic political system was called into question.\textsuperscript{62} In the course of the 1930s, the political climate grew more polarized. Due to the economic problems public opinion was heavily divided over how to solve the crisis. In these years, extreme anti-democratic parties were active in the political arena and on the streets. In addition to these factors, Dutch historians connect the success of the NSB with the wish for strong leadership, its well-built organization, and its rather vague ideology, so that a wide range of people could find something they liked in the ideas.\textsuperscript{63}

One of the other main causes of fascist success elsewhere was absent in the Netherlands: the existence of a front generation. Unlike France, Belgium and Italy, the Netherlands had maintained its neutrality during the First World War and lacked that war’s

\begin{itemize}
  \item The NSB program was unambiguously fascist from the start: Morgan, \textit{Fascism in Europe}, 101; Gertjan Broek Pluertendoders, \textit{koppelriemen en boksbeugels. De Bijdrage van de radicale Amsterdamse NSB’ers aan het politieke klimaat in de jaren 1935-1937} (unpublished Masters’ thesis Open Universiteit Nederland) 3-4, 41; Te Slaa and Klijn, \textit{De NSB}, 782-784.
  \item De Jonge, \textit{Het nationaal-socialisme in Nederland}, 172-173.
  \item Mann, \textit{Fascists} 23, 81; Paxton, \textit{The anatomy of Fascism}, 16, 77, 79.
  \item De Jonge, \textit{Het nationaal-socialisme in Nederland}, 40, 76-77.
\end{itemize}
painful legacy. Another factor impeding the success of fascism may have been the pillarization of Dutch society. Therefore, the number of people willing to change their political allegiance was rather low.

A broader public beyond the party membership shared some ideals of fascism in the Netherlands as in other countries. From the 19th century onwards there existed critiques of liberalism and the liberal-capitalist state from both the left and the right. Moreover, groups other than the fascists embraced the wish for a homogenous state. At the same time, the mobilization of the masses created an opportunity for mass politics. It was in this political landscape that the Dutch fascists argued for a strong state, an imperium, a national community and the creation of a new man, belonging to the national community and obedient to the strong state.

During the 1930s the success of the Dutch Nazis was brief. Between 1936 and May 1940 the number of NSB members declined. During that time the democratic establishment organized a cordon sanitaire to curb the influences of radical political groups like communists and members of the NSB. The Dutch government introduced a ban on the public display of uniforms by political organizations, and members of the radical movements were excluded from government jobs. These people were not allowed to be teachers, members of the police, or be employed in the local administration.

Thus, in 1940, when these indigenous “real” fascists found the opportunity to gain power by collaborating with the German Nazi occupier, their peak lay five years behind them and their influence in the local administration was non-existent. In the 1930s they had developed a fascist ideology and style. That starting point has consequences for the analysis of Dutch fascists during the occupation. When the Germans occupied the Netherlands, a group of Dutch National Socialists stood ready at their service. Radical National Socialists aspired to take over local power positions. Its pro-German orientation made the NSB the main candidate for a platform of political collaboration. In their Dutch context of the time, the NSB was a movement past their political heyday and marginalized in the political sphere.

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64 WWI experience is one of the explaining factors of the rise of Fascism, however, neutral states were heavily affected too: Mann, Fascists, 9, 66; Paxton, The Anatomy of Fascism, 80-81, 105; Kees van Geelkerken, Voor Volk en Vaderland, 75-81.

65 In Sweden we can observe a similar process: Lena Berggren, ‘Swedish Fascism: Why Bother?’, Journal of Contemporary History, 37-3 (2002) 395-417, here 411. According to Stanley Payne countries with stable democracies, like Britain, France and the Low countries, were largely immune to Fascism; Kallis, The Fascism Reader, 186.
Now history seemed to offer new chances. Thus, when their ideological example – Nazi Germany – invaded the Netherlands in May 1940, the Dutch National Socialists persuaded themselves that it was their turn to take the fate of the nation into their hands.

