

## **The Democratic Paradox**



# **The Democratic Paradox**

## ***Dutch Revolutionary Struggles over Democratisation and Centralisation (1780-1813)***

De democratische paradox  
De Nederlandse revolutionaire strijd over democratisering en centralisatie  
(1780-1813)  
(met een samenvatting in het Nederlands)

Proefschrift

ter verkrijging van de graad van doctor  
aan de Universiteit Utrecht  
op gezag van de rector magnificus prof. dr. W.H. Gispen,  
ingevolge het besluit van het college van promoties  
in het openbaar te verdedigen op donderdag 6 september 2007  
des middags te 2.30 uur  
door

Thomas Poell

geboren op 7 februari 1973, te Haarlem

Promotoren: Prof. dr. M. Prak  
Prof. dr. I. de Haan

Image on the cover: fragment of *Nauwkeurige afbeelding van de Nationale Vergadering in Den Haag* (Accurate Portrayal of the National Assembly in The Hague) signed by George Kockers in Middelburg 1797. Private collection of Rutger Schimmelpenninck.

# Contents

<b>Preface</b>	7
<b>1 Introduction</b>	11
Current Explanations	13
<i>The Debate on the Dutch Revolution</i>	15
<i>Historical Puzzles</i>	17
The Political-Process Perspective	19
<i>Democratisation and Centralisation</i>	22
Operationalisation	24
<i>Local Actors, Identities, and Coalitions</i>	25
<i>Central State Actors, Identities, and Coalitions</i>	27
<i>Focusing on Amsterdam</i>	29
<i>Research</i>	31
<i>Limitations</i>	33
<i>Organisation</i>	34
<b>2 The Patriot Revolt (1780-1787)</b>	37
Elite Conflict	38
<i>An Appeal to the Ideal of Popular Sovereignty</i>	40
Popular Reactions	43
<i>Liberal Ideas</i>	45
Coalitions	48
<i>The Construction of the Patriot Coalition</i>	51
The Patriot Revolt in Amsterdam	53
<i>The Patriot Coup</i>	54
<i>Consequences</i>	57
Conclusion	59
<b>3 The Unitary Democratic Revolution (1795-1798)</b>	61
The Introduction of the Unitary Democratic State Model	62
<i>Revolution</i>	65
<i>New Identities and Actors</i>	66
The Creation of a Sovereign Provincial Government	68
<i>Motives</i>	69
<i>The Revolutionary Committee and the French</i>	71
<i>The Partial Subordination of the Amsterdam Municipality</i>	74
The Creation of the National Assembly	77
<i>Local Democracy</i>	80
<i>The Coup in Friesland</i>	83
A New Constitution	85
<i>A Democratic Compromise?</i>	87
<i>A Network of Revolutionary Clubs</i>	91
<i>The Coup of 1798</i>	96
Conclusion	99

<b>4</b>	<b>The Federalist Reversal (1798-1805)</b>	101
	The Breakdown of the Unitary Democratic Alliance	102
	<i>The Restoration of the Democratic Process</i>	104
	<i>The Clubs and the French</i>	106
	The Federalist Reversal	108
	<i>Time Consuming Procedures</i>	110
	<i>Lack of Resources</i>	113
	<i>Change of Opinion</i>	115
	<i>A National Coalition?</i>	117
	<i>The Coup</i>	119
	Local Autonomy	122
	<i>The Restoration of the Local Corporate Alliance</i>	123
	<i>The Decentralisation of the State</i>	126
	Conclusion	128
<b>5</b>	<b>From Collaboration to Oppression (1805-1813)</b>	131
	A New Coalition?	132
	<i>Financial Concerns</i>	134
	<i>The Schimmelpenninck Government</i>	135
	<i>Amsterdam's Resistance against Financial Unification</i>	139
	The Consolidation of the Financial Coalition	142
	<i>The Battle against the Local Corporate System</i>	146
	<i>From Indirect to Direct Rule</i>	149
	<i>Local Resistance Continued</i>	151
	<i>Financial Subordination</i>	154
	Oppression	156
	<i>Intensified Local Resistance</i>	159
	Conclusion	161
<b>6</b>	<b>Conclusion</b>	163
	The Democratic Paradox	163
	Coalitions	165
	Democratisation & Centralisation	167
	The Debate	168
	<b>Samenvatting</b>	171
	De democratische paradox	172
	Coalities	173
	Democratisering en centralisatie	174
	<b>Consulted Archives</b>	177
	<b>Bibliography</b>	181
	<b>Curriculum Vitae</b>	190

# Preface

Like the Dutch Revolution, this research project has been characterized by various breakthroughs, but also by many setbacks. As the late eighteenth-century revolutionaries, I have frequently changed objectives and alliances. Consequently, the final result is very different from what was originally intended.

In the beginning, the aim was to investigate the development of national states in the urban regions of Europe, such as the Low Countries, Switzerland, and Northern Italy. I expected this development to be particularly problematic because the cities in these regions had, throughout the early modern period, been politically more or less autonomous. From the late eighteenth-century revolutions onwards, these cities and their elites suddenly became subordinated to central states.

To find out how the political rulers of such previously autonomous cities reacted to the centralisation of authority, I decided to focus my research on the Amsterdam elite. This elite had not only enjoyed substantial political autonomy in the early modern period, it had also wielded a lot of influence on the politics of the Dutch Republic as a whole. All this started to change in the revolutionary period. Hence, I planned on writing a book, which would show how the Amsterdam elite strongly resisted the centralisation process.

However, once I began to investigate, I discovered that the historical reality was much more complex, complicated and confusing, than my theoretical scheme suggested. First, no continuous centralisation process could be observed. During the 1780s, no attempts were even made to create more centralized state structures. In these years, the revolutionaries were primarily focussed on the democratisation of local government. The centralisation process did take off after the revolution of 1795, but was again reversed in 1801. A similar reversal occurred in the process of democratisation.

Second, a perhaps even more confusing phenomenon caught my eye: the Amsterdam elite did not at all act according to my theoretical expectations. Although I did find Amsterdam politicians who tried to protect the political autonomy of the city, there were many others who strongly supported the centralisation of the state. Moreover, I found a substantial number of Amsterdam politicians who occupied an in-between position: they favoured financial unification, but at the same time wanted to maintain the political autonomy of the provincial and local governments. And, to make matters more complicated, the position of the Amsterdam politicians on other crucial issues, such as the democratisation of government, did not always logically cluster with their view on the centralisation of the state. For example, many politicians who supported a unified state were also in favour of a far-reaching democratisation of government, but, at the same time, there were too many exceptions to make this a rule. Finally, to complicate the political landscape even further, throughout the revolutionary period, Amsterdam politicians repeatedly changed their mind on how the state should be reformed.

Taken together, these various and also shifting positions could not be fitted within the state-formation perspective which was my original frame of reference. In fact, the results of my research seemed to defy all classifications which had so far been made to analyse the Dutch Revolution. Categories such as “unitarist” and “federalist”, “democrat” and “aristocrat”, or “radical”, “moderate”, and “conservative” are all based on the assumption that the interests of the revolutionaries remained more or less stable over time.

Moreover, it assumes that the revolutionaries formed large clusters, which shared identical interests on a number of crucial issues. My research suggested a much more fragmented and unstable situation, in which the political interests of Amsterdam politicians not only seemed to shift frequently, but their political alliances and identities appeared to be subject to change as well.

After having made several failed attempts to analyze this constantly shifting political landscape through the state-formation perspective, I decided to change my approach. Instead of investigating how the political organization of the early modern Republic determined the revolution and the subsequent struggle over the transformation of the state, I abandoned all such preconceptions and focussed on the chaotic process of revolutionary interaction itself.

This shift in perspective proved to be fruitful. Once I no longer had to fit the actions and statements of the Amsterdam politicians within a particular mold, I could freely investigate how at times they clashed and then again cooperated with each other. Now I could use the shifting identities, interests, and coalitions to explain why and how the processes of centralisation and democratisation frequently broke down, and were even reversed in the course of the revolutionary period.

Thus, my confrontation with the chaotic and rapidly shifting character of the Dutch revolution not only impelled me to change my theoretical perspective, it also forced me to change my explanatory objectives. As I observed the many reversals in the centralisation and democratisation of the Dutch state, and obviously of other European states, I became fascinated by the problematic character of political modernization. Hence, instead of trying to explain how and why the Dutch national state had been established, I decided to focus on the sudden advances and reversals in the political modernization process during the revolutionary era.

Inevitably, my theoretical twists and turns have impelled me to change my scientific alliances as well. Originally, I primarily found myself in the company of socio-economic historians, which in the Netherlands have been the main adepts of the state-formation perspective. As I moved towards a process approach, I increasingly entered the domain of political historians.

Nevertheless, throughout this project I have been supported by my supervisor Maarten Prak. Although a socio-economic historian in heart and soul, Maarten has fully encouraged and assisted my efforts to develop a political-process perspective on the revolutionary period. I would very much like to thank him for his ongoing support, his intelligent advice, detailed criticism, and of course his patience.

My gratitude also goes to Ido de Haan, who became my second supervisor during the later stages of the project. Ido has greatly helped me to make the final transition to the political-process approach. In combination, Maarten and Ido were an excellent team of advisors.

Besides my two supervisors, I would like to thank my former colleagues in Social and Economic History in Utrecht, who have, on different occasions, commented on my work. Especially Oscar Gelderblom and Erika Kuijpers have been very helpful in this respect. In sharing an office, Erika, together with Joop van der Zee, and Lidewij Hesselink, has also made my life as a PhD student much less lonely.

Other people and collectives which have made this research project a scientifically rewarding and socially pleasurable experience, include the participants of: the NW Posthumus Research School PhD program, the European graduate school ESTER, the



Economic and Social History seminars of Utrecht University, the *Revolution and Restoration* workshop of Utrecht University, the *Contentious Politics* workshop of Columbia University, and the *Politics and History of European Democratisation Network* of the European Science Foundation. Thanks to the financial support of the Research Institute for History and Culture (OGC), I have been able to attend these seminars, and various other conferences in Europe and the US.

Finally, I would like to thank Rutger Schimmelpenninck, who has been so kind to give me permission to use a fragment of an image of the National Assembly in The Hague for the cover of this book. My gratitude also goes to my parents and friends, who supported me when I could not find a way out of the labyrinth of seemingly contradictory evidence, and theoretical jigsaws. But, above all, I would like to thank my partner Emma Los, who has accompanied me during all the highs and lows of this journey. Without her advice and companionship, this book would not have been finished.

T.P.  
July 2007



# 1 Introduction

*Now you are, through the generous help of the French people, and the appropriate use of your own powers, free. You consequently obtain all of your rights, which have been violently stolen from you, and on which you all, who ever you are, can make an equal claim. YOU ARE FREE! YOU ARE EQUAL!*<sup>1</sup>

With these optimistic words, the Amsterdam revolutionaries took over the administration of the city on 19 January 1795. As they readily acknowledged, they were able to do so with the help of the French revolutionary armies, which had invaded the Dutch Republic. The Amsterdam population experienced the French invasion and the revolution as a liberation. Three days of celebrations followed, in which the people danced around a liberty tree in the city centre. To get the message across that freedom and equality were not mere empty words, the new revolutionary governors promised, on 26 January, that they were firmly committed to establish a representative system giving the population an opportunity to elect its own representatives.<sup>2</sup>

In the following years representative structures were indeed developed in Amsterdam and other Dutch cities, as well as on the provincial and central state levels. Moreover, the Republic, which up to 1795 had been a decentralised, city-dominated state, rapidly became more centralised, despite widespread resistance against the elimination of local and provincial autonomy. Three years after the revolution of 1795, in May 1798, a constitution was established, which could be considered as a major step in the direction of the modern unitary democratic state. Although this constitution did not give voting rights to women, or the poorest groups in society, it did grant a major part of the male population the right to participate in politics. Moreover, it formally eliminated many of the privileges and corporations, which had divided the early modern Dutch population into highly unequal socio-economic and political groups. Finally, the constitution of 1798 officially concentrated political sovereignty in the central state, which turned the Amsterdam government into a subordinated administrative body. In sum, a new age of unitary democratic politics was dawning, or so it seemed.

However, this new age did not last very long. After only three years, in November 1801, the constitution of 1798 was replaced with a new constitution, which effectively eliminated the newly established democratic procedures. Moreover, political authority was partly decentralised in 1801, which made the Republic more of a federalist state. This, in turn, allowed local authorities, like the Amsterdam government, to partly restore the local

---

<sup>1</sup> Thans zyt gy door de edelmoedige hulp des Franschen volks, en het gepast gebruik dat gy van uwe eigene krachten gemaakt hebt, vry. Gy verkrygt daardoor alle uwe Rechten, welke u gewelddadig onvreemd waren, en waarop gy allen, wie gy ook zyn moogt, een gelyke aanspraak hebt. GY ZYT VRY! GY ZYT GELYK! (Gemeente Archief Amsterdam (GAA), Nieuwe Stedelijk Bestuur (NSB) (arch. nr. 5053), inv. nr. 1 (Handelingen van het Comité Revolutionair), 224.

<sup>2</sup> GAA, NSB (arch. nr. 5053), inv. nr. 5 (Proclamation of the Provisional Representatives concerning the elections, 26 Januari 1795).

corporations. Hence, a significant reversal in democratisation and centralisation took place in 1801. In fact, the democratisation process was not revived until the 1840s, as the Dutch state became increasingly more authoritarian after the reversal of 1801. And, although the centralisation process was revived in 1805, it met with strong resistance in the following years. Up to the end of the French occupation, in 1813, central and local authorities were struggling with each other over the transfer of authority and the elimination of local corporations.

These observations suggest that the creation of the modern unitary democratic state was a far from straightforward development. This impression is further reinforced, when we consider the revolutionary years between 1780 and 1787, which can be seen as the first phase of the late eighteenth-century Dutch Revolution (1780-1813). Striking about this first phase, which is usually referred to as the Patriot Revolt, is that it largely reinforced the early modern local corporations and systems of privileges. This is particularly striking from the point of view of the modern observer, as this first revolutionary phase was characterised by widespread claims for the sovereignty of the people. Thus, in contrast to today's dominant democratic ideal, the claims for popular sovereignty were not necessarily tied to the development of a unitary democratic state. All in all, instead of a straightforward development of a unitary democratic Dutch state, we see sudden advances, and quick reversals in centralisation and democratisation, as well as periods in which revolutionary activity mainly seemed to reinforce the early modern decentralised state structure.

Significantly, the same patterns can also be observed in other parts of Europe during the late eighteenth-century revolutionary era. For example, the revolutions in France, and Switzerland, as in the Netherlands, started with intense struggles for democratisation. Yet, in both cases, the resulting process of democratisation failed, only to be revived several decades later. In terms of centralisation, the record was more varied. The French state became more centralised, but in Switzerland, the initial process of centralisation was reversed.<sup>3</sup> Overall, the French, Dutch, and Swiss revolutions were characterised by almost as many reversals as advances in democratisation and centralisation. A pattern which obviously extended beyond these late eighteenth-century examples, and which could, and can, also be observed in other parts of Europe, and the rest of the world.

The larger aim of this book is to understand the problematic nature of the European political modernisation process.<sup>4</sup> The Dutch Revolution will provide the empirical

<sup>3</sup> M.H. Lerner, "Privileged communities or Equal Individuals: The Political Culture of *Freiheit* and *Liberté* in the Swiss Public Arena, 1796-1847" (PhD thesis, Columbia University, 2003); D.M.G. Sutherland, *France 1789-1815: Revolution and Counterrevolution* (London: Fontana Paperbacks, 1985); C. Tilly, *Contention & Democracy in Europe, 1650-2000* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 101-20.

<sup>4</sup> Following John Breuilly, modernisation is defined as a process, and not as a deliberate project involving the development of a specific set of features, such as a rational state bureaucracy, equal citizenship, and a certain level of industrialization. Modernisation as a deliberate project is directly connected to the distinction between modernising and traditional forces, which supposedly struggled with each other over the modernisation of state and society (perhaps the most famous articulation of this view of modernisation is: W. Rostow, *The Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1960). However, as we will see, no such modernising and traditional forces can be distinguished. Instead, political and societal change was brought about by a wide variety of actors, which most often acted upon short-term self-interests. In combination, the struggles and coalitions between these actors resulted in political changes, which can retrospectively be qualified as a process of modernisation, or its reversal. Hence, we will loosely define modernisation as the transformation process of 'a societal division of labour based on multifunctional corporations to one based on functionally specialised institutions' (J. Breuilly, "Napoleonic Germany and State-formation" in *Collaboration and resistance in Napoleonic Europe: state formation in an age of upheaval, c. 1800-1815*, ed.

underpinnings for this analysis. Its starting point is the idea that the ruptures in democratisation and centralisation are not mere glitches in an ongoing modernisation process, as most interpretations of the late eighteenth-century revolutions suggest. Instead, it is assumed that we can only fully comprehend the hopscotch character of political modernisation through an analysis of precisely these ruptures.

## Current Explanations

The notion that the late eighteenth-century revolutions were part of a progressive process of modernisation can be found in various studies on modern European history. This is particularly evident in the studies based on the ‘bourgeois revolution’ thesis. Of course, the most famous proponent of this thesis is Karl Marx.<sup>5</sup> Twentieth century advocates are among others the sociologists Ralf Dahrendorf, and Jürgen Habermas.<sup>6</sup> The ‘bourgeois revolution’ thesis contends that in the course of capitalist development a strong, independent middle class emerges, which establishes rational legal systems, checks on arbitrary rule, civil society, and representative government. The late eighteenth century revolutions play a crucial role, as they allowed, according to this modernisation account, the rising middle class to take control of politics and implement the necessary reforms.

The ‘bourgeois revolution’ thesis has especially been important in the historiography on the French Revolution, which up to the 1970s has been dominated by Marxist accounts. Marxist historians, such as Albert Soboul, have traced the origins of this Revolution to the emancipatory actions of the bourgeois in the face of aristocratic reaction. Moreover, they have interpreted its outcome as the bourgeois triumph of the capitalist mode of production.<sup>7</sup> A more political and European wide application of the ‘bourgeois revolution’ thesis has been presented by Robert Palmer’s influential study *The Age of Democratic Revolutions* (1959-1964). Through an analysis of revolutionary clashes in France, America, Switzerland, Italy, Germany, Poland, Hungary, and the Netherlands, Palmer seeks to demonstrate that these clashes revolved around a struggle between predominantly urban middle class revolutionaries, who were unhappy about the absence of proper citizenship, and the aristocratic rulers of the ancien regime, who tried to maintain the political system in

---

M.Rowe (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003): 138-39; Ibid., “Approaches to Nationalism” in *Mapping the Nation*, ed. G. Balakrishnan (London: Verso, 1996): 146-74; For a general discussion on modernisation and modernisation theory see: D. Eyoh, “Modernization” in *New Dictionary of the History of Ideas*, vol. IV, ed. M. Horowitz (Detroit: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 2005): 1485-87; G. Rozman, “Modernization Theory” in *New Dictionary of the History of Ideas*, vol. IV, ed. M. Horowitz (Detroit: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 2005): 1487-90.

<sup>5</sup> See K. Marx “Contributions to the Critique of Hegel’s Philosophy of Law” in *Collected Works*, vol. III, K. Marx, and F. Engels (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1975): 3-129, 175-87; K. Marx “The German Ideology” in *Collected Works*, vol. V, K. Marx, and F. Engels (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1976): 19-539.

<sup>6</sup> R. Dahrendorf, *Society and Democracy in Germany* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1967); J. Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere. An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1989).

<sup>7</sup> A. Soboul, *The French Revolution, 1787-1799: From the Storming of the Bastille to Napoleon* (New York: Vintage Books, 1974); See also: G. Lefebvre, *The Coming of the French Revolution* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1947); A. Mathiez, *The French Revolution* (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1964); G. Rudé, *The Crowd in the French Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967).

its original form. Palmer argues that the foundations of liberal representative democracy were established, wherever the democratic minded revolutionaries prevailed.<sup>8</sup>

Over recent decades, the 'bourgeois revolution' thesis has been strongly criticised and largely abandoned. Yet, students of European history have continued to interpret the late eighteenth century revolutions as part of an ongoing modernisation process. They have mainly done so through the state formation perspective, which is based on the idea that the development of the modern state was the result of the constant military competition between states. In line with this state formation perspective, researchers have interpreted the late eighteenth century revolutions as a critical phase in the centralisation of European states.

The state formation approach has, in the 1960s and 1970s, been developed by Reinhard Bendix, Stein Rokkan, and Charles Tilly.<sup>9</sup> Especially important in promoting this approach has been Theda Skocpol's *States and Social Revolutions* (1979), which compares the French, Russian, and Chinese revolutions. This book claims, on the one hand, that one of the main causes of social revolutions is intense military competition. And, on the other hand, it argues that social revolutions lead to more centralised state organisations.<sup>10</sup> Another important contribution to the state formation perspective has been made by Charles Tilly, who shows that Europeans states have developed along different paths, until the eighteenth century, when large monarchical states, such as France and England, started to overpower the other types of states. The city-dominated states, like the Dutch Republic and Venice, and the states dominated by the aristocracy, such as Poland and Hungary, were subsequently destroyed or centralised through outside force. Significantly, the centralisation of the city- and aristocracy-dominated states started in the revolutionary period around 1800, when France occupied large parts of Europe.<sup>11</sup>

While there are major differences between the state formation and the 'bourgeois revolution' perspectives, they both understand the late eighteenth century revolutions as part of an ongoing process of modernisation. This obviously makes it impossible to account for the many reversals in centralisation and democratisation, which occurred during the late eighteenth century revolutionary period. These reversals have either been ignored, or presented as hiccups of an otherwise progressive development of the modern state. Thus, the modernisation perspective has prevented the students of European history from fully understanding the specific dynamic of the late eighteenth century revolutionary changes, and more in general the problematic character of political modernisation.

This critique of the modernisation perspective is not particularly new. There are numerous critical accounts of this perspective. Moreover, many attempts have been made to overcome modernisation theory. In fact, the state formation approach has partly been developed out of dissatisfaction with the modernistic tendencies of the 'bourgeois

<sup>8</sup> R.R. Palmer, *The Age of Democratic Revolution* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1959-1964).

<sup>9</sup> R. Bendix, *Kings or People: Power and the Mandate to Rule* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978); Ibid., *Nation-Building and Citizenship: Studies of Our Changing Social Order* (New York: John Wiley, 1964); S.N. Eisenstadt and S. Rokkan, ed. *Building States and Nations* (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1973); C. Tilly, ed. *The Formation of National States in Western Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975).

<sup>10</sup> T. Skocpol, *States and Social Revolutions: A Comparative Analysis of France, Russia, and China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 154, 284-93.

<sup>11</sup> C. Tilly, *Coercion, Capital and the European State: AD 990-1992* (Cambridge: Blackwell, 1992); Ibid., *European Revolutions 1492 - 1992* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993).

revolution' thesis.<sup>12</sup> However, as we have seen, the state formation approach does not really break with modernisation theory, as it is based on the assumption that modern history is characterised by a progressive development of more rational and centralised state structures.

A more successful attempt to dissolve the modernisation perspective has, over recent decades, been made by various cultural historians. Inspired by François Furet's *Penser la Révolution française*, cultural historians have started to focus on the revolutionary process itself. Instead of examining the revolution as part of an ongoing modernisation process, they have considered it as a source of new political practices, and ideas. This shift in focus has resulted in a great number of studies that investigate the cultural and politically innovative character of the revolutionary period.<sup>13</sup> However, so far these cultural historians have not produced a new theory which might explain why the various late eighteenth century European revolutions were characterised by almost as many reversals as advances in centralisation and democratisation.

### ***The Debate on the Dutch Revolution***

This book specifically challenges the current historical explanations of the Dutch Revolution. This revolution is a good starting point for an investigation on the problematic character of political modernisation. In comparison with the French Revolution, the centralisation of authority was much more of a contentious issue in the Netherlands, while the debate over democratisation was fiercer than in the Swiss state. Moreover, unlike the Italian and German revolutions, the Dutch Revolution was not complicated by major territorial changes. This revolution is also interesting because it went through various successive stages in terms of democratisation and centralisation, which will allow us to enhance our understanding of the dynamic of these processes.

Like the more general studies on modern European history, the current explanations of the Dutch Revolution tend to understand the late eighteenth-century revolutionary period as part of an ongoing modernisation process. First, inspired by Palmer's analysis of the late eighteenth-century revolutions, various historians, most notably C.H.E. de Wit and Simon Schama, have applied the 'bourgeois revolution' thesis specifically to the Dutch Revolution, which is conceptualised as the first major step in the direction of modern liberal democracy.<sup>14</sup> Second, historians working in the state formation tradition, such as Tom Pfeil, and Jan Luiten van Zanden and Arthur van Riel, have argued that the Dutch Revolution should primarily be understood as an attempt to solve the economic, financial, and military problems of the Dutch Republic, which resulted from the constant military competition between European states. According to these students of state formation, the

---

<sup>12</sup> See especially: Tilly, *The Formation of National States in Western Europe*.

<sup>13</sup> F. Furet, *Penser la Révolution française* (Paris: Gallimard, 1978); Prime examples of Anglophone studies, which have been inspired by the work of Furet are: K.M. Baker, ed. *The French Revolution and the Creation of Modern Political Culture* (Oxford: Pergamon, 1987-1994); L. Hunt, *Politics, Culture, and Class in the French Revolution* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984).

<sup>14</sup> S. Schama, *Patriots and Liberators: Revolution in the Netherlands, 1780-1813* (New York: Knopf, 1977); C.H.E. de Wit, *De strijd tussen aristocratie en democratie in Nederland, 1780-1848: kritisch onderzoek van een historisch beeld en herwaardering van een periode* (Heerlen: Winants, 1965).

centralisation of the Dutch state was the solution to these problems.<sup>15</sup> Finally, cultural historians, like Niek van Sas, and Wijnandt Mijnhardt and Joost Kloek, have maintained that the Dutch Revolution should be understood in the context of the European Enlightenment. More specifically, they have claimed that this revolution established the modern political and cultural Dutch nation.<sup>16</sup>

Although all these explanations understand the Dutch Revolution as part of an ongoing modernisation process, they strongly disagree on the exact contribution of this revolution to the process of modernisation. Consequently, a lot of debate has been devoted to the allegedly traditional or modern character of the revolution. The proponents of the 'bourgeois revolution' thesis all agree that the Dutch Revolution had a decisively modern character, as they interpret it as the beginning of the development of modern liberal representative democracy.<sup>17</sup> This is most clearly expressed by C.H.E. de Wit, who maintains that: 'The foundations of the modern Netherlands have been established in the years between 1780 and 1848, a long struggle between old and new, between aristocracy and democracy.'<sup>18</sup> By contrast, the state formation historians generally concur that the Patriot Revolt of the 1780s should be considered as traditional, since it did not promote the centralisation of the state, but rather strengthened the local corporate state structure of the early modern Republic.<sup>19</sup> As the state formation historian Maarten Prak writes: 'The Patriots stood within a long tradition of urban middle-class opposition politics.'<sup>20</sup> In the minds of the students of state formation, the Dutch Revolution only became modern after 1795, when the Dutch revolutionaries started to eliminate the local corporations and establish a unitary state.<sup>21</sup> Finally, the cultural historians disagree amongst themselves on the specific character of the revolution. On the one hand, Van Sas has argued that the Patriot Revolt of the 1780s should be considered as politically modern because it led to a dramatic expansion of the political space.<sup>22</sup> On the other hand, Mijnhardt and Kloek maintain that it is a mistake to look for elements of modern politics during the Dutch Revolution, since there was little room for a free political debate, as opponents were generally oppressed and censored. They assert that the main transformation took place in the cultural realm.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>15</sup> T. Pfeil, *'Tot redding van het vaderland': het primaat van de Nederlandse overheidsfinanciën in de Bataafs-Franse tijd 1795-1810* (Amsterdam: NEHA, 1998); J.L. van Zanden, and A. van Riel, *Nederland 1780-1914: staat, instituties en economische ontwikkeling* (Amsterdam: Balans, 2000).

<sup>16</sup> J. Kloek, and W.W. Mijnhardt, *1800: Blauwdrukken voor een samenleving* (Den Haag: Sdu Uitgevers, 2001); N.C.F. van Sas, *De metamorfose van Nederland: van oude orde naar moderniteit, 1750-1900* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2004).

<sup>17</sup> Palmer, vol. I, 4-5; *Ibid.*, vol. II, 180-82; Schama, 14, 22-23; De Wit, 7, 45-47, 380.

<sup>18</sup> De grondslagen van het moderne Nederland zijn in de jaren 1780 tot 1848 gelegd, een langdurige strijd tussen oud en nieuw, tussen aristocratie en democratie (De Wit, 7).

<sup>19</sup> Van Zanden, and Van Riel, 55.

<sup>20</sup> M. Prak, "Citizen Radicalism and Democracy in the Dutch Republic: The Patriot Movement of the 1780s" *Theory and Society*, 20.1 (1991): 94.

<sup>21</sup> Even though the state formation authors do not explicitly discuss the modern character of the Dutch Revolution, they do describe the take-off of an political modernisation process after 1795 (see M. Prak, *Republikeinse veelheid, democratisch enkelvoud: Sociale verandering in het Revolutietijdvak 's-Hertogenbosch 1770-1820* (Nijmegen: SUN, 1999), 317; Van Zanden, and Van Riel, 57-58).

<sup>22</sup> N.C.F. van Sas, "The Patriot Revolution: New Perspectives" in *The Dutch Republic in the Eighteenth Century: Decline, Enlightenment, and Revolution*, ed. M.C. Jacob, and W.W. Mijnhardt (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992): 116-118.

<sup>23</sup> Kloek, and Mijnhardt, 20.



Closely related to the debate over the traditional or modern character of the Dutch Revolution, is the discussion over the question whether Dutch society changed itself, or was transformed from the outside. As the Netherlands were occupied by the French army from 1795 onwards, this has been a central issue of debate among Dutch historians. In general, those who have categorised the Patriot Revolt as modern, such as Palmer and Van Sas, have also claimed that Dutch society was primarily changed by the Dutch revolutionaries. Of course, this is not coincidental, since the claim that the goals and practices of the Patriot revolutionaries were modern, almost by default implies that the Dutch did not necessarily need the French to pursue a modernisation of their political system. As Van Sas, for example, writes: 'Precisely because of the cultural nation formation and the patriot cultus of the seventies, and the political school of the Patriot Period, one knew how to make the Batavian Revolution into a truly *Batavian* revolution.'<sup>24</sup> On the contrary, those who consider the Patriot Revolt as traditional, which include the cultural historians Mijnhardt and Kloek, as well as the students of state formation, argue that the revolutionary changes after 1795 were largely imposed from the outside. They primarily attribute the sudden acceleration in the processes of democratisation and centralisation to the French occupation in the years after 1795.<sup>25</sup>

### Historical Puzzles

All these interpretations share some specific problems when confronted with the historical record. In particular, they have trouble explaining the problematic relation between democratisation and centralisation, as well as the reversals in the modernisation process. Consequently, we are left with several historical puzzles.

First, the Patriot Revolt has been interpreted as the first step in the development of liberal representative democracy and modern politics, but also, by contrast, as an early modern corporate revolution. Evidence can be found for each interpretation. Van Sas shows that new democratic ideas, practices, and forms of association, which undermined the early modern corporate order, were developed during the Patriot Revolt.<sup>26</sup> By contrast, Prak demonstrates that the majority of the revolutionary organisations that were created, and the reforms that were implemented, largely confirmed the existing corporate state structure.<sup>27</sup> Hence, it must be explained how it was possible that the Patriot Revolt only set off a limited corporate form of democratisation, while at the same time producing new liberal democratic ideas and practices which undermined the corporate framework.

The second puzzle is presented by the sudden advances in centralisation and democratisation between 1795 and 1798. The question is whether these advances can be seen as a major step forward in the direction of unitary democracy. The proponents of the 'bourgeois revolution' thesis, like De Wit and Schama, definitely think so. They interpret the Batavian Revolution as a democratic revolution, which was completed by the unitary

---

<sup>24</sup> Juist dankzij de culturele natievorming en de verlichte vaderlandcultus van de jaren zeventig en de politieke leerschool van de patriottentijd wist men de Bataafse Revolutie ook werkelijk tot een volbloed *Bataafse* revolutie te maken (N.C.F. van Sas, "Scenario's voor een onvoltooide revolutie, 1795-1798" *Bijdragen en mededelingen betreffende de geschiedenis der Nederlanden* 104(1989) 626).

<sup>25</sup> Kloek, and Mijnhardt, 29-34; Prak, *Republikeinse veelheid*, 201, 321; Van Zanden, and Van Riel, 57-58.

<sup>26</sup> Van Sas, "Patriot Revolution", 99-118.

<sup>27</sup> Prak, "Citizen Radicalism", 91-94; *Ibid.*, *Republikeinse veelheid*, 190-197.

democratic constitution of 1798.<sup>28</sup> However, there are also authors, like Kloek and Mijnhardt, who doubt the democratic character of the reforms in these years.<sup>29</sup> The historical evidence again appears to support both viewpoints. The creation of representative institutions on all state levels, in which large parts of the male population could participate, certainly seems to confirm the opinion of the De Wit and Schama. The official abolishment of the local system of privileges provides further support for this position. By contrast, the method through which these reforms were achieved appears far from democratic. The constitution of 1798 was established through a coup in which political opponents were eliminated, and the press heavily censored. Thus, there was a contradiction between the method of reform and the content of the reforms.

Even more puzzling is the reversal in the revolutionary transformation process in the years after 1801. This reversal certainly does not correspond with the cultural and state formation approaches, which tend to see a progressive process of revolutionary change following from the economic, financial, and military crisis, or the political or cultural Enlightenment. Consequently, it is unsurprising that the cultural and state formation historians largely ignore the reversal. De Wit and Schama, on the other hand, do see a reversal taking place, which they interpret as an aristocratic victory.<sup>30</sup> Nevertheless, this is not a particularly satisfactory explanation either, as the minutes of the national parliamentary debates, as well as the letters of various prominent revolutionaries, show that a substantial part of the revolutionaries cooperated with the reversal.<sup>31</sup> This suggests that it was not so much a resurgence of old regime forces, but a fundamental change of mind that reversed the revolutionary transformation process.

The fourth puzzle is presented by the revival of the centralisation process in 1805. This revival is striking because it was not accompanied by a recovery of the democratisation process. This is particularly problematic for the proponents of the 'bourgeois revolution' thesis, who tend to assume that the two processes were necessarily linked with each other.<sup>32</sup> Obviously, the revival is much less problematic for the state formation perspective, which does not connect centralisation to democratisation. More puzzling for this perspective is the strong local resistance against centralisation in the years after 1805. This resistance does not correspond with the theoretical scheme of the state formation approach, which sees a progressive centralisation process, with diminishing local resistance. Consequently, we need to examine why the efforts to centralise political authority continued to set off strong local opposition. Furthermore, we have to investigate why the centralisation process was not accompanied by efforts to democratise the state, which had been the case in the years between 1795 and 1801.

---

<sup>28</sup> Palmer, 199-204; Schama, 20, 352-53; De Wit, 380.

<sup>29</sup> Kloek, and Mijnhardt, 20.

<sup>30</sup> Schama, 419-23; De Wit, 216-225.

<sup>31</sup> H.T. Colenbrander, *Gedenkstukken der algemeene geschiedenis van Nederland van 1795 tot 1840*, vol. III, *Uitvoerend bewind, Engelsch-Russische inval, Amiens, 1798-1801* (Den Haag: Nijhoff, 1907), 643-644; *Dagverhaal der handelingen van het Vertegenwoordigend Lichaam des Bataafschen volks*, vol. XI (Den Haag: Van Schelle en Comp., 1798-1801), 901-946; L. de Gou, *De staatsregeling van 1801* (Den Haag, Instituut voor Nederlandse Geschiedenis, 1995), 503, 558-562.

<sup>32</sup> This problem is particularly visible in the analysis of C.H.E. de Wit, who portrays the revival of the centralisation process as an uneasy compromise between democrats and aristocrats (De Wit, 269).

## The Political-Process Perspective

To solve these puzzles and improve our understanding of the dynamic of the late eighteenth-century modernisation process, I propose to focus on the interaction between the revolutionary actors. The main problem with the current approaches, which concentrate on the socio-economic, financial, military, or cultural background of the revolution, is that they necessarily limit the examination to particular revolutionary groups. Hence, proponents of the ‘bourgeois revolution’ thesis tend to focus on the clash between the middle and upper classes, while cultural historians pay most attention to the revolutionary intellectuals who introduced new ideas, whereas the students of state formation mostly investigate the corporate groups, as well as the reform-minded state elite. Consequently, these perspectives pay little attention to the interaction between the wide variety of political actors involved in the revolutionary process, such as various popular revolutionary groups, as well as politicians at different state levels, and foreign regimes.

The interactions between political actors are crucial because they not only lead to the transformation of society, but they also changed these very actors themselves, their identities, and the relations between them. Recent work by theoretical sociologists has made clear that political actors cannot be considered as stable entities with a specific set of interests. Instead, they constantly change in the course of the political process through their interactions with other actors.<sup>33</sup> This methodological insight will prove to be crucial for our analysis of the advances and reversals in centralisation and democratisation, as radical changes in the organisation and identity of political actors obviously affect the pace and direction of these processes. Thus, if we want to make sense of the dynamic of revolutionary change, we need to focus our attention on the revolutionary interaction process itself.

Particularly helpful in this respect is McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly’s reconceptualisation of the classical political mobilisation model, which has so far informed most studies on political change. First, they abandon the notion of objective ‘opportunities and threats’. This idea informed the ‘bourgeois revolution’ thesis, as well as the cultural, and state formation approaches. All three interpretations were based on the assumption that the opportunities or threats that resulted from the rise of the middle classes, the Enlightenment, or the financial crisis were clear and self-evident for the revolutionaries. By contrast, McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly maintain that an opportunity or threat will only invite mobilisation if it is actually visible and interpreted as such by challengers or potential revolutionaries. Hence, any notion of objective interests is abandoned. Instead, McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly show how the constant interpretation and reinterpretation of ‘opportunities and threats’ in contentious politics also lead to the continuous construction and transformation of political identities.<sup>34</sup>

In our account of the Dutch Revolution, we will see how revolutionary groups frequently changed their shared sense of collective purpose and identity, as a result of changing interpretations of ‘opportunities and threats’. For example, during the Patriot Revolt of the 1780s, the Dutch revolutionaries generally agreed that the only way to solve

---

<sup>33</sup> R.H. Bates, et.al, eds., *Analytic Narratives* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997); B. Latour, *Reassembling the Social* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); D. McAdam, S. Tarrow, C. Tilly, *Dynamics of Contention* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); S. Tarrow, C. Tilly, *Contentious Politics* (Boulder: Paradigm Publishers, 2007).

<sup>34</sup> McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly, 46-47.

the economic, financial, and military decline of the Dutch state was by restoring the ancient constitution of the Republic, which they thought had been corrupted. What such a restoration exactly entailed was obviously a matter of debate. However, the crucial point is that the Patriot revolutionaries framed the problems of the Republic, as well as their solution, in terms of the corporate political order. Consequently, the Patriot revolutionaries also constructed political identities that corresponded with the corporate identities of regent, burgher, inhabitant, and outsider. By 1795, after the French Revolution and the subsequent invasion of the Netherlands, many Dutch revolutionaries came to a very different interpretation of 'opportunities and threats'. At this point, the old constitution of the Republic was perceived as the problem rather than the solution. Inspired by the French Revolution, many revolutionaries were looking for a new beginning. The political identities that were subsequently constructed matched this reinterpretation. These identities did not agree with the corporate identities anymore. The term 'burgher' was no longer used to refer to a specific juridical category, but now included almost everyone. Moreover, the label 'democrat', which during the 1780s was employed to denounce political opponents, was increasingly used for self-identification. Hence, the reinterpretation of 'opportunities and threats' led to a significant reconstruction of political identities, which in turn made it possible to organise the revolutionary movement in a very different fashion than in the 1780s.

Besides abandoning the notion of objective and constant 'opportunities and threats', *Dynamics of Contention* also criticises the assumption of the classical mobilisation model that structures of mobilisation are readily available. This assumption also seems to underlie the 'bourgeois revolution' thesis, as well as the cultural, and state formation interpretations. All three approaches see the creation of political groups and organisations as a self-evident and unproblematic response to the opportunities and threats they have identified. McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly argue that instead political organisations, whether newly created or pre-existing, always need to be actively appropriated as 'vehicles of struggle'. Consequently, these organisations are never self-evident entities. To understand political change, we will need to show how political actors are actively constructed and transformed.<sup>35</sup>

The importance of this methodological point becomes clear when we briefly consider the construction and transformation of the Dutch revolutionary movement in the years around 1795. First, before the French invasion, the revolutionary movement still largely operated as a unity. It was organised in reading societies and revolutionary committees, which had been set up in the year leading up to the invasion. Shortly after the invasion, the movement started to fall apart. For example in Amsterdam, the revolutionaries who had taken over the local government, clashed almost immediately with the revolutionary committee, which had organised the revolution in the city. The revolutionary committee claimed that the new governors made too little effort to democratise local government. However, these claims made little impact, until new revolutionary neighbourhood assemblies were created, in which various members of the revolutionary committee became active. By the end of 1795, the neighbourhood assemblies had become the main vehicle of oppositional politics in the city, as they organised a major part of the Amsterdam revolutionaries. In this capacity they were able to force the Amsterdam Municipality to consider a further democratisation of local government. Thus, only by analysing how the Amsterdam revolutionary masses became organised in neighbourhood

---

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 47-48.

assemblies, can we start to understand the democratisation of local government in the following years.

McAdams, Tarrow, and Tilly's final important challenge to the classical mobilisation model is their critique of the single actor framework. So far, social scientists and historians have focused their attention on how specific actors have framed or interpreted politics, and how they subsequently developed new forms of political action to bring about political change. Hence, cultural interpretations of the Dutch Revolution focus on Enlightenment intellectuals, while the state formation authors are mainly interested in reform-minded state elites. McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly emphasise that we should leave behind this static single-actor framework, and concentrate on the interactions between political actors instead. They argue that actors in contentious politics almost constantly develop new forms of political action, and continuously reframe what is at stake in the political struggle. Political actors do this in constant interaction with each other, and not in isolation.<sup>36</sup> These interactions evidently included clashes, but also coalition making.

The significance of this insight becomes clear when we consider the revolutionary interactions in the year leading up to the constitution of 1798. By the summer of 1797, the Dutch national parliament had reached, after more than a year of difficult negotiations, an agreement about a constitutional proposal, which would have to be ratified by the enfranchised population. However, many members of parliament, as well as various societal groups, were unhappy with the proposal, which in the opinion of some went too far in the centralist direction, while others felt that it did not go far enough. The same can be said about the proposed democratic system. As a result, a broad campaign was launched against the proposal, which was consequently rejected. This effectively foreclosed the parliamentary road towards a new constitution. The various parliamentary groups subsequently started to look for support outside the National Assembly. The representatives who were aiming for a unitary democratic constitution were the most successful in this effort. They succeeded in mobilising the support of the French regime, and a network of revolutionary clubs. In turn, this temporary coalition allowed them to take political control, and expel their opponents in the central, provincial and local governments. After this coup, they were able to establish a unitary democratic constitution. Hence, only by carefully analysing the interactions between a wide variety of political actors can we start to understand how a unitary democratic constitution could be established in 1798.

All in all, the proposed changes in the political mobilisation model have far-reaching consequences for the way in which this book will study the Dutch Revolution. Since neither political identities, actors, and the relations between them are predetermined, revolutionary changes cannot be explained through the 'objective' opportunities and threats that motivated revolutionaries to seek these changes. As we have already observed, the opportunity and threats oriented approaches are incapable of explaining the revolutionary advances and reversals in democratisation and centralisation. A process-based approach seems better equipped for this task, as it is based on the very assumption that political identities, actors, and coalitions frequently transform in the course of the revolutionary process, in turn leading to changes in the direction and pace of political modernisation.

---

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 48-50.

### **Democratisation and Centralisation**

How does this perspective correspond with the current explanations of democratisation and centralisation? Democratisation has for a long time been viewed as a single clear-cut process, which is brought about by a specific type of structural change. For example, culturalists have claimed that democratisation will occur where and when a political culture becomes democratic.<sup>37</sup> Economic evolutionists have made a similar argument about economic modernisation,<sup>38</sup> while class theorists have asserted that democratisation should primarily be understood through an examination of the changes in the political relations between economic classes.<sup>39</sup> The chief drawback of these approaches is that it is not altogether clear how structural changes are translated into specific democratic reforms.

The last two decades, most students of democratisation have abandoned the search for a structural cause of democratisation. Instead they have claimed that various paths lead to democracy. Through the comparative analysis of a broad range of democratic transitions, they have identified these paths, and the sets of conditions that determine whether political actors are likely to cooperate, to establish and consolidate democracy. One of the main conclusions of this type of analysis has been that a sovereign national state is an important framework for the development and consolidation of a democratic regime. Otherwise there can be no citizenship, and without citizenship no democracy. Other conditions which have been highlighted are the rule of law, a vibrant civil society, and a non-politicised bureaucracy.<sup>40</sup>

Although the democratic transition approach is closest to the kind of analysis I want to propagate, it is not suitable to gain insight in the character of the late eighteenth-century revolutionary changes. To understand how specific democratic reforms were introduced or reversed, it is not sufficient to identify paths and conditions of democratisation. As I have argued, we need to examine the process of political interaction itself, and show how

<sup>37</sup> G.A. Almond, and S. Verba, *The Civic Culture: Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations* (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1965); R. Dalton, "Communists and Democrats: Attitudes Toward Democracy in the Two Germanies" *British Journal of Political Science* 24 (1994): 469-493; R. Dalton, *Citizen Politics in Western Democracies* (Chatham House, NJ: Chatham House Publishers, 1996); R. Inglehart, *Culture Shift in Advanced Industrial Society* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990); P. McDonough, S. Barnes and A. Lopez Pina, "The Nature of Political Support and Legitimacy in Spain" *Comparative Political Studies* 27 (1995): 349-380.

<sup>38</sup> S. M. Lipset, "Some Social Requisites of Democracy: Economic Development and Political Legitimacy" *American Political Science Review* 53, 1 (1959): 69-105; Ibid., K.R. Soong, and J. C. Torres, "A Comparative Analysis of the Social Requisites of Democracy" *International Social Science Journal* 136 (1993): 155-175; C. H. Waisman, "Capitalism, the Market, and Democracy", *American Behavioral Scientist* 35, 4/5 (1992): 500-516; M. Moore, "Democracy and Development in Cross-National Perspective: A New Look at the Statistics" *Democratisation* 2, 2 (1995): 1-19.

<sup>39</sup> G. M. Luebbert, *Liberalism, fascism or social democracy. Social classes and the political origins of regimes in interwar Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991); B. Moore, *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy: Lord and Peasant in the Making of the Modern World* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1966); D. Rueschemeyer, J.H. Stephens, and E. Stephens, *Capitalist Development and Democracy* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992).

<sup>40</sup> J. Higley, and R. Gunther, *Elites and Democratic Consolidation in Latin America and Eastern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); T.L. Karl, "Dilemmas of Democratisation in Latin America" *Comparative Politics* 23, 1 (1990); J.J. Linz and A. Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996); A. Przeworski, "Democracy as a contingent outcome of conflicts" in *Constitutionalism and Democracy*, eds. J. Elster and R. Slagstad (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988): 59-80; P. Schmitter, L. Whitehead, and G. O'Donnell eds., *Transitions to Democracy: Latin America and Southern Europe* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986).

democratic reforms and reversals were brought about by the construction and transformation of political identities, actors, and coalitions. While the students of democratic transitions do investigate the strategic coalitions between political actors, they do not systematically analyse the political construction process that leads to these alliances.

The focus on the political construction process obviously has consequences for the definition of democratisation. Most of the structural and democratic transition studies employ an institutional definition of democratisation. These definitions typically identify the key features of liberal representative democracy, such as free competitive elections. For example, Linz and Stephan stress in their *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation* (1996):

*A democratic transition is complete when sufficient agreement has been reached about political procedures to produce an elected government, when a government comes to power that is the direct result of a free and popular vote, when this government de facto has the authority to generate new policies, and when the executive, legislative and judicial power generated by the new democracy does not have to share power with other bodies de jure.*<sup>41</sup>

The major advantage of this definition is that it permits one to determine the extent to which a political regime can be qualified as democratic, and what is needed to make it more democratic. However, the disadvantage is that it does not allow us to examine how processes of democratisation relate to changes in the relations between political actors. This makes the institutional definition unsuitable for the analysis of the dynamic of late eighteenth-century processes of democratisation.

Hence, we need a relational definition, which directs our attention to the interaction between political actors. In *Contention & Democracy in Europe 1650-2000* (2004), which is based on the ideas developed in *Dynamics of Contention*, Tilly provides such a relational definition.

*Democratisation means increases in the breadth and equality of relations between governmental agents and members of the government's subject population, in binding consultation of a government's subject population with respect to governmental personnel, resources, and policy, and in protection of that population (especially minorities within it) from arbitrary action of governmental agents.*<sup>42</sup>

Although not a particularly literary definition, it suggests that democratisation involves various changes in the relation between the subject population and governmental agents. In contrast to the institutional definition, the relational definition shows, for example, how the replacement of the local system of privileges by a system of universal laws, which was a major subject of contention during the Dutch Revolution, implies a major step forward in the democratisation process. Evidently, such a replacement increases the breadth and equality of relations between governmental agents and members of the government's subject population. In turn, this makes it possible to offer protected consultation to larger

---

<sup>41</sup> Linz, and Stephan, 3.

<sup>42</sup> Tilly, *Contention & Democracy in Europe*, 13-14.

parts of the population, which was previously only available to the privileged groups in society.<sup>43</sup>

In contrast to democratisation, centralisation, and more in general state formation, has, for a long time, not been an issue of intense scientific debate. In fact, throughout the 1950s and '60s, it was not a major subject of investigation, as the state was traditionally considered as a neutral framework within which social and political conflict was resolved. This changed as a result of Tilly's *The Formation of National States in Western Europe* (1975), and Skocpol's *States and Social Revolutions* (1979). These studies suggested that the centralisation of a state strongly affected its internal social and political relations, as well as the relations with other states. The appeal to focus the attention on the state proved to be effective, as a lot of new research on the development of states was undertaken in the following decades.<sup>44</sup>

This research has demonstrated that many state forms exist between the extremes of a locally consolidated state and a completely unified state. In turn, this implies that centralisation should not be conceptualised as the arrival at a fully developed national state, as was done in the past, but as an increase in central state control. If we subsequently define centralisation in relational terms, it must be regarded as any increase of control exercised by central state agents over persons, activities, and resources within the government's territorial jurisdiction.<sup>45</sup> Central state control can be enhanced through the transfer of authority from regional and local governments, as well as from semi-autonomous corporations, to the central government. Such a transfer also entails that local power holders are transformed into, or replaced by central state officials, which execute the laws and regulations of the central government on the local level, bringing them into direct contact with a subject population. Thus, centralisation involves changes in the relationship between central state agents, the subject population, and local and regional power holders.

## Operationalisation

Having established the method of investigation, we now need to determine how the political-process analysis can be operationalised. So far, we have made clear that revolutionary change should be explained through the examination of the interactive construction of new political identities, actors, and coalitions. More specifically, trying to

---

<sup>43</sup> Protected consultation refers to all three aspects of democratisation taken together (Tilly, *Contention & Democracy*, 14).

<sup>44</sup> P. Blicke, *Resistance, Representation, and Community* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997); W.P. Blockmans, and C. Tilly, *Cities and the Rise of States in Europe, A.D. 1000-1800* (Boulder: Westview, 1994) W.Ph. Te Brake, *Shaping History: Ordinary People in European Politics, 1500-1700* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998); P. Corrigan, and D. Sayer, *The Great Arch: English State Formation as Cultural Revolution* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1985); B.M. Downing, *The Military Revolution and Political Change: Origins of Democracy and Autocracy in Early Modern Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992); T. Ertman, *Birth of the Leviathan: Building States and Regimes in Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); P.B. Evans, D. Rueschemeyer, and T. Skocpol, *Bringing the State back in* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985); W. Reinhard, ed., *Power Elites and State Building* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996); Tilly, *Coercion, Capital*.

<sup>45</sup> This definition builds on McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly's understanding of state capacity (see McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly, *Dynamics of Contention*, 78).



explain the advances and reversals in democratisation and centralisation during the Dutch Revolution, the challenge is to find out how the interactive construction of identities, actors, and coalitions has brought about changes in the relations between, on the one hand, governmental agents and the population (democratisation), and, on the other hand, between central state agents, regional and local power holders, and the population (centralisation). However, before we can do so, we obviously first need to determine the identities, actors, and alliances that characterised the Dutch state prior to the revolutionary period. Hence, we have to specify the identities, actors, and coalitions on which the decentralised particularistic Republic of the early modern period was based. This will provide us with the starting point for the analysis.

### ***Local Actors, Identities, and Coalitions***

In the early modern Republic, sovereignty did not reside in any central institution, but it was found in each of the seven provinces, which were in turn commanded by the deputies of the cities and the aristocracy.<sup>46</sup> Hence, political power was effectively in the hands of the local elite, which, at the same time, constituted the regional and national elite. In this context, very particular political identities were constructed, which were aimed at maintaining and defending local autonomy, the local corporations, and the system of privileges. In the cities, the citizens, or burghers, who constituted about one third of the urban population, were distinguished from the inhabitants and the outsiders. This was first of all a juridical distinction, as the burghers, in contrast to the other two groups, possessed local citizenship rights, which were exclusively linked to a specific city. These rights were hereditary, but they could also be obtained by a marriage with a burgher, and through purchase. Citizenship gave the burghers a privileged access to the local corporations, such as the guilds, social welfare institutions, and schools, which organised the economy, public order, education, social welfare, and religion in the cities.<sup>47</sup> The burghers made a constant effort to protect their privileged position. Especially as members of the guilds, they frequently issued petitions to the city government claiming that the ‘foreign, rambling, cheating, illegal and morally abject outsider is in every respect the opposite of the decent, law-abiding, locally established guild member.’<sup>48</sup> Moreover, they argued that the guild members, who paid taxes, and performed civic duties, especially in the civic militias, had the right to be protected by the urban community. In this sense, they were also different from the inhabitants, who were not independent craftsmen, or shopkeepers, but wage earners, and a potential burden for this community, as they always ran the risk of becoming paupers.<sup>49</sup>

---

<sup>46</sup> J. Israel, *The Dutch Republic* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 276-84; M. Prak, “The Dutch Republic’s City-State Culture (17<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> centuries)” in *A Comparative Study of Thirty City-State Cultures: An Investigation Conducted by the Copenhagen Polis Centre*, Ed. M.H. Hansen (Copenhagen: C. A. Reitzels Forlag, 2000): 343-358.

<sup>47</sup> Prak, *Republikeinse veelheid*, 33-47; E. Kuijpers, and M. Prak, “Burger, ingezetene, vreemdeling: burgerschap in Amsterdam in de 17<sup>e</sup> en 18<sup>e</sup> eeuw” in *Burger*, eds. J. Kloek, and K. Tilmans (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2002): 113-132.

<sup>48</sup> M. Prak, “Individual, Corporation and Society: the Rhetoric of Dutch guilds” in *Individual, Corporate and Judicial Status in European Cities (Late Middle Ages and Early Modern Period)*, eds. M. Boone, and M. Prak (Apeldoorn: Garant, 1996): 275.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 276.