_Dutch National Socialists under German occupation_

“After eight years of struggle, the day has come to harvest.”⁶⁶ (De Daad, May 31st 1940, Amsterdam)

The German invasion in May 1940 was not totally unexpected, but still many Dutchmen were shocked by German Nazis’ hostile move.⁶⁷ Any last hopes for the Dutch to again (after WWI) remain neutral were destroyed. In preparation for a possible German invasion the Dutch government had made a list of 2,300 leading National Socialists to be imprisoned in order to prevent treasonous actions and chaos in the streets. However, this plan largely failed; reality turned out to be difficult to handle. Germans and German-oriented people were put in improvised camps. In the end, over 10,000 National Socialists were interned, seven of whom died in prison.⁶⁸

Many Dutch citizens believed – wrongly, it turned out later – that a “fifth column” had assisted the Germans in their conquest of the country; this charge is often stressed in diaries and newspapers, and even after the war it was still believed as true. This accusation strongly contributed to the anti-patriotic image of Dutch National Socialists.⁶⁹

In May 1940, German authorities took control of the Dutch administration. All over Europe they chose different approaches for the occupied territories, depending on how they perceived the inhabitants. The German occupier believed the Netherlands might play a crucial role in the expansion of the German empire. Mazower puts the aims of the German occupier in the context of an expanding empire, where the Netherlands had to fulfill a central position. The Netherlands were part of North-Western Europe and its people

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⁶⁶ De Daad, May 31th, 1940; NIOD.
⁶⁷ Van der Boom, We leven nog, 30.
⁶⁸ De Jonge, _Het nationaal-socialisme in Nederland_, 165.
⁶⁹ Van der Boom, We leven nog, 29, 39-40, 87; Hirschfeld, _Nazi Rule and Dutch collaboration_, 265; Loe de Jong, _De Duitse vijfde colonne in de Tweede Wereldoorlog_, (Amsterdam 1953) 249-251.
belonged to the “Germanic race.” Thus, it seemed even more necessary in the end to integrate the Netherlands into their German empire.\(^{70}\)

By the end of May 1940, Hitler decided to establish a civil administration under the Austrian Reichskommisar Arthur Seyss-Inquart, which strongly tied the Netherlands to the powers in the center of the Nazi empire.\(^{71}\) The German occupation administration needed Dutch helpers in order to be able to control and eventually to nazify the Netherlands.\(^{72}\) The process of nazifying the Netherlands could be executed or supported by NSB members, the first candidates for political collaboration. Thus, the participation of political collaborating movements was crucial for the implementation of the policies of the German Nazi occupier. According to Kallis indigenous fascists were often more radical and violent than the German occupation authorities. According to historian Stathis Kalyvas occupation forces are generally “looking for active collaboration from a small number of dedicated supporters, and passive but exclusive collaboration from the population at large.”\(^{73}\)

The promising statement “after eight years of struggle, the day has come to harvest” was spread to all members of the NSB in Amsterdam in May 1940.\(^{74}\) The outburst of hope came after days of despair and confusion when prominent members of the NSB were arrested and interned. The NSB had in fact never failed to support the German policies in the 1930s. Nevertheless, they had stayed mostly inactive during the days of the German invasion, while some NSB members even had fought in the Dutch army against the invaders.\(^{75}\)

June 22, 1940 marked a defining moment. On that day, the NSB organized one of the biggest party events in its history; thousands of members came together for a rally in the

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\(^{71}\) The organization of the German administration was scattered; though, for most Dutch inhabitants and also for “ordinary” members of the NSB, the distinction between various bodies and parties was hard to see; De Jong, *Koninkrijk*, V, 50. The installment of a civil administration had various reasons; Pim Griffioen and Ron Zeller, ‘Vertrek van Wilhelmina was niet van wezenlijk belang voor hoge aantal joodse slachtoffers’, *NRC Handelsblad*, August 19th, 1997, 7.

\(^{72}\) Lammers, ‘Levels of collaboration’.


\(^{74}\) De Daad, May 31th, 1940.

\(^{75}\) De Jong, *Koninkrijk*, III, 112-113, 505.
village of Lunteren. The most striking act was their presentation to Hermann Göring, commander of the Luftwaffe (the German Air Force) of a huge bronze bell, which they offered for the purpose of being melted down to provide raw material for ordnance manufacture. Thus, they embraced the German occupier and denounced the Queen of Holland and her Dutch government, who fled to England. This gift to Göring was even more remarkable because of the devastating bombardment by the same Luftwaffe of Rotterdam on May 14, killing between 600-900 people and destroying over 20,000 houses, which secured the victory of the German army and made an equally deep impression on the Dutch people. From that symbolic handover to Göring onwards, the NSB would actively collaborate.

After the German victory, members of the NSB were filled with confidence in their own possibilities. The period of the occupation was the first and only opportunity for NSB members to put their ambitions into practice. This period enabled the Dutch National Socialists to seek fulfillment of their ideals, even while it became increasingly clear that the German authorities would set the parameters. During the first period of the occupation, the NSB developed from a nonconformist and protesting outsider organization into a party that aspired to sharing power with the foreign occupier and bearing responsibility for leading the Dutch state.