Besides the burghers, inhabitants, and outsiders, the regents also formed a separate political identity group. Although they were officially also burghers, in eighteenth-century writings they were always considered as a distinct group. This distinction was based on the control of the regent families over the urban governments. The regents could maintain their control, as the local governors were selected through a system of cooptation, which allowed the regents to elect family members. They were, however, also expected to represent the interests of the urban community as a whole and the citizens in particular. In this sense, they were considered as the representatives of the burghers, which, according to the same rhetoric, formed the core of the urban community. Of course, from a democratic perspective, the regents did not really represent the burghers, as the latter could not exercise any influence over their appointment.<sup>50</sup>

In correspondence with these political identities, a working coalition had developed between the burghers and the regents. The two groups cooperated through the local corporations, in the organisation of the urban community. The governors frequently consulted the corporations, while these regularly petitioned the city government to maintain specific regulations, or develop new legislation to protect the interests of the burghers. These petitions often resulted in a positive response by the magistrates, by which the privileges of the burghers were maintained.<sup>51</sup> In turn, this motivated the burghers to pay the relatively high taxes, and serve in the civic militias to protect public order. For their part, the regents were motivated to cooperate with the burghers, as their own position depended on the very same system of privileges. It guaranteed that they had the authority to decide the politics of the city, without interference from higher state institutions. Moreover, the corporations were for the regents very effective instruments to collect taxes, maintain public order, provide social welfare, and organise education. They were able to control the corporations through legislation and the appointment of the corporate officials, on which they often had a direct influence.<sup>52</sup> As the burghers and regents worked together through the corporations, the alliance between them will be referred to as the 'local corporate coalition'.

Of course, the political identities of regent, burgher, inhabitant, and outsider were constructed and maintained by contemporaries to organise and control a complex social reality. First, the category of burgher did not refer to a specific socio-economic class, but included a variety of groups. At the low end, there were craftsmen, small shopkeepers, and lowly paid city officials. The socio-economic middle consisted of higher educated men, such as schoolteachers, and office clerks, as well as craftsmen with a larger business, and specialised shopkeepers. Also included in the category of burghers were the highest socio-economic groups, like the large merchants, the university trained doctors, lawyers, preachers, notaries, and higher state officials.<sup>53</sup> These different socio-economic groups had potentially very different political interests.

A similar diversity was concealed by the categories of inhabitant, and outsider. The category of outsider was very a diverse one, as it referred to beggars, and peddlers, but also

---

<sup>50</sup> H. van Nierop, "Popular participation in politics in the Dutch Republic' in *Resistance, Representation and Community*, ed. P. Blickle (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997): 272-290; M. Prak, "Aristocratisering" *Spiegel historiael: maandblad voor geschiedenis en archeologie* 23 (1988): 226-232.

<sup>51</sup> Van Nierop; Prak, "Individual, Corporation and Society".

<sup>52</sup> Prak, *Republikeinse veelheid*, 59-60.

<sup>53</sup> M.H.D. van Leeuwen, *Bijstand in Amsterdam, ca. 1800-1850: armenzorg als beheersings- en overlevingsstrategie* (Zwolle: Waanders, 1992), 55-59.

to craftsmen, and merchants from other cities and the countryside. The inhabitants could include labourers, and servants, as well as merchants who did not obtain local citizenship, as their occupation was not organised by the guilds. Although there was a clear juridical distinction between the inhabitants and the burghers, in practice this distinction was not always so clear-cut. For example, in the civic militias, the inhabitants played, in the course of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, an increasingly important role.<sup>54</sup> Moreover, in contrast to the rhetoric of the guilds, the inhabitants too paid taxes. Hence, this group certainly carried the same communal financial burdens as the burghers.

The political identities of regent, burgher, inhabitant, and outsider also concealed an important religious diversity. In Amsterdam, not only the members of the dominant Reformed Church could become citizen, but also the protestant minorities, as well as the Catholics, and Jews.<sup>55</sup> Nevertheless, the Catholics, Jews, and protestant minorities were not officially allowed to practice their religion. In addition, the Jews could not join the guilds or civic militias. Finally, only the members of the Reformed Church could occupy political offices.<sup>56</sup>

### ***Central State Actors, Identities, and Coalitions***

Urban political identities, actors, and alliances were, however, not the only political relations that mattered. The cities were part of a larger state, which somehow had to be organised and defended. Hence, the local regents were forced to cooperate with each other and the aristocracy to defend the Republic. They did so through the provincial states and the States General. The city governments and the aristocracy sent their deputies to the provincial states, which took juridical decisions, raised taxes, and coordinated the maintenance of public order within the provinces. Decisions in the provincial assembly were taken by majority vote. Each city had one vote. The provincial states, in turn, sent their deputies to the States General, which decided on matters that concerned the Republic as a whole, like the declaration of war, the signing of treaties, and the distribution of the provincial taxes. Each province had one vote in this assembly. Moreover, they all had the right to veto certain types of decisions.<sup>57</sup>

In principle, this structure was not contradictory to the identities, actors, and alliances that had formed in the cities. If the regents indeed acted as the representatives of the burghers, the local corporate alliance could very well guide the provincial and central state politics. Yet, the problem was that the regents could not always strictly act as the representatives of the burghers. To take decisions in the provincial and central state governments they engaged in alliances with elite groups from other cities and provinces. This was a highly tactical game, in which coalitions were quickly formed and also rapidly disintegrated. In this game, the regents often acted to enhance their political position, or further their personal financial interests, instead of the interests of the local community.<sup>58</sup>

---

<sup>54</sup> P. Knevel, *Burghers in het geweer: de schutterijen in Holland, 1550-1700* (Hilversum: Verloren, 1994).

<sup>55</sup> Jews could only buy citizenship, which was in their case not hereditary (Kuijpers, and Prak).

<sup>56</sup> Israel, 637-676.

<sup>57</sup> Israel, 276 - 306; Prak, "The Dutch Republic's City-State Culture".

<sup>58</sup> See for example J. Aalbers, *De Republiek en de vrede van Europa: de buitenlandse politiek van de Republiek der Verenigde Nederlanden na de vrede van Utrecht (1713), voornamelijk gedurende de jaren 1720-1733*

Hence, the elite coalitions on the provincial and central state level potentially conflicted with the local corporate alliance.

The political situation was especially complicated, as the power struggles and coalition making efforts of the elites gave rise to the creation of political identities, actors, and alliances that cut across the local corporate coalition. The cause of this complex situation was the Stadholder. Even though a major part of the effort to protect the Republic could be coordinated by the local elites through the provincial states and the States General, in times of warfare these institutions delegated part of their authority to a military commander. In certain periods, the States General contracted such a commander, but for most of the two centuries of the Republic's existence this task was performed by the Stadholder. The origins of this office dated back to the Habsburg period, when the Stadholders were provincial governors who represented the sovereign. William of Orange (1533-1584), the nobleman who led the Revolt against the Habsburg Emperor, was such a governor. After the Revolt, the authority to appoint Stadholders transferred from the sovereign to the individual provinces. Thus, each province had the right to separately appoint a Stadholder. The consequence of this procedure was that the provinces sometimes decided not to elect a Stadholder or only a few provinces appointed a common Stadholder, while the other provinces had none. There were only two Stadholders in the history of the Republic who were appointed by all seven provinces: William IV (1747-1751) and William V (1766-1795).<sup>59</sup>

Because of his command of the military forces of the Republic, the Stadholder potentially posed a threat to the political autonomy of the provinces, cities, and aristocracy. The cities and the aristocracy were obviously aware of this threat and did everything to retain control of the military. They could do so by keeping the extraction of revenue for the maintenance of the army and navy in their own hands. Yet, despite such precautions, the Stadholders did gain influence over the politics of the provinces and the cities. They succeeded in this effort not by military means, but through their political privileges. In an increasing number of cities and provinces, the Stadholders had authority over the appointment of local and regional political offices. These privileges, which were different in every province and town, gave the Stadholder a lot of power. In the course of the eighteenth-century, the Stadholders, using these privileges systematically, succeeded in constructing a whole system of patronage.<sup>60</sup> Note, however, that although the Stadholders were able to informally concentrate political authority in their own hands, they continued to operate within the decentralised state structure of the Republic. They extended their authority by infiltrating local privileges, but they were consequently also limited by those same local and regional privileges. For example, in the province of Holland, the Stadholders had in most cities the right to elect the Aldermen, but they could only elect the more powerful Burgomasters in six of the ten largest cities of the province.<sup>61</sup>

The efforts of the Stadholder to construct a system of patronage led to a more or less permanent power struggle between the elites loyal to the Stadholder, the Orangists, and those who opposed his influence, the Republicans. This division was not completely stable.

(Groningen: Wolters-Noordhoff, 1980); H.H. Rowen, *John de Witt, Grand Pensionary of Holland, 1625-1672* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978).

<sup>59</sup> Israel, 276 - 306.

<sup>60</sup> Gabriëls, *De heren als dienaren en de dienaar als heer: het stadhouderlijk stelsel in de tweede helft van de achttiende eeuw* (Den Haag: Stichting Hollandse Historische Reeks, 1990).

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 47-48, 82-83.

There were, from time to time, regents and aristocrats who changed sides to enhance their own position in local, provincial, and central government. In this sense, the choice between Orangism and Republicanism was not always a principled one, but one between different power political strategies.<sup>62</sup> It was, however, a very important division, as not only the elite became divided between Orangists and Republicans, but so did the population.<sup>63</sup> As in the case of the elite, the choice between either side was not always made on the basis of deep-rooted principles, but also because of economic and financial considerations. First, the appointment in many positions in the local and provincial administration depended on the personal support of a regent or aristocrat. In return, these elites expected to be supported in their own power struggles. Thus, the competing systems of patronage also affected the population at large. Second, since both Orangist and Republican groups had contacts with foreign states, such as France and England, the dominance of one of the two sides brought along a particular type of military, financial, and economic policy, which in different ways affected the various social groups. For example, Stadholder William V maintained, up to the end of the 1770s, close contacts with the English King George III. These contacts implied that the Amsterdam merchant community could not openly challenge the dominant position of the English merchants in international trade. Consequently, Amsterdam regents and merchants, who wanted to change this situation, were prone to choose the Republican side, which maintained contacts with the French regime. Hence, the choice between Orangism and Republicanism depended very much on the specific international political and economic situation. As a result, popular support for Orangism and Republicanism also shifted.<sup>64</sup>

The identities of Orangist and Republican cut across the local corporate identities of regent, burgher, inhabitant, and outsider, but they did not undermine the local corporate alliance. In fact, they were primarily constructed in these terms. Since both groups needed the support of the burghers to maintain their position, there was a strong incentive, especially in times of political crisis, to uphold the corporate alliance and the local system of privileges. This is, of course, not to say that the Orangist or Republican elites did not accuse the other of ignoring the interests of the local corporate community.<sup>65</sup> All this was part of the ongoing power struggle. Whether this power struggle could set off a fundamental transformation of the state is highly questionable. As long as the local corporate identities, actors, and alliances were not changed or overruled, the form of the state and its political regime were likely to remain the same. At least, up to the beginning of the 1780s, no such breakthrough took place.

### ***Focusing on Amsterdam***

But where exactly are we going to look for the construction of new political identities, actors, and alliances? The previous sections have made clear that the decentralised,

---

<sup>62</sup> Rowen, *John de Witt*.

<sup>63</sup> I.J. van Manen, and K. Vermeulen, "Het lagere volk van Amsterdam in de strijd tussen patriotten en oranjegezinden, 1780-1800" *Tijdschrift voor Sociale Geschiedenis* 6 (1980): 331-356.

<sup>64</sup> Israel, 700-862, 959-997, 1067-1097.

<sup>65</sup> P.C.A. Geyl, *Revolutiedagen te Amsterdam: (Augustus-September 1748): Prins Willem IV en de Doelistenbeweging* (Den Haag: Nijhoff, 1936); M. Prak, "Burgers in beweging. Ideaal en werkelijkheid van de onlusten te Leiden in 1748" *Bijdragen en medelingen betreffende de geschiedenis der Nederlanden* 106 (1991): 365-393.

particularistic Republic of the early modern period was based on a local corporate coalition. Consequently, the investigation of the advances and reversals in democratisation and centralisation will have to simultaneously study the political construction process on the local and central state level. If the examination is limited to the central state, it is impossible to observe how the local corporate coalition was, or indeed was not, overruled. If, on the other hand, only the local level is studied, the construction of new central state alliances remains out of view. Moreover, as a major part of the transformation of the Dutch state revolved around the centralisation of political authority, especially the relationship between the local and central government is important. However, since it is impossible to study the changing political relations in all Dutch towns and cities, this investigation will focus on Amsterdam.

The choice for Amsterdam is by no means random. Amsterdam has been selected as the central subject of investigation because it was by far the largest and richest of the early modern Dutch cities. It had 220,000 inhabitants, which made it larger than the next ten biggest Dutch cities combined.<sup>66</sup> Amsterdam incorporated about ten percent of the total Dutch population.<sup>67</sup> Moreover, with its important Stock Exchange, and many merchant and banking companies, Amsterdam was the financial and trading centre of the Republic, and for a certain period also of Europe as a whole. Backed by the city's wealth and size, the Amsterdam governors were able to play a leading role in the coalition making process in the States of Holland, and in the States General.<sup>68</sup> Finally, Amsterdam was one of the few cities in the Republic that succeeded in blocking the influence of the Stadholder in its internal political relations. In 1752, the Burgomasters and the majority of the 'Vroedschap' affirmed the independence of Amsterdam in a Contract of Correspondence.<sup>69</sup> They stated that:

*The constitution of the Republic is such that an Eminent Ruler administers the general affairs, and particular regents handle the affairs of the individual cities. The Eminent Ruler is bound by an oath on the constitution to maintain everyone's privileges, and rights: just as the particular regents have sworn to conserve the privileges and rights of their cities, without limiting these or allowing them to be cut short by anyone.*<sup>70</sup>

The contract guaranteed that the patricians who had signed it, would eventually receive a position in the local administration. This prevented them from seeking the assistance of the

---

<sup>66</sup> H. Diederiks, *Een stad in verval: Amsterdam omstreeks 1800: demografisch, economisch, ruimtelijk* (Amsterdam: Historisch Seminarium van de Universiteit van Amsterdam, 1982), 10.

<sup>67</sup> Van Zanden, and Van Riel, 32.

<sup>68</sup> Israel, 604-07, 829-36, 844-50, 988-90; Rowen, *John de Witt*.

<sup>69</sup> A contract of correspondence is a written pact, in which the elite families and factions agree to divide the governing positions amongst themselves. To arrange this, schedules were made to determine whose turn it was to occupy a particular office, such as burgomaster.

<sup>70</sup> Dewijl de constitutie van de Republicq tegenswoordig zoodanig is, dat de bestiering van dezelve in handen van een Eminent Hoofd over het geheel in handen van particuliere regenten over ieder stad in 't byzonder; dat dit Eminent Hoofd, door den eedt, die Hy op dezelfs commissie heeft afgelegd, gehouden is ieder by zyne privilegiën, rechten en gerechtigheden te maintineeren: Zoo is ook aan de particuliere regenten by eeden geïnjungeerd, de privilegiën, rechten en gerechtigheden van haare steden te conserveeren, zonder die te verkorten ofte te laten verkorten, door wie het ook zoude mogen zijn (cited by H. Brugmans, *Geschiedenis van Amsterdam*, vol. IV, *Afgaande getij, 1697/1795* (Utrecht: Het Spectrum, 1973), 228).

Stadholder to secure such a position.

Hence, Amsterdam was by no means the typical early modern Dutch city. It should rather be considered as an example of a large European trading city, which could remain politically independent, as a result of its financial resources. It had more in common with Genoa, Venice, Hamburg, and Geneva, than with smaller Dutch cities. In this sense, this book fundamentally differs from other studies on cities and provinces during the revolutionary period, such as the Wayne Te Brake's *Regents and Rebels* (1989) on Deventer, Maarten Prak's *Republikeinse veelheid, democratisch enkelvoud* (1999) on Den Bosch, or Jacques Kuiper's *Een revolutie ontrafeld* (2002) on the province of Friesland. These studies are necessarily focused on the local or provincial level, as the elite of these cities and provinces did not play an important role in central state politics. By contrast, the Amsterdam elite not only exerted a large influence on the provincial politics of Holland, but also on the political decision making process on the central state level. Hence, the investigation of this group allows us to simultaneously examine the changing political relations on national, regional, and local level.

Clearly there was a lot at stake for the Amsterdam elite during the revolutionary era. On the one hand, it had much to lose. Besides its substantial influence on provincial and central state politics, centralisation obviously also threatened its political autonomy and financial interests. Yet, on the other hand, the Amsterdam elite could potentially increase its political power, if it would be able to control the transformation process. Consequently, by studying this elite, we will obtain a front row perspective on the advances and reversals in democratisation and centralisation. It will allow us to closely observe the main conflicts, opportunities, and problems involved in these processes. This has already been confirmed by the existing research on the late eighteenth-century Republic, which shows that the Amsterdam elite was implicated in virtually every major political change that took place in the decades around 1800.<sup>71</sup> Thus, through the study of the Amsterdam elite we will be able to understand the entire revolutionary process.

## Research

To analyse the role of the Amsterdam elite in the Dutch Revolution, various archives have been investigated. Evidently, the Amsterdam municipal archive was the most important. The records of the Amsterdam government have been systematically studied for the years between 1780 and 1787, and between 1795 and 1813. For the 1780s, the focus has been on the discussions in the 'Voedschap', the town Council, in which the main clashes between the Orangist and Patriot (Republican) regents occurred. For the years after 1795, the archive of the town Council was again important. After 1803, the minutes of the Aldermen, and after 1808 those of the Burgomaster, were also valuable sources of information, when the Council played a less important role.

In addition, the activities of the Amsterdam politicians in the provincial government of Holland and in the central state have been investigated, although less exhaustively. The archive of the provincial government has been occasionally consulted, to find out how struggles between the province and the city took place. This was particularly important for

---

<sup>71</sup> See for example: J. Joor, *De adelaar en het lam: onrust, opruiing en onwilligheid in Nederland ten tijde van het Koninkrijk Holland en de inlijving bij het Franse keizerrijk (1806-1813)* (Amsterdam: De Bataafsche Leeuw, 2000); Pfeil, *Tot redding van het vaderland*; Schama, *Patriots and Liberators*.

the first year after the French invasion of January 1795, when the Amsterdam Municipality frequently clashed with the provincial assembly. The Amsterdam elite in the central government have been more systematically investigated from 1795 onwards, when a series of central state coalitions were created. Fortunately, the constitutional discussions, which took place between 1796 and 1806, have been summarised and partly published by Leonard de Gou. Moreover, the minutes of the various national parliaments, in which most of the constitutional discussions were held, have also been published. These two series of editions, in combination with additional research on individual politicians, have made it possible to closely analyse the actions and arguments of the Amsterdam elite on the central state level.

To trace which Amsterdam politicians were active in the different governments in the city, province and central state, much biographical material has been examined. Most of this material was available in published form. For the years up to 1795, Johan Elias' *De Vroedschap van Amsterdam* (1903-'05) on the members of the Amsterdam city Council proved to be a highly valuable source. For the period between 1795 and 1813, an article by Johan Breen lists all the members of the town Councils.<sup>72</sup> However, in contrast to Elias, Breen does not provide much background information. Hence, I have supplemented his data with information from the baptismal records and *poorterboeken* (citizenship books) of Amsterdam concerning the occupational and religious background of the Council members.

Similar socio-economic and religious data is also available for the Amsterdam politicians in the central government. For the members of the national parliament, which was established in March 1796, this has been collected by Elias and Schölvinck.<sup>73</sup> For the Ministers and other members of the central executive, this information has been provided by the Parliamentary Documentation Centre, which can be accessed through its [www.parlement.com](http://www.parlement.com) website. The only institution for which virtually no data were available was the provincial government of Holland. There is a list of the members of the provincial assembly of Holland for 1795 and for the first months of 1796.<sup>74</sup> This list already includes 424 names. No other information has been collected. I have limited myself to identifying the Amsterdam politicians in this assembly. By combining the information on the discussions in the Amsterdam and central governments with the prosopographical material, it became possible to trace the construction and disintegration of political identities, actors, and coalitions.

To substantiate this investigation, additional research has been done on a few key figures in the Amsterdam elite, which can be considered representative of the different groups within this elite. For the 1780s, when the Amsterdam elite still consisted exclusively of regents, Jan Bernd Bicker and Joan Huydecoper van Maarsseveen, who belonged to opposing camps of regents, were studied more intensively. The account of the years after 1795, when the majority of the Amsterdam elite was upper middle class, is dominated by lawyers Rutger Jan Schimmelpenninck and Samuel Wiselius, merchants Isaac Gogel and Willem Joseph van Brien, insurer Johannes Goldberg, and financial expert Elias Canneman. In addition, the Patriot regents Bicker and Johan Pieter Farret, as well as the Orangist regent Willem Frederik Röell, have been more thoroughly investigated for this

---

<sup>72</sup> J.C. Breen, "De regeering van Amsterdam gedurende den Franschen tijd" *Jaarboek van het Genootschap Amstelodamum* 12 (1914): 1-130.

<sup>73</sup> A.M. Elias, and C.M. Schölvinck, *Volksrepresentanten en wetgevers: de politieke elite in de Bataafs-Franse Tijd 1796-1810* (Amsterdam: Van Soeren, 1991).

<sup>74</sup> L. Zoodsma, *Inventaris van het archief van de Provisionele Representanten van het Volk van Holland, 26 januari 1795-2 maart 1796* (Den Haag: Nationaal Archief, 1987).



period. These men have not only been selected because they are representative members of the main groups within the Amsterdam elite, but also because they have all played a prominent role in the political process during these years. Moreover, personal archives have survived of most of these men, containing letters, constitutional proposals, and diaries. And, as they were prominent figures, part of their personal correspondence has also been included in the publications by De Gou, and Colenbrander. The personal information has allowed me to show how political ideas, groups, and alliances were actually formed.

The Amsterdam elite played a prominent role in all revolutionary struggles. However, they never did so as a unified elite. They were always divided into competing groups, which engaged in coalitions with elite groups of other cities, and provinces, but also with popular political groups, and foreign regimes. Although these coalition partners were not the prime subjects of investigation, it was necessary to investigate their actions and motives concerning certain crucial issues. For the politicians of other cities and provinces, the minutes of national parliament proved to be a valuable source, as well as the prosopographic material presented by Elias and Schölvink. For the French, and the other foreign regimes that were at some point involved in Dutch politics, I have also relied on published material, especially the documents published by De Gou and Colenbrander.

Finally, on the popular political groups, I have done some additional research in the records of the Amsterdam neighbourhood assemblies, which were active between 1795 and 1798. Furthermore, through the investigation of the petitions of these assemblies, as well as those of *Doctrina*, the *Societeit voor Een- en Ondeelbaarheid* (Society for Unity and Indivisibility), and the *Societeit voor Deugd en Kundigheden* (Society for Virtue and Skills), all revolutionary clubs, it was possible to recover the names of the men active in the popular societies. By subsequently linking these names to the citizenship books, and baptismal records, the membership of the most prominent Amsterdam revolutionary clubs and assemblies could be reconstructed.

In combination, the various sources give us a fascinating insight in the political interactions during the Dutch Revolution. By linking biographic information to the discussions and clashes in, and between, the various government institutions, and revolutionary societies and associations, it was possible to show how political identities, actors, and coalitions were constructed, and fell apart. By subsequently relating this information to the changes in the organisation of the state and the political regime, it became possible to explain how and why advances and reversals in democratisation and centralisation took place.

### **Limitations**

Having said this, three important limitations of this research project must be mentioned. First, as only a few individuals could be investigated more thoroughly, since the others did not leave any personal archives, it cannot be established with absolute certainty that these men were indeed representative of the different groups within the Amsterdam elite. It will be demonstrated how men such as Bicker, Schimmelpenninck, and Gogel were related to larger elite groups, but it is impossible to fully demonstrate how these relationships worked. This was especially difficult because the coalitions within the elite were constantly shifting. Hence, the political construction process cannot be made completely transparent. Yet, the available sources do give us enough material to sketch the main political identities, groups, and alliances that were involved in the revolutionary process.

The second limitation of this study is its lack of comparative perspective. The point of departure was the assumption that the investigation of the Dutch Revolution can provide us with new ideas on the advances and reversals in democratisation and centralisation of all European states. This revolution was selected because it was characterised by intense processes of democratisation and centralisation, which should allow us to analyse how these processes were related to each other. However, there is a possibility that the Dutch experience was completely unique, and did not share any similarities with democratisation and centralisation processes elsewhere in Europe. Future comparative research on the various late eighteenth-century revolutions will have to make clear whether the conclusions drawn from the analysis of the Dutch Revolution can be generalised.

A final limitation of this project is its narrow timeframe. Sudden advances and reversals in democratisation and centralisation clearly did not take place exclusively during the late eighteenth-century revolutionary period, but continued to occur throughout the nineteenth century. To fully analyse the European political modernization process, the investigation would have to be extended to the end of the nineteenth, or even the beginning of the twentieth century. Obviously, a wider timeframe, as well as more international comparative research, and the inclusion of more elite groups, would allow for more authoritative statements about the dynamic of these processes. Yet, within the limited time available for this investigation, it would also have been impossible to do the kind of detailed analysis, which is necessary to show how the construction of political identities, actors, and coalitions has set off the advances and reversals in democratisation and centralisation, which characterise modern European history. Hence, this project has opted for a comprehensive analysis of the Dutch Revolution.

### ***Organisation***

The study of the role of the Amsterdam politicians in the Dutch Revolution is pursued in the next four chapters, which each discuss a particular phase in the political modernisation of the Republic. The second chapter examines the Patriot Revolt (1780-'87), which has been interpreted as the first step in the development of liberal representative democracy and modern politics, but also, by contrast, as an early modern corporate revolution. So far the available evidence suggests that this revolt did not lead to a centralisation of political authority, and only gave rise to limited democratic reforms within the confines of the local corporate framework. Yet, at the same time, research has also pointed out that various publications appeared during this period, which proposed reforms that potentially undermined the early modern corporate order. To find out why only a limited democratisation and no centralisation occurred, chapter two analyses how the political construction process during the Patriot Revolt affected the identities, actors, and coalitions on which the early modern Republic was built. More specifically, it will investigate how the new identities of Patriot, and aristocrat, which were created in these years, undermined or transformed the corporate identities of regent, burgher, inhabitant, and outsider. And, in relation to this, it will be examined whether the political groups and coalitions that were constructed by the Patriots overruled the local corporate alliance between regents and burghers.

The third chapter looks at the period between 1795 and 1798, which in the literature is usually referred to as the Batavian Revolution. During these years, a very rapid political transformation process took place. Political power was transferred from the local and

provincial governments to the central state, liberal representative institutions were established, and the local system of privileges was officially abolished. These rapid changes suggest that the creation of a unitary democratic state was supported by a majority of the revolutionaries. However, the investigation will show that many revolutionaries were not willing to give up their political autonomy, privileges, and authorities. Consequently, there was widespread resistance against specific aspects of the unitary democratic state model. Chapter three explains how these challenges could be overcome and how a unitary democratic constitution was established.

Chapter four analyses the period between 1798 and 1805. It shows how the processes of democratisation and centralisation were reversed from 1801 onwards. This reversal is particularly striking as it followed very quickly on the establishment of the unitary democratic constitution of 1798. So far, the literature has not devoted much attention to this reversal, with the exception of the proponents of the 'bourgeois revolution' thesis, who characterise it as an aristocratic restoration. Neither the state formation, nor the cultural historians fully acknowledge the reversal. Nevertheless, a close examination of the political developments around 1801 reveals that a real reversal in terms of centralisation and democratisation occurred. A reversal that cannot be attributed to the return of the old regime elite. In fact, various sources indicate that many revolutionary politicians cooperated with the turnaround. Chapter four explains why.

The fifth chapter examines the revival of the centralisation process in the years between 1805 and 1813. Particularly striking is how this revival was not accompanied by a restoration of the democratisation process. Instead, the state became more authoritarian in the years after 1805. As we have discussed, this contradicts the 'bourgeois revolution' thesis, which is based on the assumption that democratisation and centralisation were mutually reinforcing processes. Chapter five explains why the two processes diverged, whereas they had developed hand in hand from 1795 onwards. Moreover, the chapter also examines the strong local resistance against centralisation in the years after 1805. This resistance especially does not correspond with the theoretical scheme of the state formation approach, which sees a progressive centralisation process, with diminishing local resistance. The political-process analysis will demonstrate that the basis of the resistance were the local corporate identities, actors, and coalitions, which were revived in the years after 1801.

Finally, while explaining the advances and reversals in centralisation and democratisation, the analysis necessarily touches on the influence of the French, which held the Republic occupied between 1795 and 1813. So far, it is unclear what role the French exactly played in the changes that took place. Some historians, like Palmer and Van Sas, argue that the Dutch revolutionaries were largely left to their own devices to decide how they wanted to reform their state and political regime. Others, such as Mijnhardt, and to some extent the state formation authors, maintain that the French strongly influenced the political changes after 1795. Once again, evidence can be found for both positions. Research on the constitutional debates after 1795 shows that the Dutch were, at least up to 1805, largely free to pursue their own political reforms. Yet, even though the French gave the Dutch a lot of political autonomy, they did occasionally interfere.<sup>75</sup> Moreover, the

---

<sup>75</sup> L. de Gou, *Het plan van constitutie van 1796: chronologische bewerking van het archief van de eerste constitutiecommissie ingesteld bij decreet van de Nationale Vergadering van 15 maart 1796* (Den Haag: Nijhoff, 1975); Ibid., *Het Ontwerp van Constitutie van 1797: de behandeling van het Plan van Constitutie in de Nationale*

Dutch revolutionaries were strongly affected by the French Revolution, which many of them had experienced first hand. Since all current explanations have primarily examined the revolution through its socio-economic, financial, and cultural context, it has not been possible to exactly determine how the Dutch revolutionaries interacted with the French ideals and occupiers. By closely examining the political construction process in the years after 1795, the third, fourth and fifth chapter will provide new insight in these interactions.

---

Vergadering (Den Haag: Nijhof, 1983); Ibid., *De Staatsregeling van 1798: bronnen voor de totstandkoming* (Den Haag: Bureau der Rijkscommissie voor Vaderlandse Geschiedenis, 1988); Ibid., *De staatsregeling van 1801*; Ibid., *De Staatsregeling van 1805 en de Constitutie van 1806* (Den Haag: Instituut voor Nederlandse Geschiedenis, 1997).

## 2 The Patriot Revolt (1780-1787)

On 21 April 1787, a large crowd assembled on the Dam, the main square of Amsterdam, and occupied the town hall. It demanded that the city government would give the people a greater say in the appointment of public officers, and that the regents who opposed this would be discharged. In a petition to the magistrates the crowd declared that

*the fatal source of the disasters that befall the country must not only be sought in the increase of power and influence of the Stadholder, but also, and primarily in a lack of a beneficial constitutional relations between the burghers and their representatives.*<sup>1</sup>

The petition was issued in response to a proposal of the city of Haarlem to make the government of Holland more representative. The dominant group among the Amsterdam regents had opposed this proposal, by frustrating its discussion in the States of Holland. In April 1787, the revolutionary section of the Amsterdam population finally intervened and forced the city government to comply with its demands. In the following months, the local administration was reformed, and a plan was made for a new representative system, which should have given the Amsterdam inhabitants the right to elect their governors and burgher representatives.

The events that took place in Amsterdam, in the spring and summer of 1787, were part of a larger contentious episode, known as the Patriot Revolt (1780 – 1787). The term ‘Patriot’ refers to a broad revolutionary movement that was active from about 1782 onwards, and became politically dominant in large parts of the Republic from 1784 until the fall of 1787. During this period, popular revolts, as in Amsterdam, took place in many of the major cities of the Republic. The Stadholder, William V, was in some provinces relieved of a large part of his political authority. In Holland, he lost virtually all his influence. Many of the Holland towns also experienced intense popular contention. The Patriot Revolt ended with the invasion of the Prussian army, which led to the restoration of the Stadholderian regime in the fall of 1787.

Considering the Patriot reforms in more detail, it is especially striking that they strongly affirmed the decentralised, particularistic organisation of the early modern Republic. For example, the Amsterdam plan for a new representative system stated that all future Councillors and Burgomasters had to be members of the Reformed Church, and local citizens for at least seven years. Similar criteria were established for future members of the new burgher committee, which was given the explicit task to guard the rights and privileges of the urban community. And, although the electorate was not as strictly defined, future voters did have to be inhabitant of Amsterdam for over six years, and pay at least 150

---

<sup>1</sup> de nootlottige bron van 's lands rampen niet eeniglyk te zoeken is in de ver boven deszelfs waare bedoeling toegenomen magt en invloed van het stadhouderschap; maar ook, en wel voornamelyk, in het gebrek aan een heilzaam en constitutioneel verband tusschen de burgheryen en hunne vertegenwoordigers (GAA, arch. Backer (arch. nr. 172) inv. nr. 726 (Gedrukte stukken betreffende de gebeurtenissen van 1787 te Amsterdam: Petition of the Burghers to the Burgomasters and Council of Amsterdam, 21 April 1787).

guilders in taxes.<sup>2</sup> Comparable representative systems were introduced by Patriot revolutionaries in other Dutch cities, such as Den Bosch, Deventer, and Utrecht.<sup>3</sup> Although these reforms entailed a democratisation of local government, since they gave, at least, the privileged part of the population a substantial political influence, they did not challenge the local corporate state structure of the Republic. In this sense, the democratisation process was limited, as it excluded the majority of the population from political power.

However, at the same time, the Patriot Revolt introduced new practices and ideas, which did challenge the local corporate framework. Important Patriot publications, such as *Grondwettige herstelling van Nederlands Staatswezen* (1784-'86) (Constitutional Restoration of the Dutch State) and especially *Bedenkingen over het aanstellen van regenten in een vrij gemeenebest* (1786) (Thoughts on the Appointment of Regents in a Free Commonwealth), proposed a liberalisation of the economic and political system of the Republic. Moreover, even though the Patriot revolutionaries organised themselves, as we will see, according to the corporate categories of regents and burghers, within the Patriot societies and exercise associations new egalitarian forms of interaction and debate were developed.<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless, these new ideas and practices, which potentially made a more far-reaching democratisation of the Dutch political system possible, were not reflected in the actual political reforms as they were introduced by the Patriot revolutionaries. This chapter investigates how these apparently contradictory developments were combined.

## Elite Conflict

The Patriot Revolt started out as a traditional elite conflict. It was triggered by the War of American Independence. This war, which took place in the late 1770s, soon pulled in other states, such as France and Spain, which supported the American claims. The Republic was also forced to choose sides, since the British government tried to prohibit the trade in military goods with either the American States, or France. This, in turn, caused internal Dutch conflicts, especially between the Amsterdam government and Stadholder William V.

William, who was related to the English King, was willing to abide by the wishes of the British government, which in previous decades had become an ally of the Republic.<sup>5</sup> The Amsterdam government was less complacent. The regents saw great trading opportunities with an independent America. The American rebels already bought, much to the chagrin of the British, a large part of their weapons from Amsterdam merchants. To the Amsterdam government, the War of American Independence seemed an opportunity to restore the city's leading position in world trade, as it damaged the position of the British competitor.

Hence, it refused to cooperate with the British demands. Instead, it entered into secret negotiations with the Americans. A few years later, the Amsterdam governors defended these talks by arguing that envious neighbouring powers were constantly trying to

---

<sup>2</sup> GAA, arch. Bicker (arch. nr. 195) inv. nr. 310 (Concept reglement op de regeering der stad Amsterdam).

<sup>3</sup> Prak, *Republikeinse veelheid*, 195-96; W.Ph. Te Brake, *Regents and Rebels: the Revolutionary World of an Eighteenth-Century Dutch City* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1989), 98; *Concept-Reglement op de regeerings bestelling van de provincie Utrecht* (Utrecht: B. Wild, 1784).

<sup>4</sup> Van Sas, *De metamorfose van Nederland*, 246-8.

<sup>5</sup> Israel, 1096.

undermine the Republic. Consequently, city magistrates had seen it as their duty to use the opportunity, and negotiate with the Americans over a treaty of trade and friendship.<sup>6</sup> As the efforts of the Stadholder to force the city into compliance clearly failed, the relationship between the Republic and Great Britain quickly deteriorated. Finally, at the end of 1780, Great Britain declared war after the secret negotiations between the Amsterdam government and the American States were uncovered.<sup>7</sup>

The Fourth Anglo-Dutch War (1780-84) shook the Dutch domestic political relations. It could do so for three main reasons. First, the clash between the Amsterdam elite and the Stadholder, during the events leading up to the war, divided the Dutch elite into opposing camps. Both camps tried to blame the other for the conflict. For example, in November 1780, a pamphlet was published, which maintained that the ambitions of the Amsterdam governors had undermined the bond with 'our natural ally'.<sup>8</sup> In response, another pamphlet argued that

*the true system of Amsterdam is, and will always be, to maintain and increase the good relations and friendship with England, as well as France, without sacrificing the freedom and independence of the state to the opinions of one or the other empire.*<sup>9</sup>

This public debate continued in the years following the outbreak of hostilities.<sup>10</sup> Second, the Anglo-Dutch War also confirmed that the Republic was in a deep economic, financial, and military crisis. The Dutch navy proved no match for the British fleet. In the first month of the war, the British navy and privateers seized more than 200 vessels, paralyzing Dutch trade. In the following months, the British continued to capture several colonial settlements, further hampering the trading empire of the Republic. These disasters set off a general debate about the political organisation of the Republic, which further intensified the struggle within the elite. Third, this elite struggle quickly turned into a broad revolt, as the War of American Independence inspired a public discussion on freedom and popular sovereignty.<sup>11</sup>

Initially, the political struggle did not seem very different from the previous encounters between the Stadholderian and Republican elite groups in 1672, and 1748, except for the fact that the Stadholderian elites were now on the defensive. As in the lead-

---

<sup>6</sup> GAA, arch. Backer (arch. nr. 172) inv. nr. 722 (Missive of the Burgomasters to the States of Holland, 20 October 1780).

<sup>7</sup> Nationaal Archief (NA), arch. Staten Generaal (arch. nr. 1.01.03) Secrete Resoluties nr. 4513, 1780; J.W. Schulte Nordholt, *The Dutch Republic and American Independence* (London: University of North Carolina Press, 1982), 150-56.

<sup>8</sup> onze natuurlijke bondgenoot (*Eene gepaste aanspraak aan 't volk van Nederland in 't algemeen, en aan de inwoners der stad Amsterdam in 't byzonder* (Rotterdam, 1780), 5).

<sup>9</sup> het waarachtige *Systema* van Amsterdam eeniglyk en alleen is, en altoos zyn zal, de goede verstandhouding en vriendschap zo wel van Engeland als van Vrankryk te bewaaren, en zo veel mogelyk aan te kweeken, zonder echter de vryheid en onafhankelykheid van den staat aan de inzichten van een of ander Ryk op te offeren (H. Calkoen, *Het politiek systema van de Regeering van Amsterdam, in een waar daglicht voorgesteld* (Middelburg: C. Bohémer, 1780), 11-12).

<sup>10</sup> S.R.E. Klein, *Patriots republikenisme: politieke cultuur in Nederland (1766-1787)* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1995), 109-127.

<sup>11</sup> Schulte Nordholt, *Dutch Republic and American Independence*, 155.

up to the war with Great Britain, the Amsterdam government continued to clash with the Stadholder, which polarised the elite division between the Orangist and Republican camp. This struggle primarily revolved around the position of the Duke of Brunswick, who had been William's main advisor for several decades. The Duke exerted a large influence on the political decisions of the Stadholder, and through the patronage system on the political relations throughout the Republic. His presence severely limited the influence of the Amsterdam regents on the Stadholder, and, consequently, on Dutch politics in general. In the spring and summer of 1781, the Amsterdam government attempted to change this situation by proposing the creation of a Council of Regents, which should advise William.<sup>12</sup> When this proposal was dismissed, it subsequently tried to ban the Duke from the Stadholderian court. This effort failed as well. It did, however, further polarise the relations between the Stadholder and the Amsterdam regents.<sup>13</sup>

### ***An Appeal to the Ideal of Popular Sovereignty***

The confrontation between the Amsterdam government and the Stadholder turned out to be the prelude to a much broader conflict, which split the entire Dutch elite apart, and involved major parts of the population. The character of the elite conflict started to change when part of the regents and aristocrats tried to gain popular support in their confrontation with the Stadholder and the Stadholderian elite network. These defiant regents and aristocrats, most of whom played a subordinate role in local and provincial governments, made an appeal to the population by invoking the ideal of popular sovereignty.

The first influential effort in this direction was the pamphlet *Aan het volk van Nederland* (To the People of the Netherlands), which appeared in September 1781. This pamphlet was anonymously published, as it turned out by the nobleman Joan Derk van der Capellen from the province of Overijssel.<sup>14</sup> During the 1770s, Van der Capellen had clashed with the supporters of the Stadholder and was suspended from his position in the provincial assembly of nobles.<sup>15</sup> In *Aan het volk*, he decried the injustice that had been done to him, but framed this personal issue in a general attack on the Stadholderian system of patronage. Van der Capellen claimed that Stadholder William V was personally responsible for the disasters that had befallen the Republic. The Stadholder had accumulated too much power in his own hands by abusing his rights of patronage and his control over the military. *Aan het volk* proposed a broad investigation, starting in the provincial states, on why the Republic was in such military and economic problems. It called on the entire population to appoint burgher deputies to pressure the provincial states. Moreover, it urged the people to form civic militias to take the defence of the Republic into their own hands. Finally, it argued that the country belonged to the entire population, the rich and the poor, and not to the Stadholder.<sup>16</sup> Thus, Van der Capellen claimed the sovereignty of the people.

---

<sup>12</sup> M. de Jong, "Het einde eener staatkundige figuur" *Jaarboek van het Genootschap Amstelodamum* 28 (1931): 225.

<sup>13</sup> H.T. Colenbrander, *De Patriottentijd: hoofdzakelijk naar buitenlandsche bescheiden*, vol. I (Den Haag: Nijhoff, 1897-'99), 206; J. Rendorp, *Memorien, dienende tot opheldering, van het gebeurde gedurende den laatsten Engelschen oorlog*, vol. I (Amsterdam: Johannes Allart, 1792), 190-91.

<sup>14</sup> J.D. van der Capellen tot den Pol, *Aan het volk van Nederland* (Amsterdam: De Bezige Bij, 1966).

<sup>15</sup> Te Brake, *Regents and Rebels*, 43-50.

<sup>16</sup> Van der Capellen tot den Pol, 65, 129-131.



Subordinated regents and noblemen, like Van der Capellen, subsequently started to use the ideal of popular sovereignty to improve their own positions in local and provincial governments. In Amsterdam, nine junior Council members employed this ideal in an attempt to enhance the authority of the Council vis-à-vis the Burgomasters. The latter had, in the course of the early modern period, become the dominant force in the city. The Burgomasters effectively controlled their own appointment. They commanded the nomination of the new Council members and Aldermen. And, they had the authority to instruct the provincial delegates of the city.<sup>17</sup> The Council was also officially subordinated to the Burgomasters through the Contract of Correspondence, which had been designed to limit the influence of the Stadholder. By signing this contract, the regents pledged to uphold the Burgomasters' authority.<sup>18</sup> All in all, the power of the Amsterdam government was clearly in the hands of the Burgomasters.

It was this state of affairs which the junior Council members, such as Balthasar Elias Abbema (1739-1805), Jan Bernd Bicker (1746-1812), and Daniel Hooft van Vreeland (1741-1803), were challenging. They were assisted in this by one of the Burgomasters, Henrik Hooft, and opposed by the rest of the Burgomasters, including Rendorp, Dedel, Elias, and Huydecoper van Maarseveen. These Burgomasters, together with the majority of the Council members, could be considered as the dominant elite group in the city. The junior Council members, who formed a minority in the Council, constituted the opposing group. The fact that especially the 'junior' Councillors were challenging the organisation of government was not a coincidence, since these men would have to wait a long time, under the regulations of the Contract of Correspondence, before they could be appointed as Burgomasters.<sup>19</sup> For them the struggle over the authority of the Council provided an opportunity to gain direct access to political power.

Important for our investigation is that they used, in this effort, the concepts of popular sovereignty, and the separation of powers. How they employed these ideas can be clearly observed in the special Council meeting, of 23 July 1782, which was held on the request of Abbema, Bicker, and Hooft van Vreeland. In this meeting, Abbema started off arguing that the Council resolution of 1685, which transferred the authority to instruct the provincial delegates to the Burgomasters, was nothing but a mandate, which could be reversed. In fact, he stressed that not only the Pensionaries, but also the Burgomasters should be considered as representatives of the Council.<sup>20</sup> This implied that the Burgomasters only had executive powers, while the legislative authority was in the hands of the Council. Thus, Abbema effectively proposed a separation of powers.

Abbema subsequently demanded the appointment of a special committee of investigation, to examine the relationship between the Burgomasters and the Council more closely.<sup>21</sup> However, neither the Burgomasters, nor the majority of the Councillors, wanted to support this proposal. At this point, the junior Councillors employed the ideal of popular

<sup>17</sup> R. T. Fruin, *Robert Fruin's verspreide geschriften*, vol. IV, *Historische opstellen* (Den Haag: Nijhoff, 1901), 305-337.

<sup>18</sup> J. de Witte van Citters, *Contracten van correspondentie en andere bijdragen tot de geschiedenis van het ambtsbejag in de Republiek der Vereenigde Nederlanden* (Den Haag: Nijhoff, 1873), 184-86.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> GAA, arch. Bicker (arch.nr. 195) inv.nr. 297 (Voorgevallene in de Vroedschap op 23 July 1782 concernerende de Pens. van Berckel).

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

sovereignty to put the 'senior' regents under pressure. Along with eight other junior Councillors, Abbema demanded that a special note would be inserted in the minutes of the Council. He emphasised that the Councillors should account for their actions to the burghers, as 'the Councillors are the representatives of the burghers and are consequently obliged to satisfy their wishes.'<sup>22</sup> When the Burgomasters refused to include such a note, the junior Councillors threatened to make their point of view known to the general public. This threat worked: the Burgomasters gave in and included the note in the minutes of the Council.<sup>23</sup>

In the year after the first confrontations between the junior Amsterdam Councillors and the Burgomasters, it became clear that there were many other subordinate regents and noblemen across the Republic, who were ready to appeal to the ideal of popular sovereignty to strengthen their own political position. At the initiative of Van der Capellen, and the Amsterdam group around Hooft, Abbema and Bicker, an attempt was made to create a network of opposition regents. It is assumed that the foundations for this cooperation were established in Amsterdam, in April 1783, during a dinner that had been organised for Van der Capellen.<sup>24</sup> A few months later these same men agreed to organise a meeting of 'well known Patriots.'<sup>25</sup> Each would invite friends. On 16 August 1783, the first meeting of the 'Patriot Regents'<sup>26</sup> took place in Amsterdam. Obviously, the name 'Patriot' suggested that these regents truly cared about the well-being of the country. In contrast to the regents and aristocrats who dominated local and provincial government, and who only cared about power. Twenty-five regents and noblemen from Gelderland, Friesland, Overijssel, and Holland were present at the meeting. From Amsterdam, Burgomaster Henrik Hooft, the Councillors Abbema, Bicker, Hooft van Vreeland, Van Lennep, Lodewijk Hovy, and the second Pensionary of the city Carel Visscher took part. The Patriot regents agreed, as the Amsterdam regents had already discovered, that the 'People's Voice' was important in promoting their cause. Van der Capellen subsequently proposed to initiate a Patriot petitioning movement in the towns and in the Provincial States throughout the country. Following this first meeting, the Patriot regents quickly organised a second assembly in Amsterdam on 4 October 1783. During this meeting, which was attended by 32 regents, a central bureau of correspondence was created, which would operate from The Hague by the Pensionaries from Amsterdam and several other towns of Holland. The objective was to exchange information about current political issues.<sup>27</sup>

Although the Patriot regents found out that the ideal of popular sovereignty was a powerful instrument to enhance their political position, their ideas and activities hardly challenged the decentralised particularistic state structure. Neither Van der Capellen, nor the junior Amsterdam regents launched proposals for a more representative form of government. Instead, they made clear that they were after a restoration of their privileges, which had been undermined by the Burgomasters, and the Stadholder. Thus, far from a fundamental change in the existing political system, the Patriot regents wanted to bring

<sup>22</sup> de Vroedschappen zijn de representanten der Burgherij en dus verplicht aan derzelver verlangen te voldoen (GAA, arch. Vroedschap (arch. nr. 5025) inv. nr. 70 (Minutes of the Council, 23 July 1782).

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> *Nieuwe Nederlandsche jaerboeken*, vol. XVIII (Leiden: Pieter van der Eyk, 1783), 577.

<sup>25</sup> oude bekende Patriotten (H.T. Colenbrander, "Aanteekeningen betreffende de vergadering van vaderlandsche regenten te Amsterdam, 1783-1787" *Bijdragen en Mededelingen van het Historische Genootschap* 20 (1899): 88).

<sup>26</sup> Vaderlandsche Regenten.

<sup>27</sup> Colenbrander, "Aanteekeningen", 129-58.

about a redistribution of privileges. They certainly tried to achieve this shift by involving the population in the political process, but they evidently did not aim for an institutionalisation of popular political influence. Moreover, by identifying themselves as ‘Patriot regents’, and by organising in an assembly consisting exclusively of regents, they also reaffirmed the existing set of identities on which the early modern Republic was built. Hence, far-reaching political changes could not be expected from the side of the Patriot regents. This was also true because their joint activities did not progress very quickly. After the meeting of October 1783, they did not meet for another two years, and their newly created correspondence network quickly collapsed.<sup>28</sup>

## Popular Reactions

However, the elite conflict and the appeal to popular sovereignty did trigger a lively public political debate, as various periodicals were created, which commented on current political affairs. For example, in the spring of 1781, not long after the start of the war with Great Britain, *De Post van den Neder-Rhijn* began to appear. This political weekly, which was published in Utrecht, appeared twice a week and ran until 1787. It contained a combination of editorial pieces, letters to the editor, dialogues, and poems. Although this periodical could be considered as Patriot, it did not express the point of view of a particular political group. In 1782, *De Politieke Kruyer* (Political Porter) appeared, which was the first major political periodical from Amsterdam. The *Kruyer*, which like the *Post* was distributed throughout the Republic, was strictly a collection of letters. The *Kruyer* especially received a lot of public attention when its editor J.C. Hespe and the publisher J. Verlem were imprisoned because the weekly had disrespectfully commented on the Amsterdam government. Another important political publication was the *Courier van Europe*, which appeared between 1783 and 1785. It was a solo project of the young Amsterdam journalist and lawyer Willem Irhoven van Dam (1760-1802). During the 1780s he was a prolific author. In addition to running the *Courier*, Irhoven van Dam also published five influential pamphlets titled *Missives van Candidus* (Letters of Candidus). All together these publications provided the platform for an intense national debate about the organisation of the political system.

Political periodicals were a new phenomenon, as were the political clubs and exercise associations. From the beginning of the eighteenth-century, there had been Masonic lodges, literary societies, scientific clubs, and reading associations, but none of these had a political character.<sup>29</sup> This changed during the 1780s, when appeals were made for popular sovereignty, cooperation, and popular consultation. In 1783, Irhoven van Dam, together with book seller Willem Holtrop and medical doctor Hendrik Stolte, created the *Vaderlandsche Sociëteit* (Patriot Society) in Amsterdam. Initially only burghers and no regents became members of this club. These burghers were, however, strictly men from the

---

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 101.

<sup>29</sup> W.W. Mijnhart, “The Dutch Enlightenment” in *The Dutch Republic in the Eighteenth Century: Decline, Enlightenment, and Revolution*, ed. M.C. Jacob, and W.W. Mijnhart (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992): 222-23; Van Sas, *Metamorfose*, 187.

highest socio-economic classes.<sup>30</sup> In this sense, the Amsterdam Patriot movement was, in the first years, an elitist movement. This started to change in 1783 and 1784, when several companies of the Amsterdam civic militias turned Patriot.<sup>31</sup> In 1785, the Patriot exercise association, called *Tot Nut der Schutterij* (For the Purpose of the Civic Militia), was created, which operated independently from the Amsterdam government. This association, which had about five hundred members, quickly joined the Assembly of Armed Burgher Forces from Holland.<sup>32</sup> And finally, one year later, the *Burgersociëteit* (Burgher Society) was established, which was directly connected to the exercise association. Hespe, editor of *De Politieke Krayer*, became the secretary of the society. Given these organisational links, it is not surprising that the letters of the exercise association frequently appeared in the *Krayer*. The *Burgersociëteit* was the largest Patriot organisation in Amsterdam with about 600 members; the elitist *Vaderlandsche Sociëteit* never had more than two hundred members. Although the Patriots clubs and associations organised only a small part of the total population of the city, in 1786 and 1787, they could mobilise a much larger group of people. For a petition in 1786, the *Burgersociëteit* was able to collect a total of 16,000 signatures.<sup>33</sup> Hence, the democratic ideals of popular sovereignty and representative government turned out to be powerful mobilising instruments.

About most of the revolutionaries very little information has survived. A few leading figures, beside the regents, did leave more than a few traces. Especially interesting is Rutger Jan Schimmelpenninck, who, in 1805, became ‘president’ of the Republic. Between 1785 and 1787, he played a central role in the Amsterdam Patriot movement. Schimmelpenninck was born in 1761 in Deventer in a bourgeois family; his father was a wine merchant. At school he was initiated to the English Enlightenment.<sup>34</sup> In 1781, he started his law study in Leiden. In his dissertation about popular government, which became a source of inspiration for the Patriot movement, he demonstrated a thorough knowledge of the Enlightenment authors, such as Montesquieu, Rousseau, Price, and Priestley.<sup>35</sup> After taking his PhD in December 1784, he settled in Amsterdam as a lawyer. He immediately made a name for himself in the Patriot movement, as counsel for Hespe and Verlem of *De Politieke Krayer* when they were imprisoned.<sup>36</sup> He also quickly joined the *Vaderlandsche Sociëteit* and became an officer of *Tot Nut der Schutterij*. As a representative of this exercise association, he became one of the leaders of the Assembly of Armed Burgher Forces from Holland. In October 1785, he played an important role in the meeting of this assembly in Leiden, when the famous pamphlet the *Leidsch Ontwerp* (Leyden Draft) was accepted.<sup>37</sup> Schimmelpenninck truly was a central figure, as he not only

<sup>30</sup> GAA, arch. *Doctrina* et Amicitia (arch. nr. 684) inv. nr. 217 (Naamregister van de leden van de *Vaderlandsche Sociëteit* die overgegaan zijn naar *Doctrina*, 1783-1809).

<sup>31</sup> Patriot armed burgher forces were created throughout the Republic in the first half of the 1780s. Initially, they were closely linked to the regular civic militias from which they drew most of their members.

<sup>32</sup> This assembly, which first convened in October 1785, connected the various Patriot exercise associations and Free Corps in Holland.

<sup>33</sup> H. Reitsma, “Genootschappen in Amsterdam en de revolutie van 1787” in *1787: De Nederlandse revolutie?*, eds. Th. van der Zee, J. Rosendaal, and P. Thissen (Amsterdam: De Bataafsche Leeuw, 1988): 146-165.