The inverse experiences of NSB members and the anti-National Socialist part of the population set the stage for their perspectives and interactions during the German occupation of the Netherlands. The NSB perceived the German occupation as liberation and a window of opportunity. They believed that political power was within reach, just as indigenous fascist groups in other countries did. For the NSB, the German victory was the new point of departure for their political aspirations: not a period of occupation and repression but an opportunity to gain power.

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76 Van Geelkerken, Voor Volk en Vaderland, LXVII; De Jong, Het KoninkrijkIV, 241-246.
77 De Jong, Het Koninkrijk III, 394-395.
78 Paxton, The anatomy of Fascism; Morgan, Fascism in Europe, 4-5; e.g. De Jong, Het Koninkrijk IV, 603, 820; De Jong, Koninkrijk V, 58, 235-238; Van der Boom, We leven nog, 29, 40, 81.
80 Van Geelkerken, Voor Volk en Vaderland, 290.
Nonmembers disapproved of the choice and the chances of the NSB. The NSB leadership and members had deliberately chosen in favor of the German regime and against the prewar system. Therefore NSB members were, according to fellow Dutchmen, “even worse than the Germans.” Moreover, both NSB members and nonmembers expected the NSB members to receive many lucrative positions within and through the German administration of occupation. This contributed further to the party’s negative image.

However, in political terms the NSB still remained an outsider; contrary to all expectations, the Dutch fascists initially failed to gain a major position within the occupation regime, and they proved to be unable to rally other Dutch behind them. While the estimations differ, the membership rates did not exceed 100,000. Information about the generally negative image of the NSB reached the German headquarters as well. The Germans saw this widespread attitude towards the NSB as an obstacle to making use of the unpopular NSB. In several reports of the Generalkommissariat für das Sicherheitswesen (General Commissar for Security Matters), the German sources mentioned the unpopularity of the NSB. Moreover, they wished to set their own agenda and to avoid a situation like the one that Quisling had created in Norway, immediately after the 1940 invasion. Unlike in Norway they chose not to make use of the local fascists to rule the country; Mussert did not seize power by a coup-d’état as Quisling had. In the beginning, the German authorities still tried to appease the conservative elite instead of siding with the eager Dutch National Socialists. Germany’s initial gentle approach to the Dutch non-National Socialist politicians was also influenced by the Germans’ inability to protect the colonial empire: the Dutch Indies. Seyss-Inquart immediately stated that the Germans did not have any imperialistic aims regarding the colony and tried to appease the conservative elite.

A movement that competed with the NSB was the Nederlandse Unie (NU), founded in July 1940. The aim of the NU was to recognize the changed political landscape in the Netherlands and Europe and to build a society based on a broad national cooperation,

82 Kooy, Het echec, 101.
83 Generalkommissariat für das Sicherheitswesen (HSSPF), NIOD, archive 077, file 359, June 3, 1940; Generalkommissariat für das Sicherheitswesen (HSSPF), NIOD, archive 077, file 353, July 6, July 21, August 26, September 23, October 1, 8, 22, 1940. According to Paxton Hitler was reluctant to use local fascist movements and preferred to work with conservative elites; Paxton, The anatomy of Fascism, 111, 114; Dahl Quisling, 173-213, 242, 291.
84 Mazower, Hitler's empire, 105-106.
harmonious arrangements and social justice. In order to build that society the NU had to cooperate with the German and Dutch authorities.\textsuperscript{85} The number of followers of the NU greatly exceeded those of the NSB: approximately one million sympathizers of whom 600,000 were members of the NU. Despite several concessions to the Germans, the Germans decided in December 1941 to ban the NU.