<sup>34</sup> Van Sas, *Metamorfose*, 294.

<sup>35</sup> R.J. Schimmelpenninck, *Verhandeling over eene wel ingerigte volksregeering* (Leiden: Frans de Does, 1785).

<sup>36</sup> Van Sas, *Metamorfose*, 295.

<sup>37</sup> S.R.E. Klein, “Republikanisme en Patriottisme. Rutger Jan Schimmelpenninck en de klassieke wortels van het republikeinse denken (1784-1785)” *Tijdschrift voor geschiedenis* 106 (1993): 181-82.

played an important role in the different Patriot organisations in Amsterdam, he also maintained contacts with various Patriot regents, such as Bicker, but also with senior regents, like Joachim Rendorp, Jan Elias Huydecoper van Maarseveen, and Willem Gerrit Dedel.<sup>38</sup>

Little personal information is available about the large mass of Patriots. Research on the Patriot movement in other cities has suggested that the majority of the Patriots had a middle class, and guild-related, background.<sup>39</sup> The research on the Amsterdam Patriots, by Van Manen and Vermeulen, gives a somewhat different impression. They show a large presence of the lower socio-economic classes.<sup>40</sup> The variation between the research results is probably due to the different sources used by the authors.<sup>41</sup> At any rate, it is clear that the Patriot movement incorporated a variety of socio-economic groups. It was certainly not restricted to burghers and regents. In this sense, the movement potentially undermined the existing political divisions.

Of course, the crucial question is whether the popular political initiatives did challenge the decentralised particularistic organisation of the Republic. On the one hand, this seems not to have been the case. The name *Burgersociëteit* and the central importance of the civic militias suggest that the early modern political identities and actors were reaffirmed. Although the identities of ‘democrat’ and ‘aristocrat’ were frequently used as well, these terms were seldom used for self-identification, but were mostly employed to denounce political opponents.<sup>42</sup> Consequently, the revolutionaries continued to present and organise themselves according to corporate identities. Yet, on the other hand, there were also aspects of popular revolutionary activity, which appeared to challenge the decentralised particularistic state structure. As Van Sas has argued, especially the upcoming political press gave the Patriot Revolt a coherence, which extended beyond the local corporate framework. The periodicals provided the platform for an intense national political debate.<sup>43</sup> Hence, all in all, popular revolutionary activity presented a combination of traditional and new elements.

### ***Liberal Ideas***

The same can be said about the ideas that were developed by the Patriot burghers. For example, in the essay the *Vijfde Missive van Candidus* Irhoven van Dam challenged the local corporate relations by directing the principle of the sovereignty of the people at the regents. In this essay, he approvingly quoted the English philosopher Joseph Priestley to argue that the people cannot not be denied the right to change a form of government, or their governors, when they felt that the rights of the people were violated.

---

<sup>38</sup> G. Schimmelpenninck, *Rutger Jan Schimmelpenninck, en eenige gebeurtenissen van zijnen tijd* (Den Haag: Van Cleef, 1845), 25.

<sup>39</sup> Prak, *Republikeinse veelheid*, 168-172; N.C.F. van Sas, “Politiek als leerproces: het patriottisme in Utrecht” *Jaarboek* (1987): 39-40; Te Brake, *Regents and Rebels*, 71-79.

<sup>40</sup> Van Manen, and Vermeulen, “Lagere volk”, 351.

<sup>41</sup> Van Manen and Vermeulen use judicial records, while the others use petitions.

<sup>42</sup> Klein, *Patriots Republikenisme*, 229-243.

<sup>43</sup> Van Sas, *The Patriot Revolution*, 102-103.

*In the largest states, if the abuses of government should, at any time be great and manifest; if the servants of the people, forgetting their masters, and their masters' interest (...) in the name of God, I ask, what principles are those, which ought to restrain an injured and insulted people from asserting their natural rights, and from changing, or even punishing their governors that is their servants, who had abused their trust.*<sup>44</sup>

Yet, in the same essay, Irhoven van Dam also made clear that the rights of the people were based on the 'privileges and prerogatives' of the burghers, which were of old exercised through the civic militias and the guilds.<sup>45</sup> Moreover, Irhoven van Dam stressed that the right of the burghers to change their government did not imply that the governors had to obey the people's every wish. They had the obligation to account for their actions and seriously consider the demands of the burghers. However, as long as they did this, no public action was required.<sup>46</sup>

A similar combination of traditional and new political ideas could be found in the work of Schimmelpenninck. He maintained in his dissertation that a complete transfer of authority, even for a short period, did not correspond with the principles of popular government. Representatives should always be subject to the supervision of the people.

*In a people's government, one cannot tolerate any power, which stands on its own; it is not enough that all power is derived from, and finds its origin in, the people, but it must also continuously depend on the people, and only be exercised with the ongoing approval of the people.*<sup>47</sup>

Hence, the people only temporarily transferred their legislative power to their representatives, but this transfer was nothing more than a mandate.

Although this sounds like a plea for modern representative democracy, similar ideas had already been put forward during the Stadholderian restoration of 1748. The notion that the power of the government depended on the people was in itself not contrary to the corporate system. In fact, the regents often claimed that they represented the interests of the burghers and the urban community. Yet, the language in which the ideas of popular sovereignty and representative government were presented was not based on the corporate idiom, but on the natural rights tradition. Echoing ideas of Locke and Rousseau, Schimmelpenninck argued that the basis of a burgher society was the social contract

---

<sup>44</sup> Indien de misbruiken en gebreken der Regeering, zelf in de uitgestrekte Staaten, 't eenigertijd groot, en tastbaar worden, indien de dienaars van het volk, hunne meesters en derzelver belangen vergeeten (...) dan vraag ik in den naam van God, welke grondbeginzeles het kunnen zyn, die een gesmaad, mishandeld, beledigd en gehoond volk behooren te weerhouden van het verdedigen zyner natuurlyke rechten, en van het veranderen, ja zelf, van het straffen, zyner bestierders, dat is van zyne dienaars, die het vertrouwen des volks misbruikt hebben (W. van Irhoven van Dam, *Vyfde missive van Candidus, aan den schryver van het Politiek Vertoog, diende ter wederlegging van het zelve* (Rotterdam, 1782), 71-72 (from J. Priestley, *An Essay on the First Principles of Government: and on the Nature of Political, Civil, and Religious Liberty*, (Dublin, 1768), 24-25).

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 96-105.

<sup>46</sup> *Courier van Europa* 17 (1783), 66.

<sup>47</sup> In eene Volksregeering toch kan geene magt geduld worden, die op zyn eigen recht bestaat; want het is niet genoeg, dat alle magt wordt afgeleid, en zyn oorsprong neemt, uit den boezem van het volk, maar zy moet ook by voortduuring van het Volk afhangen, en niet dan met aanhoudende toestemming van het zelve worden uitgeoeffend (Schimmelpenninck, *Verhandeling*, 34-35).

through which individuals were connected with each other. The purpose of a social union was to make everyone safer and happier, and to let each enjoy the fruits of his property. Schimmelpenninck emphasised that the actual form of government was not of great importance, as long as these general principles were observed. He did make clear that the highest probability that the general interest would be achieved was through a popular government.<sup>48</sup> This form of government also made it possible to accomplish the 'purest form of general or constitutional Freedom', and to maintain the equality, which existed in the state of nature.<sup>49</sup>

As Schimmelpenninck did not use the corporate rhetoric, which had always determined who could be classified as a burgher or citizen, he had to carefully redefine this category. For this purpose, he created three criteria. First, Schimmelpenninck made clear that a citizen needed to have a material interest in the well-being of a society, which guaranteed that he would promote the general interest. Second, citizens needed to have an understanding of the interests of society, which implied that they were educated. Finally, each citizen should have the opportunity to pass independent judgment, which implied that wage labourers and people on poor relief should be excluded.<sup>50</sup> Even though these criteria for citizenship were not formulated in terms of privileges, there were still some clear overtones of the corporate ideas on citizenship. Some of the same concerns and ideas informed these criteria, as they were brought forward by the corporations. In each case, the guiding principle was the idea that citizenship rights should be restricted to those people who paid direct taxes, and were truly concerned about the maintenance of public order.

Nevertheless, Schimmelpenninck's ideas were a departure from the corporate notion of citizenship, which was directly connected to the system of privileges. He was certainly not the only one to make an attempt to redefine citizenship during the 1780s. In one of the most influential publications of the period, the *Grondwettige herstelling van Nederlands Staatswezen* (1784-'86) (Constitutional Restoration of the Dutch State), a similar process of rethinking took place. The *Grondwettige herstelling* was a two-volume political handbook, written by among others Joan Hendrik Swildens, who, a few years before, had published a widely read educational handbook.<sup>51</sup> Like most Patriot publications *Grondwettige herstelling* presented a combination of new and traditional ideas. On the one hand, it argued for the maintenance of the existing institutions, as it only wanted to give the local citizens influence on the appointment of the governors. Moreover, it proposed to organise this influence through the guilds, which in earlier times had already fulfilled a similar role. In this sense, the book did undeniably aim for a constitutional restoration, not a modernisation.<sup>52</sup> Yet, the *Grondwettige herstelling*, at the same time, argued for a liberalisation of the corporate system, to give more people a chance to make a living and exercise political influence. It maintained that the guilds should be opened up to 'people from all classes and professions.'<sup>53</sup> It claimed that Jews should be admitted. Moreover, it

---

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 48-49.

<sup>49</sup> *allerzuiverste algemeene of staatkundige Vrijheid* (Ibid., 50-51).

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 17-27.

<sup>51</sup> J.H. Swildens, *Vaderlandsch A-B boek voor de Nederlandsche jeugd. Eerste beginsels van het cyfferen en van alle kunsten en handwerken* (Amsterdam: W. Holtrop, 1781).

<sup>52</sup> J.H. Swildens, *Grondwettige herstelling, van Nederlands staatswezen zo voor het algemeen bondgenootschap, als voor het bestuur van elke byzondere provincie*, vol. I (Amsterdam: Johannes Allart, 1784-'86), 213.

<sup>53</sup> *lieden van alle standen en beroepen* (Ibid., 214).

denounced the discriminatory regulations against Remonstrants, Mennonites, and Catholics, who were all excluded from political office.<sup>54</sup>

The clearest attack on the corporate system was launched by the anonymous essay *Bedenkingen over het aanstellen van regenten, in een vrij gemeenebest* (Thoughts on the Appointment of Regents in a Free Commonwealth), which was published in 1786. This essay has been attributed to Rutger Jan Schimmelpenninck.<sup>55</sup> Whether or not he was indeed the author, the essay proposed a far-reaching liberalisation of the political system. It went further than the *Grondwettige herstelling* in attacking the political monopoly of the Reformed Church. Moreover, it depicted the guilds as 'a genuine monopoly' by which 'many inhabitants were exposed to the most extreme extortions.'<sup>56</sup>

*Bedenkingen* was also remarkable in that it developed detailed ideas for an electoral system. In contrast to the *Grondwettige herstelling*, which still wanted to give the guilds a role in the local representative system, the author of the *Bedenkingen* considered the right to vote to be an individual natural right. This not only implied that the influence of the corporations was reduced. It also entailed a separation of citizenship from a specific location. The author proposed to give burghers who had moved to another town immediately the right to vote.<sup>57</sup> This was in sharp contrast to most Patriot reform plans, which entailed that a burgher could only exercise political rights after he had lived somewhere for a certain period of time. The essay did stipulate that potential voters needed to have interests that coincided with the general interests of urban society. To ensure this link, the voters needed to own real estate, contribute a particular amount of money to the urban treasury, or, surprisingly, be a member of a guild, which shows how the departure from the corporate system was incomplete.<sup>58</sup>

Even though all these Patriot plans confirmed crucial elements of the corporate system, they also proposed a substantial liberalisation of this system. The proposals for liberalisation were important, as the democratisation process was in principle limited by the corporate system. As we have discussed, this system was based on a marriage of interest between the regents and the burghers, and on the political and economic exclusion of the rest of the population. Hence, a far-reaching process of democratisation would only be possible if the corporate privileges, which determined the political and economic position of the various social groups, were eliminated.

## Coalitions

To understand why the Patriot Revolt ultimately reinforced the local corporate state structure, it is important to consider a mechanism, which I would like to call 'the democratic paradox'. On the one hand, democratic ideals, as we have discussed, made it possible to mobilise a large revolutionary movement for political change. Yet, on the other hand, as we will see, the same democratic ideals also limited the political reforms that could

---

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 219, 225.

<sup>55</sup> Klein, *Patriots Republikenisme*, 264-65.

<sup>56</sup> *Bedenkingen over het aanstellen van regenten, in een vrij gemeenebest* (Amsterdam: J. Verlem, 1787): 14-42.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 183-84.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 170-74.



be pursued. It turned out that the ideas for political and economic liberalisation, as proposed by *Bedenkingen* and the *Grondwettige herstelling*, had to be abandoned when the various revolutionary groups were, according to the democratic ideals of consultation and cooperation, accommodated in one broad Patriot coalition.<sup>59</sup> Let's examine the coalition making process in more detail.

First, it must be noted that this process primarily revolved about the regents and burghers, as the mobilisation and organisation of the Patriot revolutionaries had strongly affirmed the corporate identities and actors. The regents had a strong position in this process, as they were still considered the designated governors by all of the political groups, irrespective of their Orangist, Republican, or Patriot orientation. The groups that identified themselves as Patriots obviously wanted to turn the regents into the true representatives of the people, but very few in principle disputed the rule of the regents. At the same time, the Patriot regents were dependent on popular support, if they wanted to overthrow the government of the Orangist regents. Especially the Patriot exercise associations were crucial, as they made it possible to put pressure on the senior regents. Besides these two groups, a special role was played by the revolutionary intellectuals, like Schimmelpenninck and Irhoven van Dam, who formulated most of the ideas and programs of the Patriot movement.

The first effort to accommodate the interests of the various revolutionary groups was the *Leidsch Ontwerp*, which was published by the Assembly of Armed Burgher Forces from Holland in 1785. This pamphlet, edited by journalist Wybo Fijnje, cloth producer Pieter Vreede, Joan Hendrik Swildens, and Rutger Jan Schimmelpenninck among others, was not only meant to bring the armed burgher forces together, but also to initiate a coalition with the regents. It argued that such an alliance was necessary because the original constitution of the Republic, which had been established in the Unie van Utrecht (1579) (Union of Utrecht), had been corrupted by the uncontrolled accumulation of power in the hands of the Stadholder and regents.<sup>60</sup> The principal remedy against the corruption of the constitution and the dangers that confronted the Republic was the 'total re-establishment

---

<sup>59</sup> A rather different conception of the democratic paradox, compared to the one employed in this study, has been constructed by Chantal Mouffe. She maintains that modern democracy contains a paradox, as it tries to combine two logics. 'On one side we have the liberal tradition constituted by the rule of law, the defence of human rights and the respect of individual liberty; on the other the democratic tradition whose main ideas are those of equality, identity between governing and governed and popular sovereignty' (C. Mouffe, *The Democratic Paradox* (London: Verso, 2000): 2-3). According to Mouffe, these two logics are ultimately incompatible. She argues that it cannot be guaranteed that democratic decisions will not threaten certain human rights. Thus, the exercise of sovereignty by the people is necessarily limited in liberal democracy.

I will adopt a more material understanding of the democratic paradox. Moreover, I will specifically use this concept to appreciate the problematic character of the European political modernisation process in the decades around 1800. Based on the analysis of the Dutch revolutionary process, I will argue that democratic ideals, whether local particularistic, or national and liberal, were powerful instruments to mobilise large popular movements to challenge the Ancien Regime, in which political power was concentrated in the hands of a small elite. Yet, these same ideals, as well as the democratic institutions which were created in the process of political struggle, also allowed the various societal groups to resist the elimination of their specific privileges. Particularly striking is that this type of resistance was very widespread. It was certainly not limited to 'the antidemocratic forces', but included many of the groups, which rallied for the sovereignty of the people.

<sup>60</sup> *Ontwerp om de Republiek door eene heilzaame vereeniging der belangen van regent en burger, van binnen gelukkig, en van buiten gedugt te maaken* (Leiden: L. Herdingh, 1785): 13-15.

and insurance of the unity and trust between the people and its representatives.’<sup>61</sup> The authors of the *Ontwerp* gave this democratic claim extra weight by warning the regents that the burghers could start to mistrust and hate them, if they would not give them more political influence. A refusal of the regent to cooperate could very easily turn the Patriot Revolt against them, which would in turn endanger the republican form of government and possibly even transform the Republic into a monarchical state.<sup>62</sup>

Having issued a strong warning to the regents, the *Ontwerp* then unfolded a reform program, which held the middle ground between the interests of the regents and the burghers. First, it reassured the regents by severely limiting the democratic character of the program. It asserted that the objective was to give the burghers influence over the appointment of their representatives, but not to create a democratic system. If the right regents were selected, they should be instated for life, to govern autonomously. The *Ontwerp* emphasised that the regents should not be disturbed in the business of government by a ‘complete democracy, which is a state of confusion and capriciousness.’<sup>63</sup> Second, the *Ontwerp* assured the burghers by emphasising that their privileged position would be guaranteed. The pamphlet stressed that the right to elect public officials would certainly not be given to everyone, but only to:

*all true burghers, which are the ones that have a fundamental and immediate interest in the maintenance of the constitution, the public order, and the promotion of general prosperity because of their property and occupation.*<sup>64</sup>

Thus, the *Ontwerp* proposed an expansion of the privileges of the burghers. In practice, the influence of the burghers should be increased by giving them the right to ‘assign the regents, or at least to appoint them the first time.’<sup>65</sup> Moreover, the burghers should be able ‘to oversee the financial administration and the maintenance of their own rights.’<sup>66</sup> In the political circumstances of 1785, these privileges implied that the burghers had the right to obstruct the appointment of a regent or to demand his dismissal, once he had lost their confidence.<sup>67</sup> This privilege would make it possible to unseat the regents and aristocrats that dominated government, and bring the Patriot regents to power.

The *Ontwerp* shows that the attempt to accommodate the various revolutionary groups in one broad Patriot coalition, based on the democratic ideals of consultation and cooperation, reaffirmed rather than undermined the local particularistic state structure of the Republic. It became clear that the middle ground between the various Patriot groups would be found in a strengthening of the local corporations and system of privileges. This implied that the mass of the population was to remain excluded from political life. Or as the

---

<sup>61</sup> De volkomen herstelling en bestendige verzekering van de eensgezindheid en het vertrouwen tusschen het volk en zyne Vertegenwoordigers! (Ibid., 27)

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 18-19.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 42.

<sup>64</sup> alle waare burgheren, dat is dezelve, die door hunne bezittingen en betrekking een weezenlyk en onmiddelyk belang hebben in de handhaving der Constitutie, in de bewaaring der openbaare rust, en in de bevordering der algemeene welvaart (Ibid., 48-49).

<sup>65</sup> Laat het Volk hen aanstellen of ten minsten de eerste benoeming doen (Ibid., 41).

<sup>66</sup> een wakend oog houden op het Finantie- weezen, en de handhaaving zyner rechten (Ibid., 41).

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 48.

*Ontwerp* stated ‘In one word, the people, the violent mob that has nothing to lose in times of revolt, and which can be bought by anyone with money or booze, should be deprived of its dangerous influence.’<sup>68</sup> It also entailed that a liberalisation of the corporate system, as had been proposed by the *Grondwettige herstelling* and by the *Bedenkingen over het aanstellen van regenten*, was out of the question. Especially telling is that Vreede, Fijnje, Swildens, and Schimmelpenninck had initially planned to include an article in the *Ontwerp*, which stated that all discriminatory laws against those who were not members of the Reformed Church should be abolished. However, this article was eliminated from the final version of the *Ontwerp*.<sup>69</sup> The authors were probably worried that such a controversial objective would alienate large parts of the Patriot regents and burghers, many of whom depended on the protection of the local system of privileges.

### ***The Construction of the Patriot Coalition***

As the *Ontwerp* was published, in the Fall of 1785, both the Patriot Regents and the Assembly of Armed Burgher Forces from Holland started to work on an alliance. Responding to popular political activities, the Patriot Regents again held a meeting in Amsterdam on 1 August 1785. The fifty-eight regents who took part in this assembly decided to create a small committee to prepare the meeting and decisions of the Patriot Regents. It was this committee, in which none of the Amsterdam regents were active, that started to work on the construction of an alliance with the armed burghers. Especially Robert Jasper van der Capellen van de Marsch, the cousin of Joan Derk van der Capellen, was very active. He stressed that ‘a coalition and correspondence’ between the regents and burghers was crucial. A similar initiative was taken by the Assembly of Armed Burgher Forces from Holland, which also appointed a special committee, consisting among others of Schimmelpenninck, to prepare the cooperation with the Patriot Regents.<sup>70</sup> Eventually the preparations from both sides accumulated in an official visit of a delegation of the Assemblies of Armed Burgher Forces from Holland and Utrecht to the meeting of the Patriot Regents, which took place in Amsterdam on 7 and 8 August 1786.<sup>71</sup>

In this meeting, the delegation of the Burgher Forces declared that they had been provoked to seek an alliance with the Patriot regents by the coalition efforts of the proponents of the Stadholder and ‘a few aristocratic regents.’<sup>72</sup> These efforts, which, as we will see, took place in the spring of 1786, had given them the idea to create ‘an opposite union and alliance between freedom-loving regents, and the fearless and diligent patriotic burghers.’<sup>73</sup> They stressed that the regents should not form a separate body from the burghers. Moreover, the representatives of the armed burgher forces expressed the hope

---

<sup>68</sup> Met één woord, men zoude aan de heffe des Volks, aan een woest Gemeen, dat by de onlusten van den Staat niets te verliezen hebbende, zich door elk, die hun geld of drank geeft, gereedelyk laat omkooopen, dien gevaarlyken invloed ontnemen (Ibid., 48).

<sup>69</sup> See for a detailed analysis: S.R.E. Klein, and J.G.M.M. Rosendaal, “Democratie in context: nieuwe perspectieven op het Leids Ontwerp (1785)” *De Achttiende Eeuw: documentatieblad van de Werkgroep Achttiende Eeuw* 25.1 (1994): 90-98.

<sup>70</sup> Klein, *Patriots Republikanisme*, 245-48.

<sup>71</sup> Colenbrander, “Aanteekeningen betreffende de vergadering van vaderlandsche regenten”, 172-73.

<sup>72</sup> een aantal van aristocratische regenten (cited by Klein, *Patriots Republikanisme*, 249).

<sup>73</sup> eene tegenovergestelde naauwe naauwe vereeniging en samenwerking van vrijheidlievende regenten met die onverschrokken en ijvervolle vaderland minnende burghers (Ibid.).

that the regents supported the principle ‘that a regular influence of the people on the regents was the only constitutional measure to guard the nation against oppression.’<sup>74</sup> Subsequently, the Assembly of Patriot Regents expressed its approval of this declaration and appointed fifteen of its members, among them Jan Bernd Bicker to form a committee with the delegation of the armed burgher forces from Holland and Utrecht.<sup>75</sup>

After the Assembly of Patriot Regents had agreed to cooperate with the armed burgher forces, it decided to create an Act of Association, with the objective to officially tie the Patriot regents together.<sup>76</sup> Although the Act was not a real success, as many regents hesitated to sign, it clearly shows the perspective of the Patriot regents on the political developments that were taking place. It demonstrates that the Patriot regents were determined to strengthen the system of privileges and the particularistic political relations. The Act, which was composed by Bicker, declared:

*We solemnly promise to have no other objective, than to maintain with all our might the true Republican form of government in our Commonwealth, namely a government by representation of the people, based on the nature of the constitution and the privileges of the specific provinces, cities, and their members, confirmed by the Union of Utrecht.*<sup>77</sup>

In addition, the Patriot regents also pledged to uphold the ‘true Christian Reformed Religion’, which they saw as ‘the invaluable pillar of our Dutch state building.’<sup>78</sup>

Hence, after the regents and burghers had been consulted, and their interests accommodated, it became clear that the Patriot Revolt was not going to change the particularistic organisation of the Dutch Republic. In fact, the coalition making efforts revived the local corporate coalition, on which the decentralised particularistic state structure was built. Accordingly, the Patriot coalition affirmed the local systems of privileges. This implied that any democratisation that was to take place, would be limited to the privileged groups in society, and would occur within the local corporate framework.

Crucially, the centralisation of authority was not even an issue of debate, as the cooperation between the Patriot burghers and regents was based on the common understanding that freedom and popular sovereignty could only be advanced through the protection and restoration of the local system of privileges. In the minds of the Patriots, these privileges had been threatened by the concentration of authority in the hands of the Stadholder. In general, the revolutionaries, as well as many other people in the Republic, saw centralisation as a sure road to absolutism. As the *Leidsch Ontwerp* claimed, it was vital to maintain the confederalist organisation of the Republic because ‘the advantages of

---

<sup>74</sup> dat eene regelmatige invloed van het volk op de regenten het eenige constitutioneel middel is om de natie voor overheersing te behoeden (Ibid.).

<sup>75</sup> Colenbrander, “Aanteekeningen betreffende de vergadering van vaderlandsche regenten”, 173-74.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., 175-76.

<sup>77</sup> Wy betuigen dierhalve by deeze op het plegtigste geen ander voorneemen te hebben, dan om met alle ons vermogen de waare Republikeinsche Regeeringsform in ons Gemeenebest, namelyk eene Regeering by representatie des volks, gegrond op den aart der constitutie en privilegien van byzondere gewesten, steden en leden van dien, en bevestigd by de Unie van Utrecht, te handhaven (GAA, arch. Bicker (arch. nr. 195) inv. nr. 305 (Acte van onderlinge verbintenisse tusschen Vaderlandlievende Regenten ter handhaving der Republikeinse constitutie).

<sup>78</sup> waaren Christelyken Gereformeerden Godsdienst; de onschatbaare vastigheden van Nederlands Staatsgebouw (Ibid.).

freedom can only be protected in small societies.’<sup>79</sup> It emphasised that freedom could be protected in the Republic, since ‘each part of the general society has authority over its own affairs, which do not concern the others.’<sup>80</sup> According to the Patriots, any concentration of authority in higher state institutions endangered the bond between the burghers and regents, and consequently the democratisation process. Thus, the corporate form of democratisation, which was pursued by the Patriot revolutionaries, was directly contrary to the process of centralisation.

Overall, the analysis shows that the democratic paradox indeed obstructed the development of a more liberal democratic state. When the revolutionary burghers and regents were, according to the democratic ideals of consultation and cooperation, accommodated in one Patriot coalition, the more radical proposals for political and economic liberalisation had to be abandoned. Hence, the same democratic ideals which had facilitated the construction of a large revolutionary movement for political change, also limited the reforms that could be pursued. Let’s examine how this worked in practice.

## The Patriot Revolt in Amsterdam

In Amsterdam, the Patriot coalition began to take shape in the course of 1786. A clear sign that the Amsterdam Patriot regents and burghers actually started to cooperate was the decision of these regents to become member of the *Vaderlandsche Sociëteit*, which had been created by Irhoven van Dam. In 1785, Van der Hoop joined the *Vaderlandsche Sociëteit*, and in 1786 the other Patriot regents followed suit.<sup>81</sup> The Amsterdam Patriot coalition immediately showed its corporate inclinations, as both the Patriot burghers and regents launched proposals to give the civic militias a direct say in the election of the local governors. This was a highly traditional demand, which had also been put forward in the revolutionary years of 1672 and 1748. It was inspired by the famous Alteration of Amsterdam in 1578, when the Catholic, pro-Spanish government of the city had been dismissed by the people of Amsterdam. The Burgomasters and the new members of the Council had on this occasion been elected by the civic militias, which could be considered as the representatives of the burghers.<sup>82</sup>

In this spirit, Hespe, one of the founders of the *Burgersociëteit*, argued in *De Politieke Kruyver* of August 1786 that the most ‘notable members of the militias’ should nominate a list of potential Burgomasters. Half of these nominees had to be senior Councillors, and the other half senior Aldermen. The Council would subsequently have to make the final selection. In addition, Hespe proposed to delegate the nomination of new Councillors to the notable members of the militias as well. The Council itself should be given the right of appointment.<sup>83</sup> In effect, these reforms entailed a transfer of authority

---

<sup>79</sup> om dat men de voordeelen der vryheid niet kan bewaaren, dan in kleine Maatschappyyen (*Ontwerp*, 11).

<sup>80</sup> Elk gedeelte der algemeene Maatschappy heeft hier de bestuuring over die zaaken, die haar alleen betreffen, en waarmede anderen niet te maaken hebben (*Ibid.*, 10).

<sup>81</sup> GAA, arch. *Doctrina* et Amicitia (arch. nr. 684) inv. nr. 217.

<sup>82</sup> S.A.C. Dudok van Heel, “Waar waren de Amsterdamse katholieken in de zomer van 1585?” *Jaarboek van het Genootschap Amstellodamum* 77 (1985): 13-26; Israel, 342-43.

<sup>83</sup> *De Politieke Kruyver* VIII. 369 (1786): 15.

from the Burgomasters, who now controlled the selection of the local governors, to the Council and the representatives of the civic militias. Consequently, like the Patriot regents Abbema and Bicker, Hesse was arguing for a separation of powers. He maintained that:

*in all political matters, which concern the general legislative power of the state, the Burgomasters, independent from the Council, have no other authority than guarding the execution of the decision of the Council.*<sup>84</sup>

Thus, the Burgomasters should only have executive powers, whereas the legislative power had to be firmly in the hands of the Council.

A similar type of reform was proposed by the Patriot regent Jan Bern Bicker, who, in January 1787, published an article in *De Post van den Neder-Rhijn*, under the pseudonym of Probus. He maintained that an examination of the privileges of the city of Amsterdam had pointed out that ‘the people had originally wielded influence over the appointment of its representatives, being the body of the Council.’<sup>85</sup> Moreover, he stressed that ‘the same Council formerly had many privileges, [...] which had been slowly, and almost imperceptibly, taken away and stolen.’<sup>86</sup> To substantiate his argument, Bicker directly referred to the Alteration of 1578. Hence, following the coalition between the Patriot regents and the armed burgher forces, both Hesse and Bicker wanted to give the civic militias and the Council a more central role in Amsterdam politics. By demanding a restoration of the privileges of the Council and the militias, they also affirmed the corporate system, and consequently prohibited attempts at political and economic liberalisation.

### ***The Patriot Coup***

But how did the Patriot coalition take control of Amsterdam politics? The other regents obviously did not allow the Patriot coalition to simply take over the government of the city. Alarmed by the mobilisation of the Patriot movement, and the public upheaval in other Dutch cities, the senior Amsterdam regents started to argue for a reconciliation with the Stadholder. As the Patriot regents had successfully constructed a local corporate coalition, their only alternative was to enter into an alliance with the Stadholder, i.e. a national coalition. Especially Burgomaster Joachim Rendorp made attempts in this direction, which were precisely the ‘aristocratic’ efforts at coalition building the delegation of the armed burgher forces referred to a few months later.

First, in March 1786, Rendorp made a failed attempt in the States of Holland to restore the command of the Stadholder over the garrison of The Hague, which had been

---

<sup>84</sup> in alle politieke zaaken, die de algemeene Wetgevende Magt der Staaten betreffen, de Burgemeesters, onafhangelijk van den Raad, geen ander gezag zullen hebben, dan alleen om te waaken voor de uitvoering van het geen in den Raad besloten is (Ibid).

<sup>85</sup> het volk eertijds wel degelijk invloed heeft gehad op de aanstelling hunner vertegenwoordigers, zijnde het ligchaam der Vroedschap (GAA, arch. Bicker (arch. nr. 195) inv. nr. 297 (Documents concerning the Council meetings).

<sup>86</sup> die zelve Vroedschap veel voorrechten [...] langzamerhand en bijna ongemerkt zijn onvreemd en afgenomen. (Ibid.)

taken away from him in the previous year.<sup>87</sup> Subsequently, in June 1786, Rendorp tried to convince the members of the provincial assembly to outlaw the Patriot armed burgher forces because ‘these associations do not hesitate to interfere in public affairs and domestic discussions [...], and consequently adopt an authority to which they have not the least competence.’<sup>88</sup> This effort to weaken the Patriot coalition failed as well, since the majority of the enfranchised cities in Holland were either dominated by Patriot regents or were not prepared to form a counter-revolutionary alliance.<sup>89</sup> Thus, the senior Amsterdam regents became increasingly isolated.

In February 1787, their position came under direct attack from the Patriot coalition. The immediate trigger was a proposal in the States of Holland of the government of Haarlem, which was already dominated by Patriot regents. Fearing disturbances on the birthday of William V, March 2, Haarlem proposed to fortify the garrison of The Hague with the regiment of the Rhine Count Van Salm, who supported the Patriot cause. To make sure that the Amsterdam Council would vote in favour of this plan, the Patriot Burgomaster Hooft proposed it for discussion on a day when the Patriot regents were in the majority, as various senior regents were out of town. Consequently, in the Council meeting of 21 February, the Patriot regents could, with 14 against 11 votes, take the decision to support the proposal of Haarlem. To reinforce this decision, the Patriot burgher colonel Goudoever, together with 96 officers of the civic militias, delivered a petition to the city government in support of the plan.<sup>90</sup>

However, on 24 February, the senior regents, this time in the majority, hit back, and proposed to disband the Van Salm regiment.<sup>91</sup> This was the cue for the Patriot civic militias and the exercise association to mobilise. When the Council again convened, on Monday 26 February, to take a decision on this proposal, the City Hall had been surrounded by a large mass of people, which for a major part consisted of the members of the exercise association and Patriot armed burgher forces. On this day, the composition of the Council was again to the advantage of the Patriot regents, as various senior regents had stayed home fearing for their safety. Hence, the Patriot regents could reverse the decision.<sup>92</sup> This struggle, which was the first Patriot victory in Amsterdam, clearly shows how the Patriot coalition operated. The Patriot regents issued a proposal in the Council, which was subsequently supported by the armed burgher forces. In turn, this left the other regents no other choice than to back down.

Although the senior regents were deeply troubled by the actions of the Patriots, they still felt that they could control the situation in the city, as they had in the previous years. The Burgomaster and Councillor Jan Elias Huydecoper, who maintained a diary during this period, saw two ways in which this could be accomplished. One option was to end the divisions within the city government. However, he did not think that this was likely to

---

<sup>87</sup> GAA, arch. Vroedschap (arch. nr. 5025) inv. nr. 73 (Minutes of the Council, 7, 9 March 1786); Colenbrander, *De Patriottentijd*, vol. II, 160, 168-170.

<sup>88</sup> zoodanige Genootschappen niet schroomen zig te immisceren in de bestelling der publyke zaken en binnenlandse dissentiën, ..., en zig aldus aanmatigen een gezag, tot het welke zy geene de minste bevoegdheid hebben (*Nieuwe Nederlandsche jaerboeken*, vol. XXI (1786), 652-54); (See also GAA, arch. Vroedschap (arch. nr. 5025) inv. nr. 73 (Minutes of the Council, 19 June 1786).

<sup>89</sup> Colenbrander, *Patriottentijd*, vol. III, 74.

<sup>90</sup> GAA, arch. Vroedschap (arch. nr. 5025) inv. nr. 74 (Minutes of the Council, 21 Februari 1787).

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, 24 Februari 1787.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, 26 Februari 1787.

happen, as ‘a few hotheads in our Council think that they can put their trust in a part of the burghers who follow them.’<sup>93</sup> Consequently, he concluded that the best alternative was to go on the counter attack, and protect the position of the senior regents against the ‘party of the mad Patriots.’<sup>94</sup>

To achieve this, they made another attempt to construct a coalition with the Stadholder. With this objective, Abraham Calkoen, former sheriff and member of a prominent Amsterdam regent family, visited the Stadholderian Court in Nijmegen and proposed a plan to rehabilitate William as Captain General of Holland. In exchange, the Stadholder had to persuade the Amsterdam shipwrights, staunch Orangists, to defend the senior regents against the attacks of the Patriot exercise associations. The plan was to mobilise 4000 shipwrights and direct them, on Wednesday 18 April, to Dam Square to facilitate an undisturbed Council meeting. On this day, the senior regents would send a delegation to the States of Holland, which would subsequently decide, in cooperation with the anti-Patriot cities and the delegation of noblemen, to restore the command of the Stadholder over the garrison of The Hague. Although highly ingenious, this plan failed. The Stadholder did send a letter to the shipwrights, but the latter refused to cooperate.<sup>95</sup>

As the formation of a counter alliance failed, the Patriot coalition could proceed to take control of Amsterdam politics. On 3 April 1787 and again on the 21<sup>st</sup>, the Patriot civic militias and the exercise association assembled around the town hall to support a proposal of Haarlem in the States of Holland to investigate how provincial politics should be organised to accommodate the voice of the people. The prompt appearance of the militias at days when crucial Council meetings were held was certainly no coincidence. The personal notes of Jan Bernd Bicker relate that the Patriot regents closely coordinated the mobilisation of the militias. They even gave specific instructions concerning the petitions, which the burghers had to deliver to the Council.<sup>96</sup>

On 21 April, the Patriot officers of the civic militias issued such a dictated petition, which maintained that the officers felt ‘compelled to insist that the members of the honourable Council against whom the mistrust of the burghers is directed, should consider themselves as discharged from their positions as Councillors of this city.’<sup>97</sup> The officers wanted to discharge nine Councillors, who had frustrated the proposal of Haarlem.<sup>98</sup> As on 26 February, the civic militias held the governors captive until they met the requests of the burghers. Huydecoper observes: ‘This day was very turbulent. The armed burghers obstructed the Council from leaving and forced it to remain in session until it had taken a decision that satisfied the demands of the burghers.’<sup>99</sup> The imprisonment of the regents came to an end when the Patriot regents, Abbema and Bicker, talked to the burghers and

<sup>93</sup> zo lang enige heethoofden onder onse Vroedschap denken hun soutien, en vertrouwen te kunnen stellen in een gedeelte der burgherije, dat van hun handt vliegt (GAA, Library (B61), J.E. Huydecoper, *Handelingen van de regeering: bijzonderheden betrekkelijk het gebeurde in Amsterdam*, 1787).

<sup>94</sup> de partije der dolle Patriotten (Ibid.)

<sup>95</sup> Colenbrander, *Patriottentijd*, vol. III, 176-177.

<sup>96</sup> GAA, arch. Bicker (arch. nr. 195) inv. nr. 297 (Notes on the preparation of the actions on 3 April 1787).

<sup>97</sup> in de volstreckte verplichtingen zijn om (...) te vergen en te insteeren dat die leeden van deze achtbaare raad, tegens wien het mistrouwen der burghery zig wel het meest bepaald, zig van nu voortaan beschouwen als ontslagen van hunne posten als Raaden deezer stad (Ibid.).

<sup>98</sup> GAA, arch. Vroedschap (arch. nr. 5025) inv. nr. 74 (Minutes of the Council, 21 April 1787).

<sup>99</sup> Deze dag was zeer onrustig, en onstuymig werdende de Vroedschap door de gewapende burgherije belet te scheyden, en genoodsaakt den gantse dag vergadert te blijven, zonder te mogen afaan voor dat haar een besluyt wierd gecommuniceert, dat aan hun (...) intentie beantwoorde (Huydecoper, *Handelingen*).



agreed that the Council could leave city hall when they accepted a declaration which discharged the nine Councillors. This decision was finally taken by the Patriot regents themselves, against the protests of the Huydecoper group.<sup>100</sup> The Patriot movement now controlled the Amsterdam government.

Our analysis of the political struggles in Amsterdam demonstrates that the coalition between the Patriot regents and the armed burgher forces was not just a paper tiger, but worked very effectively to bring about a political regime change. A similar coalition also determined the course of political events in other cities across the Republic. Before the Amsterdam revolution, similar transitions had taken place in, for example, Deventer, Utrecht, Haarlem, and Rotterdam. Eventually, in the summer of 1787, the Patriot cities were in the majority in the States of Holland, Groningen, and Overijssel, while Utrecht and Friesland were divided between rival assemblies.<sup>101</sup>

### Consequences

Considering how the Patriots went about reforming the Amsterdam government, it becomes clear that the Patriot alliance indeed promoted a limited, corporate form of democratisation. First, the civic militias and exercise associations, along with the *Burgersociëteit* and the *Vaderlandsche Sociëteit*, played a large role in the election of the new Councillors, which were to replace the regents who had been dismissed on 21 April. These corporate organisations helped to create an Act of Qualification, which was signed by a total of 16,000 people. This act empowered fifteen burgher representatives to make a list of nominees for the nine vacant Council seats. Particularly striking about these representatives is that they were all members of the elitist *Vaderlandsche Sociëteit*, in which the Patriots from the higher socio-economic classes cooperated with the Patriot regents.<sup>102</sup> On 3 May 1787, the burgher representatives and some of the officers of the civic militias presented the Council with a list of regents, which the representatives found agreeable.<sup>103</sup> A few days later, on May 7, Burgomaster Hooft and fifteen Patriot Councillors proceeded to appoint nine men from the list of nominees.<sup>104</sup> Thus, the first Patriot elections fully took place within the corporate framework.

Second, the elections of May 7<sup>th</sup> confirmed the position of the regents. For example, Johan Pieter Farret (1744 – 1822), one of the new Councillors, was the son of the tobacco merchant and Alderman Dirk Farret. And like many other regents, such as Jan Bernd Bicker, he had a law degree from Utrecht. However, most importantly, through his marriage to Susanna Cornelia Graafland, descendant of a prominent Amsterdam regent family, he had access to the circle of regent families.<sup>105</sup> But like many regents who had not obtained an influential political position, he joined the Patriot movement in the 1780s. The other new Councillors had a similar background, Jacob Anthony Roth (1753-1801) was the son of the receiver general of the Dutch East-Indies Company, and was married to Adriana Hasselaer, daughter of Burgomaster and Councillor Pieter Cornelis Hasselaer (1720-1795).

<sup>100</sup> GAA, arch. Vroedschap (arch. nr. 5025) inv. nr. 74 (Minutes of the Council, 21 April 1787).

<sup>101</sup> Te Brake, *Regents and Rebels*, 60.

<sup>102</sup> J.E. Elias, *Geschiedenis van het Amsterdamsche Regentenpatriciaat* (Den Haag: Nijhoff, 1923), 244.

<sup>103</sup> GAA, arch. Vroedschap (arch. nr. 5025) inv. nr. 74 (Minutes of the Council, 3 May 1787).

<sup>104</sup> GAA, arch. Backer (arch. nr. 172) inv. nr. 726; Ibid., (7 May 1787).

<sup>105</sup> Elias, and Schölvinc, 82.

Hendrik Weveringh (1762-1825) also came from a regent background, as his father Marten Weveringh (1737-1777) had been Councillor. The rest of the new Councillors came from prominent merchant families. For example, Johan Goll Franckenstein (1756-1821), was a merchant banker with Goll & Co, likewise Pieter Constantijn Nobel (1746 – 1788), son of merchant Constantijn Gerard Nobel (1706 – 1781).<sup>106</sup>

The same pattern emerged, when the Council replaced, on 22 June 1787, Burgomasters Dedel and Beels with Willem Backer (1733-1803), and Johan Geelvinck (1737-1802). Both men originated from old regent families. Johan Geelvinck was the son of Burgomaster and Councillor Nicolaas Geelvinck, while Willem Backer was the grandson of a Councillor, and the brother of Sheriff Willem Cornelis Backer.<sup>107</sup> The procedure of appointment of the new Burgomasters, like the selection of the nine new Councillors by the burgher representatives, entailed an important break with the existing traditions. Previously, the Burgomasters were selected by the Council of Former Burgomasters. In the new situation, the Burgomasters truly became the ministers of the Council, like the Patriot regents had demanded in previous years. Hence the outlines of a new system of government became visible, in which the regents were effectively the representatives of the corporate burghers, and the Council functioned as a legislative assembly, while the Burgomasters became the executive power, controlled by the Council. This was exactly the kind of separation of powers that the Bicker and Abbema group had been striving for in their discussion with the Burgomasters in 1782. More importantly, it strengthened, instead of weakened, the local corporate coalition, as the local governors were now truly the representatives of the privileged burghers.

Finally, the Amsterdam Patriots continued to respect the corporate system when they tried to reorganise the local political system on a more formal basis. For this purpose, a committee was appointed, on 16 May 1787, to investigate how popular political influence should be accommodated in local government.<sup>108</sup> The committee, in which Hooft van Vreeland, Abbema, Bicker, Farret, and Rutgers were active, issued a proposal for a government regulation in September of the same year.<sup>109</sup> Although this proposal, which was already discussed in the introduction of this chapter, could not be implemented, it does provide another indication of the kind of reforms the Patriot alliance was pushing for. The proposed government regulation declared that future Councillors and Burgomasters had to be members of the Reformed Church, and local citizens for at least seven years. Moreover, they had to pay more than 250 guilders in taxes, an amount paid only by the socio-economic elite. Similar rules were created for future members of the burgher committee, which was supposed to be consulted on crucial political issues, like taxation. The committee was given the explicit task to guard the rights and privileges of the urban community. Even though the electorate was not as strictly defined, voters did have to be inhabitant of Amsterdam for over six years and pay at least 150 guilders in taxes. These rules substantially limited the number of potential voters. Finally, the elections were not direct, but took place through a complicated system of electors.<sup>110</sup> In combination with the fact that the Patriot regents were still appointed for life, the government regulation

---

<sup>106</sup> J.E. Elias, *De Vroedschap van Amsterdam, 1578-1795* (Haarlem: Loosjes, 1903-1905).

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>108</sup> GAA, arch. Vroedschap (arch. nr. 5025) inv. nr. 74 (Minutes of the Council, 10 September 1787).

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, (Minutes of the Council, 3, 10 September 1787).

<sup>110</sup> GAA, arch. Bicker (arch. nr. 195) inv. nr. 310 (Conceptreglement op de Regeering der stad Amsterdam).

effectively kept popular political influence to a minimum. Moreover, the regulation made sure that this influence remained limited to the group of local citizens, and that the system of privileges was protected. As we have discussed, similar reforms were introduced in other Dutch cities which were taken over by the Patriot movement. This implies, as was suggested in the analysis of the *Leidsch Ontwerp*, that the Patriot coalition promoted a local corporate form of democratisation. And that precisely the cooperation and consultation of the various revolutionary groups foreclosed a liberalisation of the economic and political system.

However, this soon became an academic issue, as the implementation of the plan was prevented by the invasion of Prussian troops in the fall of 1787. The Prussian King Friedrich Wilhelm II had decided to send troops to defend the honour of his sister the princess Wilhelmina, wife of William. On 28 June, Wilhelmina had been held for several hours by the civic militia of Gouda on her way from Nijmegen to The Hague. Friedrich Wilhelm found this enough reason to intervene in the Dutch political scene. He was encouraged to do so by the British court, which supported the restoration of the Stadholderian regime. The combination of Prussian arms and English money proved effective. In October 1787, William returned to The Hague after a short Prussia invasion. His authorities as Stadholder were restored and the Patriot city governments were purged. In Amsterdam, the regents which had been appointed under the pressure of the burghers were discharged. Patriot regents Bicker, Abbema, Van Lennep, Van der Hoop, Hovy, and Hooft were all relieved of their offices at the request of the Stadholder and princess Wilhelmina. Abbema, Bicker, Van der Hoop, and Hovy fled abroad because they were afraid of the persecution that would follow in the wake of the restoration. A strong anti-Patriot sentiment now dominated in the towns of Holland. The Orangist groups took revenge on the Patriot burghers that had pestered them for years. Patriot houses and shops were ransacked, and thousands of burghers, from all over the Republic, went into exile.

## Conclusion

This chapter started with a puzzle. Research by cultural historians has demonstrated that the Patriot Revolt produced new ideas and practices, which challenged the decentralised corporate structure of the Republic. Yet, at the same time, it has been pointed out by state formation historians that the revolt reinforced the corporate system, instead of undermining it. The objective was to learn how these seemingly contradictory developments were combined. The larger aim was to find out why the Patriot Revolt resulted in a limited corporate form of democratisation, whereas the processes of democratisation and centralisation were rapidly advanced in the years after 1795.

Part of our analysis has confirmed the existing observations on the Patriot Revolt. On the one hand, the political-process analysis demonstrates that new political ideas and practices were indeed developed during the Patriot Revolt. Especially the new political magazines, such as *De Post van den Neder-Rhijn* and *De Politieke Krayer* created a platform for a national political debate, which transcended the local corporate framework. Moreover, this framework was also challenged by essays such as *Grondwettige herstelling van Nederlands Staatswezen* and *Bedenkingen over het aanstellen van regenten in een vrij gemeenebest*, which presented proposals for a liberalisation of the political and economic system. These proposals potentially made a more far-reaching democratisation process

possible, as they threatened to eliminate some of the privileges, which excluded the majority of the population from political and economic citizenship.

However, on the other hand, it became clear that the same publications, as well as all other Patriot pamphlets, essays, books, and magazines, also affirmed crucial aspects of the corporate system. The *Grondwettige herstelling* proposed, for example, to give the guilds a central place in the electoral system, whereas the *Bedenkingen* argued that guild membership should be one of the ways to qualify as a voter. More importantly, the investigation showed that the political identities and actors that were constructed in the course of the Patriot Revolt reaffirmed the corporate categories. The Patriot revolutionaries identified themselves as regents and burghers, and created societies, and associations accordingly. Taken together, the Patriot Revolt generated a combination of new and traditional elements. Nevertheless, the main outcome of the revolt was the reinforcement of the corporate system, which implied that only a limited process of democratisation could take place.

To understand how the Patriot Revolt produced this result, I have called attention to the concept of the democratic paradox, which so far has not been considered in the literature on the late eighteenth-century revolutions. Democratic ideals had clearly made it possible to mobilise a large revolutionary movement for political change. Yet, the same ideals also limited the political changes that could be pursued. When a broad Patriot coalition, based on the democratic ideals of popular sovereignty, cooperation, and consultation, was constructed, it became clear that the liberal reform plans could not be realised. Consequently, the Patriot coalition affirmed the corporate system.

Finally, the examination demonstrated how the democratic paradox worked in practice. It showed how the Patriot regents, such as Bicker and Abbema, cooperated with the Patriot civic militias and the exercise associations to put pressure on the Amsterdam government. When this coalition had taken control of the government of the city, it indeed aimed for a limited corporate form of democratisation. Not only did the civic militias and exercise associations play a central role in the first elections, the plans for a future electoral system also ensured that only the privileged burghers could exercise real political influence.

### 3 The Unitary Democratic Revolution (1795-1798)

When, after the French invasion, the Patriot movement again took control of the Republic in January 1795, it became clear that many revolutionaries had fundamentally changed their mind about how the state should be reformed. This change was especially notable in the new provincial assembly of Holland. On 31 January 1795, the provincial governors claimed:

*All people are born with equal rights, and these natural rights cannot be taken away from them. These rights consist of equality, freedom, safety, property, and resistance against oppression. (...) Since all people are equal, all are eligible for election in any office and administration without any other reason of preference than merit and skill. (...) Sovereignty resides with the entire people, and consequently no part of this people can usurp it.*<sup>1</sup>

Although certainly not everyone in the Patriot movement fully agreed with these claims, especially not within the new Amsterdam government, it is evident that a new ideal of political organisation had taken hold of the Dutch revolutionary struggle.

By claiming that ‘all people are born with equal rights’, the provincial government directly challenged the local system of privileges and the particularistic corporate state structure. Moreover, by maintaining that everyone could be elected in a political office, it pointed in the direction of a liberal democratic system. And finally, by arguing that sovereignty resided with the entire people and not any specific part, the provincial assembly, as it made clear in the following months, rejected the sovereignty of individual cities, and provinces, opening the door for a centralisation of authority. All in all, the provincial governors proposed a more fundamental reform in terms of democratisation and centralisation, than anyone had ever suggested during the 1780s.

In the years after the revolution of January 1795, the Republic was indeed reformed according to the ideas of the provincial governors of Holland. First, the status of the provincial governors themselves was changed. They no longer represented the local administrations, but the entire people of Holland. Second, in March 1796, a National Assembly was created. The new representatives were chosen through general elections, in which the majority of the adult male population could participate. In contrast to the representatives of the States General, the new members of parliament represented the Dutch people as a whole, and not the provincial or local governments. Finally, in May 1798, a unitary democratic constitution was established, which confirmed the national

---

<sup>1</sup> Alle menschen met gelyke rechten geboren worden, en dat deze natuurlyke rechten hun niet kunnen ontnomen worden. Dat deze rechten bestaan in gelykheid, vryheid, veiligheid, eigendom en tegenstand aan onderdrukking. (...) Dat, daar alle menschen gelyk zyn, allen verkiesbaar zyn tot alle ampten en bedieningen zonder eenige andere redenen van voorkeur dan die van deugden en bekwaamheden. (...) Dat de souvereiniteit by het geheele volk berust, en dus geen gedeelte van het volk zich dezelve kan aanmatigen (*Jaarboeken der Bataafsche Republiek*, vol. I (Amsterdam: Wessing en Van der Hey, 1795-98), 143-45).

representative system. Moreover, it officially eliminated the local corporations and early modern systems of privileges, and concentrated political sovereignty in the central state. Thus, a unitary democratic revolution seemed to have taken place.

Yet, when we investigate how the Republic was transformed, it becomes clear that the methods of reform were far from democratic. To confirm the change in its status, for example, the assembly of Holland had to imprison part of the resisting Amsterdam government. The National Assembly could only be created after the elected governors of Friesland had been replaced through a rebellion. And, the unitary democratic constitution was established through a coup in the National Assembly, and the subsequent purging of provincial and local governments, as well as of the voting assemblies throughout the Republic. Hence, there was a clear contradiction between the method and the content of reform.

This chapter examines this contradiction. It starts out by analysing why many Dutch revolutionaries embraced the unitary democratic state model, less than a decade after the Patriot Revolt. Subsequently, we will investigate how the resistance against this model was overruled on the local, provincial, and central state levels, and why this could only be done through a series of coups.

## **The Introduction of the Unitary Democratic State Model**

The French revolutionary ideal of unitary democracy deeply affected the Dutch Patriots. This can be partly explained by the negative outcome of the preceding Patriot Revolt. After this revolt had been crushed in 1787 by the invasion of the Prussian army and the restoration of the privileges of the Stadholder, many Patriots, after a period of commiseration, started to ask themselves what had gone wrong. Obviously, they had been unable to overthrow the Stadholderian regime. Moreover, in many cities and provinces, the Patriot Revolt had created political chaos and anarchy. The French Revolution, on the other hand, seemed to be a huge success. Consequently the Patriots began to reconsider their own reform program in the light of the unitary democratic ideal which was introduced by the French Revolution. This process of reflection was facilitated by the direct contact of numerous Patriots with the French Revolution.<sup>2</sup>

In 1787, several thousand Patriots fled to France, and the Southern Netherlands to escape the Orangist reaction. The majority of these refugees were middle class craftsmen, or shopkeepers.<sup>3</sup> Especially many members of the Patriot exercise associations had decided to flee the country, as they expected to be held accountable for the violence against the Orangists.<sup>4</sup> Among the exiles were also several Amsterdam regents, such as Jan Bernd Bicker. On 15 October 1787, after the Prussian army had occupied Amsterdam, Bicker, Johan Geelvinck, Cornelis van der Hoop, and Balthasar Elias Abbema, departed for the Southern Netherlands. Their fears for an Orangist reaction were certainly not unfounded, as Patriots were hunted down, and their houses plundered, in cities throughout Holland. For

---

<sup>2</sup> J.G.M.M. Rosendaal, *Bataven!: Nederlandse vluchtelingen in Frankrijk, 1787-1795* (Nijmegen: Vantilt, 2003).

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 156.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 154-55.

example, passing through Delft, Bicker reports: 'we heard violence everywhere, and occasionally the breaking of glass.'<sup>5</sup>

After the French Revolution broke out, many Patriots ended up in France. In close contact with the French Revolution, the exiled Patriots started to reflect on the political structure of the Republic. The French influence was clearly visible in the Patriot reform plans that were developed in the early 1790s. For example, in February 1793, the Amsterdam regent Balthasar Elias Abbema and the nobleman Van der Capellen van de Marsch launched a plan which proposed to establish a strong executive government of seven Ministers, supervised by a popular assembly. In their scheme, all male adult burghers, with the exclusion of servants and people on poor relief, should be given the vote. Moreover, they emphasised that any new constitution would have to be ratified by the united sovereign Batavian people.<sup>6</sup> This plan diverged substantially from the designs which the Patriot regents, or indeed any other revolutionary group, had proposed during the 1780s. Abbema and Van der Capellen departed from the idea that the revolution should reinforce local autonomy and restore the system of privileges. Instead, they looked to establish a unitary democratic state.

Meanwhile in the Republic itself, Patriots were also influenced by the ideas of the French Revolution. Although much more cautiously than the exiles, these revolutionaries started to formulate proposals to abolish the system of privileges and move beyond the Union of Utrecht. Especially influential was Pieter Paulus' *Verhandeling over de vrage in welke zin kunnen de menschen gezegd worden gelyk te zyn?* (Treatise on the Question in which Sense can People Considered to be Equal), which was published in 1793 and reprinted four times in subsequent years. Paulus, a lawyer from Rotterdam, who in 1775 had still passionately defended the Union of Utrecht, now argued for universal freedom and equality. Combining a philosophy of natural rights and a doctrine of Christian equality, he maintained:

*In the state of nature, one man does not have more rights over his fellow men, nor over the land, seas, rivers and waters, or any of the natural products of the earth, than other men. All have an equal right to use, as much as each needs to maintain oneself. The earth with all that it holds can only be characterised as a gift from the general father. (...) Natural society is a society of equality and freedom.*<sup>7</sup>

This statement was a direct attack on the system of privileges, which had always been protected by the Union of Utrecht.

---

<sup>5</sup> hoorden wij overal veel geweld en hier en daar glaazen inslaan. (GAA, arch. Bicker (arch. nr. 195), inv. nr. 151 (Aantekeningen van biografische en politieke gebeurtenissen door Jan Bernd Bicker, lopend over de jaren 1763-1798).

<sup>6</sup> Rosendaal, *Bataven!*, 504-530; Schama, 154.

<sup>7</sup> De eene mensch derhalven heeft in den staat der natuur by zyne geboorte geen meer regt verkregen over zynen medemensch, noch op den eigendom der aarde, der zeeën, rivieren en wateren, die op de aarde zyn, gelyk ook niet op alle derzelver natuurlyke voordbrengselen, dan de andere mensch; maar allen hebben een gelyk regt, om daarvan te gebruiken, zoo veel als aan een ieder tot deszelfs onderhoud noodzaaklyk is. De aarde met alles wat daarop en in is kan niet anders worden aangemerkt, dan als een geschenk van den algemeenen vader. (...) De natuurlyke maatschappy is eene maatschappy van gelykheid en vryheid (P. Paulus, *Verhandeling over de vrage: in welken zin kunnen de menschen gezegd worden gelyk te zyn? en welke zyn de regten en pligten, die daaruit voortvloeien?* (Haarlem: C. Plaat, 1793), 12, 15).

In Amsterdam, the discussion on the reform of the state primarily took place in *Doctrina*. This club, which had been established in May 1788, was officially devoted to art and literature. However, it in fact replaced the *Vaderlandsche Sociëteit*, which had been forced to dissolve after the restoration of the Stadholderian regime. The new club was even located at the same address on the Kalverstraat.<sup>8</sup> Like the *Vaderlandsche Sociëteit*, *Doctrina* was an elite club. Only 6 of a sample of 59 members could be identified as craftsmen or shopkeepers, the others were merchants (63%), lawyers, doctors, and regents. Moreover, the majority of the members belonged to the Reformed Church: 47 (78%) out of 60.<sup>9</sup> In *Doctrina*, the revolutionaries who had played a prominent role in the Patriot movement during the 1780s, like Schimmelpenninck, Irhoven van Dam, and the merchant banker Nicolaas van Staphorst, came into contact with new young Amsterdam revolutionaries, who so far had not played a significant role in the Patriot Revolt, such as the young lawyer Samuel Iperuszoon Wiselius (1769-1845), the merchant Isaac Gogel (1765-1821), and the insurer Johannes Goldberg (1763-1828).<sup>10</sup> All three were destined for important roles in the transformation of the Dutch state.

During the *soirées* at *Doctrina*, the political situation in the Republic was discussed, the reform plans of the Patriot exiles were studied, and new ideas were launched.<sup>11</sup> One of the more influential reflections on the political situation of the Republic came from Wiselius. In 1793, he argued, in a speech at *Doctrina*, that the 'Union of Utrecht does not contain anything that is worth the name of a constitution of free people.'<sup>12</sup> He asserted that the conception of freedom that had informed the creation of the Union of Utrecht was very different from what 'wise men' in the contemporary world considered as freedom.

*Today freedom is the ability to make uninhibited use of the rights of nature, in so far as these have not been transferred to society. Moreover, it means to obey just laws, which originate from the people and consequently express the general will.*<sup>13</sup>

Wiselius emphasised that the rights and freedoms which are mentioned by the Union of Utrecht have, on the contrary, been obtained as gifts or bought for money from 'self-righteous' rulers.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>8</sup> GAA, Library (U 00.1876), *Gedenkbboekje van het genootschap Doctrina et amicitia te Amsterdam ter gelegenheid van zijn honderd vijf en twintig jarig bestaan, 1788 - 1913*.

<sup>9</sup> *Nationaale Bataafsche Courant*, 4 February 1797; Baptismal Records; Poorterboeken (citizenship books).

<sup>10</sup> H.T. Colenbrander, *De Bataafsche Republiek* (Amsterdam: Meulenhoff, 1908), 33; M.C. van Hall, *Herinneringen van mr. Maurits Cornelis van Hall, 1787-1815* (Amsterdam: Blikman & Santorius, 1867); P. van Limburg Brouwer, *Het leven van Mr. Samuel Iperuszoon Wiselius* (Groningen: P. van Zweeden, 1846); J.A. Sillem, *De politieke en staathuishoudkundige werkzaamheid van Isaac Jan Alexander Gogel* (Amsterdam: Müller, 1864); W.M. Zappey, *De economische en politieke werkzaamheid van Johannes Goldberg* (Alphen aan den Rijn: Samsom, 1967).

<sup>11</sup> Colenbrander, *Bataafsche Republiek*, 11.

<sup>12</sup> De Unie van Utrecht levert dan in waarheid niets op, wat de naam van Grondwet of Konstitutie voor een vrij volk waardig zoude kunnen zijn (S.I. Wiselius, *De staatkundige verlichting der Nederlanderen, in een wijsgerig-historisch tafereel geschetst* (Brussel: Brest van Kempen, 1828), 84.

<sup>13</sup> Bij ons immers heet vrijheid het vermogen, om een onbelemmerd gebruik te maken van de regten deer natuur, voor zo verre die niet aan de burghermaatschappij, te haren nutte zijn afgestaan, en te gehoorzame aan billijke wetten, die uit den boezem des volks regelmatig zijn voortgevloeid en alzoo den algemeenen wil uitdrukken (Ibid., 55).



Thus, as a reaction against the debacle of the Patriot Revolt and the success of the French Revolution, the Dutch revolutionaries not only developed new ideas on the organisation of the state, but also adopted a totally new, universalistic conception of freedom. In principle, this conception of freedom, which had been created in the French Revolution, included everyone. By contrast, the early modern notion, on which the local corporate alliance was based, included only those people who were part of a specific privileged community. Moreover, early modern freedom was connected to local autonomy and independence from higher state institutions, while the universal type of freedom was, following the French example, linked to the unitary state.

In turn, the introduction of the unitary state model, based on universal freedom, potentially created new opportunities for democratisation. In the previous chapter, we have seen that the Patriots in the 1780s equalled centralisation to absolutism, while freedom was connected to local autonomy. Consequently, they pursued democratisation by reinforcing the local particularistic state structure. However, it also became clear that this type of democratisation was necessarily limited to privileged groups, as these groups dominated the Patriot coalition. The ideals of the French Revolution suggested that democratisation and centralisation could be combined. Indeed, the centralisation of authority and the elimination of the local particularistic institutions seemed to make a much more liberal and democratic state possible. However, to realise such a transformation, new identities, actors, and alliances had to be constructed that undermined the local corporate coalition.

### **Revolution**

The first step in this direction was set in January 1795, when the French armies occupied the Republic and the Patriot movement took control of government. This revolution had for a large part been planned by the Amsterdam Patriots, and especially by some of the members of *Doctrina*. In January 1794, Willem Irhoven van Dam established the Amsterdam Revolutionary Committee. He had been inspired to do so by his friend Herman Willem Daendels, a former merchant who had made a career in the French army and eventually became a general.<sup>15</sup> Daendels promised Irhoven van Dam that the French would assist the Dutch with an army of forty thousand men.<sup>16</sup> Irhoven van Dam subsequently asked Gogel, Goldberg, and Cornelis Krayenhoff, a medical doctor, to become members of the Revolutionary Committee. In the course of the following year, Van Staphorst, Wiselius, lawyer Pierre Baptiste van der Aa, and merchants Jurianus Ondorp and Jan Willem van Hasselt, another member of *Doctrina*, also became active members of the committee.<sup>17</sup>

These men effectively coordinated the French invasion and the revolution. Through letters and frequent trips to the Southern Netherlands they communicated with the French regime and army. Moreover, they sought contact with Patriots in other cities and induced them to set up local revolutionary committees. They printed pamphlets, collected weapons, and set up reading societies in Amsterdam and surrounding cities, to mobilise the lower socio-economic classes for the revolution. These preparations accelerated after the Revolutionary Committee organised, in the night of 31 July 1794, a secret meeting between

---

<sup>14</sup> eigendunkelijke meesters (Ibid., 69).

<sup>15</sup> Rosendaal, *Bataven!*, 443–46.

<sup>16</sup> Colenbrander, *Bataafsche Republiek*, 35.

<sup>17</sup> Breen, 2–6.

the Patriot representatives from the various provinces. At this meeting, the revolutionaries came to the conclusion that they would not be able to take control of the Republic through their own efforts alone. Consequently, they decided to encourage the French to invade the country. After the meeting, Gogel and Irhoven van Dam travelled to Brussels, which had just been occupied by the French, to discuss a possible invasion of the Netherlands with the French authorities. They came to the agreement that the French army would invade, and that the Dutch revolutionaries would proclaim the revolution in Utrecht and Amsterdam, once the French army had crossed the river Meuse.<sup>18</sup>

Although a few months later than initially planned, the revolution indeed took place according to this scenario. The Amsterdam government offered very little resistance when the French army approached the city in January 1795. In October of the previous year, the city government had still imprisoned six revolutionaries, and issued a prohibition on societies such as *Doctrina*. However, when the French had occupied Utrecht, and Stadholder William V had fled to England, the Amsterdam regents no longer tried to resist. On 19 January, the Revolutionary Committee was able to dismiss the regent government and appoint 21 Provisional Representatives of the People of Amsterdam, half of which were members of *Doctrina*. Schimmelpenninck became president of the representatives, which also included Irhoven van Dam, Goldberg, and Van Staphorst.<sup>19</sup>

In the following days and weeks, the Amsterdam Revolutionary Committee helped coordinate the revolution in the rest of the Republic. On 21 January, it called on the other revolutionary town governments of Holland to form the Provisional Representatives of the People of Holland, which held its first session on the 24<sup>th</sup>, replacing the States of Holland. For Amsterdam, Wiselius, Van Staphorst, and Jean Henri Swinden (1746-1823), professor at the Amsterdam *Athenaeum Illustre*, among others, became members of this new provincial assembly. A few days later, the Amsterdam Revolutionary Committee transformed itself into a national revolutionary committee, sending agents to other provinces to make sure that the Orangist regents and aristocrats would be replaced by Patriot politicians.<sup>20</sup>

### *New Identities and Actors*

The revolution clearly was at odds with the early modern political order. First, the regents and noblemen no longer had a monopoly over government. Although a few Patriot regents were appointed after the revolution, the majority of the new local, provincial, and central state governors were members of the upper middle class. In Amsterdam, a majority of the 21 provisional representatives were merchants (11 out of 21). The other representatives were two lawyers, an insurer, a shopkeeper, a watchmaker, a commissioner, a cashier, and a regent. Moreover, local government was no longer completely monopolised by members of the Reformed Church, even though these still constituted the majority of the governors. Of

---

<sup>18</sup> J. Otten, and H. Reitsma, "De omwenteling in Amsterdam" *Amstelodamum* 82.1 (1995): 10-20; T. Poell, "Het einde van een tijdperk: de Bataafs-Franse tijd 1795-1813" in *Geschiedenis van Amsterdam*, vol. 2.2, *Zelfbewuste stadstaat, 1650-1813*, eds. W. Frijhoff, and M. Prak (Amsterdam: SUN, 2005): 429-437.

<sup>19</sup> Breen, 6-15; Poell, "Het einde van een tijdperk", 429-437.

<sup>20</sup> Breen, 17; Colenbrander, *Bataafsche Republiek*, 54-59.

the 17 representatives whose religious background could be retrieved, 12 were Reformed, 3 Catholic, 1 Mennonite, and 1 Lutheran.<sup>21</sup>

While the appointment of the revolutionary governors broke with the early modern political practices, it was not yet a departure from the corporate tradition. The monopoly of the regents over government had always been against the corporate privileges, which in principle gave all burghers the opportunity to occupy a governing position. Consequently, from the corporate point of view it can be argued that the expansion of the political elite further perfected the corporate system. Even the appointment of Catholics, Mennonites, and Lutherans can be seen as a streamlining of this system, as the burghers of Amsterdam came from all religions.

The corporate framework was more clearly undermined in the language of the new Amsterdam government, which addressed everyone as burghers, whether or not they possessed citizen rights. The governors themselves were referred to as burgher representatives. This identity shift can also be observed in the construction of new revolutionary clubs and societies. Unlike the Patriot societies, the revolutionary associations of 1795 were no longer explicitly organised on the basis of the corporate identities of burgher and regent. Especially the Amsterdam reading societies aimed to organise all groups of society. The Revolutionary Committee, which had been directly involved in the creation of these societies, maintained that the objective had been to 'educate the people about the pure principles of true democracy.'<sup>22</sup> To this, it added that most of the members of the societies belonged to 'the part of the people, which most needed to be educated.'<sup>23</sup>

As during the Patriot Revolt, the democratic ideals proved to be powerful mobilising instruments. Already before the revolution of January 1795, the Amsterdam reading societies organised between 2 and 3 thousand people. After the revolution, this mobilisation process continued. The committee reported that new clubs were established on a daily basis.<sup>24</sup> In the course of 1795, the Amsterdam revolutionary movement grew much larger, when the Neighbourhood Assemblies were established. Following the French example, these popular assemblies had been created, in March 1795, by the society *Tot Nut van het Vaderland* (For the Purpose of the Nation).<sup>25</sup> The official goal of the Neighbourhood Assemblies was to organise the voice of the people of Amsterdam, according to the principle of popular sovereignty. The assemblies were especially successful in the first year of their existence. Their membership quickly grew to 15,000 men, and they soon covered the entire city.<sup>26</sup>

Even though the growing popularity of the unitary democratic ideal, as well as the construction of new political actors and identities, potentially facilitated a fundamental transformation of the state, it was still very much the question how the Republic would be

---

<sup>21</sup> Breen, 111-120; GAA, Baptismal Records; Poorterboeken.

<sup>22</sup> het volk tot de zuivere grondbeginzels van waare democratie opteleiden (GAA, arch. NSB (arch. nr. 5053) inv. nr. 1 (Handelingen van het Comité Revolutionair, 20 March 1795)).

<sup>23</sup> dit gedeelte van 't volk, het welk de meeste inlichting nodig heeft (Ibid.).

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> B. Resink, and J. Verhoeven, "De stem van het volk: de Amsterdamse wijkvergaderingen in de eerste jaren der Bataafse revolutie" *Amstelodamum* 82.2 (1995): 35.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 35-37; GAA, NSB, (arch. nr. 5053) inv. nr. 1075 (Minutes of the General Assembly of the Neighborhood Assemblies in Amsterdam).

reformed.<sup>27</sup> The democratic paradox, which had obstructed the process of political change during the Patriot Revolt, again complicated the development of the unitary democratic state after the revolution of 1795. As we have seen, democratic ideals had made it possible to mobilise a large revolutionary movement for political change. Yet, the same democratic ideals, as well as the representative institutions that were created on the basis of these ideals, gave different social, economic, and religious groups the opportunity to resist these changes. As it turned out, the majority of the revolutionaries generally supported the unitary democratic state model, but most of them also wanted to hold on to their own privileges and political authority. The democratic ideals, as well as the representative institutions, gave them a chance to do so.

Nevertheless, the processes of democratisation and centralisation were rapidly advanced in the years between 1795 and 1798. As we will see, the democratic paradox could be circumvented through the construction of temporary coalitions between various revolutionary elite groups, the French occupiers, and the popular clubs and assemblies. These coalitions made it possible to overrule the representative institutions and procedures, which obstructed the transformation of the state. The remainder of this chapter will investigate how this worked on the various state levels.

## The Creation of a Sovereign Provincial Government

The democratic paradox first complicated the transfer of authority from the local to the provincial level. This can very well be observed in the case of the Amsterdam Municipality and the provincial assembly of Holland. Shortly after the revolution of January 1795, these two governments clashed with each other over the status of the provincial assembly. The new provincial governors saw themselves as the representatives of the sovereign people of Holland, and not as the delegates of the local governments. They asserted their new status by calling themselves the 'Provisional Representatives of the People of Holland'. Furthermore, they changed the voting procedure in the assembly. In the second session, on 26 January 1795, it was decided that the provincial representatives would no longer vote as representatives of their communities, but as independent individuals, without consultation of the cities.<sup>28</sup>

The new Amsterdam government strongly resisted this change, which effectively entailed a transfer of authority from the cities to the province. It stressed that 'in these lands, all parts of the old Gothic building of the state government remain upright.'<sup>29</sup> Hence, from the point of view of the municipal members, the provincial governors still represented the local governments. They made clear that they would only accept changes in the

---

<sup>27</sup> GAA, arch. NSB (arch. nr. 5053) inv. nr. 10 (Publication of the Provisional Representatives of the People of Amsterdam, 26 January 1795).

<sup>28</sup> Colenbrander, *Bataafsche Republiek*, 58; GAA arch. NSB (arch. nr. 5053) inv. nr. 13 (Register van afschriften van brieven aan en van de Gecommitteerden te 's-Gravenhage, 29 January, and 3 February 1795).

<sup>29</sup> alle de deelen van het oude Gothisch Gebouw der staatsregeering dezer landen staande zijn gebleeven. (NA, Rijksarch. Zuid-Holland, Provisionele Representanten 1795-96 (arch. nr. 3.02.01) inv. nr. 98 (Letter of the Provisional Representatives of the People of Amsterdam to the Provisional Representatives of the People of Holland, 16 March 1795).

organisation of government by a 'legitimately elected Body of National Representatives'.<sup>30</sup> Since the provincial governors were neither national, nor elected, the Amsterdam Municipality saw the changes in the status of the provincial government as illegitimate. As Provisional Representatives of the People Amsterdam, the municipality certainly felt justified to oppose the provincial government, which also had a provisional status.

Hence, the democratic ideals of popular sovereignty and representative government were used to obstruct the centralisation process. Although the Amsterdam governors evoked the unitary democratic ideal by referring to an elected 'Body of National Representatives', they effectively impeded the creation of such a body. The larger objective of the provincial government of Holland was precisely the establishment of a national representative assembly. However, it would only be able to pursue this objective, if it could untie itself from the local governments. Otherwise it would constantly have to consult the municipalities, which in the case of Amsterdam clearly caused large problems.

### *Motives*

If we consider the motives of the groups involved in the confrontation, it becomes clear that this was not simply a clash between proponents and opponents of the unitary democratic model. Of course, among the members of the provincial assembly were various revolutionaries, like Wiselius and Pieter Paulus, who fully embraced the new model. These politicians, who played a dominant role in the assembly, were aiming for a more general liberalisation of society, which they tried to achieve through the elimination of the local corporate institutions, and the creation of a unitary democratic state. Although politicians with a similar point of view could also be found in the Amsterdam government, like for example Johannes Goldberg, they certainly did not play a leading role in the municipality. Instead, the local administration was dominated by Schimmelpenninck, and Irhoven van Dam, who continued to hold on to the early modern idea of freedom, as independence from higher state institutions. Schimmelpenninck maintained in the debate over the reform of the state that a complete centralisation of political authority was a sure road to 'Eastern despotism'.<sup>31</sup>

However, the clash between the two governments was not only caused by ideological differences, but it was also related to the desperate state of the provincial finances. This becomes especially clear in the case of Van Staphorst, one of the Amsterdam representatives in the provincial assembly. As a member of the provincial assembly, Van Staphorst supported the creation of a sovereign provincial government. Yet, as a member of the National Assembly, from March 1796 onwards, he was not a proponent of complete unification of the state.<sup>32</sup> This seems like blatant contradictory behaviour, but is perfectly understandable if we consider Van Staphorst's deep concern about the financial situation of the province of Holland, which was on the brink of bankruptcy. At an amount of 455 million guilders, which took up no less than 70% of the annual provincial tax revenue, Holland could barely carry its provincial debt.<sup>33</sup> This debt had primarily been created

---

<sup>30</sup> wettig verkooren Lighaam der Nationale Representanten (ibid.).

<sup>31</sup> 'Oostersche despotismus' (*Dagverhaal der handelingen van de Nationaale Vergadering representeerende het Volk van Nederland*, vol. V (Den Haag: Van Schelle en comp., 1796-1798), 754).

<sup>32</sup> De Gou, *Het Ontwerp van Constitutie van 1797*, vol. I, 213; vol. III, 82.

<sup>33</sup> Van Zanden, and Van Riel, 53.

during the seventeenth and early eighteenth-century to finance the international wars in which the Republic had been involved.<sup>34</sup> After the revolution of 1795, this debt again increased very substantially, as the French made enormous financial claims. They not only demanded a 'liberation fee' of 100 million guilders, but also wanted the Dutch to pay for the maintenance of the French occupational armies. Most of this money had to come from Holland, which also advanced a lot of the contributions of the other provinces which lacked direct access to the international financial markets. Hence, the first and foremost concern of the new government of Holland was the size of the provincial debt.<sup>35</sup> Van Staphorst was concerned about this issue, since he had, as a member of the financial committee of Holland, the task to find new loans to finance the debt. For this purpose, he travelled frequently back and forth between The Hague, where the provincial assembly held its sessions, and Amsterdam, the financial centre of the Republic.<sup>36</sup>

The financial problems caused friction between the provincial assembly and the municipality because the latter wanted to remain in control of the decision making process on such a crucial issue, while the former tried to solve the financial problems as quickly as possible. The provincial finances were especially important for the Amsterdam government because it had always exerted a large influence over the decision making process concerning this issue. It had been able to do so because Amsterdam was the financial centre of the Republic, and because the decentralised state structure gave the Amsterdam governors a direct influence on provincial and ultimately on central state politics. The changes in the organisation of provincial government threatened to eliminate this influence.

The new governors of Holland had a very different perspective on the matter. They were on a daily basis confronted with the enormous financial problems of the province, for which they had to find an immediate solution. Moreover, as they negotiated through the States General with the French authorities, they were very concerned about the retaliatory measures of the French government, if the Republic would not satisfy its financial demands. From this point of view, the resistance of the Amsterdam government against the centralisation of authority was just slowing down the decisions making process.

Finally, besides an ideological and financial clash, the confrontation between the provincial and the city government seemed to develop into a straightforward power struggle. This can be clearly observed in the case of Schimmelpenninck, who, after he left the Amsterdam government in 1795, became a member of the National Assembly in 1796 and 1797. Although he was, as national representative, still not a proponent of a fully centralised state, he did support the financial unification of the state, which should solve Holland's financial problems.<sup>37</sup> This shows that Schimmelpenninck, like Van Staphorst, was concerned about the provincial finances. In turn, it also suggests that the behaviour of the revolutionary politicians was strongly influenced by the specific institution in which

---

<sup>34</sup> Pfeil, 46-47.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 124-130, J.M.F. Fritschy, *De patriotten en de financiën van de Bataafse Republiek: Hollands krediet en de smalle marges voor een nieuw beleid (1795-1801)* (Den Haag: Stichting Hollandse Historische Reeks, 1988), 211-16.

<sup>36</sup> NA, arch. Financie van Holland 1575 - 1806 (arch. nr. 3.01.29) inv. nr. 913 (Rapporten en brieven aangaande de middelen tot betaling van de eerste helft der honderd miljoen aan het Comité de Salut Public ingevolge het Haagse Verdrag van 16 mei 1795).

<sup>37</sup> De Gou, *Het Ontwerp van Constitutie van 1797*, vol. I, 216.

they were active. Schimmelpenninck was not unique in this respect, many politicians tried to hold on to their authority, and remain in control of the revolutionary process.<sup>38</sup>

As we have seen, precisely the democratic ideals of popular sovereignty and representative government, which motivated many revolutionaries to seek a transformation of the state, gave politicians like Schimmelpenninck the opportunity to hold on to crucial aspects of the early modern state. However, the provincial governors quickly responded to the Amsterdam resistance. First, they demanded an oath of allegiance from the municipalities and their civil servants to the people of Holland and its representatives.<sup>39</sup> When the Amsterdam governors rejected this oath, the provincial assembly aggressively labelled their resistance as ‘strong expressions of aristocracy’, and the ‘beginning of the subversion and overthrow of the building of popular freedom.’<sup>40</sup> Following this outburst, the provincial assembly decided, on 19 March 1795, to send a committee to Amsterdam, to set matters straight.

### ***The Revolutionary Committee and the French***

A problem for the provincial governors was that they could not single-handedly force the Amsterdam Municipality to obey their commands. They simply lacked the coercive means to do so. Hence, they needed coalition partners, which they found in the French authorities, who controlled the means of coercion in the Republic, and in the Amsterdam Revolutionary Committee, which stood in close contact with the Amsterdam revolutionary clubs. First the provincial assembly contacted the French representative, Charles Alquier, who agreed to cooperate. He wrote a letter of authorisation to general Salm, the commander of the Amsterdam regiment.<sup>41</sup> In turn, Wiselius, who was appointed as one of the members of the provincial committee, sent a letter to the Amsterdam Revolutionary Committee. In his letter, Wiselius asked the committee, of which he was a former member, to contact the ‘commissioners of the popular clubs’ in the city to cooperate with the measures of the provincial assembly.<sup>42</sup> The Revolutionary Committee readily complied with these demands.

Why did the Revolutionary Committee and the French authorities cooperate with the provincial governors? For the French the key motive to support the centralisation process seems to have been financial interest. In fact, the Patriot exiles had coaxed the French regime into invading the Republic, by promising large sums of money. After the invasion, the French immediately showed their real intent by demanding that the Dutch would maintain their occupational armies, and pay a ‘liberation fee’ of 100 million guilders. Even though these demands increased the financial problems of Holland, they also strengthened the relationship between the government of Holland and the French regime, as Holland was

---

<sup>38</sup> M. Prak, “Revolutie in Friesland, 1795-1798” *De vrije Fries* 83 (2003): 201-210.

<sup>39</sup> NA, Rijksarch. Zuid-Holland: Provisionele Representanten 1795-96 (arch. nr. 3.02.01) inv. nr. 98 (Stukken opgemaakt en/of ontvangen door de Commissie ingevolge resolutie van 1795 maart 19 belast met de regeling van de moeilijkheden binnen de municipaliteit van Amsterdam met betrekking tot het afleggen van de eed der ambtenaren).

<sup>40</sup> sterkste stellingen van aristocratie (...) den eersten grond te leggen tot ondermijning en omverwerping van dat gebouw der volksvryheid (NA: Rijksarch. Zuid-Holland: Provisionele Representanten 1795-96 (arch. nr. 3.02.01) inv. nr. 3 (Minutes of the Provisional Representatives of Holland, 19 March 1795).

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, inv. nr. 97 (Commissie belast met de regeling van de moeilijkheden binnen municipaliteit van Amsterdam).

<sup>42</sup> commissarissen van de volks clubs (*Ibid.*).

the main provider of capital.<sup>43</sup> Consequently, at crucial instances the French were willing to support the efforts of the assembly of Holland to centralise political authority.

The motives of the Revolutionary Committee, which continued to be in session to prolong the 'work of the revolution'<sup>44</sup>, were obviously very different. First, a striking aspect of the membership of the committee, which included Gogel, Ondorp, and Van Hasselt, was that they had a very similar ideological outlook as the representatives who controlled the provincial assembly. Gogel especially disliked the local systems of privileges and corporations. He maintained in a speech: 'Walled cities and privileges, which have been given to these closed places at the cost of others, have caused many people to spend their lives in lower social circles, than they were destined for by nature.'<sup>45</sup> For Gogel, the only way out of this situation was the creation of a unitary democratic state based on universal rules and regulations, which gave everyone the same chance to make a living and contribute to society.

However, it was not only the unitary democratic ideal that linked the Amsterdam Revolutionary Committee to the provincial assembly. It was equally important that the committee was simultaneously engaged in a conflict with the Amsterdam Municipality over the persecution of the supporters of the old regime, and over the democratisation of local government. Less than two weeks after the revolution, there was a first confrontation between the Revolutionary Committee and the municipality. It was triggered by a proposal of the committee to organise bi-weekly public sessions, in which the representatives of the municipality would meet with the burghers to discuss the policies of the city. In addition, the committee argued that 'criminals [i.e. Orangists], who have brought disaster on the country and ruined their fellow burghers, by their detestable acts' should be punished.<sup>46</sup> A few days later, on 9 February, the committee reinforced this last request by claiming that each day it was asked from various sides to demand the imprisonment of the 'wicked villains' and the confiscation of the 'goods of this gang of robbers.'<sup>47</sup> These requests for prosecution and confiscation came primarily from the many clubs in the city.

Confronted by the demands of the Revolutionary Committee, the municipality made clear that they were not going to facilitate a witch-hunt. On 11 February, it published a declaration, written by Schimmelpenninck, which stated:

---

<sup>43</sup> T.C.W. Blanning, *The French Revolutionary Wars, 1787-1802* (London: Arnold, 1996), 170; Fritschy, 211-216; L.S. Godefroi, *De eerste fase van de financiële unificatie van Nederland* (Rotterdam: Erasmus Universiteit, 1986), 41-50; A.R.M. Jourdan, "Les Gaulois en Batavie: des relation diplomatiques machiavéliques" in *Remous révolutionnaires, République batave, armée française*, eds. A.R.M. Jourdan, and J.T. Leersen (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1996): 99-102; J.B. Manger jr., *Recherches sur les relation économique entre la France et la Hollande pendant la Révolution Française (1785-1795)* (Paris: Honoré Champion, 1923), 102-142; Pfeil, 124-129.

<sup>44</sup> GAA, arch. NSB (arch. nr. 5053) inv. nr. 1 (Handelingen van het Comité Revolutionair, 27 January 1795).

<sup>45</sup> Bemuurde steden, en de privilegien aan die besloten plekken grond, ten kosten van anderen geschonken, zijn de oorzaak dat veele volken in een lageren kring, als die tot welke de natuur haar scheen geplaatst te hebben, hebben moeten bestaan (NA, arch. Gogel (arch. nr. 2.21.005.39) inv. 2 (Speech of Gogel for neighborhood assembly nr. 20 on 28 January 1796).

<sup>46</sup> schurken, dewelke 's lands onheil en het verderf hunner medeburghers, door hunne verfoeielijke handelingen hebben berokkend (GAA, arch. NSB (arch. nr. 5053) inv. nr. 1 (Handelingen van het Comité Revolutionair, 31 January 1795).

<sup>47</sup> heillooze schurken (...) goederen van deeze rooverbende (Ibid., 9 Februari 1795).



*The exercise of vengeance can, in moments of fury and bewilderment, provide a momentary satisfaction; mostly the consequences are sad and deadly, while the exercise of fairness and generosity, by contrast, leaves behind the sweetest taste. These feelings, burgher! are ours; they must be yours. True supporters of Freedom and Equality!*<sup>48</sup>

This lesson in moderation was obviously a direct insult to the revolutionary clubs and the Revolutionary Committee, which claimed that the proclamation was ‘completely contrary to the principles that should determine the acts of the existing popular government, as long as the nation is in a state of revolution.’<sup>49</sup> Clearly frustrated, the committee sent a letter to the municipality in which it stressed that it had ‘suggested a mass of proposals to you, several of which, to our regret and rightful displeasure, have remained unanswered.’<sup>50</sup>

The provincial government was, in turn, able to build on the frustration of the clubs and Revolutionary Committee when it clashed with the Amsterdam Municipality. It even seemed to do so very consciously when it denounced the actions of the Amsterdam government as ‘strong expressions of aristocracy’, and the ‘beginning of the subversion and overthrow of the building of popular freedom’. In this sense, it used the same tactics as the Patriots in the 1780s to incriminate political opponents and create alliances. However, the type of coalition that the provincial government attempted to construct was of a very different nature than the local corporate alliances, which had been created by the Patriots. In fact, the government of Holland tried to untie the revolutionary part of the burghers from the local corporate alliance, and mobilise them for the unitary democratic ideal. On the one hand, it did so by arguing for universal freedom, and, on the other hand, by strongly condemning the attempts of the Amsterdam government to hold on to local autonomy. Through these rhetoric strategies, as well as through personal contacts, a broad coalition could be constructed, which undermined the local corporate alliance.

This is certainly not to say that everyone who took part in the new alliance, and helped to subordinate the Amsterdam Municipality, also fully embraced the unitary democratic ideal. One striking aspect of the coalition between the provincial assembly, the French authorities, and the Revolutionary Committee is that these actors cooperated with each other for a variety of reasons, which included financial concerns and interests, emancipatory goals, local democratic objectives, and the wish to take revenge on the supporters of the old regime. Hence, it again becomes clear that the struggle over the reform of the state was not simply a confrontation between two unified camps, with one opting for unitary democracy and the other for a decentralised particularistic state. Only a few revolutionaries, like Wiselius and Gogel, fully embraced the unitary democratic model. Most of the groups that employed this model did so for strategic reasons, which did not necessarily correspond with unification and democratisation.

---

<sup>48</sup> De uitoefening van wraak moge, in oogenblikken van drift en verbijstering, een kortstondig vermaak geven; meestal zijn de gevolgen treurig en doodelijk, terwijl de uitoefening van billijkheid en edelmoedigheid daarentegen den zoetsten nasmaak achterlaat. Deze gevoelens, Burghers! zijn de onze, het moeten de uwe zijn. Oprechte voorstanders van Vrijheid en Gelijkheid! (cited by Schimmelpenninck, *Rutger Jan Schimmelpenninck*, 43).

<sup>49</sup> geheel strydende met die grondbeginzelen, dewelke zo lang de natie noch in staat van revolutie is, de handeling van het existerend volksbewind moeten regelen (GAA, arch. NSB (arch. nr. 5053) inv. nr. 1 (Handelingen van het Comité Revolutionair, 11 March 1795).

<sup>50</sup> eene menigte van voorstellen aan ulieden zijn gedaan, waaronder verscheiden, tot ons leedwezen en rechtmatig ongenoegen, onbeantwoord zyn gebleven (Ibid.).

Thus the success of the state transformation process did not simply depend on the number of supporters of the unitary democratic ideal. Instead, it was crucial whether a sufficient number of powerful elite groups used the unitary democratic model to promote their specific interests. And even more important, whether it was strategically interesting for other actors, who were not directly involved in the elite struggle, to support these elite groups. In the first years after 1795, both criteria were met. Consequently, it was possible to circumvent the democratic paradox, and push the development of the unitary democratic state forward. However, this was certainly not done by democratic means.

### ***The Partial Subordination of the Amsterdam Municipality***

Having won the support of the Amsterdam Revolutionary Committee and the French authorities, the provincial assembly, or more specifically its special committee, was ready to subordinate the municipality. On 19 March 1795, the special provincial committee travelled to Amsterdam. Upon arriving: it relieved the military commander of the city, Cornelis Krayenhoff, of his oath to the municipal government. Krayenhoff, who had also been a member of the Revolutionary Committee, agreed to cooperate.<sup>51</sup> He later argued to the municipality that he had taken this decision because the National Guard, which he commanded, officially served the Batavian People. Consequently, he had to obey to a 'higher power, than the municipality of the city.'<sup>52</sup>

Now the provincial committee, ensured of the assistance of the military commander, the Revolutionary Committee, the clubs, and the French authorities, could arrest the resistant members of the Amsterdam government, including Schimmelpenninck and Irhoven van Dam. These two, together with four other members of the municipality, were put under house arrest. The provincial committee was now free to make a compromise with the five remaining members of the municipality, which had not been involved in the decision to reject the oath. With these men, which included among others merchant Jacob Teyssset Junior, and lawyer Hendrik van Castrop, the provincial committee agreed that the Amsterdam government would swear its loyalty to the people of Holland, but not its representatives.<sup>53</sup> When this compromise had been reached, the imprisoned members of the municipality were released. Through this coup, the provincial assembly sent a clear message to the other cities in the province. For example, the government of Leiden, which had also resisted the oath, was now willing to cooperate with the provincial assembly.<sup>54</sup>

The coalition between the provincial assembly, the French, and the Revolutionary Committee proved to be very effective. It made it possible to subordinate the municipality without much public upheaval. The Revolutionary Committee had indeed succeeded in winning the approval of most of the Amsterdam clubs for the actions of the provincial assembly. Or as the special provincial committee reported: 'the best part of the Amsterdam

---

<sup>51</sup> (NA, Rijksarch. Zuid-Holland: Provisionele Representanten 1795-96 (arch. nr. 3.02.01) inv. nr. 97 (Commissie belast met de regeling van de moeilijkheden binnen municipaliteit van Amsterdam).

<sup>52</sup> *Jaarboeken der Bataafsche Republiek*, vol. II, 158.

<sup>53</sup> NA, Rijksarch. Zuid-Holland: Provisionele Representanten 1795-96 (arch. nr. 3.02.01) inv. nr. 97 (Commissie belast met de regeling van de moeilijkheden binnen municipaliteit van Amsterdam); GAA, arch. NSB (arch. nr. 5053) inv. nr. 1 (Handelingen van het Comité Revolutionair, 20 March 1795).

<sup>54</sup> NA, Rijksarch. Zuid-Holland: Provisionele Representanten 1795-96 (arch. nr. 3.02.01) inv. nr. 3 (Minutes of the Provisional Representatives of Holland).

burghers seem to support the measures of the (provincial) assembly.<sup>55</sup> Only one club did not cooperate. This was *Doctrina*. Officially, the society had decided in a general meeting, on 24 February 1795, that it would refrain from all political interventions, and devote itself exclusively to art, science, and companionship.<sup>56</sup> Nevertheless, one month later, the members of the society strongly criticised the actions of the provincial assembly. The provincial committee maintained that ‘the aristocrats [...] do everything to cast the behaviour of the (provincial) assembly in a bad light. This morning, in the society named *Doctrina*, the harshest criticisms have been formulated.’<sup>57</sup> Thus, a substantial part of the Amsterdam revolutionary elite, organised by *Doctrina*, seemed determined to resist the provincial assembly.

The Amsterdam governors, even after the coup of the provincial government, continued to oppose the transfer of authority to the province. Especially after the first local elections in May 1795, the municipality, in which the Patriot regents Bicker, and Farret played a prominent role, strongly opposed the centralising ambitions of the provincial assembly. The May elections showed that the majority of the Amsterdam voters supported politicians who wanted to hold on to local political autonomy. Backed by the majority of the Amsterdam voters, the municipality once more employed the ideals of popular sovereignty and representative government to hold on to its authority. Obviously the members of the municipality were now in a much stronger position, as they had been officially elected, whereas the provincial governors were still appointed on a provisional basis.

The Amsterdam governors used this difference, when the provincial assembly, in December 1795, again tried to persuade the municipality to swear an oath of allegiance. The local governors pointed out that the provincial assembly did not really represent the people of Holland, as no elections had taken place. Consequently, they maintained that they could only swear their allegiance to ‘the future people’s representatives: to beings that up to now do not exist.’<sup>58</sup> The municipality in other words had powerful democratic arguments to resist political centralisation.

In fact, at the beginning of 1796, the Representatives of the People of Amsterdam used these arguments to go on a counter offensive. Challenging the composition of the provincial assembly, the local governors argued:

*Until now it has remained uncertain whether and when the current representation of the people of Holland, which has continued to function in the same composition as when it was appointed almost a year ago at the time of the revolution, will finally be replaced by another*

---

<sup>55</sup> Het beste gedeelte van de Amsterdamsche burgherij schijnt te approbeeren de demarche van de (provinciale) vergadering (NA, Rijksarch. Zuid-Holland: Provisionele Representanten 1795-96 (arch. nr. 3.02.01) inv. nrs. 97-98 (Commissie belast met de regeling van de moeilijkheden binnen municipaliteit van Amsterdam).

<sup>56</sup> GAA, Library (U 00.1876), *Gedenkbokje van het genootschap Doctrina et amicitia te Amsterdam ter gelegenheid van zijn honderd vijf en twintig jarig bestaan, 1788 - 1913*, 26.

<sup>57</sup> de aristocraten [...] spannen alles te samen om het gedrag van de vergadering in een kwaad dagligt te stellen, gelijk daarover heden morgen in de societeit genaamd *Doctrina* de ongemeen zwaarste uitdrukkingen zijn voorgevallen (NA, Rijksarch. Zuid-Holland: Provisionele Representanten 1795-96 (arch. nr. 3.02.01) inv. nr. 98 (Commissie belast met de regeling van de moeilijkheden binnen municipaliteit van Amsterdam)).

<sup>58</sup> volks verkoozene repreasentanten in futuro, aan weezens die tot dus verre nog niet existeeren. (GAA, arch. NSB (arch. nr. 5053) inv. nr. 154 (Registers van afschriften van uitgegane brieven van de Representantten van het Volk van Amsterdam, de Raad en de Administratieve Municipaliteit aan provinciale en staatorganen, 119-127)).

*legitimate government. (...) We are in a position in which we can no longer explain to the people of this city our silence in a matter of such importance. This is even more difficult, since experience has shown more than once to our regret how little influence such a great part of the people of Holland, represented by our assembly, has had on the provincial deliberations. They have (the people of Amsterdam), against all grounds of order and proportionality, in general not been allowed to be present in your assembly with more than four votes. Moreover, decisions have been taken on issues of the greatest importance, without us having had the opportunity to let our opinion, in the name of our principals, known to our deputies. In any case, the deputies have been unable, due to the notorious inequality of representation, to give weight to the advices of their principals.<sup>59</sup>*

By demanding provincial elections, the municipality obviously hoped to diffuse the assault of the provincial assembly on the autonomy of the local governments.

The Amsterdam governors certainly had good reasons to be worried about the loss of political autonomy, as the provincial assembly had just launched a plan which should regulate the administration of the province until a new constitution was established. This plan gave the provincial assembly the final authority over all issues of justice, finance, the police, and the economy. What this exactly entailed was not clear, and this led to vigorous protests from the Amsterdam Municipality. The local governors asked with much pathos whether the plan entailed that they would be reduced to mere administrators.<sup>60</sup> Outraged, the Amsterdam governors declared:

*It is obvious that such important issues cannot be arranged under intermediary schemes, over which the people have not been consulted and which threaten to put them under a constitution that is infinitely worse than even the previous regime. When all power is delegated without limitations or redress to the intermediary government, no God can forestall that the 55 members of the so-called intermediary government evolve into tyrants.<sup>61</sup>*

---

<sup>59</sup> Voor als noch ten eenemaale onzeker gebleven of en wanneer de tegenwoordige representatie van het volk van Holland, welke nu bijkans een geheel jaar, op den zelfden voet, waarop het ten tijde der revolutie was daargesteld, gelaten is, eindelijk door een ander regelmatig bestuur naar behooren zal worden vervangen. (...) Wij laten ons ondertusschen voorstaan, dat wij aan het volk dezer stad, het verder stilzwijgen, in eene zaak van zodanig aan belang, in geen deele zoude kunnen verantwoorden, te minder, daar de ondervinding, tot ons leedweezen, reeds te meermaale, heeft doen zien, welken geringen invloed een zoo goed groot deel van Hollands volk, als door onze vergadering gerepresenteerd word, tot dus verre op de provinciaalen deliberation gehad heeft, terwijl het zij met eerbied gezegt tegen alle gronden van orde en evenredigheid doorgaans niet meer dan vier stemmen van wegen deeze stad ter uwer vergadering, in computatie hebben mogen koomen en er telkens, op zaken van het grootste aan belang besluiten worden genomen, zonder dat wij in de mogelijkheid zijn geweest aan onze gedeputeerden daar omtrent van onze gevoelens, in naamen van wegen onze committenten ten doen blijken; immers en in allen gevallen, zonder dat dezelve onze gedeputeerden uit hoofde eener zo notoire ongelijkheid in de representatie in staat zijn geweest, om, in cas van dissensie, door een proportioneel getal van stemmen, eenig gewigt aan hun lieder advies bij te zetten (Ibid., 148-155).

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 5 January 1796.

<sup>61</sup> Sprekende het over het overige van zelfs, dat althans zulke aangeleegene objecten bij geene zogenaamde intermediaire schikkingen kunnen worden afgedaan, noch het volk 't welker nooit opgehoord is daar door in een ogenschijnlijk gevaar kan worden gebracht van buiten hunne kennissen toestemming daar door van oneindig minder constitutie te worden, dan zij zelfsonder het vorig bestuur geweest zijn, en wel, indien alle magten aan het voors intermediair bestuur zonder eene juiste limitatie onderworpen zouden kunnen raaken, buiten eenige apparentei van eventueele redres bijzonder in dienste geen Godt verhoede de 55 leden van dat zogenaamde

The Amsterdam Council closed its tirade with a comparison of the actions of the provincial government with the politics of the dictatorial Spanish King Philip II.<sup>62</sup>

Hence, the Amsterdam Municipality resisted the provincial assembly by invoking the democratic ideals of popular sovereignty and representative government. The provincial assembly had certainly been able to partially subordinate the Amsterdam government through a strategic coalition with the French regime, the Revolutionary Committee, and the Amsterdam clubs. However, it was also clear that the municipality could not be completely subordinated by coercive means only. To make the centralisation of authority legitimate, a new national constitution, which was approved by the enfranchised voting population, was necessary. Otherwise the assembly of Holland, or any other higher state institution, would remain vulnerable to the sort of democratic critique, which had been advanced by the Amsterdam governors. Without a constitution, the legitimacy of political reforms would remain a matter of debate. However, before a new constitution could be established, the provincial governments first had to agree on the specific institution that would formulate the constitutional proposal. This issue led to a new round of political struggle, as the assembly of Holland wanted to create a sovereign National Assembly, while some of the other provincial governments wished to maintain the States General in its early modern form.

## The Creation of the National Assembly

The creation of a National Assembly was crucial for the governors of Holland. Without it, it would be impossible to either find a national solution for the financial problems of this province, or establish a unitary democratic state. Such reforms could not be pursued in the old States General, since this institution left each province the right to veto the decisions of the States General. However, in trying to establish a National Assembly, the governors from Holland met with resistance from some of the other provincial governments, which like the Amsterdam Municipality used the ideals of popular sovereignty and representative government to resist the development of the unitary democratic state.

Initially, it seemed as though there would not be a clash, and the provinces would be able to establish a National Assembly through open negotiations. The debate about this issue started in May 1795, when a committee of the States General proposed to create a National Assembly with the primary task to construct a constitutional proposal. According to the plan, the assembly would have authority over the general government of the Republic, but not over the internal politics of the provinces.<sup>63</sup> This was not to the liking of the government of Holland, which quickly issued a counter proposal. In July 1795, it proposed to create a National Assembly with the task to devise a new constitution, as well

---

intermediair bestuur 't eenigen tijd in tyrannen mogten veranderen (Ibid., inv. nr. 155 (Registers van afschriften van uitgegane brieven, 4-22).

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> NA, arch. Staten-Generaal, 1576-1796 (arch. nr. 1.01.03) inv.nr. 3085 (Decree of 29 May 1795); P. Brood, P. Nieuwland, and L. Zoodsma, eds. *Homines Novi: de eerste volksvertegenwoordigers van 1795* (Amsterdam: Schiphouwer en Brinkman, 1993): 16-17; Colenbrander, *Bataafse Republiek*, 77; A.M. Elias, "Van Raad van State, Comité te Lande en Staatsraad (1795-1810)" in *Raad van State 450 jaar*, ed. H.C.C.de Schepper (Den Haag: Staatsuitgeverij, 1981): 119-20.

as the authority over the external and internal government of the entire Republic. Accordingly, all the provincial assemblies would be transformed into administrative bodies.<sup>64</sup> This far-reaching proposal was rejected by all other provincial governments, except Utrecht. The governments of Overijssel and Gelderland preferred the proposal of the States General committee, while Friesland, Groningen and Zeeland wanted to create a separate convention, alongside the States General, with the exclusive task to formulate a constitutional plan.<sup>65</sup>

After these first bids, negotiations were started, which eventually led, in October 1795, to a compromise that steered the middle course between the plan of the government of Holland and that of the committee of the States General. In this compromise, called the The Hague Plan, it was agreed that the members of the new National Assembly would no longer be the representatives of the provincial governments, but of all Dutch people. They would vote, not by province, but individually. Moreover, the members would be chosen through general elections based on proportional representation. This was important for Holland, which had by far the largest population. However, on a few crucial points the representatives from Holland had to give in. First, it was agreed that the new assembly would have authority over the general affairs of the Republic, but not over the internal politics of the provinces. The government of Holland also had to permit that the new constitution would only be valid, if a majority in each individual province had approved it. Third, it was resolved that the first constitutional proposal would be developed by a special committee of the National Assembly, in which Holland would have no more than 6 out of 21 representatives.<sup>66</sup> Although this was a much higher number than the other provinces, Holland was still underrepresented. Based on the size of its population, it was entitled to 8 out of 21 representatives in the constitutional committee.<sup>67</sup> Nevertheless Holland, along with Gelderland, Utrecht, and Overijssel accepted the compromise. Drente and Brabant, which were still not members of the States General, agreed to cooperate as well. Yet, Friesland, Zeeland, and Groningen, three of the seven voting provinces, still resisted.<sup>68</sup> They even continued to resist when the government of Holland declared that they were going to proceed with the creation of the National Assembly in cooperation with the five other provinces.

A large part of this resistance against the National Assembly was instigated by the fear, not unjustified, that the politicians from Holland wanted to centralise the state for their own purposes. More specifically, the representatives from the resisting provinces were afraid that Holland would transfer its enormous debt to the central state, i.e. to them. This was clearly expressed by the Reformed Frisian schoolmaster and village judge Nicolaas Colé, who was a member of the government of Friesland in 1795.<sup>69</sup> He maintained that in case the Republic was centralised, 'a single politician from Amsterdam can come and dictate the law to us, and take as much Money from our funds, as Amsterdam or Holland

<sup>64</sup> NA, arch. Staten-Generaal, 1576-1796 (arch. nr. 1.01.03) inv. nr. 3087 (Decree of 28 July 1795).

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., inv. nrs. 3087-3090 (Decrees of 20 July, 14 September, and 2 October 1795).

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., inv. nr. 3090 (Decree of 14 October 1795).

<sup>67</sup> In 1795, Holland had 783.000 inhabitants, while the Republic at large had a population of approximately 2.079.000 (Van Zanden, and Van Riel, 32). Hence, 37,7% of the Dutch population lived Holland. In turn, 37,7% of 21 is about 8 members.

<sup>68</sup> Brood, Nieuwland, and Zoodtsma, 18; Colenbrander, *Bataafsche Republiek*, 77-80.

<sup>69</sup> Brood, Nieuwland, and Zoodtsma, 178-79.

pleases.<sup>70</sup> Consequently, the provincial assembly of Friesland wanted to make sure that its interests would be met in a new National Assembly. It argued:

*The special interests of the provinces should not be refuted in the constituting assembly, or suppressed by a dominant force of whatever nature, but brought forward in a neutral way and considered on its own merits.*<sup>71</sup>

The government of Friesland especially opposed the Holland proposal to elect the members of the assembly through proportional representation of the population. In a proportional system, about 37.7% of all the representatives would come from Holland, and only 7.8% from Friesland. This was even less than the percentage of representatives that would be elected by the Amsterdam population, which would be represented by 10.4% of the members of the assembly.<sup>72</sup>

In opposing the government of Holland, the provincial assembly of Friesland employed a similar rhetoric as the Amsterdam Municipality. It too evoked the ideals of popular sovereignty and representative government to hold on to its autonomy. Against Holland's declaration that it was going to proceed with the establishment of a National Assembly, with or without the cooperation of Groningen, Friesland, and Zeeland, the Friesian government maintained:

*We cannot but again express our deep regret concerning the lack of interest of the representatives of Holland for the inalienable rights of the Frisian People. In all seriousness, they cannot ask us to give our consent to the establishment of a National Assembly, and, consequently, to change the influence which Friesland has long had on the deliberations of the confederacy, without knowledge and approval of our people.*<sup>73</sup>

In October 1795, the Frisian government showed that it was indeed serious about consulting the voting population, as it brought the plan for the National Assembly to a popular vote. When the Frisian voters had rejected this plan, the provincial government triumphantly declared: 'The free, Sovereign People of Friesland has, after legally

---

<sup>70</sup> "Een enkel Amsterdammer kan dan komen en ons de wet stellen, en zoveel Geld uit onze Kasse krijgen, als 't Amsterdam of Holland gelust' (cited by J. Kuiper, *Een revolutie ontrafeld, politiek in Friesland 1795-1798* (Franeker: Van Wijnen, 2002), 96).

<sup>71</sup> De byzondere belangen der provintien moeten derhalven in de constitueerende vergadering niet verworpen, niet door een overwicht van eenen andere aard onderdrukt, maar onpartydig ingebracht worden, en naar verdiensten gelden (*Jaarboeken der Bataafsche Republiek*, vol. IV, 218).

<sup>72</sup> Van Zanden, and Van Riel, 32.

<sup>73</sup> Dat wy echter niet kunnen nalaten ons grievend hartzeer nogmaals uit te drukken over den geringen prys dien de Repraesentanten van Holland op de onvervreembaare rechten van het Friesche Volk schijnen te stellen. Zy kunnen van ons in goeden ernst niet vergen, dat wy zonder meede weeten en bewilliging van onze committenten tot het daarstellen van eene Nationale Conventie, en dus het veranderen van een invloed, dien Friesland dus lang op de deliberationen van 't bondgenootschap gehad heeft, onze toestemming geeven (*Jaarboeken der Bataafsche Republiek*, vol. V, 43).

convening in its voting assemblies, declared [...] that there will be no National Assembly according to the The Hague Plan.<sup>74</sup>

As the governments of Friesland, Groningen, and Zeeland continued their resistance, the assembly of Holland resolved to take action. The outcome of the next conflict decided whether the debate over the new constitution, would take place between provincial governments, or between national politicians, who represented the Dutch people as a whole. In the first scenario, the debate would be fully determined by provincial interests. In the second scenario, a much more open debate would take place between representatives, who did not have to account for their actions to lower level governments. Obviously, a radical transformation of the state, in terms of centralisation and democratisation, was much more likely to occur in the second scenario.