When the German authorities banned the NU, the NSB became their only option. The initial unwillingness of the German authorities to use the NSB as a political partner changed in 1941. From then on, The Germans used the NSB in two ways: the NSB as a political organization and as a political partner, and NSB members to recruit for positions locally. In both ways the role of the NSB increased.\textsuperscript{86} By then, the German authorities had recruited many Dutch National Socialists for positions such as mayors, local administrators and policemen.\textsuperscript{87} The NSB was not allowed to form a government, as the Quisling movement had in Norway in 1942. Actually, one of the reasons the German rulers in Holland chose to keep their distance from the NSB was the fact that Hitler regretted his decision to allow Quisling to obtain a prominent political position.\textsuperscript{88}

However, the NSB became a political player on the local level. Gradually, the NSB was a designated provider for candidates for vacant local government positions. Thus, at this level, the NSB became a willing participant in sharing power. In addition, Mussert received the title of “leader of the Dutch nation” in December 1942.\textsuperscript{89} The NSB became an insider in the political sphere but on the illegitimate ground of its solidarity with the Germans. NSB’s claim to leadership in national and local politics was not based on a large constituency but was due to its relationship to Nazi Germany and the shared National Socialist ideology. Its members had National Socialist missionary ethics of sacrifice in common with the German occupiers; their loyalty towards the fascist cause set them apart from other forms of wartime collaboration.\textsuperscript{90}

\textsuperscript{85} Wichert ten Have, \textit{De Nederlandse Unie. Aanpassing, vernieuwing en confrontatie in bezettingstijd. 1940-1941} (Amsterdam 1999) 221-228.
\textsuperscript{87} Romijn, \textit{Burgemeesters in oorlogstijd}, 322, 372-373, 380-381, 413.
\textsuperscript{88} Dahl, \textit{Quisling}, 291.
\textsuperscript{89} Pollmann, \textit{Mussert & Co}, 126-127.
With the support of the German occupation regime, the NSB could expand all their political subsidiary organizations for National Socialist women, men and children. Moreover, they were able to exercise considerable influence in new fascist state organizations. Dutch historians have already analyzed the structures of these organizations.\textsuperscript{91} However, it remains unclear how many and how often members participated in these organizations. The organizations created a network for NSB members. It is possible that these National Socialist social networks led to higher political participation.\textsuperscript{92} In a polarized atmosphere such as an occupied society, groups may develop into an increasingly distinct entity with common goals and a common fate.\textsuperscript{93} The mutual support of Dutch and German Nazis created an atmosphere in which the Dutch National Socialists increasingly linked their fate to the German Nazis.

\textit{Analyzing interaction patterns}

The study of social relations of NSB members can perhaps benefit from discussions on different concepts of social interaction. All social relations were under pressure during the German occupation. In this period, many questions arose about loyalties towards the occupier, standpoints towards National Socialism and about whom one could trust in an occupied society. While a shift of governments in a democratic political system does not require taking a stand, a foreign occupier may put this burden on every individual. Making a choice about collaboration—working with the enemy—will in the end be an issue for each individual citizen.\textsuperscript{94} This makes it even more important to focus on individuals throughout society instead of only on the elite when analyzing war and occupation.\textsuperscript{95}

\textsuperscript{91}De Jong, Koninkrijk, De Jonge, Nationaal-socialisme in Nederland, Kooy, Het echec.
\textsuperscript{92}Structure and strength of a social network can even lead to higher political participation; Scott D. McClurg, ‘Social Networks and Political Participation. The Role of Social Interaction in Explaining Political Participation’, \textit{Political Research Quarterly} 56 (2003) 449-464 here 459.
\textsuperscript{95}Gildea, Wieviorka and Warring, eds, \textit{Surviving Hitler and Mussolini}, 5. It was a dilemma for people in the Netherlands and in all occupied areas of the Nazi empire; Cornelis Lammers, \textit{Vreemde overheersing. Bezetten en bezetting in sociologisch perspectief} (2005) 19; Peter Davies, \textit{Dangerous Liaisons, collaboration and World War Two} (Harlow 2004) 13, 105.
The traditional image of NSB members is that they were “isolated” and “non-Dutch” and therefore placed outside Dutch society. As mentioned before, the ruling perception has been that most NSB members were conservatives and developed into alien and isolated radicals. The origins of this image originated from portraying Dutch political society as a pillarized one, with every traditional ideological or religious community locked into its own institutions. Challenging the old ideas about NSB members may lead to new insights about Dutch society during the German occupation. Until recently, these perspectives were rather binary and static. 96 One group belonged to the NSB and supposedly was alien and hated; another group organized themselves into resistance movements and was thus perceived as representing the “real” Dutchmen. 97

Such binary logic is also related to the dominance of the national Dutch perspective in the history of the German occupation. In the history of individuals, this perspective was dominated by normative questions, about having been either “right” or “wrong.” Dutch historians Jan Bank and Hans Blom challenged his perspective in the 1980s. 98 Lately, the discussions about the choices and the behavior of the Dutch have reheated. 99 In these discussions, one of the main disputes involves whether it is possible or desirable to use a “normative” approach. This dispute is also related to the question about the underlying causes behind an individual’s choice to support National Socialism, take part in the resistance or remain a bystander. Historians have debated whether the choice for joining one