### ***Local Democracy***

As in the clash with the Amsterdam Municipality, the government of Holland was able to construct a temporary coalition with the French authorities, and the revolutionary clubs. The cooperation with the former was again based on the financial interests of the French, which tied them to the government of Holland. The alliance with the revolutionary clubs was more complicated, since most of the clubs did not show an immediate interest in the creation of a unitary democratic state. To understand how the assembly of Holland nevertheless won the support of the revolutionary clubs and assemblies, it is necessary to consider the struggles over the democratisation of local government. These struggles, which polarised the political relations in the first year of the revolution, allowed the assembly of Holland to appear as a democratic force in comparison with the local administrations, and the other provincial governments. How this conflict over democratisation unfolded, can be clearly observed in Amsterdam.

In Amsterdam, the conflict started in April 1795, when a committee of the municipality, led by Schimmelpenninck, presented a plan for a highly restricted local representative system, in which only part of the adult male population could exert an indirect influence on the appointment of their local representatives.<sup>75</sup> This plan was especially criticised by the Neighbourhood Assemblies, which not only wanted to give the voting population direct control over the selection of their representatives, but also over the political decision making process itself. On 16 April 1795, a deputation of the Neighbourhood Assemblies, which claimed to have 'the utmost right to represent the people of Amsterdam', visited the meeting of the municipality and declared that the plan created, under the veil of 'freedom, equality, and the people's voice, a second

---

<sup>74</sup> Dat het vrije, het Souveraine Volk van Friesland, na eene wettige oproeping en zamenkomst in zyne grondvergaderingen deszelfs wel te kennen geeft. [...] Dat 'er geene Nationale Vergadering, volgens het Haagsche Plan ingericht zal worden gehouden (Ibid., 156-57).

<sup>75</sup> The plan only gave part of the male population over 25 years old the right to vote. Besides excluding women, the plan also recommended to limit the electorate to those who paid the tax on coffee and tea. This rule excluded another 55% of the population, who did not pay this tax because they earned less than 300 guilders a year. Finally, the plan proposed that only the people who had been Amsterdam residents for over three years qualified as potential voters. Above these restrictions, the committee of Schimmelpenninck devised a complicated indirect electoral system. Representatives would not be directly chosen, but they were appointed by electors who nominated candidates on which the population could vote. Elections would have to take place every six months, when half of the representatives would be replaced (GAA, arch. NSB (arch. nr. 5053) inv. nr. 4 (Minutes of the Provisional Representatives, 11 April 1795).



aristocracy.<sup>76</sup> These charges were immediately countered by the municipality, which tried to prevent a real discussion about the plan by questioning the legitimacy of the Neighbourhood Assemblies. The municipality, in the person of Schimmelpenninck, argued that it 'did not know any representatives of the burghers of this city, other than our own assembly.'<sup>77</sup> However, the municipality did promise that the plan for the representative system would only be effective during the first elections, after which a new plan would be formulated. This promise temporarily appeased the Neighbourhood Assemblies.

On 19 June 1795, the first popularly elected Representatives of the People of Amsterdam were sworn in. These men again overwhelmingly came from the socio-economic elite of the city.<sup>78</sup> Several Patriot regents were elected, such as Jan Bernd Bicker, Johan Pieter Farret, Willem Backer, and Daniël Hooft. Like their predecessors, the elected representatives clashed with the Neighbourhood Assemblies over the organisation of the local representative system. In December 1795, the municipality wanted to organise a new round of elections, on the basis of Schimmelpenninck's original design, which had been only slightly modified.<sup>79</sup> The Neighbourhood Assemblies protested, and maintained that no new elections could be held before a new plan was approved by the voting population. When the municipality tried to ignore these demands and go ahead with the elections, the Neighbourhood Assemblies were joined in their opposition by the revolutionary clubs, which worked closely together in a general assembly. It soon became clear that the clubs and Neighbourhood Assemblies indeed organised a major part of the Amsterdam voting population. Many of the ballots were not returned, or returned with explicit protest. Consequently, the municipality had no alternative but to hold new elections and open the negotiations on the representative system.<sup>80</sup>

Such clashes over democratisation not only took place in Amsterdam, but throughout the Republic.<sup>81</sup> They offered an opportunity to the government of Holland to present itself as the democratic force par excellence, which, in turn, helped its effort to establish a National Assembly. Already on 31 January 1795, as we have discussed in the introduction of this chapter, the assembly of Holland publicly showed off its democratic intentions by proclaiming the sovereignty of the people, and the freedom, and equality of all. In their attempt to create a National Assembly, the governors of Holland again appealed to popular democratic sentiments. On 28 July 1795, they published a plan in which they stressed that the sovereignty of the united Dutch people could only be maintained by a National Assembly, which governs the entire Republic without the obstruction of provincial governments.<sup>82</sup>

<sup>76</sup> het volkoomenste recht het Volk van Amsterdam representeert (...) vrijheid, gelijkheid en volksstem, eene tweede aristocratie (GAA, arch. NSB (arch. nr. 5053) inv. nr. 7 (Acts of the Municipality, 15 april 1795).

<sup>77</sup> geene Representanten van de Burgerije dezer stad kende, dan haare Vergadering (Ibid., 16 April 1795).

<sup>78</sup> Among the 57 representatives, whose occupation could be determined, there was only 1 craftsman, and 1 shopkeeper. Of the remaining 55 representatives, 31 were merchant, 10 regent, 6 juridical professional, 6 professional, and 2 industrialist. Moreover, a large majority of the representatives were members of the Reformed Church: 51 out of 66. Among the newly elected governors were several Patriot regents, like Jan Bernd Bicker, Willem Backer, and Johan Pieter Farret (Breen, 111-120; GAA, Baptismal Records; Poorterboeken).

<sup>79</sup> The most important change was that the minimum age of the voters was lowered from 25 to 20.

<sup>80</sup> Breen, 47-53.

<sup>81</sup> Kuiper, 53-93; Prak, *Republikeinse veelheid*, 204-223.

<sup>82</sup> *Jaarboeken der Bataafsche Republiek*, vol. V, 146; *Plan ter oproeping der burgers van Nederland tot het verkiezen eener Nationaale Conventie, gearresteerd by de vergadering der provisioneele Representanten van het volk van Holland, op vrijdag den 24 July 1795* (Den Haag: Lands Drukkery van Holland, 1795).

The appeal to the sovereignty of the Dutch people proved highly effective. Apart from a few exceptions, such as *Doctrina*, the revolutionary clubs and assemblies massively supported the effort of the government of Holland. For example, in October 1795, the Amsterdam Neighbourhood Assemblies and clubs officially demanded the creation of a constitution, which ‘eliminates every provincial government under whatever designation.’<sup>83</sup> They promised the representatives of Holland that

*the most honest part of the Batavian people will keep a close watch on every movement of the moribund seven-headed government, impatiently awaiting the important decision that will destroy this monster.*<sup>84</sup>

Many other clubs and assemblies across the Republic also expressed their support.<sup>85</sup> In September 1795, the clubs and assemblies even created a national organisation to help the unification process forward.<sup>86</sup> On 5 October 1795, this organisation wrote to the government of Holland that it was happy to cooperate with the effort ‘to destroy the seven headed federalism, and turn Bato’s yard into an indivisible country’. And ‘to ensure the people, through the introduction of wise laws, that they will be free and independent.’<sup>87</sup>

These quotes suggest that the government of Holland had reconciled the struggle for local democracy with the campaign for a unitary democratic state. In this effort, the federalist organisation of the early modern Republic was denounced as a ‘monster’. Moreover, the fight against federalism, which had been defended by the Amsterdam Municipality, as well as by the provincial governments of Friesland, Groningen, and Zeeland, was portrayed as a struggle for popular freedom. Consequently, federalism became associated with aristocracy and unitarism with freedom and democracy. Thus, a fundamental shift in the composition of political identities had taken place in comparison with the 1780s, when centralisation was associated with absolutism, and decentralisation, or federalism, with popular freedom. This change greatly helped the government of Holland to forge an alliance with the revolutionary clubs in Amsterdam, and in Friesland.

---

<sup>83</sup> elk provinciaal volksbestuur onder welke benoeming het ook zij, ten eenemaal buiten werking brenge en afschaffe (GAA, arch. NSB (arch. nr. 5053) inv. nr. 1068 (Minutes of the Neighborhood Assemblies, 11 October 1795).

<sup>84</sup> Het braafste gedeelte van het Bataafsche volk houdt een staarend oog op alle bewegingen van het zieltoogend zevenhoofdig bestuur gevestigd, en wacht met ongeduld op dat groote besluit, waar aan de vernietiging van dat gedocht verbonden is (Ibid.).

<sup>85</sup> Brood, Nieuwland, and Zoodsma, 64-65; Kuiper, 100; NA, Rijksarch. Zuid-Holland: Provisionele Representanten 1795-96 (arch. nr. 3.02.01), inv. nr. 41, (Letter of the burgher societies in Groningen to the Representatives of Holland, 15 October 1795).

<sup>86</sup> Colenbrander, *Bataafsche Republiek*, 78.

<sup>87</sup> door het vernietigen van het zevenhoofdig foederalisme, Bato’s Erf tot een onverdeelbaar land te brengen. En om, door het invoeren van wyze wetten, eenmaal aan het volk te verzekeren dat het vry en onafhangelijk is (NA, Rijksarch. Zuid-Holland: Provisionele Representanten 1795-96 (arch. nr. 3.02.01), inv. 8 (Resolutions of the Provisional Representatives, 5 October 1795).

### ***The Coup in Friesland***

As in the clash with the Amsterdam Municipality, the governors of Holland were able to use the support of the revolutionary clubs, and the French to enforce a breakthrough in the conflict with Friesland, Groningen and Leeuwarden. In January 1796, the Committee of Public Safety<sup>88</sup> of Holland, in close cooperation with the French representative Noël, and the French General Jean Moreau, planned a coup in Friesland. The Committee of Public Safety included Wiselius and Wibo Fijnje, one of the authors of the *Leidsch Ontwerp*. These men agreed with the French to bring about a breakthrough in the discussion by mobilising the support of the revolutionary clubs of Leeuwarden, the main city in Friesland.<sup>89</sup> The plan was to let the revolutionary clubs do the dirty work.

In many ways, the situation in Friesland was similar to that in Holland. Like Amsterdam, Leeuwarden was in conflict with the provincial government over the transfer of authority from the city to the province. The municipality of Leeuwarden also tried to protect its local privileges against the interference from the provincial assembly. Moreover, the governors of Friesland, like those in Holland, used the language of unitary democracy to subordinate the city. Of course, there were also a few crucial differences. As we have seen, the government of Friesland, despite its use of the unitary democratic ideal, was not at all keen on creating a sovereign National Assembly. In fact, when this issue was at stake, it had no problem in reverting back to the rhetoric of the decentralised particularistic state model, arguing:

*We acknowledge the inalienable right of the Frisian nation to maintain its influence, which it has had for a long time, on the confederate government of this Republic; a right which it cannot loose without its explicit consent.*<sup>90</sup>

Again, we can see how many revolutionaries alternately used different state models to pursue specific interests. However, it was not ideological inconsistency that undermined the position of the government of Friesland, but its conflict with the municipality of Leeuwarden, which it had not been able to fully subordinate. Unlike the Amsterdam government, the municipality of Leeuwarden was not in conflict with the revolutionary clubs in the city. In fact, the clubs controlled the city government, and could consequently put up a joint resistance against the provincial assembly. When this assembly clashed with the government of Holland, the latter became a potential coalition partner for the municipality and clubs of Leeuwarden.<sup>91</sup>

By January 1796, the government of Holland, or at least its Committee of Public Safety, was more than willing to lend Leeuwarden a hand. It was agreed with Noël and Moreau that the French would temporarily withdraw all their troops from Friesland, allowing the clubs and civic militias of Leeuwarden to take control of the provincial government. This operation was led by the Frisian regent Arent de Bère, the journalist

---

<sup>88</sup> Comité van Waakzaamheid

<sup>89</sup> Kuiper, 113-128.

<sup>90</sup> Bij dezelve erkenen wy het als een onvervreembaar recht van de Friesche Natie, dat zy dien invloed, dien zy dus lang op het Bondgenootschaplyk bestuur van deze Republyk gehad heeft, zonder haar uitdruklyk bewilliging niet verlieze (*Jaarboeken der Bataafsche Republiek*, vol. V, 52).

<sup>91</sup> Kuiper, 98-101

Godschalk, and Christiaan Prediger who was the secretary of the Committee of Public Safety of Holland. On 26 January 1796, these three men led the civic militias to the provincial assembly and dismissed the representatives, who were temporarily thrown in gaol. Subsequently, new provincial governors were appointed, who were willing to let Friesland join the National Assembly.<sup>92</sup> This coup proved to be the turning point, since it convinced the provincial states of Zeeland and Groningen to join the National Assembly as well.<sup>93</sup>

The creation of the National Assembly was an important step in the direction of a unitary democratic state. The assembly constituted a truly national political platform. In contrast to the representatives of the States General, the members of the National Assembly represented the Dutch people as a whole, and not the provincial or local governments. Thus, the direct link between the provincial and central government was eliminated, just like the connection between the provincial and local governments had been erased. The representatives of the National Assembly were not selected by local or provincial governors, but through general elections, which were, as agreed, organised on a proportional basis. Entitled to vote were men of 20 years and older, who had lived in the Republic for at least one year. There was no census or other major restrictions.<sup>94</sup> Hence, the establishment of the National Assembly not only entailed a leap forward in the centralisation process, but also in terms of democratisation.

Paradoxically, this leap had been accomplished through authoritarian measures. As in the confrontation with the Amsterdam Municipality, the government of Holland had overruled its opponents by constructing a coalition with the revolutionary clubs, and the French regime. Although this coalition was inspired by the ideal of unitary democracy, its actions were far from democratic. Not only were the officially chosen representatives of the people of Friesland forcefully unseated, the governors of Holland, who initiated the coup, were, unlike their Friesian colleagues, not even appointed through democratic elections. Hence, the unitary democratic revolution was very much the work of a self-appointed group of revolutionaries, not necessarily representing the wishes of the majority of the voting population. More importantly, the first steps in the transformation of the Republic suggest that the processes of democratisation and centralisation did not by definition reinforce each other, as was implied by the unitary democratic ideal. Instead, the unification process could only be pushed forward by overruling democratic institutions and procedures, which obstructed the centralisation of authority. Hence, the democratic paradox could indeed be temporarily circumvented.

## A New Constitution

This was also the case in the struggle over the new constitution between the representatives in the National Assembly, which held its first session in March 1796. The struggle again pitted Amsterdam politicians against each other. Two of the Amsterdam representatives

---

<sup>92</sup> Colenbrander, *Bataafse Republiek*, 80-81; Kuiper, 113-137.

<sup>93</sup> In fact, the government of Groningen, which was also pressured by the clubs in the province, had already agreed to support the National Assembly, if Friesland and Zeeland would join as well.

<sup>94</sup> R.E. de Bruin, *Burghers op het kussen: volkssoevereiniteit en bestuurssamenstelling in de stad Utrecht, 1795-1813* (Zutphen: De Walburg Pers, 1986), 119-120, 126.

positioned on the ideological extremes were Patriot regent Johan Pieter Farret, and Reformed minister Bernadus Bosch. Like Gogel, Bosch, who had also been a member of the Amsterdam Neighbourhood Assemblies, was an example of a revolutionary politician who fully embraced the unitary democratic state model, and the ideals of universal freedom and equality. He was strongly opposed to making a differentiation between people on the basis of privileges, or wealth. This became particularly clear in a discussion with Farret on the organisation of the national representative system. In this debate, Farret had proposed to only give voting rights to men who paid at least 200 guilders a year in house rent, which according to Bosch was much too high. He argued:

*My surprise here reaches its zenith, as I remember that the burgher Farret was in the year 1787 a member of the committee of defense of Amsterdam. At this time, the same burgher has seen that the majority of the people who endangered themselves for the freedom of our Country, did not live in houses that did 200 guilds in rent annually.<sup>95</sup>*

He added that ‘many rich men sat indifferently next to their fireplaces, while their poor fellow citizens struggled for their freedom.’<sup>96</sup> Bosch’s concern for the poor citizens was directly connected to the debate over the organisation of the state. Like Gogel, he was convinced that the social differences between people could only be eliminated by creating a unified state. He maintained that ‘the one and indivisibility of the Batavian Republic’ must be ‘the main pillar, on which the Dutch state building should be founded.’<sup>97</sup>

Johan Pieter Farret had a very different perspective on the new constitution. He was primarily concerned about the defence of local and provincial autonomy. Resounding the *Leidsch Ontwerp*, Farret asserted:

*The unity of this Republic should only exist in those matters without which the safety and happiness of the entire Republic cannot be promoted. Hence, concerning [these matters], the individual members should delegate the freedom, which each possesses, to a government that uses it in the name of all individuals. [...] Yet, all that does not belong to the general interest, but to the domestic affairs of the provinces, the cities and villages, should not be centralised.<sup>98</sup>*

---

<sup>95</sup> Mijne verwondering rijst hier ten toppunte, wanneer ik mij herinnere, dat de burgher Farret in den jaar 1787 lid geweest is van het defensiewezen te Amsterdam en dat diezelfde burgher toen heeft gezien, dat het grootste getal dergeenen, welken zich voor de vrijheid van ons Vaderland in de bresse stelden, juist in geene huizen woonden die 200 gulden jaarlijks aan huur deden (*Dagverhaal Nationaale Vergadering*, vol. IV, 919.)

<sup>96</sup> veele rijkaards [zaten] onverschillig bij hunne haardsteden, terwijl hunne medeburghers van alles ontbloot voor hunne vrijheid streden (*Ibid.*).

<sup>97</sup> de eenheid en ondeelbaarheid der Bataafsche Republiek (...) de grondzuil, waarop het gebouw van Neerlands staatswezen moet rusten (*Ibid.*, 218).

<sup>98</sup> De eenheid derhalven deeser Republicq behoort alleen te bestaan in alle zulke zaaken zonder welke de veiligheid en het geluk der geheele Republicq niet kan bevorderd worden, en omtrent welke dus de individueel leden de vrijheid, welke ieder voor zig heeft, moeten afstaan aan een bestuur, om in naam van alle de individueele waargenoomen te worden. [...] Edog al wat tot de algemeene belangens niet behoort, maar het privatif huishouden der gewesten aangaat behoort hun zo min ontnoomen te worden als aan de onderscheide steden en

Thus, Farret still very much embraced the early modern particularistic notion of freedom, which was connected to local political autonomy. He was so convinced of this point of view, that he even wanted to keep the financial organisation of the Republic decentralised, which according to most representatives was highly uneconomical for Holland.<sup>99</sup>

Most of the other Amsterdam representatives, which included Schimmelpenninck and Van Staphorst, as well as the Patriot regents Bicker, Geelvinck, and Van Lennep, did not clearly support either the unitary democratic, or the decentralised particularistic model. For example, Schimmelpenninck and Van Staphorst were, like Farret, convinced that a complete centralisation of authority would undermine freedom. Yet, at the same time, like Bosch, they promoted the financial unification of the state, as a solution for Holland's financial problems. In the discussion over this issue, Schimmelpenninck was particularly combative. When confronted with charges that Holland tried to pass its own problems onto the other provinces, he maintained that such an amalgamation was justified because

*the majority of the provincial debts and especially those of Holland have been made to uphold the interests of the entire country. Moreover, it seems to me that the relations between the various provinces, which have for already a long time been united through a common bond, so tender and vested with common interests that the amalgamation of the provincial debts cannot be compared to the uniting of debts between nations.*<sup>100</sup>

Thus, having moved from the Amsterdam Municipality to the National Assembly, Schimmelpenninck started to see the reform of the state from an entirely different perspective. Although he still did not fully embrace the unitary democratic model, he did promote financial unification, which obviously directly threatened local autonomy and the system of privileges. Schimmelpenninck's point of view on financial unification was shared by many of the representatives from Holland, also by those who, like Schimmelpenninck, were otherwise not in favour of a complete unification of the state.

The debate over the constitution was further complicated by the simultaneous discussion over democratisation. For men such as Gogel and Bosch, the processes of democratisation and centralisation were necessarily tied to each other, but they were certainly not the rule. The Amsterdam clubs and assemblies, for example, were first and foremost interested in the democratisation of local government. Only because they clashed with the Amsterdam Municipality in their attempt to achieve this goal, could they be mobilised by the government of Holland for the promotion of unitary democracy. For many of the representatives in the National Assembly, the connection between democratisation and centralisation was not self-evident either. For instance, the Frisian regent Coert

---

dorpen van ieder gewest en aan ieder ondeeligen in dezelve de beheering in hunne huishoudelijke zaaken behoort ontnoomen te worden (cited by De Gou, *Het plan van constitutie van 1796*, 32, 54).

<sup>99</sup> *Dagverhaal Nationale Vergadering*, vol. III, 787.

<sup>100</sup> Verre het grootste gedeelte der provinciale schulden en wel bijzonder der Hollandsche, zeer zekeer tot behoud der algemeene zaake des geheelen Vaderlands zijn gemaakt en het kooft mij bovendien voor, dat men toch nimmer zal kunnen ontkennen, dat de betrekking tusschen de onderscheidene Gewesten, zints zulk een geruime tijd door eenen bondgenootschappelijken band vereenigd, dermaten teder en wederzijdsch belang en elks bloei, welvaart en bestaan zo groot is, dat de algemeenmaking deezer gewestelijk schulden tusschen zodanige gewezen bondgenoten niet kan gelijk gesteld worden met eene ineenmelting van de schulden tusschen volken (*Ibid.*, vol. IV, 553).

Lambertus van Beyma was a proponent of a far-reaching democratisation of the state; he even wanted to give the vote to people who were on poor relief, but at the same time he opposed the unification of the state.<sup>101</sup> However, especially the politicians who occupied an in-between position on the question of centralisation complicated matters. On the one hand, there were many representatives, like Schimmelpenninck and Van Staphorst, who supported a financial unification of the state, but did not want to establish a unitary democracy. On the other hand, there were also a number of representatives from the provinces with few debts, who, like Bosch and Gogel, were in favour of unitary democracy, but did not support the financial unification of the state.

Thus, as on the local and provincial level the struggle over the reform of the state was not simply a confrontation between the unitary democratic and the decentralised particularistic model. Instead, the struggle dissolved in separate clashes over centralisation and democratisation. This implied that the debate over the new constitution could have a variety of results, which were not necessarily located on a straight line between the unitary democratic and the decentralised particularistic extremes. The combination of interests of the representatives could lead to a unified state with a limited, indirect representative system, but also to a decentralised state with a broad, direct representative system. Various other results were also possible. Ultimately, the outcome was decided by the coalitions, which could be made between the representatives in the National Assembly, and between the representatives and other political actors, such as the clubs and the French regime.

### *A Democratic Compromise?*

Initially it seemed as though it was possible to establish a new constitution through the representative system. At least after a year of negotiations, the members of the National Assembly had reached an accord about several controversial issues. Among other things, it was agreed that state and church would be separated, which implied that the Reformed Church would lose its privileged position. Moreover, the representatives also decided to abolish the guilds, which were seen as based on the 'exclusive rights of some, often incompetent, persons', preventing many of their fellow burghers to build a satisfactory and honest existence.<sup>102</sup> However, especially the agreement on the financial unification of the state was a potential breakthrough in the constitution making process, as such a union had been strongly resisted by most of the representatives from Gelderland, Overijssel, Friesland, Groningen, Drenthe, and Brabant, which were all provinces with small or even negligible debts.

A parliamentary majority on financial unification could be reached through the construction of a strategic alliance between the representatives from the indebted provinces Holland, Zeeland, and Utrecht, and a few politicians from the other provinces who were aiming for a unitary democratic constitution. The basis for this coalition was established by Schimmelpenninck in cooperation with Pieter Vreede, a cloth producer from Brabant. In the constitutional discussion, Vreede was one of the most outspoken supporters of the unitary democratic ideal. When the constitutional debate threatened to reach a deadlock at the end of 1796, Vreede and Schimmelpenninck, who had previously collaborated on the

---

<sup>101</sup> Ibid., vol. IV, 914-15; Ibid., vol. V, 754-55.

<sup>102</sup> uitsluitend regt aan eenige weinige dikwijls onbekwame personen (De Gou, *Het plan van constitutie van 1796*, 220).

*Leidsch Ontwerp*, proposed to create two special committees. One was to reconsider the financial organisation of the state, and the other to review the principle of 'one and indivisibility'.<sup>103</sup> This proposal made it possible to, at least temporarily, unite politicians from very different ideological backgrounds. On the one hand, it offered new hope to the representatives who were looking for a complete unification of the state, such as Bosch and Vreede. At the same time, it was appealing to many of the politicians from Holland, Zeeland, and Utrecht, who did not want to create a fully unified state, but were interested in financial unification, as these provinces all had relatively large debts. The separate committee on the finances allowed these representatives to consider the financial unification independently from political centralisation.

The financial committee, in which Schimmelpenninck, and Vreede were also appointed, indeed produced a report in favour of financial unification. The committee concluded:

*The old debts can be treated throughout the nation in the same fashion as the new debts. If it is possible to raise one general tax in the Republic as a whole, pay it in one general national fund and fulfil the annual expenses of the state from this general tax, than it is also possible to pay the costs of the old debts from the general tax.*<sup>104</sup>

To bring about such an amalgamation, the committee recommended converting the different bonds of the various provinces into national state bonds with one uniform interest rate. It also asserted that the proclaimed unity did not agree with current methods of finance of the Republic, which were based on the financial autonomy of the provinces. Therefore, it maintained that it was necessary that the general needs of the state would be financed through national taxation and a uniform system of tariffs.<sup>105</sup>

From the beginning of the debate on the new constitution, many representatives from Holland, Zeeland, and Utrecht, including Bosch, Schimmelpenninck and Van Staphorst, were convinced that financial unification was an effective solution for the financial problems of these provinces. These men did not need to be convinced by the report. However, there were also various representatives who still doubted whether financial unification was such a good idea. On the one hand, this group of doubters included politicians from the provinces with few debts, who supported the unitary democratic ideal, but were afraid that an amalgamation would be highly unfavourable for their province. On the other hand, it included representatives from the indebted provinces, who saw the advantages of an amalgamation, but who also wanted to hold on to the autonomy of local and provincial governments. Prime examples of such politicians were Farret, and Bicker. Before the financial report was issued, the latter maintained:

---

<sup>103</sup> Ibid., *Het Ontwerp van Constitutie van 1797*, vol. I, 22.

<sup>104</sup> dat door de geheele Natie op dezelfde wys kan gezorgd worden voor de oude schulden, als voor de nieuwen. Indien het mogelyk is, generale belastingen over de geheele Republicq te heffen, denzelven in één algemeene Nationale kas te storten, en uit het jaarlyksch provenue van die generale belastingen de jaarlyksche uitgaven voor de nieuwe behoeften van den Staat te voldoen; dan is het ook mogelyk, op diezelfde wys, uit het provenue van generale belastingen het jaarlyksch montant van den last der oude schulden te voldoen (Ibid., 136-137; NA, arch. Wetgevende Colleges 1795-1810 (arch. nr. 2.01.01.01) inv. nr 565 (Report of special financial committee, 9 January 1797).

<sup>105</sup> De Gou, *Het Ontwerp van Constitutie van 1797*, vol. 1, 136-155.



*What would be the consequences, if after the principle of financial unity had been established, it became clear that it was impossible to implement such unity? This would put the cart before the horse. Moreover, it is important to notice that the people who have argued for financial unity and an amalgamation of the provincial debts have not yet made clear how such a unification should take place.*<sup>106</sup>

Hence, there were various representatives who still needed to be convinced of the feasibility of financial unification.

It turned out that the report of the financial committee convinced a sufficient number of representatives. On 20 January 1797, a majority of 60 against 45 voted in favour of the amalgamation of the provincial debts. Bicker was one of the men who were now prepared to support the financial union. Along with him, there were thirteen representatives from the provinces with few debts who also voted in favour of the amalgamation. Their support was crucial, as the result of the vote would otherwise have been 47 against 58 votes. Most of the representatives voted according to the perceived financial interest of their province. Of the 54 representatives from Holland, Zeeland, and Utrecht, no less than 47 supported the amalgamation. Of the remaining seven representatives, who did not support the amalgamation, no less than five came from Amsterdam, one of whom was Johan Pieter Farret.<sup>107</sup>

The resistance of these Amsterdam politicians against financial unification is at first sight remarkable given that the Amsterdam elite had invested heavily in the provincial debt. By voting against the amalgamation, they risked losing their own investments. However, seen from a political point of view, the behaviour of the Amsterdam representatives is not so strange. As we have discussed, the Amsterdam government was in the decentralised state structure able to exert a major influence on provincial and central state politics. If political and financial authority were centralised, the city government would lose this influence. Instead, it would be reduced to an administrative body, and political decisions would be dictated top-down. As already became clear in the confrontation between the Amsterdam Municipality and the provincial assembly, a substantial part of the revolutionary politicians from Amsterdam feared such a scenario. Nevertheless, in spite of the resistance of the five Amsterdam representatives, the National Assembly decided in favour of the amalgamation.

The discussion on financial unification seemed to have opened the door to a broad parliamentary coalition, uniting politicians from very different ideological backgrounds. Although this issue divided politicians along provincial lines, at the same time it made the unification more attractive for many politicians, like Schimmelpenninck and Bicker, who would otherwise have strongly resisted the centralisation of authority on such an important issue as the state finances. Financial centralisation united different groups of representatives from Holland, who had previously clashed with each other over centralisation and democratisation. This financial coalition potentially made it possible to centralise the state through compromise instead of coercion. Hence, it seemed to defy the democratic paradox.

---

<sup>106</sup> Wat doch zoude de gevolgen zijn, als men eerst het principe decreteerde, van het finantieele geheel op onbepaalde eenheid te vestigen en men zag bij het nader discutiëren van het plan dat het onuytvoerlijk was, zou dit niet zijn, de paarden agter den wagen spannen? Ook verdient bij mij, veel opmerking, dat die leeden welke het meest ijveren voor eene onbepaalde eenheid in het finantieele en voor een amalgame van de ouden schulden, geen plan hebben uytgewerkt, op welk men de uytvoerlijkheid daarvan kon bereekenen. (GAA, arch. Bicker (arch. nr. 5053) inv. nr. 374 (Mijn advies in de Nat. Vergadering om het eerste plan van Constitutie aan te nemen).

<sup>107</sup> *Dagverhaal Nationaale Vergadering*, vol. IV, 579-80; Elias and Schölvinck.

However, to make the financial coalition a success, an agreement would also have to be reached on the question of political unification. This proved to be very difficult. Although representatives like Schimmelpenninck and Bicker supported financial unification, they still did not embrace the unitary state model. At the same time, politicians such as Vreede and Bosch had only been willing to cooperate with Schimmelpenninck under the assumption that an agreement could also be reached on political unification. This was not the case. Although the second special committee on 'one and indivisibility', in which Bosch was active, advised to concentrate authority in the central state institutions, the majority of the representatives in the assembly were not willing to support political unification. This became very clear when the National Assembly had to take a decision on the authorities that would be assigned to the new departmental governments, which would replace the provincial assemblies. It was decided to leave provincial autonomy partly intact. The assembly resolved that:

*In the first capacity, the departmental governments are strictly administrative and subordinated colleges. However, in the second capacity and insofar as the domestic government of the departments is concerned, the departments must be considered as distinct parts of the Commonwealth. [...] The departmental governments must be chosen as one assembly through the free choice of the inhabitants of each department, to promote their domestic interests.*<sup>108</sup>

The assembly only transferred part of the old authority of the provinces to the central state.<sup>109</sup> Thus, it once again became clear that the democratic institutions offered the opportunity to resist the elimination of important features of the decentralised particularistic state.

The parliamentary decision was obviously a major disappointment for representatives, who, like Bosch and Vreede, embraced the unitary democratic state model. In turn, it led to the breakdown of the parliamentary coalition which had facilitated the decision on financial unification. The group of Vreede and Bosch was not willing to support the final constitutional plan, which combined financial unification with partial provincial autonomy. On top of this, the plan proposed to create a representative system, which was still too limited and indirect in the eyes of these politicians. To undermine the plan, which was brought to a popular vote in the summer of 1797, they issued, together with ten other representatives, a critical pamphlet. This pamphlet, called *Manifest der 12 Apostelen* (Manifest of the twelve apostles), stated that 'the plan does not conform to the requirements of a people's government by representation.'<sup>110</sup> Moreover, it claimed that 'no unity of government can be found in the plan.'<sup>111</sup>

---

<sup>108</sup> In de eerste betrekking zyn de departementaale bestuuren louter administrative en ondergeschikte collegien, doch in de tweede betrekking, en voor zoo veel het byzonder huishoudelyk bestuur der departementen aangaat, behoort men de departementen zelve aan te merken, als zoo veele onderdeelen van het geheele gemeenebest. [...] Elk gedeelte of departement gekoozen, om voor derzelver huishoudelyke belangen in hunnen naam en van hunnen wegen te zorgen (De Gou, *Ontwerp van de Constitutie van 1797*, vol. II, 56).

<sup>109</sup> Ibid., 56-61.

<sup>110</sup> het ontwerp niet overeenstemt met de vereischten van eene Volksregeering bij vertegenwoordiging (De Gou, *De Staatsregeling van 1798*, vol. I, 492).

<sup>111</sup> geene éénheid van bestuur in het ontwerp te vinden is (Ibid., 493)

By issuing the *Manifest der 12 Apostelen*, the group of Bosch and Vreede started to mobilise outside support to overrule the parliamentary majority that obstructed the creation of a unitary democratic constitution. In doing so, they used the same tactics as the government of Holland in 1795 and 1796. The opponents of a fully unified democratic state were again identified as aristocrats and federalists. Moreover, contacts were established with the revolutionary clubs and the French regime. These actions further polarised the relations between the revolutionary groups, and precluded the possibility that a new constitution could be established through negotiations and compromise. To understand how another extra-parliamentary unitary democratic coalition could be created, we need to investigate how the revolutionary clubs developed in course of 1796 and 1797, and how the French approach towards the Republic changed in this period.

### *A Network of Revolutionary Clubs*

A couple of important changes had taken place in the organisation of the revolutionaries, which made the construction of a broad popular alliance a better coordinated and less ad hoc affair. In Amsterdam, the revolutionary politicians, who embraced the unitary democratic ideal, like Gogel and Wiselius, created their own newspaper and network of clubs. In June 1796, they established the weekly newspaper *De Democraten* (The Democrats), which was published by the Amsterdam bookseller Jacobus Crayenschot, and edited by Gogel, Wiselius, and Reformed minister Willem Ockerse, who had issued, in 1795, a very outspoken pamphlet in favour of the creation of a National Assembly. A few months later, in March 1797, the same men created the first *Societeit voor Een- en Ondeelbaarheid* (Society for Unity and Indivisibility), which soon turned into a network of clubs.<sup>112</sup> By constructing their own organisations, they could exercise more direct control over the process of political change. And they were less dependent on temporary alliances with the revolutionary clubs and Neighbourhood Assemblies, which were primarily focussed on the democratisation of local government.

In the course of 1796, when the Amsterdam Neighbourhood assemblies and clubs succeeded in changing the local representative system, it became increasingly clear that there was a tension between the local and national form of democratisation.<sup>113</sup> In October 1796, after one and a half years of struggle, a new government regulation was approved by the municipality and a large majority of the voters. In the new regulation, the Amsterdam voters obtained the right to issue proposals to the city government. These proposals were binding, if they were supported by two-thirds of the voting population. Thus, a form of direct democracy was established in Amsterdam.<sup>114</sup> Although this was clearly a democratic breakthrough, *De Democraten* was highly critical of the new regulation and of the idea of direct democracy in general. The newspaper maintained that direct democracy could never produce consistent laws and regulations, as the nation would be permanently in deliberation. It stressed that only a very limited number of people had the expertise to take decisions on such complicated subjects as the state finances. More specifically, *De*

---

<sup>112</sup> NA, arch. Gogel (arch. nr. 2.21.005.39) inv. nr. 2 (List of the members of the secret bureau of the *Societeit voor Een- en Ondeelbaarheid*).

<sup>113</sup> T. Poell, "Liberal Democracy versus Late Medieval Constitutionalism" *Redescriptions: Yearbook of Political Thought and Conceptual History* 8 (2004), 131-32.

<sup>114</sup> Breen, 22-27, 47-51, 56-62.

*Democraten* argued that the regulation of October 1796 could prove to be an obstacle for the implementation of representative democracy on the national level. It stressed that only the united Dutch people were sovereign and that no individual part, not even the people of Amsterdam, had the right to make separate regulations.<sup>115</sup> Similar concerns were also expressed by the government of Holland, which warned, in January 1797, that no local regulations should be made that contradicted the principles of ‘One and Indivisibility of the Dutch Republic and of popular government by representation.’<sup>116</sup> Hence, there was a clear tension between the ideal of national representative democracy and the forms of direct democracy at the local level, advocated by the Amsterdam clubs and Neighbourhood Assemblies.

As the objectives of the Amsterdam clubs and assemblies diverged from those of Gogel et.al., it became attractive for the unitary-minded politicians to establish their own network of clubs. The first branch of *Een- en Ondeelbaarheid* was established in Amsterdam on 27 March 1797. At the opening of the new club, Gogel declared that he was ‘deeply affected by the disasters, which threaten our native inborn or adopted country, because of the increasing divisions in parties and factions.’<sup>117</sup> Moreover, he asserted that he was

*convinced of the necessity to create a meeting point for those who are far removed from the disastrous influences of the old systems of aristocracy, or federalism, as also from those who, under the cover of Patriotism, nourish wicked plans for anarchy, disorder, or injustice.*<sup>118</sup>

Next to Gogel, Wiselius, Crayenschot, and Ockerse, prominent members of the society were: journalist Wibo Fijnje, merchant Johannes van Hasselt, lawyer Reinier Tadama, and professor Jan Konijnenburg.<sup>119</sup> These men swore that they would do everything in their power to establish a constitution based on the sovereignty of the one and indivisible Dutch people.<sup>120</sup>

Very soon the Amsterdam society had about 200 members, mostly from a middle class background.<sup>121</sup> After its establishment in Amsterdam, branches of *Een- en*

<sup>115</sup> NA, arch. Gogel (arch. nr. 2.21.005.39) inv. nr. 3 (De Democraten, nr. 15 donderdag 22 September 1796).

<sup>116</sup> ‘Eenheid en Ondeelbaarheid der Nederlandsche Republiek en op eene volksregering bij vertegenwoordiging’ (GAA, arch. NSB (arch. nr. 5053) inv. nr. 30 (Minutes of the Representatives of the People of Amsterdam, 11 January 1797).

<sup>117</sup> Gevoelig getroffen door de rampen welke ons aangebooren of aangenomen vaderland bij de toenemende partij- en factiezucht dreigen (NA, arch. Gogel (arch. nr. 2.21.005.39) inv. nr. 2 (Oprichtingsvoorstel van de Sociëteit voor Een- en Ondeelbaarheid).

<sup>118</sup> Overtuigt van de noodzakelijkheid der daarstelling van een vereenigingspunt voor hen, die even verwijderd van het verderffelijke des ouden systemas, van aristocratie of foederalismus, als van diegenen welke onder den dekmantel van vaderlandsliefde de snoodste bedoelingen tot regeeringloosheid wanorde of onrechtvaardigheid koesteren (Ibid.).

<sup>119</sup> Ibid., (List of the members of the secret bureau of the *Sociëteit voor Een- en Ondeelbaarheid*).

<sup>120</sup> *Wetten der Sociëteit voor Een- en Ondeelbaarheid, opgericht in Amsterdam, den 27 maart 1797* (Library of University of Amsterdam (OTM: Pfl. U i 4); Ibid., (Oprichtingsvoorstel van de Sociëteit voor Een- en Ondeelbaarheid).

<sup>121</sup> A sample survey points out that 36 out of 73 members, whose occupation could be retrieved, were craftsman, 5 were shopkeeper, and 3 clerks. Moreover, there were 17 (23%) merchants, part of who were probably middle class as well. (GAA, Poorterboeken; GAA, arch. NSB (arch. nr. 5053) inv. nr. 228a, nr. 526 (Petition of the *Sociëteit voor Een- en Ondeelbaarheid* to the municipality of Amsterdam, 15 April 1798).

*Ondeelbaarheid* were created all across the Republic.<sup>122</sup> Concerning these societies, Petrus van Limburg Brouwer, son-in-law and biographer of Samuel Wiselius, has maintained that they functioned as a political action network. He asserts that in each town, ‘the presidents of the [society] formed a bureau of correspondence, which was connected to a provincial bureau. In turn, these provincial bureaus were in touch with the central office in Amsterdam.’<sup>123</sup> All of this took place in deep secret. Whether or not Van Limburg Brouwer obtained this information directly from his father-in-law is unclear. Other authors have doubted the existence of such a political action network.<sup>124</sup> Nevertheless, the societies, in combination with the newspaper *De Democraten*, were effective instruments to win parts of the population for a unitary democratic constitution.

For example, in March 1797, *De Democraten* tried to play on the democratic sentiments of the population by maintaining that true friends of the people would ‘promptly establish a constitution that introduces unity and indivisibility, the sovereignty of the people, the human and citizenship rights, and a representative democracy’.<sup>125</sup> Regarding the constitutional proposal, which included financial unification, but no fully sovereign national state, *De Democraten* stressed that ‘your future polity will be far from a people’s government by representation. It cannot be called anything but an aristocracy by election.’ Moreover, it insisted that the ‘plan revives in the departments the old provincial sovereignty.’<sup>126</sup> ‘Everything that can lift the national spirit, and get it going, will be destroyed.’<sup>127</sup> To reinforce its criticism, *De Democraten* set up, in cooperation with *Een- en Ondeelbaarheid*, a petition campaign in which the members of the National Assembly were asked to reconsider the constitutional proposal. The petition, which was printed in the newspaper, stated that ‘the plan is hampered by such serious shortcomings that its rejection, however pernicious, will result in less and shorter-lived evil, than its introduction and durable ratification.’<sup>128</sup> The newspaper urged its readers to sign the petition, which was distributed through the various branches of *Een- en Ondeelbaarheid*. Soon petitions from various parts of the country were delivered to the National Assembly.<sup>129</sup> In addition, members of *Een- en Ondeelbaarheid* composed negative reports on the plan, which were probably distributed among the various branches. For example, a report from the

---

<sup>122</sup> De Bruin, 193.

<sup>123</sup> presidenten derzelve in eene stad maakten te zamen een bureau van correspondentie uit; deze bureaux van correspondentie stonden weder in verband met centrale bureaux in de provincie, en deze met het bureau generaal te Amsterdam gevestigd (P. van Limburg Brouwer, *Het leven van Mr. Samuel Iperuszoon Wiselius* (Groningen: P. van Zweeken, 1846), 88).

<sup>124</sup> H. de Lange, “De politieke actie van een bewuste publieke opinie” *De gids: nieuwe vaderlandsche letteroefeningen* 134.8 (1971): 505-515.

<sup>125</sup> zoo spoedig mooglyk eene constitutie te verkrygen, die, op eenheid en ondeelbaarheid gegrond, de oppermacht des volks, de rechten van mensch en burgher huldigend, en eene democratie by vertegenwoordiging invoerde (NA, arch. Gogel (arch. nr. 2.21.005.39) inv.nr. 3 (De Democraten, no. 44, 9 March 1797).

<sup>126</sup> uwe aanstaande staatsinrichting, wel verre van eene volksregeering by vertegenwoordiging te zyn, niet dan eene aristocratie by verkiezing kan genaamd worden (...) Dat eindelyk by hetzelfde ontwerp de oude provinciale oppermacht in de departementen alomme zal herleven (Ibid., (no. 54, 18 May 1797).

<sup>127</sup> Alles, wat den nationalen geest en veerkracht zoude kunnen opbeuren en gaande maken, wordt dus vernietigd (Ibid.).

<sup>128</sup> plan aan zoodanige grove gebreken zoude kunnen onderhevig zyn, dat deszelfs afkeuring, hoe verderfelyk ook in zich zelve, echter een minder en kortstondiger kwaad, dan de invoering en duurzame bekrachtiging van hetzelfde, zoude opleveren (Ibid., (no. 56, 1 June 1797)).

<sup>129</sup> Ibid., (no. 56 & 59 of 1 and 22 June 1797); *Dagverhaal Nationaale Vergadering*, vol. VI, 113, 146, 209.

Amsterdam society maintained that the plan was 'not based on popular representative government', but on 'an elected aristocracy.'<sup>130</sup>

Hence, more clearly than in the first year after the revolution, the struggle over the reform of the state was presented as a clash between aristocracy and democracy. The constitutional proposals of 1796 and 1797 were denounced as aristocratic and federalist, while the Gogel group presented itself as proponents of popular sovereignty, representative democracy, and unification. A similar strategy was followed by the representatives from the National Assembly who published the *Manifest der 12 Apostelen*. They claimed:

*We have been described as Revolutionaries and Terrorists. It is up to the nation to decide whether we are anything else but true Republicans, friends of the nation, and proponents of a genuine freedom! The aristocracy needs to accuse others, who have no other objective than truth and order, of irregular deeds, while it permits itself to act violently. How could the aristocracy otherwise succeed in attaining its devious goals?*<sup>131</sup>

This quote clearly shows the intensity of the labelling process, in which politicians not only denounced opponents, but also had to work hard on their own image.

However, not only the proponents of unitary democracy campaigned against the constitutional proposal so did the defenders of the local corporate alliance. The constitutional plan obviously threatened to eliminate many key features of the decentralised particularistic state, such as the guilds, the monopoly of the Reformed Church, and the financial autonomy of local and provincial governments. Consequently, it is not surprising that petitions were issued to argue for the maintenance of these features. In the course of the constitutional deliberations, the guilds, throughout the Republic, sent petitions to the National Assembly to argue against their abolishment.<sup>132</sup> The Reformed Church was equally active. In Holland and Utrecht alone, it managed to get as many as 73,500 signatures for a single petition.<sup>133</sup>

Given the many misgivings against the constitutional proposal, it is not surprising that it was rejected by an overwhelming majority of the voters in August 1797. No less than 108,781 people voted against the plan, while only 27,955 were in favour. In not one single province did the proposal obtain a majority.<sup>134</sup> Hence, the constitution making process had reached a deadlock. It became clear that it would be very difficult to establish a new constitution through the representative system. On the one hand, this system allowed various groups to hold on to specific aspects of the early modern state. Although many

<sup>130</sup> niet op eene volksregeering bij representatie gegrond (...) eene verkiesbaare aristocratie (GAA, library (B (1797) 7), (Notes of the Amsterdam *Societeit voor Een- en Ondeelbaarheid* on the Constitutional Proposal).

<sup>131</sup> Wij hebben ons getroost, als Revolutionairen en Terroristen te worden rondgedragen. De Natie oordeele, of wij anders zijn, dan ware Republikeinen; dan vrienden van het Vaderland, dan voorstanders van eene regelmatige Vrijheid! De Aristocratie heeft nodig, terwijl zij zelve zich alle gewelddadig stappen veroorlooft, anderen van onregelmatigheden te betichten, die niets anders bedoelen, dan waerheid en orde. Hoe zoude de Aristocratie anders kunnen slagen, om hare slinksche oogmerken te bereiken? (De Gou, *De Staatsregeling van 1798*, vol. I, 500)

<sup>132</sup> For petitions to maintain the guilds see: *Decreten der Nationale Vergadering representeerende het Volk van Nederland*, vol. VIII (Den Haag: ter 's Lands Drukkery, 1796-1798), 242; *Ibid.*, vol. XII, 20, 271, 303; *Ibid.*, vol. XIII, 92; *Decreten der Constitueerende Vergadering representeerende het Bataafsche Volk.*, vol. I, (Den Haag: ter 's Lands Drukkery, 1798), 121, 239; *Ibid.*, vol. II, 122, 196, 421.

<sup>133</sup> De Gou, *De Staatsregeling van 1798*, vol. I, 44.

<sup>134</sup> Colenbrander, *Bataafsche Republiek*, 106.

revolutionaries might have been in favour of the unitary democratic state model, most of them were clearly not willing to give up their specific authorities and privileges. On the other hand, the revolutionaries who fully embraced the unitary democratic ideal were evidently not willing to compromise. In fact, the *Manifest der 12 Apostelen* suggests that by the summer of 1797, part of this group already seemed to have given up on the effort to reform the state through the representative system.

Yet, to pursue a transformation of the state by coercive means, the unitary-minded revolutionary elite not only needed the support of the clubs and popular assemblies, but also of the French authorities. This support was by no means self-evident. Even though the French had previously assisted in the subordination of the Amsterdam government, as well as in the creation of a National Assembly, their backing for a unitary democratic constitution could not be taken for granted. The traumatic experience of the Jacobin terror had made the French Directory especially cautious in dealing with populist politicians and revolutionary clubs.<sup>135</sup> For example, in March 1795, the French representative in Amsterdam expressed his concern over the creation of the Neighbourhood assemblies, which in France had been Jacobin instruments.<sup>136</sup> And when, in May 1796, the clubs and revolutionary militias briefly revolted, the French did not hesitate to intervene.<sup>137</sup>

Another problem for politicians like Bosch, Vreede, Gogel, and Wiselius were the personal preferences of Noël, the main French representative in the Republic. He was especially taken with Schimmelpenninck, who he advertised to the French government as someone who ‘enjoys a large consideration as an honest and talented man.’<sup>138</sup> On their part, the Vreede and Bosch group became increasingly frustrated with Noël. They even turned directly to the government in Paris to obtain support for their plans. For example, in November 1796, Vreede and Van Hooff wrote a letter to the French secretary of state, Delacroix, asking him to ‘charge the minister Noël to persuade and make sure that the feeble men of the Convention’ adopt the principles of ‘One and Indivisibility.’<sup>139</sup> However, until the Fructidor coup of September 1797 brought about a change in the French regime, these efforts were to no avail.

After the Fructidor coup, which led to a temporary resurgence of Jacobinism in France, the French regime became more open to the demands of the group around Vreede.<sup>140</sup> This group immediately seized the opportunity and decided to ask the French government for a replacement of Noël and assistance in their conflict with the representatives who wanted to maintain part of the autonomy of local and provincial governments. For this purpose, Vreede, Konijnenburg, Ockerse, and the Amsterdam pharmacist Theodorus van Leeuwen (1743-1809), who, in September 1797, all became

<sup>135</sup> Sutherland, 248-78; I. Woloch, *Jacobin Legacy: the Democratic Movement under the Directory* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970), 48-79.

<sup>136</sup> GAA, arch. NSB (arch. nr. 5053) inv. nr. 1 (Handelingen van het Comité Revolutionair, 20 March 1795).

<sup>137</sup> Van Hall, 30-33; I.J. van Manen, and K. Vermeulen, “Het lagere volk van Amsterdam in de strijd tussen patriotten en oranjegezinden, 1780-1800” *Tijdschrift voor Sociale Geschiedenis* 7 (1981): 21-22; Poell, “Het einde van een tijdperk”, 455-56.

<sup>138</sup> jouit d’une grande considération comme homme probe et homme à talents (Colenbrander, *Gedenkstukken*, vol. II, 55).

<sup>139</sup> charger le ministre Noël de veiller et d’influencer le plus que possible les hommes faibles de la Conventions (...) l’unité et de l’indivisibilité (Colenbrander, *Gedenkstukken*, II, 77).

<sup>140</sup> M. Broers, *Europe under Napoleon, 1799-1815* (London: Arnold, 1996), 17; Sutherland, 305-06; Woloch, *Jacobin Legacy*, 83.

members of the second National Assembly, contacted the Amsterdam club the *Uitkijk* (Outlook). Whether, and if so how, this club was linked to *Een- en Ondeelbaarheid*, of which Konijnenburg and Ockerse were part, remains unclear. At any rate, after several missions of members of the *Uitkijk* to Paris, and a large financial donation to one of the French Ministers, the government in Paris responded to the wishes of the Vreede group.<sup>141</sup> Noël was replaced by Delacroix, who received the express instruction to stimulate the creation of a 'constitution based on freedom, and a stable and powerful central government.'<sup>142</sup> When Delacroix arrived in the Republic, he contacted the Vreede group.<sup>143</sup> The cooperation between this group, Delacroix, and the societies of *Een- en Ondeelbaarheid* subsequently provided the platform to stage a coup, take control of the National Assembly, and establish a unitary democratic constitution.

### *The Coup of 1798*

Ensured of the support of French regime, and at least part of the revolutionary clubs, the Vreede group was ready to initiate a top-down revolution. Hence, unitary democracy was to be imposed on the Dutch people by a minority. In close cooperation with Delacroix, a small group of members of the National Assembly, which included the Amsterdam representatives Ockerse, Konijnenburg, and Van Leeuwen, planned the revolution.<sup>144</sup> First, on 22 January 1798, the National Assembly was reformed. With the assistance of the Dutch army, which was under the command of general Herman Willem Daendels, twenty-three representatives were arrested on the grounds of federalist sympathies.<sup>145</sup> Also arrested were the members of the committee for foreign affairs, which had tried to prohibit the cooperation between the French and the Vreede group. Among the prisoners were the Patriot regents Jan Bernd Bicker and Cornelis van der Hoop, as well as lawyer Hendrik van Castrop, who, like the other two, was an exponent of the original Amsterdam Patriot movement. For Bicker, the detention almost became fatal, as he was nearly lynched by an angry mob in Leeuwarden, where he was temporarily imprisoned.<sup>146</sup> The remaining members of the assembly were asked to swear their 'unchanging aversion of the Stadholderian Government, the Aristocracy, Federalism, and Anarchy.'<sup>147</sup> In total ten representatives refused to do so, and were subsequently dismissed. Another twenty-eight did take the oath, but voluntarily left the assembly. By the end of the day, a total of 75 representatives remained in the assembly, which was now called 'Constituting Assembly'. Among these 75 were 13 representatives from Amsterdam, including Bosch, Ockerse, Konijnenberg, merchant Jurianus Ondorp, and medical doctor Hartog de Hartog Lémon.<sup>148</sup>

<sup>141</sup> De Gou, *De Staatsregeling van 1798*, vol. I, XI-XVIII.

<sup>142</sup> l'établissement d'une constitution libre, d'un gouvernement fixe dont la force ne soit point illusoire (Colenbrander, *Gedenkstukken*, vol. II, 142).

<sup>143</sup> Vreede remained in the background until after the coup, as he was forced to stay at home in Tilburg because he was sick.

<sup>144</sup> For a detailed account see: De Gou, *De Staatsregeling van 1798*, vol. I, XI-LXVI.

<sup>145</sup> Ibid., XL-XLVII.

<sup>146</sup> For a lively account of Bicker's experiences during this period see: GAA, arch. Bicker (arch. nr. 195), inv. nr. 163 (Account of the arrest in The Hague, the imprisonment in Wijk te Duurstede, and in Leeuwarden).

<sup>147</sup> onveranderlijken afkeer tegen het Stadhoudelijk Bestuur, de Aristocratie, het Foederalismus en de Regeeringsloosheid (De Gou, *De Staatsregeling van 1798*, vol. II, 2).

<sup>148</sup> Ibid., vol. I, XI-LXVI.



Having eliminated the opposition, the Constituting Assembly made a public declaration in which it defended the coup. The assembly stated that

*The Confederate Monster, not unlike the Hydra of the Ancients, can only be terminated through one manly blow, which simultaneously makes all its heads drop. This long wished-for blow has been dealt today.*<sup>149</sup>

Subsequently, the assembly continued to proclaim a series of resolutions that turned the Republic within a few days time into a centralised state. All the provincial sovereignties were invalidated, and a sovereign Executive Council was created, to which all the provincial and local governments were subordinated. Vreede, and Fijnje were appointed in the Executive Council. These men were assisted by six Agents: for warfare, finance, foreign affairs, internal affairs, justice, and the navy. Isaac Gogel became the Agent for Finance.<sup>150</sup>

However, the main objective of the coup was to finally establish a unitary democratic constitution. For this purpose, the assembly had already on the day of the coup appointed a special constitutional committee, in which Ockerse, and Konijnenburg were active.<sup>151</sup> In the following weeks, the committee created, in cooperation with Delacroix, a new constitutional proposal. In many aspects, this proposal built on the plan of 1797. Yet, it took the centralisation and democratisation of the state one crucial step further. It not only proposed to unify the provincial debts and introduce a national system of taxation, but it also intended to permanently transfer provincial sovereignty to the central state. Moreover, executive power was brought under a much stricter supervision of the legislative.<sup>152</sup>

The next phase of the unitary democratic revolution was a purge of the local governments, administrations, and voting assemblies, to make sure that the population would approve the constitutional proposal. In Amsterdam, this was done with the assistance of the revolutionary clubs, which provided personnel and information on the voters and local governors suspected of federalist and even Orangist sympathies.<sup>153</sup> On 15 March 1798, a committee from the government of Holland arrived in Amsterdam and replaced the municipality. At least 10 out of the 25 new Amsterdam Councillors had been member of the Neighbourhood Assemblies, *Een- en Ondeelbaarheid*, or the *Societeit voor Deugd en Kundigheden* (Society for Virtue and Skills), another important club in the city which had embraced the unitary democratic ideal.<sup>154</sup> The influence of the clubs was perhaps even

---

<sup>149</sup> Het Bondgenootschappelijk Monster, niet ongelyk aan de Hydra der Ouden, kan niet worden verdelgd, dan door een manmoedige slag, welke allen deszelfs koppen in eens doet vallen. Deze lang gewenste slag is heden gegeven (De Gou, *De Staatsregeling van 1798*, vol. II, 16).

<sup>150</sup> Pfeil, 187-188; *Jaarboeken der Bataafsche Republiek*, vol. XII, 130-40.

<sup>151</sup> De Gou, *De Staatsregeling van 1798*, vol. I, LIII.

<sup>152</sup> De Gou, *De Staatsregeling van 1798*.

<sup>153</sup> Breen, 72-76; See for example the address of *Een- en Ondeelbaarheid*, which delivered a list of 909 Orangist officials: GAA, arch. NSB (arch. nr. 5053) inv. nr. 225 (Minutes of the Administrative Municipality of Amsterdam, 5 April 1798).

<sup>154</sup> GAA, NSB, (arch. nr. 5053) inv. nr. 1075 (Minutes of the General Assembly of the Neighborhood Assemblies in Amsterdam); Ibid., inv. nr. 228a, nr.526 (Petition of *Een- en Ondeelbaarheid* to the Municipality of Amsterdam, 15 april 1798); Ibid., inv. nr. 233, nr. 798 (Petition of *Deugd en Kundigheden* to the Municipality of Amsterdam, 5 June 1798).

larger, as only part of the membership of the clubs and assemblies could be reconstructed. What is also striking is the change in the institutional and religious background of the Councillors. Whereas the majority of the municipality before the unitarist coup had been members of the Reformed Church, now two-thirds were Catholic, Jewish, Lutheran, or Mennonite. Moreover, the former regents and lawyers had completely disappeared from the municipality, which was now dominated by merchants, industrialists, professionals, and even artisans.<sup>155</sup>

The role of the revolutionary clubs was especially evident in the purge of the local bureaucracy and the voting assemblies, which had been a central demand of the revolutionary middle class groups from the revolution of 1795 onwards. The reform of the bureaucracy and the voting assemblies were closely linked, since civil servants who were excluded from the vote would automatically lose their jobs. The unitary-minded clubs immediately jumped to the opportunity. On 5 April 1798, *Een- en Ondeelbaarheid* delivered a list of 909 Orangist officials to the Amsterdam Municipality.<sup>156</sup> With the help of this list, the special municipal committees started to purge the administration and the voting assemblies. By the middle of April, at least 83 public servants had been dismissed, and many had been excluded from the vote. Among the men who lost their job were a professor from the Athenaeum Illustre, a fish inspector, a gatekeeper, a caretaker of the weigh house, and a supervisor of the market.<sup>157</sup> However, as the purging committees energetically went about their work, the resistance among the population was also growing. Even the municipality was afraid that the purge would turn into a witch-hunt. The municipality, as well as various private burghers, subsequently, sent a delegation to The Hague to ask the Executive Council to tone down the purges. The Council complied and declared that the men who had lost their voting rights would not be automatically dismissed from their job.<sup>158</sup>

Although the purges caused turmoil everywhere in the Republic, they did achieve their objective.<sup>159</sup> The unitarist constitution was approved by a majority of 153,913 against 11,597 votes.<sup>160</sup> Hence, on 1 May 1798, the Dutch established their first national liberal representative constitution, which officially unified the formerly sovereign cities and provinces and ended the particularistic elitist regimes of the early modern period. Thus, at least on paper, the Republic had been completely transformed from a decentralised particularistic into a unitary democratic state.

## Conclusion

By 1795, the character of the Dutch revolutionary movement had fundamentally changed. After the failure of the Patriot Revolt, and the success of the French Revolution, many

---

<sup>155</sup> Breen, 111-120 Baptismal Records; *Poorterboeken*.

<sup>156</sup> GAA, arch. NSB (arch. nr. 5053) inv. nr. 225 (Minutes of the Administrative Municipality of Amsterdam, 5 April 1798).

<sup>157</sup> Breen, 74; GAA, arch NSB (arch. nr. 5053) inv. nr. 225 (Minutes of the Administrative Municipality of Amsterdam, 9 June 1798).

<sup>158</sup> Breen, 74-75.

<sup>159</sup> Prak, *Republikeinse veelheid*, 249-52; De Bruin, 170-73.

<sup>160</sup> Colenbrander, *De Bataafsche Republiek*, 132-134.

Dutch revolutionaries supported the unitary democratic state model, which directly conflicted with the decentralised corporate organisation of the Republic. The new model also introduced a new concept of freedom, which was not exclusively connected to the privileged groups, but which included everyone. Moreover, this new type of freedom did not depend on local autonomy and independence from higher state institutions, but was linked to the central state.

However, the introduction of the new state model certainly did not resolve the democratic paradox. Although many Dutch revolutionaries now supported vital elements of the unitary democratic state model, most of them simultaneously resisted the elimination of their own social, economic, political, and religious privileges. Schimmelpenninck, for instance, was after the revolution of 1795, a strong proponent of the financial unification of the state, and of the abolishment of the local corporations. However, at the same time, he resisted the elimination of the political autonomy of the Amsterdam government. Like Schimmelpenninck, many revolutionaries were inconsistent in their views when it came to centralisation.

As in the Patriot Revolt, the democratic ideals, as well as the newly created representative institutions, provided the perfect platform for continuing such inconsistencies. Hence, in the spring of 1795, the Provisional Representatives of the People of Amsterdam, which were headed by Schimmelpenninck, obstructed the transfer of authority from the city to the province by invoking the sovereignty of the people of Amsterdam. A similar tactic was again used by the provincial representatives of Friesland, Groningen and Zeeland, when they were asked to give up the sovereignty of their province to the new National Assembly. Finally, as various revolutionary groups continued to resist the elimination of their special privileges and authorities after the National Assembly had been founded, it proved very difficult to construct a constitution.

To understand how it was nevertheless possible to establish a unitary democratic constitution, it is crucial to consider the changes in the political construction process, which had taken place since the Patriot Revolt. First, after 1795, the Dutch revolutionaries no longer presented themselves according to the corporate identities of 'burgher' and 'regent'. The term 'burgher' became a universal category, which included everyone, and not a specific juridical or institutional group. Moreover, as in the 1780s, opponents of political change were denounced as aristocrats. However, after 1795, this term became linked to the label 'federalism', implying that the defence of local autonomy was based on aristocratic sentiments. Another change, in comparison with the Patriot Revolt, was that the notions of representative democracy, and popular sovereignty were increasingly used for self-identification. Especially important was that they were successfully linked to the principle of One and Indivisibility, or unitarism.

Similar changes occurred in the construction of political actors. The revolutionaries no longer formed societies and clubs that consisted exclusively of regents, or burghers. For example, *Doctrina* was clearly an elite club, but neither in name, nor in composition could it be considered an association of exclusively burghers or regents. The same could be said about *Een- en Ondeelbaarheid*, and the Neighbourhood Assemblies, which were even expressly focused on organising the people as a whole. The break with the corporate categories made it possible to create new types of coalitions. In this respect, another important change was the presence of the French occupying force, which provided the revolutionaries with a powerful coalition partner, at least potentially. Although the French had promised not to interfere in Dutch domestic political affairs, they did occasionally support particular revolutionary groups over others.

The changes in the Dutch political landscape made it possible to construct temporary coalitions, through which political opponents and democratic institutions could be overruled. These temporary coalitions consisted of different groups of unitary-minded revolutionary elites, the French regime, and popular revolutionary clubs and assemblies. The group of Amsterdam revolutionaries around Isaac Gogel and Samuel Wiselius played a central role in the construction of these coalitions. By pushing the ideal of a national democratic state, they were able to win the support of the revolutionary clubs and assemblies, who were in Amsterdam and many other cities across the Republic, engaged in struggles over the democratisation of local government. In turn, the French regime was willing to cooperate, as it held the opinion that a unitary democratic Dutch state would be financially more beneficial for the French state.

Through these coalitions it became possible to temporarily circumvent the democratic paradox. The coalitions with the clubs and the French allowed the unitary-minded politicians to break the resistance of the Amsterdam government, and of the provincial assemblies of Friesland, Groningen, and Zeeland. Moreover, it facilitated the coup of 22 January 1798, and the subsequent purging of the provincial and local governments, as well as of the voting assemblies. Finally, it led to the creation of the unitary democratic constitution of 1798. Hence, the sudden advances in the processes of democratisation and centralisation were, and could only have been, achieved through undemocratic coalitions.

## 4 The Federalist Reversal (1798-1805)

In April 1802, Bernardus Fient asked the Amsterdam Municipality if he might skip the exam for aspiring pharmacists as he had already been a pharmacist in The Hague for twenty-five years.<sup>1</sup> This long record of service, however, did not impress the Amsterdam government, or more specifically its Commission of Medical Supervision, which refused to grant the request. Fient was not discouraged. He appealed to the State Council to revoke the decision of the municipality. The State Council immediately complied, and ordered the Amsterdam governors to admit Fient without further ado.<sup>2</sup> Yet, the Amsterdam Municipality did not yield so easily. It argued that

*when a higher constituted power can grant exemptions of urban or municipal laws then the free disposition over the domestic interests, which had been granted by the constitution to each municipality, is no longer a free disposition.*<sup>3</sup>

Therefore, it asked the State Council to withdraw its decree.<sup>4</sup> And, when the State Council refused to do so, the municipality issued a complaint to the National Syndicate, which supervised the execution of the constitution.<sup>5</sup>

Although the Amsterdam governors eventually agreed to let Fient work as a pharmacist in the city, the clash does make clear that the relationship between the municipality and the central government had fundamentally changed in comparison to some years earlier.<sup>6</sup> In May 1798, when the unitary democratic constitution had been established, the municipality had been reduced to an administrative body of the central government. Now, it once more claimed to have the ‘free disposition over the domestic interests.’ In making this claim, it referred to the constitution, which no longer was the unitary democratic constitution of 1798, but the revised constitution of November 1801. The constitutional revision of 1801 greatly diminished the influence of the national parliament, and partly decentralised political power. In turn, this gave the Amsterdam Municipality the opportunity to extend its political autonomy, which it indeed did in the years after 1801. Moreover, it restored some of the crucial elements of the local corporate community and the system of privileges.

---

<sup>1</sup> GAA, arch. NSB (arch. nr. 5053) inv. nr. 511 (Minutes of the Intermediary Municipality of Amsterdam, 9 April 1802).

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., inv. nr. 513 (Minutes of the Intermediary Municipality of Amsterdam, 10 September 1802).

<sup>3</sup> wanneer nu een hooger geconstitueerde magt mag verleenen dispensatie van stedelijke of plaatselijke wet, dan spreekt het vanzelf, dat de beschikking welke bij het gezegde 74st. art. vrij is toegekend aan iedere gemeente, inderdaad geene vrije beschikking meer is (Ibid., inv. nr. 526, nr. 479 (Report of the Committee of General Welfare)).

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., inv. nr. 513 (Minutes of the Intermediary Municipality of Amsterdam, 10 September 1802).

<sup>5</sup> GAA, arch. NSB (arch. nr. 5053) inv. nr. 513 (Minutes of the Intermediary Municipality of Amsterdam, 5 November 1802).

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 16 September 1802.

To understand this sudden reversal in the revolutionary transformation process, we again need to consider the democratic paradox. After the unitary democratic constitution had been established in May 1798, it quickly became clear that this constitution did not resolve the democratic paradox. In fact, the exact opposite turned out to be the case. It forced the revolutionaries to respect the rules of the democratic game, which again allowed various social and political groups to resist the elimination of their privileges and authorities. Although part of the unitary-minded elite initially tried to continue in the same coercive fashion as before, this immediately undermined the legitimacy of the constitution and their regime.

This chapter will trace how the inability of the revolutionaries to solve the democratic paradox led to the breakdown of the coalition between the unitary-minded politicians, the popular clubs, and the French regime. In turn, the breakdown of this coalition allowed the federalist-minded politicians to take political control, and establish a more federalist and less democratic constitution. In Amsterdam, this reversal gave part of the old regime elite the opportunity to return to politics, and restore the local particularistic coalition.

## The Breakdown of the Unitary Democratic Alliance

Immediately after the constitution had been established in May 1798, the revolutionary coalition came under pressure, as the unitary-minded revolutionaries disagreed on how to deal with the democratic paradox. This paradox became an explicit issue of debate because the constitution proscribed that new parliamentary elections should be organised. Unsurprisingly, the politicians who had instigated the January coup had serious doubts whether elections would be such a good idea. A committee of the Constituting Assembly maintained that

*It is possible that a large part of the people, in this time of political conflict, will be misled by intriguers and choose the false over the true patriot, (...) which will have disastrous consequences for the Republic as a whole.*<sup>7</sup>

The committee stressed that the experience of the elections for the National Assembly in 1796 and 1797 had demonstrated that many people were likely to elect aristocrats and federalists. It maintained that this danger had only increased after the purging of the voting assemblies. The committee emphasised that even many people who had formerly supported the revolutionaries of the January coup, now cursed them. Consequently, it argued that it would be best to restrict the elections to one third of the representatives.<sup>8</sup> This would ensure that the revolutionaries of the January coup would be able to overrule any potential resistance against the implementation of the new constitution.

---

<sup>7</sup> 't is moogelyk, dat een groot gedeelte des volks, in dit tydſtip, waar in de woelingen der partyschappen alomme zo meenigvuldig zyn, (door intriguanten misleid) weder in zyne keuze mistaste, den ſchynpatriot boven den waaren de voorkeur geve, (...), en daardoor de rampzaligſte gevolgen voor de geheele Republiek berokkene (Dagverhaal Nationaale Vergadering, vol. XIII, 618).

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 618.

Yet the committee, which included the Amsterdam representatives Bernardus Bosch, Hendrik Costerus, Willem Ockerse, and Jan Welsman, was also aware that this decision would undermine the very ideals on which the revolutionary movement had been mobilised, and the unitary democratic coalition constructed. The committee acknowledged that the restriction of the elections could be considered as an ‘attack on the rights of the free people, whose main privilege is to elect its representatives.’<sup>9</sup> Moreover, the decision would entail a direct breach of the constitution, which had just been established. Nonetheless, the committee, having to choose between two undesirables, did advice to limit the elections, as this would assure ‘National Freedom’ and guarantee the consolidation of the constitution.<sup>10</sup> All the members of the Constituting Assembly agreed with this line of reasoning. Consequently, on 4 May 1798, they decided to convert the Constituting Assembly into the Representative Body of the Batavian People.<sup>11</sup> The representatives, like the members of the Executive Council, clearly feared that a restoration of the democratic procedures would create a platform for new resistance. Hence, as in the years between 1795 and 1798, they continued to overrule these procedures. However, this decision immediately backfired, as it undermined the legitimacy of the constitution and the Vreede regime.

For the regime it was especially problematic that it caused a split between the groups that had supported the January coup. A few days after 4 May, the Executive Council received reports from Amsterdam that some of the ‘most determined patriots were highly dissatisfied with the decree of the Constituting Assembly.’<sup>12</sup> It was said that the decision was publicly condemned and perceived as a direct violation of the constitution, that it was an aristocratic action, and an assault on the rights and power of the people.<sup>13</sup> The report also mentioned that the critique on the parliamentary decision mostly came from the various departments of *Een- en Ondeelbaarheid*, which had been created by Gogel, Wiselius, and Ockerse.<sup>14</sup>

However, not only the decision to limit the elections caused a split among the unitary-minded revolutionaries, so did the purges. Although these had clearly helped to eliminate the resistance against the unitary democratic constitution, many revolutionaries, who in principle supported this constitution, felt that they had gone too far. Gogel, for example, was highly alarmed by the purges in the Amsterdam government, which led to the appointment of public officials who, in his mind, were of inferior quality. In a letter to the French Agent Delacroix, he described the new ‘maire’ Hendrik Nobbe, as a ‘rude man, with a questionable reputation, excessively stupid, conceited and greedy without limits, in sum a big loudmouth without qualities.’<sup>15</sup> And he depicted Reinier Leendert Bouwens, one of the new members of the Committee of Justice, as a ‘short-tempered man, savage, without merit

---

<sup>9</sup> een attentaat op de Rechten van een vrijvolk, wiens grootste voorrecht is, zich zelve Vertegenwoordigers te kiezen (Ibid., 618).

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 619-620.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 621.

<sup>12</sup> de fermste patriotten zeer ontevreden waren over het decreet der Constituerende Vergadering. (GAA, arch. NSB (arch. nr. 5053) inv. nr. 225 (Minutes of the Administrative Municipality of Amsterdam, 9 May 1798).

<sup>13</sup> het openbaar vloekte en tierde, en dien stap noemde een verkragting van het plan staatregeling, nooit gehoorde aristocratie, vertrapping van ‘s volksrecht en macht (Ibid., inv. nr. 231, nr. 679 (Letter of the Agent of General Policy and Internal Correspondence of the Batavian Republic to the Municipality of Amsterdam).

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> homme insolent, d’une réputation equivoque, stupide à l’excès, et d’une presumption et avidité sans bornes, enfin grand crieur sans mérite (Colenbrander, Gedenkstukken, vol. II, 761).

or talent.<sup>16</sup> Complaints about the wrongful character of the purges were also voiced in other parts of the Republic.<sup>17</sup> Moreover, several prominent patriot magazines, such as the *Politieke Blixem*, the *Constitutioneele Vlieg*, and the *Revolutionaire Vraag-al*, criticised the actions of the Vreede regime. This criticism certainly reached the central government. Every day, the Representative Body received numerous petitions which complained about the arbitrary character of the purges. One of the representatives, wine merchant Johannes Midderigh, remarked that ‘we hear time and again (...) how known patriots (...), who are supportive of the present order, are excluded from the vote.’<sup>18</sup>

The unitary-minded revolutionaries were not only divided on the local level, but also in the central state government. Especially the Agents of the Navy, Warfare, Finance, Justice, and Internal police were becoming increasingly unhappy with the decisions of the Executive Council and the Constituting Assembly. Like the members of *Een- en Ondeelbaarheid*, they wanted to execute the constitution and restore the democratic process. Two of them, Gogel and former lawyer Reinier Willem Tadama (Agent of Justice), were actually members of *Een- en Ondeelbaarheid*. Gerrit Jan Pijman (Warfare), who was a former lieutenant, had been, together with Gogel and Wiselius, a member of the Revolutionary Committee in Amsterdam. These Agents had a different perspective on the political situation than the members of the Executive Council and the Representative Assembly, who had been directly implicated in the January coup. The latter feared for their own positions, as they would be held responsible for the purges and the imprisonment of several members of the National Assembly.

Thus, a combination of ideological and personal concerns split the unitary-minded revolutionaries apart over the question how one should deal with the democratic paradox. As we will see, this split greatly weakened the unitary democratic coalition, since it led to a second coup, which expelled some of the strongest supporters of the unitary democratic ideal from the central state government. Moreover, the coup restored the democratic process, which allowed the other revolutionary groups to return to politics.

### ***The Restoration of the Democratic Process***

The initiative for the coup was taken by the Agents of the central government. The opportunity for such a counter-coup presented itself as a result of a clash between general Daendels and the Executive Council. Daendels seemed to have fallen out with the Council because he was disappointed by the financial reward he obtained for cooperating with the coup of 22 January.<sup>19</sup> Whatever the background of the conflict, the result was that the general contacted the French regime and organised a counter-coup in which the five Agents participated.<sup>20</sup> The French regime was willing to cooperate with this second coup, as it had been informed about the growing popular resentment against the Vreede regime.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>16</sup> home fougoux, enragé, sans mérite ni talens (Breen, 90).

<sup>17</sup> Kuiper, 452-60; Prak, *Republikeinse veelheid*, 251-52.

<sup>18</sup> Wij hooren telkens (...) dat beproefde patriotten (...) bewijzen de tegenwoordige orde van zaken toegedaan te zijn, uit de grondvergaderingen over de constitutie te stemmen worden uitgesloten (*Dagverhaal Nationaale Vergadering*, vol. XIII, 617-621).

<sup>19</sup> Colenbrander, *Gedenkstukken*, vol. II, 607.

<sup>20</sup> See for a detailed account of the coup: “Gedenkschrift van Van Langen”, “Memorie van den Burgher Blauw”, and “Gebeurtenissen van den 12 juni 1798” (Ibid., 594-632, 673-684).

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 681.



On 12 June 1798, Daendels arrested three members of the Executive Council, Fokker, Van Langen, and Wildrik, while the other two, Vreede and Fijnje, escaped.<sup>22</sup> For the majority of these men, the coup meant the end of their political career. Fijnje was initially unemployed, but eventually found work as a journalist for the *Bataafsche Staatscourant* (1805-1809).<sup>23</sup> Vreede went back to his textile factory, but again abandoned it in 1800. From 1816 until his death in 1837 he occupied various administrative positions.<sup>24</sup> Of the Representative Body eleven representatives were arrested. Among them were various Amsterdam representatives, such as medical doctor Lémon, ministers Ockerse and Bosch, and pharmacist Theodorus van Leeuwen. For most of them too the counter-coup was the end of their political life. Although Lémon continued as a representative of the new Jewish community, he was never re-elected as a member in the national parliament.<sup>25</sup> Neither was Ockerse, who first became a stockbroker in Amsterdam and eventually returned to the occupation of minister. Bosch was even less fortunate. A few years later he died in poverty.<sup>26</sup> All in all, the June coup expelled some of the strongest supporters of the unitary democratic ideal from the political process. Obviously, this dealt a further blow to the unitary democratic coalition, which up to this point had been largely carried by men like Vreede, Ockerse, Bosch, and Van Leeuwen.

After the purge, the five Agents formed an Intermediary Executive Council and appointed an Intermediary Legislative Body.<sup>27</sup> They clearly did not want to undo the unitary democratic constitution. In their official declaration, issued the day after the coup, they emphasised that their objective was to maintain the constitution and restore the democratic process. Thus, they fully subscribed to the unitary democratic ideology. They certainly did not want to reopen the discussion on the constitution. Yet at the same time, they distanced themselves from the authoritarian methods of the preceding unitarist regime. They insisted that the coup 'had no other objective than to save the people from the clutches of monsters.'<sup>28</sup> They made clear that their regime would only be temporary, with the sole objective to organise new elections for the Representative Body, which would subsequently choose a new Executive Council. The elections would be much more open than the vote on the constitution, as it was decided that the purges would be reversed.<sup>29</sup> Thus, the groups which had been excluded from the political process by the unitary democratic alliance were allowed to return. The Agents were aiming for reconciliation between the various revolutionary groups to broaden the political support for the constitution and revive the state finances, which had suffered as a result of the purges of the traditional elite groups.<sup>30</sup>

---

<sup>22</sup> Colenbrander, *De Bataafse Republiek*, 151-152.

<sup>23</sup> See: <http://www.parlement.com>. The website contains among other things biographical information of national politicians from 1798 onwards. This information has been supplied by the Parliamentary Documentation Center of the University of Leiden.

<sup>24</sup> Elias, and Schölvinc, 252-53.

<sup>25</sup> S. Bloemgarten, *Hartog de Hartog Lémon* (Amsterdam: Aksant, 2007), 143-148.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 47-48, 152-153, 178-179, 184-185.

<sup>27</sup> The Agents actually performed for a short period the double function of Agent and Director (Pfeil, 199).

<sup>28</sup> geen andere strekking hebben gehad, dan het Volk te redden uit de klauwen van monsters (*Dagverhaal Vertegenwoordigend Lichaam*, vol. I, 357).

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 360.

<sup>30</sup> Pfeil, 198.

Although the reinstatement of the democratic process restored the legitimacy of the constitution and broadened its political basis, it also returned various politicians to the political process, who did not fully embrace the unitary democratic ideal. For example, among the new members of the Representative Body were the Amsterdam regents Cornelis van Lennep, and Daniël and Isaac Hooft, who were in favour of a more federalist state. Yet, there were also various representatives who had cooperated with the January coup, such as Amsterdam merchants Jurianus Ondorp, Abraham Haan, and Hendrik Costerus, which suggests that reconciliation was indeed taking place.<sup>31</sup> A similar mix of politicians from different ideological backgrounds could also be found in the Executive Council, which, as prescribed by the constitution, was appointed by the Representative Body. On 17 August 1798, the assembly assigned Patriot regent François Ermerins from Zeeland, nobleman Anthony Frederik van Haersolte from Overijssel, and merchant Johannes van Hasselt, who as a member of the Amsterdam Revolutionary Committee, and of *Een- en Ondeelbaarheid*, had been the only clear proponent of the unitary democratic ideal.<sup>32</sup> Although the central government no longer consisted exclusively of outright supporters of the unitary democratic state, the members of the Executive Council and the Representative Body certainly did not immediately try to reverse the constitution. At this point, no one was keen to reopen the discussion on the constitution, which included many reforms that were supported by a majority of the revolutionary elite.

As in the central government, reconciliation also took place in the Amsterdam Municipality. This reconciliation was enforced top down by the Agents of the central government. First the departmental administrations were reformed and subsequently the municipalities. In Amsterdam, an intermediary municipality was already installed the day after the 12 June 1798 coup. Most of the men that were appointed, 24 out of 30, had been part of the municipal government before the purge of 15 March 1798. One of them was Van Hasselt, who two months later would become member of the Executive Council.<sup>33</sup> On the day of his reappointment, he emphasised that it was time for cooperation and appeasement. He claimed that the time had come to ‘suppress the conflicts between factions, and let Virtue and courage unite our hearts to revive prosperity and happiness.’<sup>34</sup>

### ***The Clubs and the French***

The revolutionary alliance was not only weakened by the disagreement over the restoration of the democratic process, it was also undermined by the political demobilisation of the revolutionary masses, which had been instrumental in establishing the unitary democratic constitution. Effectively this demobilisation process already started after the January coup. To create a unified state and eliminate all possible opposition against the unitary democratic constitution, the Vreede regime had not only purged the voting assembly and the various governments, it also tried hard to control or even limit the political activities of the clubs. For this purpose, the government ordered the municipalities to gather information on all of the societies and gatherings in their jurisdiction. The local administrators needed to compile

---

<sup>31</sup> Elias, and Schölvinc, 64-65, 97, 117-118, 153-54, 180-181.

<sup>32</sup> <http://www.parlement.com>

<sup>33</sup> Breen, 76-77.

<sup>34</sup> help de woelingen aller factiën verpletten; dat deugd en edele moed ons aller harten vereenige, om de welvaart en het geluk te doen herleeven (cited by Breen, 78).

the name lists, regulations, and contracts of the societies.<sup>35</sup> Subsequently, the municipalities were commanded to investigate the regulations, and close down

*all Orangist and federalist societies, but also all other societies, or gatherings (...), of which, on the basis of conversations or speeches, one can expect that they have the objective to contradict the wonderful revolution of 22 January, and consequently expose freedom to new shocks by secretly promoting Aristocracy, Federalism, and the Stadholderate.*<sup>36</sup>

Hence, the Vreede regime tried to eliminate every possible opposition. Many clubs were closed down as a result. Even *Deugd en Kundigheden*, whose members had strongly supported the January coup, at one point ran the risk of being shut down.<sup>37</sup> The clubs that remained, such as *Een- en Ondeelbaarheid*, became instruments of the central regime. They played a prominent role in the purge of the local government and the voting assemblies. Moreover, they supplied new members for the administrative municipality.

On top of the abolishment of many revolutionary clubs, the central government also eliminated every form of local democracy. Of course, this entailed, as we have seen, the transformation of the local governments into strictly administrative institutions, but it also implied the termination of the gatherings of the Amsterdam voting assemblies, which in 1797 had obtained the right to discuss local politics and issue proposals to the municipality. These rights, as we have discussed, had been obtained after a long struggle between the municipality, and the Neighbourhood Assemblies and clubs. However, after the establishment of the constitution, this form of direct democracy could no longer exist, as it undermined the unitary democratic state. The central government, consequently, ordered the local administrators to close the regular meetings of the voting assemblies, and consider their power to have transferred to the municipality.<sup>38</sup> Thus, ultimately the attempts to circumvent the democratic paradox, and eradicate the resistance against the processes of democratisation and centralisation, led to the elimination of the clubs. In turn, this further weakened of the unitary democratic coalition.

These developments continued after the June coup, as repressive measures were taken against the societies which had cooperated with the regime of Vreede.<sup>39</sup> This implied that also *Een- en Ondeelbaarheid* and *Deugd en Kundigheden* lost their prominent political position in Amsterdam politics. After June 1798, they are no longer mentioned in the minutes of the municipality. In general, organised popular political activity seemed to have largely disappeared in Amsterdam after the summer of 1798.<sup>40</sup> This was not just the result

---

<sup>35</sup> GAA, NSB (arch.nr. 5053), inv.nr. 34 (Minutes of the Municipality, 19 February 1798).

<sup>36</sup> alle Orange en gemeenebestgezinde societeiten, maar ook voords alle andere societeiten, of bijeenkomsten (...): waarvan men, zo uit de daar gehoudene gesprekken of voordragten, moet verwagten, dat zij strekkende zijn, om de gelukkige omwenteling, die de 22ste Januarij ons heeft gebragt, tegen te werken en dus de vrijheid weder aan nieuwe schokken bloot te stellen, door de Aristocratie en het Federalisme of het Stadhouderschap heimelijk te begunstigen (Ibid.).

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 23 February 1798.

<sup>38</sup> GAA, NSB (arch. nr. 5053) inv. nr. 225 (Minutes of the Administrative Municipality, 9 May 1798).

<sup>39</sup> De Bruin, 198.

<sup>40</sup> De Bruin, 198-99; Van Manen, and Vermeulen, part II, 18; H. Reitsma, "Lesegesellschaften und bürgerliche Revolution in Amsterdam" in *Lesegesellschaften und bürgerliche Emanzipation. Ein europäischer Vergleich*, ed. O. Dann (München: Beck, 1981): 175.

of repression, but it was also caused by the disappointment of many revolutionaries with the unitary democratic revolution, which had not brought the kind of direct popular political influence that many people had been aiming for. Consequently, many societies turned away from politics.<sup>41</sup>

The final blow to the unitary democratic alliance came in November 1799, when Napoleon Bonaparte took control of the French state through a military coup. After this coup, the Jacobin clubs were prohibited in France. Moreover, the French representative system became ever more curtailed, while the executive power was enhanced. Finally, part of the old regime elites returned to power in Paris. With Napoleon in charge of the French state, the French authorities were no longer willing to support a unitary democratic Dutch state, or collaborate with clubs, or politicians suspected of Jacobin sympathies.<sup>42</sup>

Hence, all three participants in the unitary democratic alliance had fundamentally altered their political perspective, which implied that this coalition could no longer be mobilised to pursue political change. With the breakdown of the unitary democratic coalition, the identities of aristocrat versus democrat also started to dissolve. In the years after 1798, these terms disappeared from the political vocabulary.

## The Federalist Reversal

The breakdown of the unitary democratic alliance did not imply that the constitution was immediately reversed. The members of the Executive Council and the Representative Body, who were elected after the June coup, all promised to uphold the constitution. The constitution also included many reforms, such as the abolishment of the guilds, the separation of state and church, the creation of a national armed burgher force, and a general system of education, which had been supported by a majority of the representatives in the National Assembly in 1796 and 1797. The financial unification of the state was clearly more controversial, but was still supported by the majority of the politicians from Holland, Zeeland, and Utrecht.

However, the breakdown of the unitary democratic coalition did imply that the constitution would have to be implemented through the democratic system, which again proved to be very difficult. Unlike in the years between 1795 and 1798, the unitary-minded politicians could no longer advance the state transformation process by eliminating political opponents and overruling representative procedures. Without the assistance of the revolutionary clubs and the French, they were forced to pursue political reform through the official democratic institutions. These institutions were again an obstacle for political change. In fact, they obstructed the implementation process to such an extent that various politicians, who initially wanted to execute the constitution in full, eventually opted for a reform of the constitution document itself. One of them was Isaac Gogel. In December 1800, he wrote:

---

<sup>41</sup> P.J. Bruijnsters, "Lesegesellschaften in den Niederlanden" in *Lesegesellschaften und bürgerliche Emanzipation. Ein europäischer Vergleich*, ed. O. Dann (München: Beck, 1981), 154-56; F.J.E. van Lennep, *Late regenten* (Haarlem: H.D. Tjeenk Willink, 1962): 1-64.

<sup>42</sup> Broers, *Europe under Napoleon*, 67; Sutherland, 336-351.

*The present constitution is completely unsuitable to ensure the Dutch people a lasting happiness. (...) Provincial and city interests, expediency, personal relations, favourism, and whatever else has replaced the general interest. This is what daily experience teaches us: see the minutes of the Legislative Body from 1798-1800 (...) The Legislative Body does not know what it wants. (...) Such a body is not capable of doing something good, something great.*<sup>43</sup>

As a result of the experience of the previous two years, Gogel had become deeply disappointed in the existing system of government. In fact, the man who had once defended the cause of national representative democracy was by the end of 1800 prepared to severely limit the influence of the Legislative Assembly and strengthen the executive power. He argued that the number of representatives in the assembly should be reduced from 126 to about 30 members. Moreover, he insisted that the Representative Body did not have to be permanent, but that two sessions of a total of six months a year would suffice. Finally, Gogel maintained that parliament should no longer have the right to issue proposals. This right would have to be restricted to the Executive Council.<sup>44</sup> In sum, Gogel proposed a strong de-democratisation of the central state.

Gogel was certainly not the only former supporter of the unitary democratic ideal, who changed his mind. Other members of the Amsterdam *Societeit voor Een- en Ondeelbaarheid*, such as Johannes van Hasselt, who had been a member of the Executive Council in 1798 and 1799, and Samuel Wiselius thought that the democratic character of the central government should be diminished.<sup>45</sup> In March 1801, Wiselius, who at the time was an active member of the Council of the Asian Territories, maintained that ‘limiting the legislative power and strengthening the executive power should be one of the main objectives of the coming changes.’<sup>46</sup> Some of the Amsterdam members of the Representative Body, who had previously supported the unitary democratic state model, were also in favour of a similar change. For example, cashier Gerard van der Zoo, and merchant Hendrik Costerus, who, in 1796-’97, had both voted for political and financial unification, now supported a revision of the constitution.<sup>47</sup>

Obviously, the change of heart of these unitary-minded politicians undermined the constitution. However, the heaviest blow to the constitution was the change of opinion of the politicians who had continued to hold on to crucial features of the decentralised particularistic state model. They collectively abandoned their support for the constitution in 1801. These politicians, who had returned to national politics after the coup of June 1798, had already disapproved of the way in which the constitution was established. Yet, once it had been ratified, many of them had chosen to support it, because it included various reforms advocated by all the revolutionary politicians. However, after three years of problems implementing the constitution, many of them no longer wanted to uphold it. Jean

---

<sup>43</sup> De tegenwoordige staatsregeling is geheel ongeschikt om immer het Bataafsche volk een duurzaam geluk te verzekeren. (...) Provinciale en stedelijke belangen, eigenbaat, personeele betrekkingen, gunst en wat dies meer is vervangen de plaats van het algemeen belang. Dit alles leert de dagelijksche ondervinding: zie de dagverhalen van 1798-1800. (...) Het Wetgevend Lichaam weet zelf niet wat het wil. (...) Zodanig lichaam is niet in staat iets goeds, iets groots te verrigten (Colenbrander, *Gedenkstukken*, vol. 3, 643-644).

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> De Gou, *De staatsregeling van 1801*, 503, 558-562.

<sup>46</sup> Beperking der Wetgeevende en uitbreiding der Uitvoerende Macht moet een der hoofddoeleinden van de aanstaande verandering zijn. (Ibid., 559)

<sup>47</sup> *Dagverhaal Vertegenwoordigend Lichaam*, vol. XII, 431, 432; Elias, and Schölvinc, 24, 99-100, 262-263.

Appelius, for example, lawyer from Zeeland, maintained that the constitution should be revised as the Representative Body did not function properly. Like Gogel and Wiselius, he came to the conclusion that the instructions of the assembly had to be changed, as this institution ‘obstructs, at will, decisions on the most important issues.’<sup>48</sup> However, very different from Gogel and Wiselius, he also argued that the degradation of the departmental (i.e. provincial) governors to mere administrators was a major flaw in the constitution.<sup>49</sup> Appelius was supported in this view by Augustijn Besier, regent from Overijssel, who in 1799 had replaced Van Hasselt as member of the Executive Council.<sup>50</sup> In March 1801, Besier wrote that he above all wanted to restore the authority of the departments over their domestic affairs. He emphasised that this implied that departmental administrations would again have sovereign authority over their internal affairs, the form of government, civil legislation, and taxation. Besier maintained that he could not imagine a lasting republicanism without provincial political autonomy. Moreover, he claimed that national finances were being ruined by an excess of centralism.<sup>51</sup>

### ***Time Consuming Procedures***

To understand why many politicians eventually rejected the unitary democratic constitution, we need to consider how the representative system obstructed the implementation of this constitution. When reflecting on this issue, we should note that the resistance against the constitution did not directly block its implementation. It did, however, slow it down considerably. This was particularly problematic because the Dutch central state was still very weak at this point. Not only did it lack the financial resources to develop new policies and institutions, it also did not have the personnel to rule directly on the local level. In 1800, the central state bureaucracy was run by about 246 civil servants.<sup>52</sup> Given the enormous workload created by the implementation of the constitution, this was a dismally low number. Consequently, the central administration could do little else than prepare general legislation. It had very limited time to solve problems that were brought to its attention by the local governments. The combination between the weak central state and the time consuming representative procedures made it very difficult to eliminate the local corporate state structure. This was plainly visible in Amsterdam. Initially the Amsterdam Municipality, which had been appointed after the June coup, actively cooperated with the implementation of the constitution. Yet, when it became clear that the central government was unable to respond to the problems that occurred on the local level, the municipality lost its enthusiasm for the unitary democratic constitution.

Virtually every decision on the local level had to be approved by the Executive Council and the Representative Body. Consequently, it might happen that a request to the Amsterdam government was first considered by the municipality and its committees, subsequently sent to the relevant Agent, who often had to pass it on to the Executive Council. If the Council wanted to make a new regulation on the basis of the request, it had

---

<sup>48</sup> de afdoening der belangrijkste zaaken, naar goedvinden, kan tegenhouden (*Dagverhaal Vertegenwoordigend Lichaam*, vol. XII, 451).

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> [www.parlement.com](http://www.parlement.com)

<sup>51</sup> De Gou, *De staatsregeling van 1801*, 546-47.

<sup>52</sup> Pfeil, 532.

to present it to the Representative Body. And finally, after parliament had taken a decision, which often took a long time, the message again had to be sent back to the local level, passing all the different institutions in between, including the departmental administration. Given the limited bureaucratic staff available at each state level, it usually took too long before a decision was taken.

The Amsterdam Municipality soon came to the conclusion that the unitary democratic constitution unnecessarily complicated the organisation of various aspect of local administration. One of these aspects was the supervision of the orphanage, which the constitution had brought under the direction of the Agent of Justice. One year after the constitution had been established, in April 1799, the Amsterdam Municipality tried to regain control of the orphanage. It wrote to the Executive Council that 'no college is more suitable to supervise the interests of the orphans than the government of the city, where the orphans live and their estate or property is located.'<sup>53</sup> Moreover, the municipality argued that in case of pressing matters, it would take too much time for the guardians of the orphans to contact the Agent of Justice in The Hague. Finally, it emphasised that the local supervision of the orphanage corresponded with the undeniable right of the city to the funds of the orphanage, which it could use in case the treasury of the city was in financial difficulty.<sup>54</sup> In reaction to the request of the Amsterdam Municipality, the Executive Council decided, apparently happy to pass some of its responsibilities back to the municipalities, to restore the original regulation concerning the orphanage. This decision not only applied to Amsterdam, but to all of the local governments.<sup>55</sup>

The municipal members were also personally affected by the inability of the central government to take decisions concerning local matters. When the Amsterdam Municipality was purged after the June coup, the new members were appointed on a provisional basis for a period of two months. However, one year later, in July 1799, they had not been replaced. Demanding their replacement, the municipality wrote to the Representative Body that it had already been waiting eleven months for its dismissal.<sup>56</sup> This demand was to no avail, as the Amsterdam government was not replaced in the following two years either. The Representative Body wanted to wait for the creation of a new municipal law, which would regulate the replacement of local governors. The formulation and the discussion of this law in the Representative Body, however, took a very long time. In fact, it was not until the Spring of 1801 before the new municipal law was introduced.<sup>57</sup>

By this time, a majority of the members of the Representative Body and of the Executive Council no longer supported the unitary democratic constitution. These institutions had already started to work on a revision. Consequently, the municipal elections prescribed by the new law were cancelled by the Executive Council.<sup>58</sup> In the meantime, the

---

<sup>53</sup> geen college zo geschikt is, een nauwkeurig toezicht over de behartiging van der weeskinderenbelangen, te houden dan het stedelijk bestuur zelfs, alwaar de weezen woonachtig, en de boedels of goederen hun aanbestorven, in loco zijn (GAA, arch. NSB (arch. nr. 5053) inv. nr. 288 (Letter to the Executive Council, 10 April 1799).

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., inv.nr. 261 (Minutes of the Intermediary Municipality of Amsterdam, 21 May 1799).

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., (23 July 1799).

<sup>57</sup> M.J.A.V. Kocken, *Van stads- en plattelandsbestuur naar gemeentebestuur: proeve van een geschiedenis van ontstaan en ontwikkeling van het Nederlandse gemeentebestuur tot en met de gemeentewet van 1851* (Den Haag: Stichting Gemeentelijk Cultuurfonds, 1973), 140-151.

<sup>58</sup> GAA, arch. NSB (arch. nr. 5053) inv. nr. 257 (Minutes of the Intermediary Municipality of Amsterdam, 30 March 1801).

Amsterdam Municipality kept on sending requests to the Executive Council to be replaced.<sup>59</sup> Various members decided not to wait any longer and handed in their resignation. In turn, this led to a reaction from the Executive Council, which obviously feared an administrative crisis. It pointed out that the members had a personal responsibility to serve their community. The Executive Council threatened that if municipal members refused to take this responsibility, they would be forced to remain in office 'on the threat of imprisonment.'<sup>60</sup> Although some members were impressed by this threat, various others resigned anyway.<sup>61</sup>

Even more of a problem for the local government was that it lacked the legitimacy to take strong measures. Because the members of the municipality were not elected, but appointed on a provisional basis, they felt that did they not have sufficient authority. The municipality maintained:

*The position of this assembly becomes ever more problematic when other institutions and affairs have been arranged according to the constitution, while this assembly still operates on the basis of its previous instruction. Whereas the deplorable state of the city finances and of the financial means of the churches demand a shift and powerful recovery. This can only be achieved if the city is organised according to the constitution.*<sup>62</sup>

Eventually, when the new municipal law was cancelled in 1801, the municipality decided to take matters into its own hands and organise elections for burgher representatives, with whom it could make a plan to restore the local treasury.<sup>63</sup> The cancelled municipal law had made a provision for the election of burgher representatives, which had the task to negotiate and control the financial policies of the local government.<sup>64</sup> The Amsterdam Municipality now called upon this regulation to legitimise an increase of local taxes. By the end of April 1801, the voting assemblies had chosen twenty burgher representatives. However, it is doubtful whether the election of the burgher representatives, which were predominantly large merchants, regents and prominent revolutionaries, did much to boost the legitimacy of the tax increases.<sup>65</sup> The elected men were not particularly eager to take up their new position. The Amsterdam Municipality even had to call in the help of the Representative

---

<sup>59</sup> Breen, 79-82.

<sup>60</sup> door gijzeling daartoe zal worden geconstringeerd (GAA, arch. NSB (arch. nr. 5053) inv. nr. 262: (Minutes of the Intermediary Municipality of Amsterdam, 15 April 1800).

<sup>61</sup> Breen, 81-82.

<sup>62</sup> de positie van deze vergadering moeilijker wordt naar mate andere collegien en zaaken op den voet der staatsregeling worden daargesteld, terwijl deze vergadering als noch alleen op haare vorige instructie werkzaam is. Dat wijders den kommerlijken toestand van deze stadsfinantien, en van de geldmiddelen der respective godshuizen, een onverwijld en krachtadig herstel vorderen, daarin niet met vrucht zal kunnen worden voorzien, voor en aleer het gemeente bestuur conform de staatsregeling zal wezen georganiseerd (GAA, arch. NSB (arch. nr. 5053) inv. nr. 261 (Minutes of the Intermediary Municipality of Amsterdam, 23 July 1799).

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., inv. nr. 536 (Secret minutes of the Municipality and the Intermediary Municipality of Amsterdam, 25 March 1801); Ibid., inv. nr. 257 (Minutes of the Intermediary Municipality of Amsterdam, 2 April 1801).

<sup>64</sup> Kocken, 140-1.

<sup>65</sup> GAA, arch. NSB (arch. nr. 5053) inv. nr. 257 (Minutes of the Intermediary Municipality of Amsterdam, 30 April 1801).



Body to force the burgher representatives to participate in the meetings with members of the municipality.<sup>66</sup>

### ***Lack of Resources***

Another reason why the central government was incapable of reacting adequately to local problems were the limited resources of the central state. Of course, the Republic was already in deep financial problems, as a result of the enormous early modern debt and the large financial demands of the French regime. Again the Representative Body only aggravated these problems, as it obstructed the financial unification process. The constitution had dictated that a general system of taxation should be established within two years after the constitution had been accepted. Moreover, it specified that throughout the country, the taxes should be levied relative to the fortunes of the inhabitants. The Agent of Finance, Gogel, subsequently created a plan that was primarily directed at the financial needs of the national state, but which also relieved the lower socio-economic classes. Moreover, the plan tried to relieve the seaborne provinces, especially Holland, of their disproportionately high tax burden. Consequently, part of the burden would be shifted towards the land provinces. As during the constitutional debates in 1796 and 1797, the representatives from the land provinces protested. To obstruct Gogel's plan, these representatives issued a large number of counter proposals in the Representative Body, which slowed down the debate over the new tax system considerably. Consequently, it was only after long and difficult discussions that the plan for a national tax system was finally approved in March 1801.<sup>67</sup>

In the mean time, both the central and the local governments lacked the resources to abolish the local corporations. This problem especially obstructed the reform of the social security system. When the various Amsterdam poor relief institutions were asked in 1798 to give a complete report of their finances to prepare the amalgamation of their funds, they protested vigorously. The Catholic, Lutheran, and Remonstrant poor administrations even decided to send a collective petition to the Representative Body with the request not to eliminate their independence.<sup>68</sup> This resistance was certainly not limited to Amsterdam; the poor relief institutions in Den Bosch, for example, did not want to cooperate either.<sup>69</sup> The state reformers soon discovered that they had little in hand to pressure or tempt the local poor relief institutions, as these controlled their own money. Neither the central state nor the municipalities, both on the brink of bankruptcy, had the resources to take over the provision of poor relief. Thus, they depended on the voluntary cooperation of the local institutions. Since these institutions refused to cooperate, it was impossible to create a national system of social security. The local particularistic poor relief institutions, consequently, survived the constitution of 1798.<sup>70</sup>

The inability of the central state to guarantee social security also made the elimination of the guilds, more difficult, as these played a large role in the provisioning of poor relief. Many guilds had a collective fund through which they supported old and sick

---

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., inv. nr. 258 (Minutes of the Intermediary Municipality of Amsterdam, 26 June 1801).

<sup>67</sup> Pfeil, 229-234; Fritschy, 126-127, 137-141.

<sup>68</sup> Van Leeuwen, 85.

<sup>69</sup> Prak, *Republikeinse veelheid*, 307.

<sup>70</sup> Van Leeuwen, 83-86.

members. These funds immediately ran into trouble, once the guilds were abolished. Guild members refused to pay their contributions to the funds. Consequently, the former guilds were no longer able to support members in need.<sup>71</sup> Already in June 1798, Hendrik Peereboom, a seventy-eight year old retired peat transporter, complained that his weekly allowance of four guilders and ten cents of the fund of the peat transporters guild had been stopped. Since he had a handicapped daughter, and was barely able to leave his chair because of his high age and additional physical handicaps, he had become very poor.<sup>72</sup> After the official abolishment of the guilds in October 1798, the number of appeals for help increased. In December 1798, the Amsterdam government received a petition of several old and weak guild brothers and sisters of the former tailors' guild, whose guild allowance was stopped. The provisional commissioners of the guild claimed that the fund was empty.<sup>73</sup> Several months later it was reported that members of a number of guilds no longer got the support to which they had an 'undeniable entitlement'. These people were, according to the report, brought to utter destitution. Some of them were even forced to beg on the streets.<sup>74</sup>

Alarmed by the looming crisis, the Amsterdam Municipality asked the central government for additional measures.<sup>75</sup> Since the central regime could not offer alternative social security and the poor relief institutions of the churches and the municipality were in deep financial trouble themselves, the Executive Council could do little else than advice the municipality to facilitate the conservation of the guild funds.<sup>76</sup> Although the former guilds were not allowed to force their members to contribute, they were given the option to collect contributions on a voluntary basis. Members who did not want to pay were automatically excluded from the guild fund. Moreover, guilds were allowed to sell their government bonds, to continue the support of their poor and sick members.<sup>77</sup> The additional regulation on the funds gave the guilds the opportunity to sustain their grip on their members. It created a certain amount of vagueness concerning the abolishment of the guilds, which its commissioners tried to exploit to uphold their activities. In fact, in Den Bosch, the former guilds succeeded in convincing the municipal government that they should be allowed to force their members to contribute to the guild poor relief funds.<sup>78</sup> In Amsterdam, the former surgeon guild tried to do the same thing, but the municipality refused to cooperate.<sup>79</sup>

The problem of the limited resources of the central state also presented itself in the transformation of the civic militias into a national armed burgher force. This transformation, which began in April 1799, went less than smoothly. After the old civic militias had been dismissed, it became clear that the central state was unable to pay for the various divisions of the national burghers force. In Amsterdam, the two burgher infantry

<sup>71</sup> GAA, arch. NSB (arch. nr. 5053) inv. nr.278, nr. 1288 (Letter of the Municipality to the Representative Body, 10 November 1798).

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., inv. nr. 259 (Minutes of the Intermediary Municipality of Amsterdam, 21 June 1798); Ibid., inv. nr. 269, nr. 848 (Petition of Hendrik Peereboom, 6 June 1798).

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., inv. nr. 260 (Minutes of the Intermediary Municipality of Amsterdam, 3 December 1798).

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., inv. nr. 262 (Minutes of the Intermediary Municipality of Amsterdam, 2 May 1799).

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., inv. nr. 276, nr. 1205 (Report of the committees of General Welfare, and Trade and Shipping, 10 October 1798); GAA, arch. NSB (arch. nr. 5053), inv. nr. 360 (Minutes of the intermediary municipality of Amsterdam, 10 October 1798).

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., inv. nr. 277, nr. 1265 (Letter of the Agent of Internal Police).

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., inv. nr. 338 (Dagblad van de vergaderingen: Letter of the Agent of Internal Police, 24 December 1798); Ibid., inv. nr. 262 (Minutes of the Intermediary Municipality of Amsterdam, 17 April 1799).

<sup>78</sup> Prak, *Republikeinse veelheid*, 284-285.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., inv. nr. 261 (Minutes of the Intermediary Municipality of Amsterdam, 30 May, and 2 July 1799).

companies, which played a vital role in crushing local revolts, were not immediately replaced by national companies. The municipality, fearing that it would be unable to maintain public order without such companies, decided to provisionally preserve them. At the same time, it tried to recover the costs from the central government, as it felt that the country as a whole now profited from the companies.<sup>80</sup> This was to no avail. The Representative Body, even after several requests, refused to burden the heavily indebted treasury any further.<sup>81</sup> Thus, the municipality was put in the difficult position of having to decide between its own financial well-being, and the safety within the city. The local committee concerned with public order tried to convince the municipal government to decide for the latter. It even proposed, contrary to the law on the national burgher force, to only employ the companies within the city itself.<sup>82</sup> However, at this point, the municipality was more concerned about the financial situation of the city. It decided to dismiss the two companies, leaving Amsterdam more vulnerable to revolts, and leaving the local governors less than enthusiastic about the national burgher force.<sup>83</sup>

### *Change of Opinion*

As it was evident that the central government was unable to solve the problems that arose as a result of the elimination of the local corporations, the Amsterdam Municipality increasingly defended the local corporate community, and became progressively less willing to cooperate with the implementation of the unitary democratic constitution. This was clearly apparent in the case of the abolishment of the guilds, which greatly affected the regulation of the local economy.

One of the problems that occurred as a result of the elimination of the guilds was an increase of peddler activity. Before the constitution, the guilds had always acted against peddlers. The elimination of the guilds gave the peddlers new opportunities to sell their products. The Executive Council had tried to prevent the cities from being overrun by foreign peddlers by ruling that only those people were allowed to trade merchandise, who had obtained a certificate from local Dutch authorities stating that they were tax-paying inhabitants of a particular district in the Republic.<sup>84</sup> However, according to the Amsterdam Municipality this did not solve anything. In May 1799, it claimed that other municipalities, such as Gouda, were giving out certificates to foreigners who had only lived in that city on a provisional basis for three months. The municipality argued that these foreigners subsequently came to Amsterdam for work, which harmed the natives of the city. To reverse this trend, the Amsterdam government decided to take a more conservative stance, and demanded that the Executive Council would take measures to stop this.<sup>85</sup> However, more than a year later, the problem had clearly not been solved, as the Amsterdam

---

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., inv. nrs. 263, 264 (Minutes of the Intermediary Municipality of Amsterdam, 4 December 1799, and 9 January 1800).