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97 De Jong, Het Koninkrijk I, 308-310; idem, Het Koninkrijk V, 232-240; idem, Het Koninkrijk VI, 511; De Jonge, Nationaal-socialisme in Nederland, 188; idem, Crisis en critiek, 260; Kooy, Het echec, 5; Dam, De NSB en de kerken, 52; Groeneveld, Zo zong de NSB, 119-120; Havenaar, Mussert, 42, 81; Sytze van der Zee, Voor Vrijbroer, volk en vaderland. De SS in Nederland (Meppel 2008) 99; Van der Heijden, Grijs verleden, 210; Vossen, Vrij vissen in het Vondelpark., 194; Van der Boom, Kees van Gielkerken, 42.
of the National Socialist organizations was determined by an individual’s ideology or character or by his or her socio-economic conditions.\textsuperscript{100}

An element in De Jong’s study is the general public opinion towards the NSB. Recently, historian Bart van der Boom added to the study of public opinion an analysis of the daily lives during the occupation through a sample of diaries.\textsuperscript{101} In these diaries, negative attitudes towards the NSB are often expressed. The disparagement was shown publicly in different ways. Examples of misbehaving NSB members were magnified to strengthen the negative image of the group.\textsuperscript{102} Through all these ways, the negative image became widespread in public opinion. However, it remains unclear what determined opinions regarding individual NSB members.

The NSB itself also published regularly about its isolated position in Dutch society.\textsuperscript{103} The NSB leaders used its “isolated” situation to portray its members as victims. By constantly proclaiming their isolation and victimhood they tried to enhance the internal group solidarity and activity of NSB members. Therefore they reinforced the image of suffering, heroic National Socialists, who struggled for their ideals despite the opposition they met. These patterns of “victimhood” fit into theories about fascism. Cultivating a sense of victimhood was a common element in many fascist parties, and, as mentioned before, at the same time “struggle” was one of the fascist’s key words.

In addition to considering theories of fascism, it is also important to observe which other theoretical frameworks are useful in explaining the interactions between NSB members and their surroundings. As Kevin Morgan, Gidon Cohen and Andrew Flinn argue in a connected field in their study of the social history of communists in British society, there is no such thing as a “closed society.”\textsuperscript{104} In general, the NSB was a strongly hated political organization. However, feelings and attitudes towards a group tend to be different from the attitude or feeling towards its members. It still remains an open question how the general feeling of revulsion against the NSB as a movement affected opinions towards individual NSB

\textsuperscript{101}Van der Boom, \textit{We leven nog}; Bart van der Boom, \textit{Wij weten niets van hun lot. Gewone Nederlanders en de Holocaust} (Amsterdam 2012).
\textsuperscript{102}Norbert Elias, \textit{Gevestigden en buitenstaanders} (Amsterdam 2005) 12; in 1965 published in English as N.Elias and J.L. Scotson, \textit{The established and the outsiders: a social enquiry into community problems}.
\textsuperscript{103}Meinoud Marinus Rost van Tonningen: ‘In ons isolement ligt onze kracht’ (n.p. [1937]); Vossen, \textit{Vrij vissen in het Vondelpark}, 191.
members. To what extent could an individual member be appreciated, despite the widespread revulsion towards the NSB? We need to take into account the special conditions of a country occupied by an ideologically inspired occupier who is fighting an internal (to nazify occupied territory) and external (to expand its territory) war. What concepts are illuminating when we discuss interactions between people inside and outside the NSB?

One of the relevant concepts may be social exclusion. The concept of social exclusion has multiple genealogies and meanings. The framework of social exclusion deals with a person’s ability to enjoy “full participation in all aspects as an end in itself.” So it concerns the most fundamental social relations: a person’s belonging to society and participation in social life. A socially excluded person is deprived of social networks, or his or her only entry is to the networks of other outsiders.105 Social exclusion differs from theories of “social capital” because social-capital research is mainly concerned with consequences; social ties are resources, while social exclusion is concerned with causes. In addition, social capital deals with relations of an individual, while social exclusion deals with groups. Enclaved communities or sects score high on social capital but may be socially excluded. And because this study is not only about Dutch National Socialists among each other but mainly about Dutch National Socialists within Dutch society, the concept of social exclusion is extremely relevant.106

Social exclusion is a dynamic process in which two groups are involved: the excluding actors and the excluded.107 In this case, the NSB and non-NSB categories were each active in excluding the other. Each groups felt itself to be superior to the other. Dutch National Socialists saw themselves as true patriots, fighting for the right future for the nation.108 However, their feelings of superiority did not always have to mean they excluded the others; in the end they hoped to win the support of their countrymen with the exception of the Jewish population, whom they rigorously excluded. At the same time NSB opponents saw themselves as the representative of the true Dutch spirit and culture, and viewed NSB

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105 Alison Woodward and Martin Kohli, Inclusions and Exclusions in European societies (2001) 1-10.
106 It is also related to one of the other main concepts in this research: participation. Goodin considers “participation as the antidote of social exclusion.” Mary Daly and Hilary Silver, ‘Social exclusion and social capital. A comparison and Critique’, Theory and Society 37 (2008) 537-566, here 539-540, 546, 555, 558; Woodward and Kohli, Inclusions and Exclusions in European societies, 2-4.
107 Daly and Silver, ‘Social exclusion and social capital’, 539-540, 546, 555, 558. Socially excluded groups and individuals lack social relations and opportunities to fully participate in society and therefore they are more likely to suffer from poverty; Hilary Silver ‘Social Exclusion Comparative Analysis of Europe and Middle East Youth’, The Middle East Youth initiative working paper 1 (2007) 1-48, here 15-16, 37-38.
108 E.g. The title of the national NSB newspaper was Volk en Vaderland (People and Country).
members as pure traitors and even as “un-Dutch.” Social exclusion takes place when people are excluded at different levels at the same time: state, market and (civil) society.\textsuperscript{109} If a person or a group is excluded from all these three levels, one might label the phenomenon as social exclusion. In the 1930s members of the NSB could be labeled as outsiders on all three fronts; however, during the occupation they could no longer be labeled as outsiders on political and economic levels. Their membership brought them many opportunities on the job market and in local politics. In such cases, social exclusion becomes a difficult concept to use.

Moreover, once again, one has to be aware of the fundamental problem of a binary logic. Subdividing Dutch society into NSB and non-NSB groups could lead to a dichotomous and unrealistic view of society, and this has in fact been the case in the post-war politics of meaning.\textsuperscript{110} It is necessary to keep in mind that NSB members may have had identities outside their political identity. Many members wore their uniform only when they attended the weekly party meetings. In more recent years, historians and other scholars have taken their distance from such binary views. As Martin Blinkhorn states about Italian Fascism: “even the most fundamentalist fascists were buffeted constantly by their national, local, class, gender, family, religious, and a host of other pasts, presents, and futures.” And “all fascists were in some sense part-time ideological warriors and any serious historical understanding must reckon with that partiality.”\textsuperscript{111} The same thing pertains to nonmembers: they too had different identities and different reasons to reject or not to reject NSB members.

Belonging to a fascist group only partly shaped a person’s identity. National Socialists had other activities, loyalties, and relationships outside their own political group. Kevin Passmore argues that we need to abandon the notion of fascists as “just fascists”: “Members of fascist parties are not fascists all the time, even when they attend party meetings. They are also husbands, wives, workers, lawyers, Catholics, Protestants, atheists, and so on. These shifting, interlinked, mutually constructing and sometimes conflicting

\textsuperscript{110} Daly and Silver, ‘Social exclusion and social capital’, 556.
\textsuperscript{111} Martin Blinkhorn as quoted by Bosworth in: Bosworth ed., \textit{The Oxford Handbook of Fascism}, 6.
identities shape their actions as much as their Fascism’ does.”  

Being a fascist was not a fixed, but a mixed identity.

Both groups saw themselves as “insiders” and the others as “outsiders.” Of course, there are many differences within the two groups, as there were different opinions towards the out-groups. Dutch Nazis saw the Jews as “the other” in extreme, with all its devastating consequences. In contrast to the actor-victim dynamic of social exclusion, the insider-outsider framework suggests a more reciprocal process, two groups claiming to be the real insiders and looking at the others as outsiders. Normally, members of a group value themselves more highly than people outside their own group. The use of an in- and outsider paradigm supposes that polarized public opinion caused alienation between the two groups and indirectly strengthened the internal coherence of the NSB organization. It is also possible that during a dynamic and reciprocal process of deeper internal integration within the group and rejecting the other group as a whole in a polarized political atmosphere, opportunities for individual contact across party lines perhaps still remained.