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., inv. nrs. 256, 257 (Minutes of the Intermediary Municipality of Amsterdam, 31 December 1800, and 2 March 1801).

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., inv. nr. 322, nr. 24 (Report of the Committee of Domestic Correspondence, 8 January 1801).

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., inv. nr. 257 (Minutes of the Intermediary Municipality of Amsterdam, 14 January, 2 March 1801).

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., inv. nr. 293, nr. 618 (Report of the Committee of General Welfare, 1 July 1799).

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., inv. nr. 291, nr. 503 (Letter of the Municipality to the Executive Council, 15 May 1799).

Committee of General Welfare maintained that various former guilds had complained about the many instances of peddling in the city.<sup>86</sup>

Since the central government was unable to adequately regulate the local economy, the Amsterdam Municipality started to take measures into its own hands. This change in the attitude of the municipality became, for example, visible in its decisions concerning the regulations on the production and sale of bread. In the summer of 1798, the municipality had still ruled that everyone was free to produce bread as they saw fit, given that they did so in an honest way.<sup>87</sup> One year later, it had considerably changed its position, as it decided to allow the commissioners of the former bread bakers' guild to maintain the corporate regulations concerning the bread and flour salesmen, and regarding the baker servants and students. It ruled that the commissioners were authorised to fine anyone who broke these regulations. The municipality justified its decision by arguing that it saw harmful consequences for the maintenance of good police, if the regulations were not maintained.<sup>88</sup> Although the decision of the Amsterdam government did not prevent anyone from producing bread, it did renew the control of the guild commissioners over bread production.

Apparently sensing the change in the attitude of the municipality, the Amsterdam bakers demanded, in February 1800, that the traditional regulation of 1652 on the production of bread would be restored. According to this regulation, bakers could only use wheat that came directly from the mill without any further refinement. The bakers wanted to restore this regulation to neutralise the competition from the so-called 'French bakers', who used processed wheat. Although the municipality did not directly grant this request, it did not want to reject it either, before a general regulation had been made.<sup>89</sup>

By September 1801, the change in the position of the municipality was complete. It now supported the commissioners of the former bakers' guild in prohibiting a Jew, Marcus Nathan Samuels, from setting up a bakery. Samuels claimed that he was no longer able to provide for his large family with his previous occupation. Consequently, he wanted to set up a bakery to save his family from poverty and disaster.<sup>90</sup> The commissioners, however, did not want to cooperate because Samuels did not possess a certificate which confirmed that he had been trained as a baker. According to the commissioners, this rule, which had been established in 1750, should be maintained in the name of the 'good police'. Moreover, they argued that the bakers' trade was certainly not an effective remedy against poverty.

*By contrast, it was constituted in such a way that honest bread bakers, who do not rob the country through ingenious tricks, have to employ all their diligence, attentiveness, and thrift not to be left a pauper. Nevertheless, each day many businesses go bankrupt.*<sup>91</sup>

---

<sup>86</sup> Ibid., inv. nr. 520, nr. 800 (Report of the Committee of General Welfare, 20 November 1800).

<sup>87</sup> Ibid., inv. nrs. 225, 259 (Minutes of the Administrative Municipality, 9 May 1798, and of the Intermediary Municipality, 17 July 1798).

<sup>88</sup> Ibid., inv. nrs. 261, 262 (Minutes of the Intermediary Municipality of Amsterdam, 3 April, 6 May 1799).

<sup>89</sup> Ibid., inv. nr. 264 (Minutes of the Intermediary Municipality of Amsterdam, 13 February 1800); Ibid., inv. nr. 306, nr. 134 (Report of the Committee of General Welfare, 13 February 1800).

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., inv. nr. 333, nr. 559 (Report of the Committee of General Welfare, 16 September 1801).

<sup>91</sup> In tegendeel zodanig is geconstitueerd, dat broodbakkers welke op een eerlijke wijze de kost willen winnen, en het land niet kunstig tragten te besteelen, alle middel van vlijt, oplettendheid en spaarzaamheid bij de hand moeten

Concerned by the growing financial problems of the bakers and other craftsmen in the city, the municipality decided to support the arguments of the commissioners. It advised Samuels to try his luck as a bread baker's journeyman or a bread salesman.<sup>92</sup>

### *A National Coalition?*

By 1801, it was clear that the revolutionaries had been unable to solve the democratic paradox. Although the democratic procedures of consultation and representation did not completely block the process of political change, they did slow it down considerably. This was especially problematic, as the central state was still very weak. Consequently, the central government was unable to assist the municipalities in eliminating the corporate system. Hence, in Amsterdam, this system continued to function, even though the municipality initially made efforts to eliminate it. In 1801, the Amsterdam government had given up these efforts, and was again actively protecting the local corporate community.

As many politicians on the local and the central state level abandoned their support for the unitary democratic constitution, it was clear that a constitutional change was in the air. This change became inevitable when the Napoleonic regime, in the spring of 1801, invited the Dutch political elite to start working on a revision of the constitution. In addition to this invitation, the French advised the Dutch to issue a general pardon for everyone who had been punished in 1798 for having opinions contrary to the unitary democratic ideal.<sup>93</sup> The French regime, which in 1801 was working on an international peace agreement with some of its main rivals, was at this point primarily interested in stabilising the political relations in the regions it had conquered in previous years. It expected that this could be best achieved by returning the old regime elite to the political process, a tactic which Napoleon had also used in France itself.<sup>94</sup>

Although the French pushed the Dutch to bring about a constitutional revision, they did not stipulate what this constitution should look like. Hence, the specific character of the constitutional changes still had to be decided. As the unitary democratic coalition had fallen apart, the question was whether a new coalition could be created, to continue the elimination of the local corporate state structure. Rutger Jan Schimmelpenninck, who was now Dutch ambassador in France, certainly believed that it was possible to construct such a coalition.

During the constitutional debates in 1796-'97, Schimmelpenninck had been an advocate of financial unification and of the abolishment of the privileges of the corporations, but he had strongly opposed a complete unification of the state. However, like many other revolutionary politicians, he had chosen to support the unitary democratic constitution, once it had been established, as it included various reforms which he had been aiming for. But, like many other politicians, his opinion on the subject had changed by 1801. Along with Gogel, Wiselius, and Besier, Schimmelpenninck now wanted to reduce the influence of the Representative Body, and increase the authority of the Executive Council. Concerning the subject of unification, Schimmelpenninck took up a middle

---

nemen, om niet tot den bedelstaf te koomen, terwijl dat niet tegenstaande daagelijks veele neeringen verlopen, en te gronde gaan (Ibid.).

<sup>92</sup> Ibid., inv. nr. 510 (Minutes of the Intermediary Municipality of Amsterdam, 23 September 1801).

<sup>93</sup> De Gou, *De staatsregeling van 1801*, XV-XVI.

<sup>94</sup> Broers, *Europe under Napoleon*, 28-31, 67.

position. On the one hand, he agreed with Besier and Appelius that political authority should be partly decentralised. He insisted that local and departmental governors had to be able to take decisions on their domestic affairs, 'without being dependent on a foreign and far away power, which is not familiar with the details.'<sup>95</sup> On the other hand, Schimmelpenninck argued that apart from strictly local and provincial affairs, government should be fully unified.<sup>96</sup>

Schimmelpenninck was consciously trying to find a middle ground between various groups. His goal was the creation of a strong central government based on a broad elite coalition between different ideological groups, as he had already tried to accomplish during the constitutional debates in 1796 and 1797. His intentions became especially clear in relation to the subject of financial unification. As in 1797, he asserted that a system of national taxation was in principle the best solution. Yet, at the same time, he argued that financial unification was also one of the main reasons why many politicians from the land provinces were looking for a revision of the constitution. To persuade these politicians to cooperate in the creation of a strong central government, Schimmelpenninck argued that the establishment of a full-blown national tax system should be postponed. This system could, he thought, be partly centralised, which would leave the departmental governments in control of the taxation for infrastructural costs.<sup>97</sup> Although Schimmelpenninck proposed a state that was less centralised than envisioned by Gogel and Wiselius, it was clearly not as decentralised as Besier had projected. It was certainly a state which could renew the assault on the corporate system.

Despite the differences between the various revolutionary groups, Schimmelpenninck was confident that they would be happy with his compromise. In a letter to Gogel, he argued:

*The Unitarist will be content because the Republic will still be one and indivisible with a general government and a chosen representative Legislative Body, which represents the entire undivided nation, not by department, but proportionate to the number of voters. (...) Concerning finances, he would rather have seen that all of the departmental systems of finances were immediately abolished and replaced by general national taxes, but the opportunity for such a reform has been refuted by many sensible and reasonable people. (...) He who is more prone to a moderate federalism, will also join this state affairs because his departments will have sufficient constitutional power to organise local affairs and domestic economic interest without being dependent on a strange and far away power, which is less familiar with the details.'*<sup>98</sup>

---

<sup>95</sup> zonder daaromtrent van een vreemde en op verre afstand werkende magt, minder met die details bekend, af te hangen (Colenbrander *Gedenkstukken*, vol. III, 664).

<sup>96</sup> De Gou, *De staatsregeling van 1801*, 504-510, 543-545.

<sup>97</sup> *ibid.*, 544.

<sup>98</sup> De Unitarist zou met zijne eene en ondeelbare Republiek met een niet geëntreveerd algemeen gouvernement met een welgekozen representatieve Wetgevende Vergadering, de geheele onverdeelde Natie representerende en niet bij departementen maar bij hoofden in proportie der relative populatie stemmende, te vreedten zijn. Hij zou, ten opzichte van het finantieele, ja wel liever gezien hebben dat dadelijk alle departementale stelsels van finantie konden zijn afgeschaft en alles door algemeene nationale heffingen konde gevonden worden, maar de mogelijkheid daarvan door zeer veele verstandige en redelijke menschen gecontesteerd wordende. (...) Hij, die meer naar een gemodereerd federalismus overhelde, zou zich insgelijks met die order van zaaken vereenigen,

To achieve the national coalition between federalist-minded and unitary-minded politicians, Schimmelpenninck wrote several letters to leading men of both factions and to the French regime.<sup>99</sup> However, all this was to no avail.

It turned out the majority of the revolutionary elite could not be persuaded to cooperate in the creation of a cross-ideological coalition. Unlike the Amsterdam politicians Van Hasselt, Wiselius, and Gogel, who intensely corresponded with Schimmelpenninck on the revision of the constitution,<sup>100</sup> many other politicians wanted to hear nothing of the subject. Especially most of the representatives in the Legislative Assembly were unwilling to compromise. They were engaged in a fierce debate over the constitutional revision, which divided them into two groups. The first wanted to hold on to the unitary democratic constitution, while the other group aimed for a more federalist and less democratic state. The point of view of the first group was, for example, expressed by lawyer Petrus Verhoyesen from Brabant, who insisted that the constitution had not been given a fair chance, since only the central government had been reformed. The rest of the constitution had yet to be implemented.<sup>101</sup> Hendricus van Royen, a head master from Zeeland, spoke for the second group when he claimed: the unitary principle is contrary to 'the nature, the customs, and the prejudices of our nation.'<sup>102</sup> He said that the unitarist constitution was completely ineffective, as local governments had no authority to do anything, while the Legislative Assembly was overloaded with 'a great number of problems that should not be its business, or which can be settled elsewhere without any harm to the general interest.'<sup>103</sup> His opinion was supported by about half the representatives of the Legislative Assembly, and the majority of the members of the Executive Council.<sup>104</sup>

### *The Coup*

With the majority of the politicians refusing to compromise and cooperate in a coalition, the matter could only be decided through a power struggle in the central government, which was ultimately to be decided by a very small number of politicians. Crucial for the outcome of this struggle was that the Executive Council was controlled by the federalist-minded politicians. Three of the five members of this Council, regent Augustijn Besier, nobleman Anthony Frederik van Haersolte, and former lieutenant Gerrit Jan Pijman, supported, at this point, the creation of a federalist state.<sup>105</sup> In 1798, Pijman had, as Agent of Warfare and collaborator in the June coup, still defended the unitary democratic constitution. Like other politicians, he had changed his mind about how the Republic should be reformed. Pijman now cooperated with Besier and Van Haersolte in an attempt to create a more federal and authoritarian state. They were opposed in this endeavour by the other two members of the

---

omdat aan zijne departementen genoegsame constitutioneele macht gereserveerd wordt om de huishoudelijke oeconomische belangen, de dagelijksche locale aangelegenheden te kunnen beredden zonder daaromtrent van een vreemde en op verre afstand werkende magt, minder met die details bekend, af te hangen (Ibid., 544-545).

<sup>99</sup> Ibid., 504-510, 530-536, 543-545.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid., 503, 521-523, 528-529, 536-538, 543-545.

<sup>101</sup> *Dagverhaal Vertegenwoordigend Lichaam*, vol. XI, 904.

<sup>102</sup> de geaardheid, de gewoontes, de vooroordeelen van onze natie (Ibid., vol. XII, 525).

<sup>103</sup> een menigte van zaken, die, of by hetzelfde niet behoren, of gevoeglyk en, zonder benadeeling der algemeene belangen, elders konden worden afgedaan (Ibid.).

<sup>104</sup> Ibid., vol. XIII, 597-599, 621-622.

<sup>105</sup> De Gou, *De staatsregeling van 1801*, XXIII-XXVI.

Council, mathematics professor Jean Henri van Swinden from Amsterdam, who in 1795 had been part of the government of Holland, and Patriot regent François Ermerins from Zeeland, a personal friend of Gogel.<sup>106</sup>

In the summer of 1801, Besier, Van Haersolte, and Pijman developed a new constitutional proposal in cooperation with Amsterdam lawyer Irhoven van Dam, and Agent of the Navy Jacobus Spoors, who had also cooperated in the June 1798 coup.<sup>107</sup> In this proposal, the influence of parliament, which would have to be renamed Legislative Body, was much reduced. This institution would only be allowed to consider proposals issued by the executive. The number of representatives would be reduced to 35, and the meetings limited to two sessions, of a total length of three and a half months each year. Moreover, in each session only twelve representatives, chosen by the majority of the members of the Legislative Body, would be authorised to discuss the laws proposed by the executive. Finally, the members of the Legislative Body would be chosen, for the first time after the constitution had been established, by the executive.<sup>108</sup> The reduction of the power of the legislative assembly implied that the influence of the executive, which was now called State Council, would be expanded. More than before, it would be able to initiate legislation and govern autonomously.<sup>109</sup>

However, at the same time, the proposal returned to the departments and municipalities some of their former independence. Article 71 of the plan stated that

*the (departmental governments) have the authority over everything that belongs to the normal internal police, economy, and finances of the department, which authorises them to make statutes, laws, regulations, and ordinances, given that these are not contradictory to the general laws.*<sup>110</sup>

And article 74 announced that ‘each municipality has the free disposal over its domestic interests and government, and it can for this purpose make all of the required local regulations.’<sup>111</sup> Along with the political decentralisation of the state, the financial unification was also abandoned. The proposal declared that the departmental taxes would be maintained in their current form. Although the plan involved a clear refederalisation of the state, it did certainly not completely reverse the revolution of 1798. The central government still had the sovereign authority over matters of war and peace, the central state budget, and the maintenance of public order throughout the Republic. In sum, the proposal aimed at a state that was unified on the outside, but which left sufficient autonomy and freedom for its individual parts.<sup>112</sup>

---

<sup>106</sup> Pfeil, 313.

<sup>107</sup> De Gou, *De staatsregeling van 1801*, XXIII.

<sup>108</sup> *Dagverhaal Vertegenwoordigend Lichaam*, vol. XIII, 604.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, 603.

<sup>110</sup> De (departementale besturen) hebben de beschikking over alles wat tot de gewoone inwendige policie, oeconomie en finantie van het departement behoort, en vermogen daaromtrent statuten, keuren, reglementen en ordonnantiën te arresteren, mits dezelve niet strijdig zijn met de algemeene wetten (*Ibid.*, 606).

<sup>111</sup> Iedere gemeente heeft de vrye beschikking over derzelver huishoudelyke belangen en bestuur, en maakt daaromtrent alle de vereischte plaatselyke bepalingen (*Ibid.*).

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, 600-606.



To establish their plan as the new constitution, Besier, Pijman, and Van Haersolte first needed the approval of the enfranchised population. Moreover, they had to overcome the resistance of Van Swinden and Ermerins, and of the members in the Representative Body, who wanted to maintain the constitution. To achieve this, they issued a public proclamation in which they criticised both the current constitution and the Assembly. They asked the people whether the existing unitarist constitution really served their interests. 'Does it not take away your self-government? (...) Are your domestic interests and needs not discussed far away from you?'<sup>113</sup> In addition, they argued that the Representative Body was completely unsuitable to revise the constitution. 'Such a numerous assembly, which is tossed between human hope and calculation, is in its nature unsuitable to create a good constitution.'<sup>114</sup> Consequently, Besier, Pijman, and Van Haersolte maintained that they had created a proposal, and would not hesitate to bring this plan to a popular vote. And finally, to make sure that the vote would be a success, they stated that burghers who did not vote would be considered as being in favour of the proposal. In effect, the proclamation amounted to a coup. Not only was the popular vote tricked, but the Representative Body was sidestepped as well, since it was not consulted about the constitutional plan. When the Representative Body protested against the proclamation, Besier, Van Haersolte, and Pijman decided to close down this institution. They did so in collaboration with the French authorities, who were impatiently waiting for a constitutional reform.<sup>115</sup>

Although most of the revolutionary clubs had either disappeared, or turned away from politics after 1798, the federalist coup did provoke some popular protest. In Amsterdam, 51 petitions were submitted with a total number of 906 signatures.<sup>116</sup> These petitions argued that the proclamation of the Executive Council was not legitimate as it was taken against the will of the Representative Body. The petitioners also protested against the rule that burghers who did not vote would be considered as favouring the proposal. However, at the same time, they maintained that the existing constitution had many serious flaws. Consequently, they were not against a revision, but such an alteration would have to take place in a legitimate and dignified manner.<sup>117</sup> The petitioners, thus, took a similar position as men like Gogel, Wiselius, and Schimmelpenninck, who wanted to revise the constitution through open deliberation. Among those who signed the petitions were various members of the societies of *Een- en Ondeelbaarheid* and of *Deugd en Kundigheden*, such as bookseller Jacobus Crayenschot, publisher Wijnand Wijnands, and merchants Dirk Versteegh, and Elias Hambeek. But also (former) members of the municipality signed the petition, like merchant Pieter Johannes van Leuvenig, commissioner Willem van de Vuurst, silversmith Nicolaas van Bleyenburgh, and medical doctor Daniel Lublink. There were even former representatives of the National Assembly among the petitioners, like merchant Herman Leonardus Bromet, and professor Jan Konijnenburg.<sup>118</sup>

---

<sup>113</sup> Ontneemt u dezelve niet dat zelfsbestuur (...)? Worden niet alle, zelfs uwe plaatselijke en huisselijke belangen en behoeften verre van u behandeld? (Ibid., 597)

<sup>114</sup> zulk eene talryke vergadering, door menschelyke berekeningen en uitzichten geslingerd, uit haaren aart, ongeschikt is eene wel ingerichte staatsregeling ten voorschyn te brengen (Ibid., 599).

<sup>115</sup> De Gou, *De staatsregeling van 1801*, XXVI-XXVII.

<sup>116</sup> GAA, arch. NSB (arch. nr. 5053) inv. nr. 510 (Minutes of the Intermediary Municipality of Amsterdam, 1, 5, and 6 October 1801).

<sup>117</sup> Ibid., inv. nr. 334, nr. 602 (Petition signed by 622 burghers).

<sup>118</sup> Ibid.; GAA, Baptismal Records; Poorterboeken; Breen, 111-120; Elias & Schölvinck.

Despite these protests, the Executive Council went ahead with the vote on its constitutional proposal, which turned out to be a mere formality, as most burghers did not vote. Only 68,990 of a potential 416,419 votes were cast; 52,219 of these 68,990 had voted against the proposal, which left only 16,771 in favour. However, according to the rules of the Executive Council, all the burghers who did not vote were considered in favour of the proposal. On 16 October 1801, Besier, Pijman, and Van Haersolte could announce that the new constitution had been established with an overwhelming majority of 364,200 votes.<sup>119</sup>

Thus, after several years in which the Republic was centralised and democratised, these processes were reversed. The inability of the revolutionaries to overcome the democratic paradox, as well as their recognition of the weakness of the central state, eventually impelled many central state politicians to reconsider their ideas about how the state should be reformed. In turn, this led to the constitutional revision of 1801. Although this revision did not restore the decentralised particularistic state of the early modern period, it did reverse the transformation process. Moreover, it facilitated the return of part of the old regime elite to the political process. And perhaps even more important, it allowed the local governments to regain some of their former autonomy, and partly restore the local corporate community. At least, this is what the Amsterdam Municipality did after the constitutional revision.

## Local Autonomy

Effectively, the federalist coup had been brought about by a very small number of politicians in the central government, who succeeded because the unitary democratic coalition had fallen apart, and because they were able to obtain the support of the French occupiers. After the coup, Pijman, Besier, and Van Haersolte quickly broadened the political basis of the federalist reversal by purging the central and local governments, and appointing politicians who had similar ideas about the organisation of the state. This primarily resulted in the appointment of members of the old regime elite. In the new State Council, which consisted of twelve members, various former regents were appointed alongside Pijman, Besier, and Van Haersolte. For example, the regents De Beveren from Zeeland, Van Burmania Rengers from Friesland, and Van Hoogstraten from Holland all became members of the State Council. In 1803, the Amsterdam regent Jan Bernd Bicker was also appointed. Of the 13 men who sat on the State Council between 1801 and 1805, no less than eight were either regents or noblemen.<sup>120</sup>

A similar restoration took place on the local political level. In Amsterdam, some of the regents returned to the local government. On 31 October 1801, the Amsterdam Municipality, to the great relief of its members, was finally replaced by an intermediary municipal government, appointed by the departmental administration.<sup>121</sup> Among the 17 men who were active in this government, 4 were members of the old Amsterdam elite, including Johan Pieter Farret, Willem Backer, who had been made Burgomaster in 1787,

---

<sup>119</sup> De Gou, *De staatsregeling van 1801*, XXVII.

<sup>120</sup> <http://www.parlement.com>

<sup>121</sup> GAA, arch. NSB (arch. nr. 5053), inv. nr. 510 (Minutes of the Intermediary Municipality of Amsterdam, 31 October 1801); *Ibid.*, inv. nr. 334, nrs. 672, 673 (Speeches of the Departmental Commission and of the President of the Amsterdam Municipality, 31 October 1801).

Gerrit de Graeff, and Hendrick Bicker, the son of Jan Bernd Bicker. Although 4 out of 17 was still a small number, the appointment of the regents was a break with the local governments of the preceding years, in which no members of the Amsterdam elite had been included. The restoration was also visible in the religious background of the Councillors. No less than 14 (82%) out of 17 were member of the Reformed Church. In comparison with the Administrative Municipality, which was appointed on 15 March 1798 by the unitarist regime, this was a very high number. In the latter, only 35% (8 out of 23) had a Reformed background.<sup>122</sup>

From March 1803 onwards, when a new local government regulation was established, the restoration of the old Amsterdam elite was consolidated. Of the 42 men who sat on the Amsterdam government between 1803 and 1808, when the government regulation was once again changed, 14 were former regents. Some of them were Patriot regents, such as De Graeff, Farret, and Cornelis van Lennep, but there were also several of an Orangist persuasion. For example, Jacob van Collen and Samuel van der Meulen, who in 1787 had been appointed by Willem V in the Amsterdam Vroedschap, became Council members in March 1803.<sup>123</sup>

### ***The Restoration of the Local Corporate Alliance***

In Amsterdam, the federalist reversal was not only consolidated through the appointment of former regents, but also through the restoration of the local corporate coalition, which had formed the basis of the decentralised particularistic state structure of the early modern Republic. As in the early modern period, the Amsterdam governors again started to cooperate with the corporate officials to protect the interests of the urban community. In turn, this led to the partial restoration of the local system of privileges. This became more than anywhere visible in relation to the guilds.

Despite the fact that the constitution of 1801 confirmed the abolishment of the guilds, the intermediary municipal government and its successor did everything in their power to reinstate the central features of the guild system. On 8 January 1802, the municipality decided to reinstate the rule that anyone who wanted to set up shop or work as a craftsman in Amsterdam had to become a member of one of the former guilds.<sup>124</sup> Moreover, it ruled that one had to be a citizen of Amsterdam to become a member of a former guild. The Committee for Trade and Shipping, which had written a report on the matter, maintained that it was difficult to decide whether it was a good idea to only allow citizens of Amsterdam set up a trade. It argued that

*if this question is only considered from a financial standpoint than it would be easy to answer, but if one sticks to the principles of burgher freedom and even to the present constitution, it is contestable whether one can force people to swear the oath of local citizenship and pay a sum*

---

<sup>122</sup> Elias, *De Vroedschap van Amsterdam*; Breen, 111-120; GAA, Baptismal Records; Poorterboeken.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid.

<sup>124</sup> GAA, arch. NSB (arch. nr. 5053) inv. nr. 511 (Minutes of the Intermediary Municipality of Amsterdam, 5 and 7 January 1802).

*of money to the city when they want to start a trade or business, especially since the law protects everyone in the same measure.*<sup>125</sup>

Yet despite these doubts, the committee advised to maintain the old regulations concerning guild membership and local citizenship. It argued that the city government first had to be established on a permanent footing, before measures could be taken to finally abolish the guilds and create rules on the maintenance of good police. In the meantime, the committee suggested it was better to uphold the old rules. Otherwise, there would be more disturbances and the city government would be constantly confronted with complicated cases, which would take up much of its time.<sup>126</sup>

The ruling of the intermediary Council was effectively an open invitation to the craftsmen, small merchants, and shopkeepers of the city to participate in the reinstatement of the guild system. Various occupational groups responded soon. In April 1802, Jan Stooter and Claas Blijl requested that the municipality would act against the peddling of floor mats by strangers. Stooter and Blijl contended that the foreigners could sell the mats at a lower price because they lived on barges, which only cost about 10 guilders a year and allowed them to evade municipal taxes.<sup>127</sup> The municipal Committee of General Welfare fully agreed with the complaint of Stooter and Blijl. It argued that the sales- and craftsmen of the Republic, who had to pay heavy duties and taxes, were disadvantaged by foreigners from low-wage areas elsewhere in Europe. The committee did admit that this kind of trade was permitted under the existing laws, which allowed foreigners to trade and produce goods if they had obtained a certificate saying that they were tax-paying inhabitants of a particular district in the Republic. However, the committee also argued that these regulations had been made under the previous constitution, which was no longer valid. Moreover, it stressed that the municipality had been given the authority to make regulations to manage its domestic interests. Consequently, the committee advised that the municipality would use its regained legislative powers to create a regulation against the peddling of mats outside the permitted places and market hours.<sup>128</sup> The municipality took this advice to heart. It not only decided to make a regulation against the peddling of mats, but against all products, as it argued that peddling was a general problem that affected all occupational groups.<sup>129</sup>

Another group that immediately responded to the appeal of the municipality were the Amsterdam bakers, who had already, in the years between 1798 and 1801, issued various petitions against the so-called French bakers, and for the maintenance of the corporate regulations concerning bread baking. In 1802, the bakers again complained that it was impossible to make a living under the existing regulations. The Committee of General Welfare immediately responded and came to the conclusion that many Amsterdam bakers

---

<sup>125</sup> Indien deze kwestie alleenlijk uit een financieel oogpunt moest worden beschouwd, zoude de beantwoording vrij gemakkelijk zijn, maar houdt men zig aan de beginselen omtrent de burgherlijke vrijheid en zelfs aan den zin der tegenwoordige staatsregeling zo komt het ons twijfelachtig voor, of men tot het afleggen van poortereed, en het betalen der somme daarbij voor de stad gevorderd wordende diegene die eenige neering of bedrijf willen aanvangen bij uitsluiting van andere burghers verplichten kan, daar toch de wet aan allen eene even groote mate van bescherming verzekert (Ibid., inv. nr. 517, nr. 7 (Report of a personal committee of the Municipality).

<sup>126</sup> Ibid.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid., inv. nr. 521, nr. 237 (Petition of Jan Stooter and Claas Blijl).

<sup>128</sup> Ibid., inv. nr. 522, nr. 270 (Report of the Committee of General Welfare on the petition of Stooter and Blijl).

<sup>129</sup> Ibid., inv. nr. 511 (Minutes of the Intermediary Municipality of Amsterdam, 30 April 1802).

had been reduced to poverty because the corporate regulations on bread baking were not maintained. Following such a regulation from 1652, bakers could only use wheat that came directly from the mill without any further treatment. However, this regulation was no longer effective after the administrative municipality had, on 9 May 1798, in response to a petition of thirty French bakers, decided that anyone could bake bread as they saw fit. According to the committee, this decision had to be withdrawn and the regulation of 1652 once again enforced. Although this would compel the French bakers to change their production methods, the committee was at the same time convinced that this was the only way to restore the bread baker's trade. Moreover, it emphasised that the French bakers only constituted a small part of the total number of bakers. Thus, it was only justified to force this small group to change its 'illegal' ways, so that it would no longer contribute to the downfall of the majority of the bakers.<sup>130</sup> The municipality fully agreed with these arguments and decided to withdraw the decree of 9 May 1798 and reinforce the regulation of 1652.<sup>131</sup>

Fully confident that it had the authority to organise the local economy as it saw fit, the Intermediary Municipality decided in January 1803, in response to the many complaints from Amsterdam shopkeepers and craftsmen, to issue a new set of regulations that effectively restored the guild system. It argued that further measures were needed as the crafts, trades, and factories in the city were more and more in decline.<sup>132</sup> It also argued that these measures did not need to be approved by the departmental government, since they only applied to domestic affairs.<sup>133</sup> First, the municipality again ruled that anyone who wanted to set up shop or work as a craftsman in Amsterdam had to become member of one of the former guilds. The members who were admitted, were subsequently required to strictly comply with the rules of the former guild. If they declined to do so, they risked a twenty-five guilder fine. Secondly, the provisional commissioners of the former guilds were only allowed to admit new members if they were citizens of Amsterdam. Thirdly, only people who had taken the appropriate exam and who had been an apprentice for a stated period of time, as stipulated in the guild regulations, could become guild member. Fourthly, new members had to pay an examination fee and a certain amount of money to enter the guild. Fifthly, the members who in previous years had failed to pay their annual contribution could still do so within three weeks. This would again entitle them to poor relief from the guild funds. The municipality clearly tried to restore the social security system of the guilds, which had broken down in previous years. The sixth measure served the same purpose: all fines that had previously been intended for the guild fund should go there again. Finally, peddling by people who are not inhabitants of Amsterdam was prohibited, except during the usual weekly and annual markets.<sup>134</sup>

The policy started by the Intermediary Municipality was continued by its successors after March 1803. In contrast to the statement of January 1802, the guilds were not abolished once a permanent government regulation had been created. In fact, the

---

<sup>130</sup> Ibid., inv. nr. 522, nr. 279 (Report of the Committee of General Welfare).

<sup>131</sup> Ibid., inv. nr. 511 (Minutes of the Intermediary Municipality of Amsterdam, 30 April 1802).

<sup>132</sup> Ibid., inv. nr. 530, nr. 6 (Report of the Committee of General Welfare concerning the work of the guilds); A detailed analysis of the decline of the Amsterdam economy in the years around 1800 can be found in: Diederiks, *Een stad in verval*.

<sup>133</sup> GAA, arch. NSB (arch. nr. 5053) inv. nr. 514 (Minutes of the Intermediary Municipality of Amsterdam, 5 January 1802).

<sup>134</sup> Ibid., inv. nr. 530, nr. 7 (Ordinances to restore the businesses in Amsterdam).

Amsterdam government continued to actively support the local corporations. New regulations were created, often in cooperation with the provisional commissioners of the former guilds, to protect the interests of the shipwrights, mast makers, small merchants, shopkeepers, shoemakers, and tar salesmen.<sup>135</sup> The restoration of the guilds was not limited to Amsterdam, as other cities, such as Rotterdam, Dordrecht, Utrecht, Middelburg, Leiden, and Alkmaar also started to reinstate guild regulations.<sup>136</sup>

### *The Decentralisation of the State*

The reinstatement of the guilds was part of a more general restoration of the early modern city. Immediately after the intermediary Amsterdam Municipality was appointed in October 1801, the new governors revealed their intentions. Former regent Johan Pieter Farret proposed to remove the words 'Liberty, Equality, Fraternity', and the indication of the date as 'the seventh year of the Batavian Freedom' from all the Amsterdam regulations and proclamations.<sup>137</sup> Farret maintained that the State Council and the departmental government, since the political change, no longer used these words either. Therefore they could be readily removed from local publications as well.<sup>138</sup> Of equal symbolic importance were the costume prescriptions that the intermediary municipality issued for its members. On 13 November 1801, it decreed that all members should wear the traditional black costume, a triangular hat, and a ribbon in the three colours of the coat of arms of the city. Initially, it was proposed that the ribbon would have a text saying City Government. However, the majority of the Council decided not to provoke the superior state institutions and stick to the text Intermediary Municipal Government.<sup>139</sup> Even so, the Amsterdam governors made an attempt to restore some of the symbols of the autonomous early modern city.

In addition to these efforts at identity reconstruction, the Intermediary Municipality also tried to regain some of the authority it had lost during the unitary democratic revolution of 1798. One of the main efforts was directed at gaining control over the military and police force of the city. On 26 January 1802, it sent a letter to the State Council, in which it requested the authority to call for military assistance without the approval of the departmental government. It argued that 'the immediate intervention of a military force to disperse an agitated mass of people at the moment at which this mass is gathering, is the best method to prohibit the disturbance of public order. By contrast, any delay is highly disadvantageous in such cases.'<sup>140</sup> Consequently, it contended that the obligation to first address the departmental government was unhelpful and detrimental to the maintenance of

---

<sup>135</sup> Ibid., inv. nr. 571, 572, 573 (Minutes of the Council of Amsterdam, 6 September, 25 November 1803, 4 September, 4 December 1804, 2 July 1805).

<sup>136</sup> C. Wiskerke, *De afschaffing der gilden in Nederland* (Amsterdam: Paris, 1938), 142-154.

<sup>137</sup> GAA, arch. NSB (arch. nr. 5053), inv. nr. 510 (Minutes of the Intermediary Municipality of Amsterdam, 2 November 1801).

<sup>138</sup> Ibid., inv. nr. 515, nr. 679 (Proposal of burgher J.P. Farret).

<sup>139</sup> Ibid., inv. nr. 510 (Minutes of the Intermediary Municipality of Amsterdam, 13 November 1801).

<sup>140</sup> Eene onrustige hoop volks, door militaire macht, uiteentedrijven, als het ware op hetzelfde oogenblik wanneer de samenrotting geboren wordt, is het beste middel om de stoorenis der publieke rust te voorkomen, en, in tegendeel, is alle verwijl, in zulke gevallen, hoogst nadeelig (Ibid., inv. nr. 518, nr. 63 (Letter of the Intermediary Amsterdam Municipality to the State Council, 26 January 1802).

public order.<sup>141</sup> The State Council agreed with the municipality and ruled that the municipal governments evidently had the right to call directly for military assistance to suppress riots.<sup>142</sup>

Encouraged by this success, the Amsterdam Municipality decided to establish a committee to investigate: which 'affairs that have been unjustly withdrawn from the authority of the city and should again be brought under its control.'<sup>143</sup> The committee, which included the former regent Johan Pieter Farret and Hendrik Bicker, son of Jan Bernd Bicker, soon arrived at the conclusion that the municipality should have the supreme command over the civic militia. This implied that the national armed burgher force would have to be changed back into a local burgher force. In defence of this proposal, the committee argued that the maintenance of public order was a domestic affair, which the constitution of 1801 had delegated to the local governments.<sup>144</sup> The other members of the municipality agreed with this line of reasoning, and resolved to send a proposal to the State Council.<sup>145</sup> Again the Amsterdam Municipality was successful. At least, the State Council was also convinced that the national armed burgher force should be changed into a local force. In December 1803, it decided to abolish the national force. The Amsterdam Municipality subsequently incorporated the members of the national force into a temporary local force, and started to work on a new regulation for the Amsterdam civic militia.<sup>146</sup> The new regulation, which was approved in January 1805, effectively returned the supreme authority over the police force to the city.<sup>147</sup> Although the civic militia could still be called upon to perform national duties, its service within the city was under the control of the Amsterdam government.<sup>148</sup>

Thus, even though the constitution of 1801 did not fully reverse the revolutionary changes of the previous years, it did give the local governments the opportunity to reinstate crucial features of the decentralised particularistic state of the early modern period. The Amsterdam government especially made ample use of the constitutional rule which guaranteed each municipality the free disposition over its domestic interests. It gave the Amsterdam governors much more political autonomy than they had enjoyed under the unitary democratic constitution. This became particularly clear when the departmental government tried to interfere in the appointment of a local official. In March 1802, the municipality had appointed Pieter Schooneveld in the place of Johannes de Bruine, as secretary of the Amsterdam Committee of Insolvent Estates. The latter subsequently complained to the departmental administration, which ruled that the appointment of Schooneveld should be reversed. The Amsterdam government reacted furiously. It claimed that the departmental government did not have the authority to investigate the complaints of De Bruine, whether these complaints were justified or not. It emphasised that De Bruine

---

<sup>141</sup> Ibid.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid., inv. nr. 511 (Minutes of the Intermediary Municipality of Amsterdam, 2 February 1802).

<sup>143</sup> zodanige meerdere zaken, welke, uithoofde van de van tijd tot tijd plaats gehad hebbende omstandigheden, ten onrechte aan de beheering van het stedelijk bestuur zijn onttrokken, en waaromtrent dus, uit kragte van het gemelde art. der staatsregeling, redres behoort te worden gedaan (Ibid., inv. nr. 522, nr. 294 (Report of the personal committee of the municipality)).

<sup>144</sup> Ibid.

<sup>145</sup> Ibid., inv. nr. 512 (Minutes of the Intermediary Municipality of Amsterdam, 11 May 1802).

<sup>146</sup> Ibid., inv. nr. 571 (Minutes of the Council of Amsterdam, 27 December 1803).

<sup>147</sup> Ibid., inv. nr. 573 (Minutes of the Council of Amsterdam, 15 January 1805).

<sup>148</sup> Ibid., (26 February 1805).

was not a departmental official. Moreover, the municipality maintained that ‘under the existing constitution, the administration of the city is a legislative government regarding its domestic affairs.’<sup>149</sup> Consequently, it warned the departmental government that it had no business interfering in the affairs of the city. Insulted by the aggressive response of the Amsterdam government, the departmental administrators turned to the State Council. However, the Council, bound by its own constitution, could not force the municipality to obey the decisions of the departmental administration. It could only reprimand the Amsterdam government for the insulting expressions. The municipality responded by crossing out the controversial words, but it firmly remained behind its decision to refute the decree of the departmental government.<sup>150</sup>

## Conclusion

In 1801, only three years after the unitary democratic constitution had been established, the processes of democratisation and centralisation were reversed. So far, the literature on the Dutch Revolution has either largely ignored this reversal, or characterised it as an aristocratic revival. The state formation and cultural historians tend to ignore the reversal, although the latter do recognise that a process of depolitisation took place from 1800 onwards.<sup>151</sup> By contrast, the students of the ‘bourgeois revolution’ thesis acknowledge the reversal. However, they theorise it as ‘the reaction’, and ‘the restoration of aristocratic power’.<sup>152</sup> This chapter has demonstrated that the reversal was not in the first place brought about by the opponents of the unitary democratic ideal, but was rather caused by the inability of the revolutionaries to solve the democratic paradox. After the constitution had been established, representative procedures continued to slowdown the process of political change. The time consuming representative procedures were particularly problematic, as the central state was still rather weak, which, in turn, made it very difficult to eliminate the local corporate state structure. Ultimately, the failure to solve the democratic paradox led to the breakdown of the unitary democratic alliance, and subsequently to the rejection of the unitary democratic constitution by local and central state revolutionaries.

Immediately after the establishment of the constitution, in May 1798, the unitary-minded revolutionaries started to disagree on how they should deal with the democratic paradox. Especially the revolutionaries who were directly involved in the January coup were against the restoration of the democratic process, as this would allow the opponents of the constitution to return to politics. This undemocratic stance was criticised by many of the other unitary-minded revolutionaries, like Gogel, who felt that the actions of the Vreede regime undermined the legitimacy of the constitution. This rift led in June 1798 to a second coup, which brought about the political expulsion of many of the most determined supporters of the unitary democratic constitution. As the coup restored the democratic process, various federalist-minded politicians were able to return to politics.

---

<sup>149</sup> is het stedelijk bestuur, met de thans werkende staatsregeling, in hare huishoudelijke belangen en bestuur geworden een legislatief bestuur (Ibid., inv. nr. 523, nr. 324 (Report of a personal committee of the municipality).

<sup>150</sup> Ibid., inv. nr. 512 (Minutes of the Intermediary Municipality of Amsterdam, 30 May 1802).

<sup>151</sup> Kloek, and Mijnhardt, 32; Van Sas, *De Metamorfose van Nederland*, 27-28, 30-31, 86-87.

<sup>152</sup> Schama, 419; De Wit, 216.



The unitary democratic alliance was further undermined by the political demobilisation of the revolutionary masses. Again this was mainly the result of attempts of the unitary-minded politicians to deal with the democratic paradox. To limit the resistance against the constitution, the Vreede regime tried to eliminate all independent local political activity. Consequently, many clubs and popular assemblies were closed down. This development effectively continued after the June coup, when the clubs which had cooperated with the Vreede regime were eliminated as well.

The Napoleonic coup, in November 1799, was the final blow to the revolutionary coalition. From this point onwards, the French were no longer willing to support a unitary democratic Dutch state. Hence, by 1800 the political basis of the constitution had largely disappeared. However, constitutional change only became inevitable after politicians on the local and the central state level started to reject the constitution.

After the June 1798 coup, most of the revolutionary groups had still been willing to execute the constitution, as it contained many reforms that were favoured by all of the revolutionary groups. This changed in the years after 1798 when it became clear that the representative system greatly complicated the implementation of the constitution. In Amsterdam, it turned out to be impossible to eliminate the local corporate system, as no alternative arrangements had been provided by the weak central state, which lacked both financial resources and personnel. In fact, after three years, the Amsterdam governors gave up the effort to eliminate the local corporations. At the central state level, politicians from all ideological backgrounds started to reject the democratic ideal, and were considering a constitutional change that would enable them to breakout of the stalemate.

As no new revolutionary coalition could be constructed, the subsequent constitutional change was decided by a power struggle between a handful of politicians in the central government. The federalist-minded politicians prevailed, as they were in the majority in the State Council, and were able to obtain the support of the French. Although various unitary-minded politicians, such as Gogel and Wiselius, also wanted to diminish the influence of the national parliament, they certainly did not favour a reversal of the centralisation process. In fact, they proposed to reduce parliamentary influence to enhance the centralisation process. However, without the support of the French and the revolutionary clubs, they were no longer able to dictate the political relations at the central state level. Consequently, the coup of 1801 not only brought about a significant reversal in democratisation, but also in terms of centralisation. The influence of the national parliament was enormously reduced, while at the same time the local and provincial governments regained part of their political autonomy. Subsequently, in Amsterdam, this reversal was consolidated and further extended through the return of part of the old regime elite, as well as the restoration of the local corporate coalition. Hence, in the years after 1801, crucial features of the early modern Republic were restored.



## 5 From Collaboration to Oppression (1805-1813)

Ten years after Rutger Jan Schimmelpenninck had, as a member of the Amsterdam Municipality, defended local autonomy, he was again involved in a struggle over centralisation. This time, however, he stood on the other side of the line. On 29 April 1805, Schimmelpenninck had become in effect president of the Republic, more precisely Councillor of State. His government immediately started to centralise political authority. As in 1795, the Amsterdam Municipality strongly protested against the transfer of its authority. Yet, unlike the municipality of 1795, it did not invoke the democratic ideals of popular sovereignty and representative government to resist the centralisation process. Moreover, neither did the Schimmelpenninck government of 1805 try to legitimise its centralising efforts by invoking the ideal of unitary democracy, as the Assembly of Holland had done in 1795. In its clash with the Amsterdam Municipality, the Schimmelpenninck government maintained, on 11 November 1805:

*One should not lose sight of the objective with which the constitution has been created, which is also the perspective from which it should be considered: the concentration of all parts of the sovereign power.<sup>1</sup>*

The aim was the centralisation of political power, not the democratisation of the state.

Another striking feature of the political events of 1805 and following years was the strong local protest. In the period between 1795 and 1798, the Amsterdam government clearly resisted the centralisation process, but this resistance largely disappeared after the coup of January 1798. In the years after 1805, local resistance was again very strong. In fact, it seemed to grow stronger towards the end of the French occupation, when both the Amsterdam government and the population frequently protested against the measures of the central state.

Why was there such strong local resistance? And why was it apparently impossible to appease or subordinate the local political actors, like in the period between 1795 and 1801? To answer these questions, we will consider the effects of the breakdown of the democratisation process. Up to 1801, the unitary democratic ideal had legitimised the centralisation of the state. When a major part of the revolutionaries rejected this ideal in 1801, not only the process of democratisation collapsed, but the centralisation process was reversed as well. This raises the question whether the centralisation process could be successful without the promise of unitary democracy?

---

<sup>1</sup> Dat men tans niet uit het oog moet verliezen 't groote oogpunt, waaruit de tegenwoordige constitutie bij haare vorming beschouwd is; en, zo lange dezelve duurzaamheid heeft, beschouwd moet worden, te weteen het concentreren van alle de deelen der opperste magt (GAA, NSB (5053), inv. nr. 689 (Secret minutes of the Aldermen of Amsterdam, 11 november 1805).

## A New Coalition?

Especially some of the revolutionary politicians from Amsterdam, who in previous years had worked hard to achieve the unitary democratic ideal, were after the coup of 1801 trying to create a new coalition to revive the centralisation process. This turned out to be a complicated task. It was clearly no longer possible to construct a unitary democratic coalition, as in the years between 1795 and 1798. The revolutionary clubs and societies had largely disappeared, or had been transformed into cultural associations.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, after Napoleon's coup of 1799, the French regime was no longer willing to support the democratisation of the Republic. And finally, after many politicians, including various unitary-minded revolutionaries such as Gogel, and Van Hasselt, had abandoned the unitary democratic ideal, the incentive to construct popular alliances had disappeared as well. Even Wiselius, the revolutionary conspirator *pur sang*, seemed tired of popular revolutions. In a letter to Daendels he argued that 'it is the duty of every honest patriot to prevent shocks. Experience has, unfortunately, frequently taught us that such constitutional trembles bring no substantial changes, only changes in personnel.'<sup>3</sup> This point of view was shared by Gogel, who wrote to his friend Elias Canneman: 'we are no longer so silly as to search for supporters, or even less to be spoon-fed by someone else and to again do somebody else's dirty work, as on 12 June 1798.'<sup>4</sup>

Although Wiselius had developed a distaste for 'shocks' and 'trembles', it did not prevent him from corresponding about the possibilities to reverse some of the changes that had taken place after the coup of 1801. In July 1802, he reported to general Daendels that he had discretely consulted some of the 'Patriot' members of the Executive Council and the Legislative Body, and discovered how many of them were unhappy with the direction the political developments were taking. However, he had been unable to convince them to cooperate with a reversal. He maintained that 'it is true that people are in many respects unhappy, but when it comes down to business, they refuse to commit themselves.'<sup>5</sup> What is striking about these efforts is that Wiselius, who in the first years after 1795 had been a strong proponent of the unitary democratic model, was now prepared to cooperate with politicians who had always refused to fully embrace this model.

Wiselius' most promising attempt at a cross-ideological coalition took place with Schimmelpenninck, who at the time was Dutch ambassador in Paris. In previous years, Schimmelpenninck had worked for financial unification, and the abolishment of the local corporations. Although he had never embraced the unitary democratic model, he did not support the reversal of the transformation process after 1801. Yet, Schimmelpenninck would certainly not allow Wiselius to dictate any coalition; he had his own program of reconciliation in mind, which he had already tried to accomplish in 1797 and 1801.

<sup>2</sup> Bruijnsters, 154-56; Van Lennep, 1-64; Van Sas, *De Metamorfose van Nederland*, 27-28, 86-87, 123.

<sup>3</sup> het de plicht is van elken braven vaderlander het zijne toe te brengen, om alles, wat naar schokken kan gelijken, te voorkomen. De overvinding heeft ons helaas! te dikwerf geleerd, dat zulke staatkundige trillingen geene resultaten van zaken, maar alleen van personen opleveren (Colenbrander, *Gedenkstukken*, vol. IV, 357).

<sup>4</sup> doch aanhang zoeken, of nog minder aan een anders leiband te loopen en nog eens voor anderen de kastanjes uit het vuur te halen, zooals op 12 Juni 1798, zoo mal zijn wij niet meer (NA, arch. Canneman (arch.nr. 2.21.005.30), inv.nr. 75 (Letter of Gogel to Canneman, 7 September 1802).

<sup>5</sup> Wel is 't waar, dat men in vele opzichten malcontent is, maar zoodra 't op zaken aankomt, houdt men de boot af (Colenbrander, *Gedenkstukken*, vol. IV, 364).

Schimmelpenninck's aim was to unite the various ideological camps in one broad national alliance. On 30 July 1802 he wrote to Wiselius: 'Harmony is the only means through which our country can maintain its existence among the nations.'<sup>6</sup>

The contacts between Wiselius, Daendels, and Schimmelpenninck soon fuelled rumours that the latter would be appointed president. On 24 September 1802, Elias Canneman (1777-1861), who was a member the financial committee of Holland, reported from The Hague to Gogel that: 'everyone now believes in the instability of the current state of affairs.'<sup>7</sup> A few days later, speculating on the best-case scenario, he maintained that 'the best reports amount to a government of five people with a president and vice-president; Schimmelpenninck will be permanently appointed for the first post.'<sup>8</sup> In addition, Canneman hoped for the establishment of a general system of taxes, and the creation of departmental governments without legislative authority.

Hearing these reports, Gogel again became inspired with revolutionary enthusiasm. On 4 October he wrote to Canneman: 'It must be decided, even if it has to with blood, whether Orange or Patriots rule the country.'<sup>9</sup> Gogel already envisioned a new Executive Council with Ermerins and Van Swinden, who had been dismissed during the coup of 1801, along with Johannes Goldberg, who had been a member of the Amsterdam Revolutionary Committee, and himself as members. With Schimmelpenninck as president, this would amount to a government fully controlled by the revolutionary politicians from Holland. A very optimistic Gogel was convinced that such a change would be widely supported within Amsterdam: 'Here everything awaits the revolution; nobody, maybe not even one person in Amsterdam, chooses the side of the oppressors [the current central government].'<sup>10</sup>

Yet, no revolution took place in 1802. It turned out that the breakdown of the democratic struggle made it much more difficult for the Wiselius and Gogel group to mobilise sufficient support for political change. Unlike in the years between 1795 and 1798, the revolutionaries were unable, nor willing, to mobilise popular support to back up their plans. They did not try to play the masses through the press, pamphlets, and popular gatherings. Consequently, they no longer had the physical support of the clubs and popular militias. To pursue political change, they were now much more dependent on the cooperation of other elite groups, as well as on the support of the French. In 1802, it was clearly not possible to obtain the collaboration of politicians outside their own circle. Neither were the French willing to assist in a regime change.<sup>11</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup> Eendracht is het eenig middel hetwelk ons land nog eene existentie onder de volken kan doen behouden (Ibid., 374).

<sup>7</sup> Men gelooft hier thans algemeen aan de instabiliteit van de thans vigeerende orde van zaken (NA, arch. Gogel (arch. nr. 2.21.005.39) inv. nr. 25 (Letter of Canneman to Gogel, 24 September 1802).

<sup>8</sup> de beste berichten komen neer op een bewind van vijf mensen met een president en vice-president; permanent Schimmelpenninck voor de eerste post (Ibid., 27 September 1802).

<sup>9</sup> Het moet dan, al was het meet bloed, beslist worden of Oranje of de Patriotten het land regeeren zullen (NA, arch. Canneman (arch. nr. 2.21.005.30) inv. nr. 75 (Letter of Gogel to Canneman, 4 Oktober 1802).

<sup>10</sup> Hier wacht alles de revolutie af, en niemand, misschien geen een mensch in Amsterdam, kiest de partij van de overheerschers (Ibid.).

<sup>11</sup> Colenbrander, *Gedenkstukken*, vol. IV, 386-88.

***Financial Concerns***

However, at the same time, it is important to note that the breakdown of the democratic struggle did lead to an important shift in political identities, which potentially facilitated the efforts of the Wiselius and Gogel group to construct a new elite coalition. As we have already noticed in the preceding chapter, after the unitary democratic coalition collapsed, the terms ‘aristocracy’ and ‘democracy’ were less and less used to define political actors.<sup>12</sup> This made it possible to seek alliances, which so far had been blocked by the polarisation over the democratic issue. Revolutionaries such as Wiselius and Gogel, who in previous years had been identified as democrats or radicals, could now try to forge an alliance with politicians like Schimmelpenninck, who had once been renounced as aristocrats. The basis for such an alliance was the common concern of various politicians from Holland over the state finances. Obviously, finances had already been a major worry of the representatives of Holland in the National Assembly in 1796 and 1797. Yet, at that time, it had been impossible to establish a financial coalition, as the struggle over unitary democracy had polarised the relations between the representatives from Holland. When the unitary democratic ideal was abandoned in the years around 1801, this was no longer a problem.<sup>13</sup>

A major incentive for various politicians from Holland to start collaborating was the financial policies of the federalist regime. The decision to terminate the plan for financial unification, as we have discussed, already created a lot of bad blood. The subsequent measures to finance the ever increasing state deficit and the interest payments on the national debt were not to the liking of many politicians from Holland either. Breaking with the policies of Gogel, the government of Besier, Pijman, and Van Haersolte chose voluntary loans, instead of the unpopular forced loans and income taxes. Although more popular, the voluntary loans were much more costly, as they were issued against higher interest rates than the forced loans. This would not only greatly increase the state’s deficit, it would also lead to the devaluation of existing shares.<sup>14</sup> Consequently, in reaction to these measures, Gogel wondered in February 1802:

*May any government dispose in such a way of the capital of its inhabitants? Does one want to ban the investors from the country? Does one want to deter strangers from settling here? Does one want to force merchants to move to Antwerpen, and Bremen? Does one want to speed up National Bankruptcy and make it inevitable?*<sup>15</sup>

---

<sup>12</sup> And, as the terms ‘aristocracy’ and ‘democracy’ lost importance, so did the labels of ‘federalist’ and ‘unitarist’, which had been connected to the former. As we have discussed, federalism had become associated with aristocracy, and unitarism with freedom and democracy. The diminishing significance of these political labels confirms the more general claim of the cultural historians that a process of depolitisation took place in the years after 1800.