The plan of the book

This study will examine the social aspects of membership in the Dutch National Socialist party during the Second World War. The main question is: what was the influence of NSB membership on a members’ life and on his or her social relationships? To answer this questions I will first focus on the influence of NSB membership: how it affected them ideologically, how they participated in the party and what the role violence in the public sphere played. After having answered these questions I will turn to the issue of interaction with nonmembers.

In the first chapter I will examine the role of Dutch National Socialist ideology for individual members of the NSB. Ideology is an essential part of defining identity and interaction with people with other identities, in particular in Dutch society, where ideological

112 Griffin, Loh and Umland, eds, Fascism Past and Present, West and East, 171; Bosworth ed., The Oxford Handbook of Fascism, 6.
divisions defined social and political relations. The attitudes or worldviews provide structures of meaning, within which identity is formed. Different worldviews – ideas about Jews, religion and the occupier – may have caused tensions and frictions between NSB members and those around them, particularly because National Socialist believed that several groups did not belong to the nation. In the ideological framework of Fascism ideas about “otherness” or “outsider” shaped the drive to eliminate the other.

Chapter 2 examines the political participation of NSB members. A question arises regarding the visibility of Dutch National Socialists as members of the National Socialist movement. To what extent did they actively participate in the movement and show their membership in public? In order to explore the political activities of NSB members during the occupation, I will focus on political participation, which fits into a new international perspective on fascist movements. I will follow Robert Paxton, who proposes concentrating on members’ activities and participation rather than on their ideology alone. Political participation includes more than activities. According to Michael Spurr, a historian of British fascism, a fascist lifestyle went beyond simple political ideology; it also included networks, socialization, friends and an identity. In order to examine the fundamental elements of the NSB as a political organization, one should include the methods used by local NSB leaders in mobilizing party members, as well as the levels of participation of those members in order to be able to make statements about political participation throughout the war.

Chapter 3 discusses the role of violence in the NSB. In the monographs about Western European collaborating National Socialist organizations, violence is an under-explored subject. Most authors focus on the ideological development of the leadership and do not analyze the day-to-day practices of local members. The same mechanism can be

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114 Koonz, Nazi Conscience, 5.
115 Kallis, Genocide and Fascism, 23-30.
seen in the historiography of the NSB. The main interest has been in leadership and ideology instead of in members and practices. However, the NSB was a fascist party, and violence is an essential aspect of fascism. During the era of fascism, violence was not limited to fascist parties alone. One important difference, though, is that fascists saw struggle as an aim in itself, not only as an instrument to reach a certain goal. In other words, violence was seen as something positive in itself, related to other concepts worth pursuing, such as war and struggle. In addition to this “intellectual” argument, the fascists also saw the “instrumental” side of violence. Fascists accepted violence as an inevitable instrument to accomplish a New Order free of racially “inferior” groups. It is impossible to analyze the functioning of the NSB without its National Socialist ideology and its violent practices. Moreover, violence shaped the image of National Socialists. A threat of violence existed on both sides, which could widen the gap between National Socialists and other parts of Dutch society and is thus an essential concept when discussing processes of interactions and polarization.

Chapter 4 analyzes the interactions between NSB members and nonmembers. The occupation polarized political opinion: one could choose a position only in favor of or against the occupier. The occupied society was also highly politicized; the smallest decision had political implications: whom to befriend, where to shop, which paper to buy, where to work. The occupation united the inhabitants of the occupied territory in their negative attitudes towards the occupier and those who collaborated with the occupier. The latter were labeled as “traitors.” Their choice to cooperate with the German Nazis had even made them “un-national.” In studies of Belgian, French, Norwegian, and British fascist groups, their members are often pictured as socially unpopular; they are described as being “isolated” from their society. In literature on collaborating Nazi movements, historians seem to agree that collaborators’ commitment to the local National Socialist representative led them into an isolated position. However, in all cases the “isolated position” is a hypothesis, which has not been tested or even well explained.


120 Morgan, Fascism in Europe, 4-5, 64.
121 Kallis, Genocide and Fascism, 106-108, 112.
122 Political violence not only divides people, but polarizes them; David E. Apter, The legitimization of violence (Basingstoke 1997) 1.
123 Occupation is a threat to national unity; Mazower, Hitler’s empire, 417.
124 Swett, Neighbors and enemies, 22.
125 Kallis, Genocide and Fascism, 282; E.g. De Wever, Greep naar de Macht, 349, 483, 484, 594, 626; Conway, Collaboration in Belgium, 18-19, 76, 156.
The last chapter examines the final phase of the occupation. By September 5th, 1944, almost everyone in the Netherlands believed the Nazi defeat was not far off. These developments pleased most Dutch citizens but troubled NSB members. Thinking their defeat was imminent, the German and Dutch National Socialists panicked. So, the interactions, ideological commitments, activities, and violence changed dramatically after the putative Allied victory in September 1944. Because the levels intertwined strongly, I analyze all levels together in this final stage.

I have opted for a new approach by designing research on the grassroots level. I believe that a bottom-up approach may bring us new ways of understanding Dutch National Socialists and National Socialism during the Second World War. It fits into recent international studies on fascism, the daily life of fascists and daily life in the Second World War. I have selected five towns in the most industrialized, highly populated and richest areas of the Netherlands: Amsterdam, the capital and the area in which most of the Jewish population lived and therefore the most important focus of the Holocaust in the Netherlands; Utrecht, where the Dutch National Socialist movement was founded and established; Hilversum, the heart of intellectual national-socialism; Leiden, where most of the National Socialists came from a working-class background and were less dominantly present on the streets; and finally Haarlem, where NSB members were highly visible.

I have analyzed local newspapers: De Daad (Haarlem, Amsterdam, and Hilversum), and De Werker (Utrecht), and national newspapers: Volk en Vaderland and from the WA: De Zwarte Soldaat. In addition, I analyzed party archives from the NSB and NSB sub-organizations and over a dozen diaries of both members and nonmembers. I also looked at local police archives in order to analyze clashes in the public sphere. Finally, I looked at the postwar files of former NSB members, which recently became more easily available. I decided to analyze approximately 1 percent of the wartime NSB members. I took a random sample from the different areas of my research. Because I have not corrected for gender and education, the sample is not representative. In addition to this random sample, I

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126 Van der Boom, Wij weten niets van hun lot; Browning, Ordinary Men; Goldhagen, Hitler’s Willing Executioners; Johnson, Nazi Terror; Gellately, Backing Hitler; Koonz, The Nazi Conscience; Johnson and Reuband, What we knew.; Gildea, Wieviorka and Warring, eds, Surviving Hitler and Mussolini; Dörner, Die Deutschen und der Holocaust.; Fritzschke, Life and Death in the Third Reich; Sax, Voor Vlaanderen, Volk en Führer.

127 In the research area lived approximately 30.000 NSB-members, I have analyzed 327 dossiers.
was able to conduct deep-dive case studies because of a detailed list of NSB members in Amsterdam, who were aligned to the NSB in 1942. I have constructed a local case study of three streets in Amsterdam, in different neighborhoods: the Kromme Mijdrechtstraat in Amsterdam-South, a neighborhood with a high percentage of Jewish inhabitants; Zacharias Jansestraat in Amsterdam-East with many middle class/white-collar residents; Hudsonstraat in Amsterdam-West with mainly lower-middle-class and working-class residents. Analyzing all members in a street makes it possible to create a better picture of the relationships of individual members and of the neighborhood dynamics.

Until recently, it was difficult to carry out bottom-up history in the field of Dutch fascism studies. The subject of social interaction in daily life is indeed not easy to research. The difficulties lie in the sources; not many records describing social life are available. There are some diaries and letters, but they remain scarce. The main source of this study is the neighborhood surveys in postwar files, conducted after the liberation, and therefore even more problematic. The neighborhood testimonies are not a contemporary source; these testimonies were given in the years following the liberation. Moreover, these surveys were taken during a judicial procedure, which makes them even more problematical. However, if we take these conditions into account, these surveys may offer new insights; these files contain statements of members and those around them taken not long after the occupation.

Besides, the files often also include notes, letters and documents from the period of the occupation. For these reasons, while this source is perhaps not ideal, it remains by far the best source available. An analysis of these statements demonstrates that the statements came from many different neighbors. The postwar files also reveal insights on the other themes of this thesis: the ideology and participation of local members. The information offered by these testimonials is supplemented with other information from the NSB archives, diaries of members and nonmembers and police reports. The police reports are a valuable source for (violent) public confrontations. Therefore, the postwar records combined with other local sources may offer interesting insights about the local community during the German occupation.

129 In 2025 the files will be fully opened; Greta Donker and Sjoerd Faber, Bijzonder gewoon. Het Centraal Archief Bijzondere Rechtspleging (1944-2000) en de ‘lichte’ gevallen (Zwolle 2010) 83-104.