<sup>13</sup> T. Poell, “Local Particularism Challenged (1795-1813)” in *The Political Economy of the Dutch Republic*, ed. O. Gelderblom (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008): forthcoming.

<sup>14</sup> Pfeil, 323-25.

<sup>15</sup> Mag een bestuur, om het even welk, op deeze wijze over de vermogens der ingezetenen beschikken? Wil men de renteniers het land uitbannen? Wil men vreemden afschrikken om zich hier te vestigen? Wil men de kooplieden noodzaken om naar Antwerpen, Bremen etc. te verhuizen? Wil men het Nationaal Bankroet onmisbaar maken, en

The financial situation of Holland was not only a central concern of the revolutionaries of 1798. Various Orangists from this department were deeply worried as well. For example in October 1803, Hendrik van Stralen, former Burgomaster of Enkhuizen, who since 1802 was a member of the departmental government of Holland, maintained in a letter to Schimmelpenninck that 'our finances are rapidly in decline.'<sup>16</sup> Van Stralen, who in 1799 had still been imprisoned for his efforts to restore the Orangist regime, declared to be closely cooperating with the well-known Patriot Canneman, to remedy this situation. He even called Canneman an honourable friend.<sup>17</sup>

The politicians from Holland really started to see their common interest, when the central government, in November 1803, made plans to reintroduce the early modern quota system.<sup>18</sup> In this system, each province paid a fixed percentage of the state budget. In the minds of the politicians from Holland, their province had always paid too much in this system. Moreover, they were concerned that the quota system would generate insufficient revenue to finance the national debt, which for the most part was in the hands of investors from Holland. Consequently, many politicians from Holland were strongly against the proposal to reintroduce the quota system. Canneman, for example, maintained that this was, 'for the poor Hollanders and for the agonising Republic, a deadly plan.'<sup>19</sup> Together with the other members of the departmental government of Holland, he did what he could to prevent its implementation. In the central government, Samuel van Hoogstraten, the financial expert from Holland on the Executive Council, did the same.<sup>20</sup> Although these men failed to prevent the reintroduction of the quota system in 1804, their increased efforts to cooperate did mark an important break with previous decades, when they had been at loggerheads.

### *The Schimmelpenninck Government*

Although these collaborative efforts only involved a very small number of politicians, they were important as they eventually made it possible to create an alliance for the financial unification of the state. The opportunity to pursue such unification presented itself in the Fall of 1804, when Schimmelpenninck was invited by Napoleon to write a new constitution. In the course of 1804, the Emperor had become irritated with the weakness of the Dutch government, which in his opinion did too little to prevent the illicit trade with England. He wanted a stronger and more energetic government with one head of state. He saw the Dutch ambassador Schimmelpenninck, with whom he had regular contact, as the most suitable candidate for this position. In talks on 15 and 16 September 1804, Napoleon let Schimmelpenninck know that he wanted an autocratic government. Moreover, he stressed that a general system of taxation should be established to resolve the financial problems of the Republic.<sup>21</sup>

---

bespoedigen? (NA, arch. Canneman (arch. nr. 2.21.005.30) inv. nr. 75 (Letter of Gogel to Canneman, 16 Februari 1802)

<sup>16</sup> wij [...] in 't finantieel met harde schreden achteruitgaan (Colenbrander, *Gedenkstukken*, vol. IV, 464).

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 465.

<sup>18</sup> Pfeil, 335-36.

<sup>19</sup> voor de arme Hollanders en voor de agoniseerende Republiek doodelijk plan (NA, arch. Gogel (arch. nr. 2.21.005.39) inv. nr. 25 (Letter of Canneman to Gogel, 7 November 1803).

<sup>20</sup> Pfeil, 336-40.

<sup>21</sup> Colenbrander, *Gedenkstukken*, IV, XXV-XXVI; Schimmelpenninck, *Rutger Jan Schimmelpenninck*, II, 88.

The shift in the French approach to the Dutch government is related to a more general change in the relationship between France and its satellite states. After Napoleon took control of the French state in 1799, his government was, as we have discussed, first and foremost focussed on restoring public order, and consolidating the French military advances of the 1790s. To achieve this aim, the Napoleonic regime had tried to broaden its political basis by returning the old regime elite to the political process. However, as Michael Broers has noted, this led in many of the French satellites to 'administrative paralysis and the continued degeneration of law and order.'<sup>22</sup> Although there was no 'degeneration of law and order' in the Republic, the Dutch government certainly did enter into a state of 'administrative paralysis', which was most clearly visible in the quick deterioration of the state finances.<sup>23</sup> To counter these problems, the Napoleonic regime began to stimulate a further centralisation of the satellite states.<sup>24</sup> In turn, the aim was to increase the revenue it could extract from these states. Since the Napoleonic regime was, in 1804, preparing for a new round of European warfare, it needed all the resources it could obtain.<sup>25</sup>

In the Republic, Napoleon's increased demands created an opportunity for a government, in which various politicians from Holland could cooperate to establish a financial union. Yet, before such a government could be established, the key figures first had to reach an agreement on a few important matters. The first contentious issue was the relationship between the executive and parliament. Napoleon had insisted that, as in France, the legislative assembly should be fully subordinate to the executive. This proposal was immediately adopted by Schimmelpenninck, who as the new president would be given extensive authorities.<sup>26</sup> However, Johannes Goldberg and especially Gogel had objections. Although these men had abandoned the unitary democratic ideal, they still clung to basic notions of accountability. Goldberg called the intermingling of the legislative and executive 'monstrous', but decided to overlook this breach of democratic principles for the sake of the advances that could be made towards financial unification.<sup>27</sup> Gogel was not so accommodating. For him it was initially a reason not to cooperate with the creation of a new constitution and government. On 25 September, he wrote to Schimmelpenninck 'I'm not a proponent of, nor do I want to associate myself with an autocratic government.'<sup>28</sup> Goldberg and Canneman, afraid of losing a strong ally, immediately tried to change Gogel's mind. In a letter to Gogel, Canneman contended that he was saddened that 'you, and the few who still think like you, remain off the stage. Consequently, we can await everything except the establishment of enlightened and just principles (especially concerning finances).'<sup>29</sup> On a more positive note, Canneman claimed that there were strong indications that Schimmelpenninck was willing to adopt some of Gogel's ideas and

---

<sup>22</sup> Broers, *Europe under Napoleon*, 67.

<sup>23</sup> Pfeil, 395.

<sup>24</sup> Broers, *Europe under Napoleon*, 67.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 38-41; S. Woolf, *Napoleon's Integration of Europe* (London: Routledge, 1991): 24-25.

<sup>26</sup> De Gou, *De Staatsregeling van 1805 en de Constitutie van 1806*, 184-85.

<sup>27</sup> NA, arch. Gogel (arch. nr. 2.21.005.39) inv. nr. 80 (Letter of Goldberg to Gogel, 20 September 1804).

<sup>28</sup> ik voor mij geen voorstander ben, noch mij vereenigen kan met een eenhoofdig bestuur (De Gou, *De Staatsregeling van 1805 en de Constitutie van 1806*, 189).

<sup>29</sup> U en de weinigen die, zoals gij, nog denken van het toneel verwijderd zou doen blijven en dus alles behalven de daarstelling van verligter en billijker principes (ook vooral in het finantieele) te wagten was (NA, arch. Gogel (arch. nr. 2.21.005.39) inv. nr. 25 (Letter of Canneman to Gogel, 27 September 1804).



principles, at least concerning the financial organisation of the state.<sup>30</sup> This promise was apparently sufficient for Gogel to set aside his democratic objections. In the following months, Gogel actively cooperate with the creation of a new, authoritarian, constitution. Hence, even among the most convinced democrats of the first hour, financial concerns had, at this stage, clearly prevailed over democratic ideals.

The state finances were the central subject of discussion in the construction of a new constitution and government. Although Gogel, as well as Schimmelpenninck, agreed that a national tax system should be established, they did not agree on the speed with which it would have to be introduced. As in 1801, Schimmelpenninck was initially in favour of a slow introduction of such a system, not to alienate the politicians from the other departments. As before, his larger objective was to create a broad national coalition. By contrast, Gogel, Goldberg and Canneman, with whom Schimmelpenninck immediately sought contact, were in favour of a quick introduction. These men subsequently tried to convince Schimmelpenninck to pursue this swift transition.

Goldberg opened the discussion. On 20 September, he reported to Gogel that he had told Schimmelpenninck that the national tax system should be established immediately. In his mind, Gogel's original proposal for a national tax system, which had been approved by the Representative Assembly in 1801, could be implemented directly.<sup>31</sup> A few days later, Gogel confirmed to Schimmelpenninck, in the same letter in which he refused to cooperate with the creation of a new government, that he was still in favour of a general tax system. To convince Schimmelpenninck of the merits of such a system, he again referred to the injustice of the existing financial system, which burdened the inhabitants of Holland much more than those of the other provinces. He argued that the burghers of Den Bosch, Nijmegen, and Zwolle had at least the same opportunities to make money, as those from the smaller towns of Holland, such as Schoonhoven, Den Briel, Monnikendam, and Gorcum. Therefore, it would only be just to raise the same taxes throughout the country.<sup>32</sup> He also emphasised that a general tax system would dissolve all obstacles between provinces concerning the selling, buying, and trading of goods and services. In turn, this would lead to the 'spreading of general welfare, and the stimulation of industry.'<sup>33</sup>

In the following weeks, Goldberg and Gogel were joined in their campaign by Canneman, who subsequently mobilised lawyer Pieter van de Kastele from Haarlem, who in the constitutional debates in the National Assembly, in 1796 en 1797, had been a strong proponent of financial and political unification. On 14 October 1804, Canneman wrote to Gogel:

*He [Van de Kastele] agrees with you on every subject; he will also tell S[chimmelpenninck] that without national taxes there will be no unity, without unity no concentration, and without*

---

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> NA, arch. Gogel (arch. nr. 2.21.005.39) inv. nr. 80 (Letter of Goldberg to Gogel, 20 September 1804).

<sup>32</sup> Sillem, 177-78.

<sup>33</sup> verspreiding van algemeene welvaart, en aanmoediging van nijverheid (Ibid., 178).

*this it will be impossible to achieve a reduction of costs. He will also predict to S. that if any other project is chosen, the country will be lost.*<sup>34</sup>

After three months of discussion, Schimmelpenninck gave in. On 10 December, he said in a letter to Van Stralen that he had carefully read and considered the letters and reports from Canneman, Gogel, and Van de Kastele concerning the system of general taxes. He confessed that he was now convinced of the need and attainability of a national tax system.<sup>35</sup>

Having won Schimmelpenninck over to financial unification, Goldberg, Gogel, Canneman, and Van de Kastele were now also willing to accept the inclusion of 'moderate' and Orangist politicians in the government, an important demand of Schimmelpenninck. Thus, a number of politicians from Holland, who came from very different ideological backgrounds, started to work together in the Schimmelpenninck government, which was established in May 1805. The former proponents of the unitary democratic ideal cooperated with the very same men they had violently opposed before 1801. Gogel became Minister of Finance, Canneman secretary of the Department of Finance, while Van de Kastele and Goldberg joined the Council of State. In these positions they closely collaborated with Orangist Van Stralen, who was appointed Minister of Domestic Affairs. And in the Council of State they cooperated with Amsterdam merchant Willem Six, who was also a well-known Orangist, as well as regent Joan de Vos van Steenwijk from Overijssel, and lawyer Jean Appelius from Zeeland, both of whom had always supported the federalist state model.<sup>36</sup> Apparently, the disastrous financial policies of the previous government, of which Appelius and De Vos van Steenwijk had been members, convinced these men to promote the financial unification of the state.

The Schimmelpenninck government went to work on the basis of a new constitution, which proscribed financial unification, and largely eliminated the political autonomy of the departments. This step towards a more centralised state was accompanied by a further deterioration of the democratisation process. First, although the constitution was legitimated by a popular vote, the way in which it was established was far from democratic. No parliamentary or public debate had taken place. And, as in 1801, the popular vote was strongly biased: the voters who did not cast their vote, were considered to be in favour of the constitutional proposal. This measure took away the last democratic enthusiasm of the population. Only 14,229 voters, or 4% of the total electorate, decided to take part. Of this group 14,093 voted in favour of the constitution, and only 136 against it. Consequently, counting all the non-voters, the constitution was approved with an overwhelming majority, worthy of any modern dictator.<sup>37</sup>

Second, not only the procedure through which the constitution was approved was undemocratic, its contents were openly authoritarian as well. The constitution subordinated the Legislative Assembly to the president, or Pensionary of State, as Schimmelpenninck's

---

<sup>34</sup> Hij is het in alles met U eens, hij zal ook aan S[chimmelpenninck] zeggen dat zonder algemeene belastingen geen uniteit, zonder uniteit geen concentratie zonder dit geen epargnes zijn daar te stellen en voorspelle ook aan S[chimmelpenninck] dat bij alle andere projecten het land verloren is (NA, arch. Gogel (arch. nr. 2.21.005.39) inv. nr. 25 (Letter of Canneman to Gogel, 14 October 1804).

<sup>35</sup> De Gou, *De Staatsregeling van 1805 en de Constitutie van 1806*, 221.

<sup>36</sup> Pfeil, 406-07.

<sup>37</sup> De Gou, *De Staatsregeling van 1805 en de Constitutie van 1806*, XVIII.

position was called. The assembly was allowed to meet only twice a year, and it had merely the authority to accept or reject the laws proposed by the Pensionary of State. It no longer had the right of initiative or amendment.<sup>38</sup> Hence by 1805, the parallel development of centralisation and democratisation had fully come to an end. In the following decades, centralisation was pursued by authoritarian governments.

On the one hand, the elimination of the last democratic checks and balances obviously simplified the legislative process on the central state level, which in the years between 1798 and 1801 had been greatly complicated by the representative system. Yet, on the other hand, the breakdown of the democratic process had also greatly reduced popular and elite support for the centralisation of political authority and the elimination of the corporate system. Although the cooperation between some of the most prominent politicians from Holland had facilitated the creation of a new, more unitary constitution, this elite alliance effectively had a very narrow political basis. It only included a small number of politicians, who obtained political power because they were willing to cooperate with the French authorities. The narrow basis of the Schimmelpenninck government subsequently made it difficult to implement the constitution, i.e. unifying the financial system, and eliminating the local corporate state structure.

### *Amsterdam's Resistance against Financial Unification*

There were certainly efforts to broaden the political basis of the financial alliance. The appointment in the central state government of politicians from a variety of ideological backgrounds had clearly been an attempt to gain the cooperation of as many elite groups as possible. Moreover, when the Schimmelpenninck government went to work on the implementation of the constitution, it tried hard to convince the local politicians of the necessity of a financially more unified state. At least, it did so in the case of the Amsterdam Municipality. However, these efforts were not particularly successful, as the Amsterdam government, in which various former regents, such as Johan Pieter Farret, Pieter Elias, and Nicolaas Calkoen, played a prominent role, continued to resist the financial unification process and the elimination of the local corporations.

The Amsterdam governors were not convinced that a more centralised state could solve the economic and financial problems of the Republic. This is not surprising given that the first attempt to centralise crucial areas of government, in the years between 1798 and 1801, had not been particularly successful in Amsterdam. As a result of insufficient central state resources, and time consuming decision making procedures, it had proven impossible to organise the economy, provide poor relief, and maintain public order through central state institutions. In response to these problems, the Amsterdam governors, as we have discussed, had decided to reinstate some of the key features of the local corporations. Consequently in 1805, the Amsterdam governors were sceptical when confronted by new attempts to eliminate the local corporate system and centralise the state.

The renewal of the centralisation process revolved around the creation of the national tax system, which had originally been designed by Gogel in 1799. Following this design, the new system would be uniform, implying that the same taxes and tariffs applied to all provinces.<sup>39</sup> To make this system a success, the Schimmelpenninck regime also

---

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 26-31.

<sup>39</sup> Pfeil, 409-13.

centralised other areas of government. How this affected the Amsterdam government became particularly clear in November 1805, when new municipal laws were made public. Although the municipalities were given the opportunity to establish their own regulations, they were held to general instructions. They had to strictly maintain all laws, orders, and decisions of superior government institutions. They were not in any way allowed to assume rights of sovereignty. Without the authorisation of the Pensionary of State, they could not negotiate with foreign powers or cities over commercial or political matters. Following the establishment of the general tax system, local taxes that conflicted with the new system would be replaced. New local taxes could only be issued, when authorised by the departmental administration.<sup>40</sup>

These measures clearly threatened the political autonomy of the Amsterdam Municipality, which it had tried to win back in previous years. In addition, the project of financial unification undermined the efforts of the Amsterdam governors to restore the privileges of the guilds. Especially Gogel, as Minister of Finance, used the new tax system in an effort to again eliminate these privileges. First, he prohibited any local regulations concerning the production, transport, storage, and delivery of goods. This decree already greatly limited the control of the guilds and municipalities over the economy. Up and above this measure, Gogel issued a proposal for a patent law, which introduced a tax on the free practice of almost all businesses, occupations, and trades. Anyone who wanted to create a new firm, or start a trade, would, under the new law, have to obtain a license from the municipality. The law gave everyone who had bought such a license the freedom to start any occupation of their choosing, anywhere in the Republic, without the obstruction of guilds or city regulations.<sup>41</sup> When implemented, this law would effectively end the monopoly of the guilds over the regulation of local economic life.

However, the Amsterdam Municipality was certainly not willing to cooperate with these measures. It immediately objected to the Gogel plans. In fact, it already protested before the new municipal and patent law had been made public. In September 1805, the municipality secretly contacted some of the politicians from Amsterdam in the central government. Among the addressees were Gogel, as well as Willem and Cornelis Six, who were members of the Council of State and the Legislative Assembly respectively. To these men, the Amsterdam governors maintained that:

*It is said that all city governments will be subjected to strict regulations concerning the police and the finances. Remark: in the same proportion as the power of governments is reduced, the authority and opinion, which are absolutely necessary for happy government, are reduced as well. (...) This makes it even more difficult, yes it makes it impossible, to find truly capable people for government, especially in a city like Amsterdam, where the task of government demands an immense amount of work and effort, which has to be done without any rewards.*<sup>42</sup>

---

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.; Kocken, 158-60.

<sup>41</sup> Wiskerke, 158-59.

<sup>42</sup> Men zegt, dat alle stedelijke regeeringen aan zeer naauwe bepalingen, zo wel omtrent de politie als 't finantiaal zullen onderworpen worden. Aanmerking: Na proportie de magt den Reegeringen wordt verminderd, verminderd het gezach en de opinie, welke zo volstrekt vereischt worden, om gelukkig te regeeren. (...) En dit een en ander vermeerderd de moeylijkheid, welke reeds zo groot is, ja wordt het onmogelijk, waarlijk geschikte personen voor de regeering te vinden, en zulks vooral in eene stad als Amsterdam, daar de regeering onnoemelijk veel werk en

In short, it would be impossible to govern Amsterdam, if the authority of the municipality would be reduced.

Simultaneously, the Amsterdam governors made clear why it was important to preserve the guilds. They contended that abolishing the guilds would lead to the total ruin of the city. They argued:

*It is clear that the rents of the houses are higher and will continue to be higher here than anywhere else, and it is also true that the inhabitants of Amsterdam are heavier burdened than all others in the entire Republic. Hence, it would be a great unfairness to give others, who do not share in these heavy burdens, the freedom to trade their goods, which will be offered much cheaper. They will, consequently, enjoy the advantages, while the most heavily burdened inhabitants will be reduced to beggars.*<sup>43</sup>

The municipality also emphasised that the elimination of the guilds would undermine the poor relief system of the city. It asserted that if the funds of the guilds could no longer maintain widows, and sick and old guild members, the number of needy people would increase enormously.<sup>44</sup>

A few months later, in November 1805, when the government had officially revealed its plans for the new patent and municipal laws, the Amsterdam government issued a more extensive defence of the guild system, in which it emphasised the importance of this system for the maintenance of public order and quality control. It insisted that when craftsmen would no longer be guided by strict laws, and when no one was forced to demonstrate his skills to become an independent master, many people would undoubtedly start their own businesses. In turn, this would lead to low quality work, at a low price. Consequently, the trained craftsmen would, to remain competitive, also be forced to lower their prices, and devote less time and attention to their products. Hence, instead of stimulating industry, as the government assumed, the new patent law would result in a sharp decline in the quality of production and services. The Amsterdam magistrates stressed that this would inevitably cause confusion and disputes.<sup>45</sup>

Finally, the municipality argued that the abolishment of the guilds further threatened to disturb public order, as it would become increasingly difficult to control the roughest and most uncivilised parts of the population, such as the shipwrights and the fishmongers, which were now kept in check by the guilds. Moreover, the abolishment would remove a very effective instrument to implement new laws and supervise the maintenance of existing regulations. If the guild officials no longer functioned as an intermediary between the city government and the individual craftsmen and businesses, ‘everything will continue

---

moeite heeft, zonder eenige de minste beloning te verlangen (GAA, arch. NSB, inv. nr. 689 (Secret minutes of the Aldermen of Amsterdam, 24 September 1805).

<sup>43</sup> Is het dus zeker dat de huuren der huizen duurder zijn en zullen blijven, dan ergens elders, en is ‘t even waar, dat de ingezeetenen van Amsterdam meer lasten moeten opbrengen dan alle anderen in de geheele Republiek, zo zoude het eene schreeuwende onbillijkheid zijn, dat anderen, die niet in die zware lasten participeeren, door ‘t vrijgeven hunner waaren, die zo veel beterkoop te staan koomen, de voordeelen zouden genieten, terwijl de zwaargedrukte ingezeetenen tot den bedelstaf zouden worden gebracht (Ibid.).

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., (December 1805).

unrestrained.<sup>46</sup> The municipality stressed that there is no government which in 'the larger cities can guard against the many small offences and abuses which take place on a daily basis.'<sup>47</sup>

The objections of the Amsterdam governors against the project of financial unification were a major problem for the Schimmelpenninck government, as this project could only be successful if the Amsterdam Municipality, as well as the other local governments, would cooperate. Even though the constitution of 1805 had officially concentrated political authority in the central government, this government lacked local officials to force the municipalities to comply with its policies. In this sense, the Dutch government system was still very much characterised by indirect rule. And, as the Schimmelpenninck government, unlike the unitary-minded politicians in the years between 1795 and 1798, could not call upon a network of revolutionary clubs to put pressure on the local governments, it now had to convince the Amsterdam Municipality to cooperate.

Attempting to do so, the central state governors made clear that the French occupation practically forced them to centralise the state. They stressed that the centralisation of authority should be considered: 'A) as the only measure to save this tortured country. B) as the only condition under which the mighty power, which controls us, leaves this country any room for existence.'<sup>48</sup> Hence, the Schimmelpenninck government presented the centralisation of authority as the inevitable consequence of the pressure exerted by the French and by the deteriorating financial situation. To make this project a success, the administration asserted that political, financial, and juridical changes had to be made, which 'affect the claims that the local governments have, justly or unjustly, made so far. Otherwise, a lengthy opposition will be inevitable.'<sup>49</sup>

These claims did not impress the Amsterdam governors. As they refused to see the centralisation of authority and the elimination of the guilds as a necessary consequence of either French or financial pressure, they continued, as we will see, to resist the project of financial unification in the following years. This led to new clashes and debates, since the revolutionary politicians within the central government, such as Gogel and Goldberg, were determined to use the opportunity to implement the reforms they had sought since the beginning of the revolution.

## The Consolidation of the Financial Coalition

The reform-minded politicians from Amsterdam and Holland not only had to deal with resisting local governments, they also had to maintain their alliance with the Napoleonic regime. These politicians had only obtained control of the central government through

<sup>46</sup> zo moet alles bandeloos voortgaan. (Ibid.)

<sup>47</sup> kan in de groote steden waken tegens alle de kleine overtredingen en misbruiken die bijna dagelijks plaats hebben (Ibid.).

<sup>48</sup> A) als het eenig redmiddel, dat voor het gefolterd vaderland in deszelfs hagelijk positie over bleef. B) als de eenige voorwaarde, waarop eene magtige mogeheid die ons in haare hand heeft, nog eenig bestaan aan dit gemeenebest vergund (Ibid, 11 november 1805).

<sup>49</sup> de pretensien die de plaatselijke bestuuren, het zij dan met regt of ten onregte, tot hier toe gesustineert hebben zeer aanmerkelijk bepaalen, anderzints zal in onvermijdelijk eene gedurige tegenwerking gevonden worden (Ibid.).

collaboration with the French authorities. Yet, less than a year after the Schimmelpenninck government had been established, the coalition with the French had to be renegotiated, as the Napoleon regime wanted to initiate another regime change in the Republic. From February 1806 onwards, the Dutch government was under pressure from French politicians and diplomats to invite a member of the Bonaparte family as the new head of state. It turned out that Napoleon had his brother Louis Napoleon in mind as the new Dutch King. This automatically implied that Schimmelpenninck would have to abandon his post, and that the Republic would be transformed into a monarchy. The French government insisted that the new state would be called the Kingdom of Holland.<sup>50</sup>

Napoleon's demands were certainly not a sudden impulse, but part of the larger plan for the reorganisation of the French satellite states. The Napoleonic regime not only tried to stimulate the centralisation of these states, but it also started to integrate these states more closely in the French Empire. After he pronounced himself Emperor of the French in May 1804, Napoleon began to work on a system of satellite states, which would be governed by him or by family members. In March 1805, he crowned himself King of Italy. In 1804, he had already made his brother, Joseph, King of Naples. His younger brother Jerome was appointed as King of Westphalia, and his sister Caroline as Queen of Naples after Joseph became King of Spain in 1808. The demand to make Louis the Dutch King fitted this larger pattern.<sup>51</sup>

For the Dutch, Napoleon's plans posed a direct threat. National independence, which in the previous decade had already come under increasing pressure, was now in immediate danger. In addition, a major concern was the financial future. The central state politicians from Amsterdam and Holland had entered into the coalition for financial unification, so they could ensure that the interest payments on the national debt would be maintained, and the financial burdens more evenly distributed. It was unclear how the new French King would deal with these financial issues. Neither was it clear whether he would be a mere straw man of Napoleon or an independent leader. Consequently, from the moment the French demands became known to the Dutch government, in February 1806, the central state governors engaged in an intense discussion over the position they should adopt vis-à-vis the French. Again the central state politicians from Amsterdam played an important role in the debate.

Schimmelpenninck, in an attempt to save his position, tried to turn the matter into a public debate by proposing to organise a general vote on the question whether the Dutch should accept Louis Napoleon as their new King. However, his opinion was not shared by the majority of the members of government. Following the abandonment of the unitary democratic ideal, they tried to keep public deliberation to a minimum. In fact, they were much more concerned about the financial consequences of the change of government, than with its democratic implications. This sentiment was especially propagated by Goldberg. He maintained that it was above all important that the French would honour the national debt of the Republic. If not, it would have ruinous consequences for many poor relief

---

<sup>50</sup> H.T. Colenbrander, *Schimmelpenninck en Koning Lodewijk* (Amsterdam: Meulenhoff, 1911), 61-84; Gou, *De Staatsregeling van 1805 en de Constitutie van 1806*, XX-XXII.

<sup>51</sup> Broers, *Europe under Napoleon*, 60-70; O. Connelly, *Napoleon's Satellite Kingdoms* (New York: The Free Press, 1965): 1-18, 127-75; A. Palluel-Guillard, "Les Pays-Bas a l'impérialisme français" in *L'Europe de Napoléon*, ed. J. Tulard (Le Coteau: Horvath, 1989): 249-272; M. Rowe, ed., *Collaboration and resistance in Napoleonic Europe: state formation in an age of upheaval, c. 1800-1815* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003): 1-15.

institutions and for a large number of small investors. Moreover, for many private individuals it would be difficult to continue their businesses. In turn, this would, according to Goldberg, greatly diminish the state income derived from taxation.<sup>52</sup>

In addition, Goldberg proposed an argument which could be used to convince the French government to honour the Dutch debts. He argued that it should be stressed to the French that half of the current debt had been created over the last 11 years. At the same time, it should be made clear that because of the forced loans, the debt had come into the hands of a much larger part of the population. If the French Emperor refused to honour the debt, this large group of citizens would not only be dispossessed, but also alienated: 'our nation never forgets such things'.<sup>53</sup> By contrast, if the French could reassure the Dutch on this issue, the Emperor could, according to Goldberg, take the decisions he wanted. In his concern over the state finances, Goldberg even went so far as to suggest that the Republic should entirely give up its political independence and become a part of the French Empire. He especially liked this perspective, as it would lead to the amalgamation the Dutch and French debts, which would be very profitable for the Dutch, as the French debt was relatively lower. Goldberg added that the incorporation in the French Empire would also lead to much lower taxes.<sup>54</sup>

Although the other government members did not share Goldberg's enthusiasm for a French annexation, they did share his concern over the maintenance of the national debt. Consequently, it was decided to send a committee to Paris to negotiate with the French over the financial consequences of the political change. This committee, which included Gogel and Willem Six, not only hoped to obtain guarantees concerning the national debt, but it also hoped to persuade Napoleon to reduce the Dutch contribution to the French war effort. This last wish was immediately rejected by Napoleon, who was initially irritated with the committee, as it did not have the authority to request the appointment of his brother Louis as the new Dutch King. He declared that he would only enter into negotiations with the Dutch, when this demand was satisfied. If not, he would immediately punish the Republic. This left the Dutch government no other choice than to comply with Napoleon's wish, and request that Louis would be crowned as the new King of Holland.<sup>55</sup>

Having satisfied Napoleon's main demand, it now became possible to negotiate over the new constitution. On 14 May 1806, after two weeks of negotiations, Gogel reported to his friend Canneman that this went very well. The French agreed that the courts of justice, the Legislative Assembly, as well as the religious organisation of the country would remain more or less the same. They also promised to leave the positions in the state institutions, even in the military apparatus, in the hands of the Dutch. And most importantly, the tax system and the national debt could be maintained. Gogel concluded, that compared to the previous constitution, 'the state of affairs has not deteriorated, but has maybe even improved.'<sup>56</sup> Goldberg was also satisfied with the results. On 21 May, he contended that 'the article on the finances is better than expected, (...) [and the] commercial treaty is

---

<sup>52</sup> NA, arch. Goldberg (arch. nr. 2.21.192) inv. nr. 59 (Memorie over de noodzakelijkheid van de ronde en openlijke erkenning der Nationale schuld, eene volkomen gerustheid deswegens voor het vervolg, March 1806).

<sup>53</sup> onze natie vergeet zulkes dingen nooit (Ibid.).

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., (Advise of Goldberg to the Council of State concerning the relationship with France, March 1806).

<sup>55</sup> De Gou, *De Staatsregeling van 1805 en de Constitutie van 1806*, XXII-XXVII.

<sup>56</sup> de Staat der Zaken niet is verergerd, maar misschien verbeterd (NA, arch. Canneman (arch. nr. 2.21.005.30) inv. nr. 75 (Letter of Gogel to Canneman, 14 May 1806).



advantageous.’<sup>57</sup> A week later, he even asserted that ‘the class of investors should erect a statue for the committee.’<sup>58</sup>

The question remained whether the new constitution should be brought to a popular vote. As a few months before, Schimmelpenninck was in favour of such a vote. He said he was convinced that

*No pressure could be so great, no motive so powerful, no threat so horrible, no promises so attractive, as to keep us from consulting the (nation) on this point, or to authorise us to withhold the decision of this major issue from the People.*<sup>59</sup>

Again, it becomes clear how flexible political identities and interests are in a period of rapid political change. The very same man who only a year before had actively cooperated in the final breakdown of the democratisation process, was suddenly, once his own position was threatened, transformed into a proponent of popular consultation.

The other members of government had a very different perspective. The Minister of the Navy, Ver Huell, who had also been a member of the Dutch committee in Paris, wrote in a letter to Goldberg: ‘the vote of the people has long been a joke; it would be very sad to sacrifice the country to an inevitable fall, merely by following a formality.’<sup>60</sup> Gogel shared the same opinion, as he wrote to Canneman: ‘I believe that the right thing to do is to not hesitate, as one has overcome one thing, one should also overcome the other.’<sup>61</sup> The majority of the government agreed with Ver Huell and Gogel and decided to ratify the new treaty with France without popular consultation.

Hence, after more than two hundred years, the Dutch Republic was turned into a monarchy, with a Frenchman as the first Dutch King. Although this was a major break with the past, in terms of centralisation and democratisation the regime of Louis Napoleon continued in the same direction as the Schimmelpenninck government. Political authority was again concentrated in the hands of a single ruler. Under the new constitution, which was officially introduced in August 1806, the executive was fully concentrated in the hands of the King. He had the right to appoint all central state personnel, as well as higher administrative and judicial officials, and military officers. Moreover, the constitution of 1806 continued the project of financial unification. At the same time, the last remains of democratic government were eradicated. The legislative power was still officially vested in the Legislative Assembly, but this assembly could be even less considered as a democratic institution than its predecessor under the Schimmelpenninck regime. As before, it had

---

<sup>57</sup> L'article des finances est mieux qu'on ne s'y attendait, (...) [et la] traité de commerce avantageux (De Gou, *De Staatsregeling van 1805 en de Constitutie van 1806*, 584).

<sup>58</sup> De renteniersklasse mag de commissie wel een standbeeld doen oprichten (Ibid., 595).

<sup>59</sup> geen drang zoo knellend, geene beweegredenen zoo magtig, geen dreigingen zoo verschrikkelijk, geene beloften zoo aanlokkelijk kunnen zijn, welke ons zouden kunnen afhouden, om het gevoelen van (de natie) over dit aangelegen punt in te nemen, of ons bevoegd maken om de beslissing van deze groote zaak aan het Volk te onthouden (Ibid., 627).

<sup>60</sup> Sints lange heeft men alle volkskeuse als een wassen neus gedraaije en het zoude thans treurig zijn om voor het willen opvolgen van eene formaliteyt 't land aan een onvermijdelijke val te sacrificeeren (Ibid., 585).

<sup>61</sup> Ik geloof dat het zaak is om niet te weiffelen en is men over het een heen gekomen, dat men ook maar over het andere stappen moet (NA, arch. Canneman (arch. nr. 2.21.005.30), inv. nr. 75 (Letter of Gogel to Canneman, May 1806).

neither the right of initiative nor amendment. On top of this, it was only entitled to one official session a year, in which it could accept or reject government proposals. The members of the Assembly were for the first time appointed by the King, and subsequently elected through a complicated electoral system, in which only a small part of the male population could exert an indirect influence. The final appointment of the members of parliament was done by the King.<sup>62</sup>

All in all, the financial alliance between the central state politicians from Holland and the French regime was consolidated despite the departure of Schimmelpenninck. Many of the same politicians from Amsterdam and Holland, such as Gogel, Goldberg, Canneman, Six, Van de Kastele, and Van Stralen, which had been part of the Schimmelpenninck administration, were again active in the government of Louis Napoleon. They were joined by the likes of Willem Frederik Röell, an Orangist minded member of a prominent Amsterdam regent family, who became Secretary of State.

### ***The Battle against the Local Corporate System***

Although the financial alliance was consolidated, the question was whether the battle against the local corporate system, which had been revived by the Schimmelpenninck government, could also continue under the reign of Louis Napoleon. Gogel, as Minister of Finance, was still determined to eliminate the guilds. He had not been discouraged by the strong criticism of the Amsterdam Municipality on the new patent law. However, he did agree with the local governors that the guilds played an important role in the provisioning of poor relief, quality control, and the maintenance of public order. To make sure that these tasks would still be performed, and to supervise the implementation of the patent law, Gogel proposed, in August 1806, to establish new associations which would organise the various occupational groups.

To prohibit the creation of new monopolies and to ensure the liberalisation of the economy, Gogel's proposal explicitly forbade the municipalities to demand local citizenship as a precondition for membership of these new associations. Moreover, maximum amounts were set on the admission charge and annual contribution that could be demanded by the new organisations. The testing and investigation of goods from outside the city, which had always been an effective measure to close off the urban markets, was no longer allowed either. Neither could the associations demand a master test, a rule that had in the past been used to limit the number of independent craftsmen. Finally, Gogel proposed that also journeymen could become members of the new organisations, although they would not be given voting rights.<sup>63</sup>

This plan, which Gogel had in effect developed to assist the local governments, was used by the Amsterdam Municipality to set up, in cooperation with the guilds and other municipalities, a campaign for the maintenance of the guild system. With this objective, the Amsterdam guilds sent fifteen petitions to the King in November 1806. They argued that abolishment of the guilds was the result of overblown ideas of equality, which dated back to the heady revolutionary days. The guilds stressed that if the new associations were to be a success, they would have to be based on local citizenship rights, a regulated system of

---

<sup>62</sup> De Gou, *De Staatsregeling van 1805 en de Constitutie van 1806*.

<sup>63</sup> Wiskerke, 169-70.

apprenticeship, a master test, and regulations against peddling.<sup>64</sup> Otherwise, ‘a total chaos in all aspects of existence -the extinction of energy, poverty- and a total decline of the capital’<sup>65</sup> would be the result. The Amsterdam Municipality immediately informed the King that it fully supported the guild requests. The campaign soon became nation-wide, as the Amsterdam guilds sent their petitions to the guilds of other cities suggesting they would submit similar petitions to the King.<sup>66</sup>

The Amsterdam guilds and municipality obviously hoped that the King, being new to this particular struggle, would be more open to their pleas. This indeed seemed to be the case, as the King, in December 1806, set up a meeting to discuss the complaints of the municipalities and guilds. In this meeting, representatives of the municipalities of Amsterdam, Rotterdam, The Hague, Haarlem, Leiden, and Delft were given the opportunity to defend the guild system.<sup>67</sup> The Amsterdam representative, Isaac Thin van Keulen, used the opportunity to argue that Gogel’s plan threatened to undermine the existence of thirty thousand Amsterdam inhabitants, who exclusively depended on the protection of the guilds. To make sure that the livelihood of these thousands would be guaranteed, the Amsterdam representative claimed that the new associations needed to be based on local citizenship, a master test, and a ban on peddling.<sup>68</sup> The representatives from the other cities agreed with Thin van Keulen. Support for the point of view of the Amsterdam Municipality also came from within the State Council. The Councillor Wilhem Willink, merchant banker from Amsterdam, argued that a city like Amsterdam could not be limited in the same way as a small village. He maintained that the supervision over the various crafts, as well as the assistance to the poor had to be organised according to local circumstances.<sup>69</sup> Unlike most of the other politicians from Amsterdam in the central government, such as Gogel and Goldberg, Willink still strongly identified with the interests of the municipality, of which he had been a member in previous years and which he rejoined in 1808.

The many complaints about Gogel’s plan had the desired effect. The King started to have doubts. He established a special committee of proponents and opponents of the guild system to re-examine the plan. It soon became clear that the supporters of the guilds were in the majority. On 10 January 1807, the committee, which included Willink, came to the conclusion that Gogel’s plan would have disastrous consequences for the welfare of the cities. To reinforce this message the committee included a memorandum of the representatives of the cities, who had been present at the meeting of the State Council of 8 December 1806. They again insisted that the access to the new associations should be limited to those who possessed local citizenship rights, had been apprenticed for several years, and had passed the master test. These arguments eventually convinced the King. In October 1807, he decided that the recommendations of the special committee and not Gogel’s plan should be taken as the basis for the reorganisation of the guilds.<sup>70</sup>

---

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 173.

<sup>65</sup> NA, arch. Röell (arch. nr. 2.21.008.78) inv. nr. 11 (Letter to Röell of the commissioners of the ship wrights and mast makers guild of Amsterdam, December 1806).

<sup>66</sup> Wiskerke, 174.

<sup>67</sup> Colenbrander, *Gedenkstukken*, vol.V, 591.

<sup>68</sup> NA, arch. Röell (arch. nr. 2.21.008.78), inv. nr. 11 (Letter of the government of Amsterdam to the King, signed by its representative Thin van Keulen).

<sup>69</sup> Colenbrander, *Gedenkstukken*, vol. V, 605-6.

<sup>70</sup> Wiskerke, 183-87.

Hence, it seemed as though the municipalities had been able to avert the attack on the guilds. However, when the proposal for the new occupational associations was finally presented in the Legislative Assembly in January 1808, the core characteristics of the guilds were again prohibited. In the final proposal, the corporations were not allowed to demand a master test, nor could they limit membership to local citizens. It is impossible to reconstruct how the plan was again reformulated, but it is evident that the opponents of the guild system were in the majority in the State Council and among the Ministers. In the absence of an effective system of representation and consultation, this proved to be decisive. In this specific case, it obviously also helped that Louis Napoleon often left the day-to-day governing to his Ministers, who used this freedom to follow their own preferences. Thus, with some delay, the assault on the guilds could continue. On 30 January 1808, the law on the occupational associations was proclaimed.<sup>71</sup>

Another important aspect of the centralisation of the state and the breakdown of the local corporate system was the transformation of the civic militias into a national armed burgher force. Already in the years between 1798 and 1801, an attempt had been made to create such a force. As we have seen, this effort was eventually reversed by the coup of 1801. In 1805, the issue had again been on the political agenda when the French government asked the Schimmelpenninck administration to create a national guard, which can be used 'within and outside the cities to fend off hostile attacks.'<sup>72</sup> The employment of burgher forces outside the cities would effectively transform the local civic militias into a national conscription army, which would be charged with the defence of the country as a whole. For the French government this was attractive because it would allow it to draw regular Dutch army troops from the country and employ them in its international wars. By contrast, the Dutch population was not particularly enthusiastic about the prospect of a conscription army, to say the least. The Amsterdam Municipality even claimed that the proclamation of such a reform would 'throw our entire city into confusion.'<sup>73</sup>

Despite the warning of the Amsterdam Municipality, the Schimmelpenninck government proceeded to make a plan for a national armed burgher force. The task of this force was to maintain order in times of crisis, which could be a revolt or even a fire. The supreme command over the forces was in the hands of the central government, while the municipalities managed the daily affairs. Yet, contrary to the wishes of the French government, it was explicitly stipulated that the forces could not be employed outside the cities.<sup>74</sup> Hence, part of the sting was taken out of the reorganisation project. Nevertheless, the plan still took a potentially important step in the direction of a national conscripted army.

After Schimmelpenninck was dismissed, this plan was adopted by the government of Louis Napoleon. Concerning the reorganisation of the armed burgher forces, the King was decisively more resolved, than in the case of the elimination of the guilds. In fact, in April 1809, the administration of Louis Napoleon issued a new plan for the reorganisation of the armed burghers, which resembled the proposal of the Schimmelpenninck

---

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 187-88.

<sup>72</sup> zo binnen als buiten de steden ter afwering van vijandelijke aanvallen (GAA, arch. NSB (arch. nr. 5053) inv. nr. 689 (Secret minutes of the Aldermen of Amsterdam, 1 November 1805).

<sup>73</sup> onze stad geheel in rep en roer zoude geraten (Ibid.).

<sup>74</sup> Joor, 284-85; C.J. Sickesz, *De schutterijen in Nederland* (Utrecht: T. de Bruyn, 1864), 204-6.

government, but did not include the stipulation that the burgher forces could only be employed inside the cities.<sup>75</sup>

To strengthen the Dutch defences, the Louis Napoleon administration not only tried to reform the civic militias, it also made plans to draft orphans and pauper boys into the army. In 1808, the government decreed the creation of several royal military training colleges, in which male orphans would be drilled as soldiers. The first such training college would have to be created in The Hague, but orphans would be recruited from all over the country.<sup>76</sup> These plans not only caused general moral outrage among the population, which was appalled by the harsh treatment of innocent children, it also threatened to further to undermine the local corporate system. The orphanages, as for example the guilds, had always considered themselves as independent local institutions, which could not be ordered around by higher state institutions. Thus, on the whole, the Louis Napoleon government continued the battle against the local corporate system, which had been revived by the Schimmelpenninck administration.

### ***From Indirect to Direct Rule***

In its effort to eliminate the local corporations and pursue the project of financial unification, the Louis Napoleon government faced the same challenge as the Schimmelpenninck regime: it somehow had to obtain the cooperation of local political actors. This was a major challenge, as the Louis Napoleon government, like the previous regime, had a very narrow political basis. Both governments were founded on the cooperation between a small number of unitary-minded politicians from Holland and the French government. This coalition did not include any local political groups, which could be employed to force the municipalities in the desired direction. To solve this problem, the new government opted for a structural solution, as it tried to change the existing system of indirect rule into one of direct rule.

Starting in April 1807, a system of *landdrosten* was established, which strongly resembled the French prefect system. The *landdrost* was a central state official, who had to make sure that the law and orders of the central government were executed on the departmental and local level. He had direct responsibility over the administration of the department, as well as over the maintenance of public order and the administration of justice. In this capacity, he had to answer to the Minister of Domestic Affairs and the Minister of Justice and Police. The *landdrost* was assisted in his governing tasks by district *drosten*, which supervised the municipalities. The *landdrosten* as well as the *drosten* were appointed by the King. They governed over largely the same departments, which had existed before. A major exception was Holland, which was split into two separate departments. The northern part, in which Amsterdam was situated, was now called 'Amstelland', the southern part 'Maasland'.<sup>77</sup>

In the larger cities and towns, with more than 5,000 inhabitants, the new system of direct rule led to the restoration of the office of Burgomaster. However, unlike the early modern Burgomasters, the new Burgomaster did not represent the local community, but the

---

<sup>75</sup> Joor, 289-291.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., 303-304.

<sup>77</sup> Kocken, 175-77; *Verzameling van wetten van Zijne Majesteit den Koning van Holland* (Amsterdam: J. Allart, 1809-10), vol. II, 126-134.

central state government. In this sense, the Burgomaster was the local equivalent of the *landdrost*. He was appointed by the King, had supervision over the local government, the maintenance of public order, and the administration of justice. And, most importantly, he was to execute the laws and orders of the central government. In executing these tasks, he was assisted by Aldermen and by the members of the city Council, who were also appointed by the King. The Aldermen assisted on a daily basis. The Councillors only met once a year, in a meeting which had to be explicitly called by the *drost*. In this meeting the Council had to decide on the city budget, and advise the Burgomaster concerning complaints which had been brought to their attention by the inhabitants of the city.<sup>78</sup> Thus, the Louis Napoleon government established a highly centralised bureaucratic system, which in principle should make it possible to force the local governments to comply with central state policies.

Yet, in practice this still proved to be difficult, as the establishment of the system of direct rule was not accompanied by a real change in government personnel. Of the 36 Amsterdam Councillors appointed in 1808, 24 had been members of the previous Council, which had strongly opposed the process of financial unification and the breakdown of the local corporate system. Moreover, many of the newly appointed governors were former regents, who had grown up with the ideal of an autonomous Amsterdam government. For example, the new Burgomaster, Jan Wolters van de Poll, came from a very old Amsterdam regent family. He had been part of the Amsterdam government between 1787 and 1795. In the Council, the various regent families were also well represented. Among the new Councillors were Joan Huydecoper van Maarsseveen, David Cornelis van Lennep, Willem Rendorp van Marquette, Jan van de Poll, Jacob van Collen, Pieter Elias, and Nicolaas Calkoen, who were all directly related to former *Vroedschap* members, or had been members of the *Vroedschap* themselves. Of the 38 Councillors between 1808 and 1811, 14 came from an Amsterdam regent family. Most of them had only again become politically active after the coup of 1801, which was true for the majority of the new Councillors.<sup>79</sup>

However, apart from changing the structure of government, the Louis Napoleon administration also made a specific effort to enlarge its political basis by trying to tie the Amsterdam elite to the royal court. For this purpose, and of course to boost its prestige, the central government decided, in January 1808, to move the court and the central government to Amsterdam. Although Louis Napoleon had managed, in the two years of his reign, to gain some popularity, this attempt to woo the Amsterdam elite and population backfired.

The move to Amsterdam was certainly an honour for the city, as it confirmed its status as the real political centre of the Netherlands. Yet, it also confirmed that the city had lost the final vestiges of its political autonomy. And perhaps even more importantly, it cost the municipality many of its most prestigious buildings. At the end of January 1808, the Amsterdam Burgomaster Van de Poll received a letter from Mollerus, the Minister of Internal Affairs, which stated that the King could only take residence in the town hall. Consequently, this building, which had always been the glorious political centre of the city and symbolised its quasi-independence, would have to be transformed into a royal palace.<sup>80</sup> Besides the town hall, the city would also lose many other public buildings to house the

---

<sup>78</sup> Kocken, 178-84; *Verzameling van wetten*, vol. II, 163.

<sup>79</sup> Breen, 96-99, 111-119; Elias, *Vroedschap van Amsterdam*, vol. II.

<sup>80</sup> GAA, arch. Handschriften (arch. nr. 5059) inv. nr. 60 (Letter of Mollerus, Minister Internal Affairs, to Burgomaster Van de Poll, 28 January 1808).

various ministries, the director generals, all of the state archives, the National High Court, the National Auditors Office, the National Library, and the National Museum.<sup>81</sup> Taken together, this project would inevitably cost the city and its population a lot of money.

Not surprisingly, the mass of the population did not seem to be very enthusiastic about the arrival of the King.<sup>82</sup> In fact, Mollerus had to order the Burgomaster to inform the Amsterdam population about the many advantages connected to the King's arrival.<sup>83</sup> Moreover, Burgomaster Van de Poll himself was not overjoyed either. In March 1808, Mollerus had to specifically insist that the municipality would offer its town hall to the King. It should certainly not appear as though the King had claimed the building.<sup>84</sup> The municipality could do little else than comply with the wishes of the central government. Consequently, on 20 April 1808, King Louis Napoleon officially took up residence in the new palace on the Dam.

It soon became clear that the move to Amsterdam was not a success. Attempts to tie the Amsterdam elite to the royal court with lavish parties failed conspicuously, as a major part of the elite simply refused to attend.<sup>85</sup> The King's efforts to create a royal household were not very successful either. In August 1808, Röell, Minister of Foreign Affairs, who was in close contact with the traditional Amsterdam elite, reported that both the ladies Dedel and Rendorp, who belonged to the most prominent Amsterdam regent families, had refused to become ladies-in-waiting. Mrs Dedel claimed to be fully occupied with her four children, and one on the way. Mrs Rendorp simply stated that she liked to spend most of her time in the countryside, which she did not want to change.<sup>86</sup> All things considered, Louis did not get a very warm welcome in Amsterdam. Consequently, his enthusiasm for the city quickly evaporated. From the Fall of 1808 onwards, he spent more and more time in his other palaces, near Apeldoorn and in Haarlem.<sup>87</sup>

### ***Local Resistance Continued***

In the course of 1808 and 1809, it indeed became clear that the King's efforts to win the support of the Amsterdam elite and population did not produce the desired effect. Rather the opposite, as the Amsterdam population became increasingly rebellious in this period. And even though the *drosten* system made it possible to force the municipality to comply with central state policies, the elimination of the local corporate system remained very much a struggle. Instead of actively cooperating, the municipality tried to undermine all attempts to abolish this system.

This was most clearly visible in relation to the guilds. In March 1808, the municipality, contrary to the new law on the occupational associations, refused to permit Isaac Gabriel Polak, a Jewish baker, to buy a patent to set up a bakery.<sup>88</sup> Only after the *landdrost* of Amstelland had intervened and ordered the municipality to comply with the

---

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., (Letter of Gogel, Minister of Finance, to Burgomaster Van de Poll, 7 February 1808).

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., (21 February 1808).

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., (Letter of Mollerus to Burgomaster Van de Poll, 21 February 1808).

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., (19 March 1808).

<sup>85</sup> Colenbrander, *Schimmelpenninck en Koning Lodewijk*, 150-52.

<sup>86</sup> NA, arch. Röell (arch. nr. 2.21.008.78) inv. nr. 68 (Letter of Röell to King Lodewijk, 26 August 1808).

<sup>87</sup> Joor, 90-91.

<sup>88</sup> GAA, NSB (arch. nr. 5053) inv. nr. 932 (Minutes of Burgomaster and Aldermen, 18 Februari, 1 March 1808).

new law, was Polak able to buy a patent.<sup>89</sup> In November 1808, the municipality decided, again against the letter of the law, to refuse Jacob de Held membership of the former guild of 'small inland shippers' because he owned a ship, which was built outside Amsterdam.<sup>90</sup> The *landdrost* had to intervene once more: in his opinion there was no ground on which Jacob de Held could be refused access to the former guild.<sup>91</sup>

It took more than a year of corrections and interventions before the Amsterdam government started to show signs that it was willing to execute the new regulations. One of the first steps in this direction was set in April 1809, when the municipality, referring to the law on occupational associations, rejected a complaint of the glass, jugs, and pottery shopkeepers, who had criticised the lack of persecution of peddlers.<sup>92</sup> In February 1810, the municipality again used this law to overrule a decision of the commissioners of the former shipwrights and mast makers' guild. The commissioners had refused to validate the patent of Jabob Staats to operate as a master ship carpenter because he had always been known as a journeyman. The municipality argued that under the new regulations Staats had the right to buy a patent and set up business as master ship carpenter.<sup>93</sup>

Although the Amsterdam Municipality occasionally executed the law on occupational associations, it also continued to take measures to preserve the guild system in its original form. For example, in November 1809, Wilhem Willink, who was now, after his time in the State Council, an Alderman, convinced the municipality that it should protect the city's tin casters by enforcing a guild law of 27 January 1751. This law made it possible to prosecute all tin ware sellers in the city, who did not belong to the tin casters' guild.<sup>94</sup> This happened in reaction to complaints of the commissioners of the former tin casters guild about the tin ware sold by 'Christian and Jewish peddlers and second-hand iron sellers in market stalls and along the houses.'<sup>95</sup> The enforcement of this old guild regulation went directly against the law on occupational associations, which was meant to liberalise the buying, selling and trading of goods. Thus, even after the establishment of the *drosten* system, it proved to be very difficult to eliminate the Amsterdam guilds, as the municipality continued to sabotage central state policies.

The breakdown of the local corporate system was further complicated by the resistance of the Amsterdam population. This was particularly clear in the case of the civic militias. In 1809, plans to transform the civic militias into a national conscription army led to strong public protests. It started with a pamphlet from Maria Hulshoff, a clergyman's daughter from Amsterdam.<sup>96</sup> Hulshoff, who published the pamphlet anonymously, warned that:

---

<sup>89</sup> Ibid., (16 March, 7 April 1808).

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., (8 October, 2 November 1808).

<sup>91</sup> Ibid., inv. nr. 933 (18 Januari 1809).

<sup>92</sup> Ibid., (14 April 1809).

<sup>93</sup> Ibid., inv. nr. 934 (4 Januari, 9 Februari 1810).

<sup>94</sup> Ibid., inv. nr. 933 (24 November 1809); Ibid., inv.nr. 953 (Supplements of the minutes of the Burgomaster and Aldermen, nr. 202).

<sup>95</sup> Christen- en Joodenkramers en oudijzerkopers zoo in kraampjes en langs de huizen word uitgevent (Ibid., inv. nr. 933 (2 November 1809)).

<sup>96</sup> G. Wiersma, *Mietje Hulshoff, of De aanslag op Napoleon* (Amsterdam: Bakker, 2003)



*the damned hateful **conscription**, that frosty plague, which has depopulated entire regions of France, and which each year costs eighty thousand young French men their lives, will also be established here; first [it will appear] under the deceitfull pretense of a general burgher armament, to maintain public order.*<sup>97</sup>

It is unclear how much impact the pamphlet exactly had, but when Louis Napoleon and his government tried, in August 1809, to implement the new law in Amsterdam, it immediately led to protests and widespread evasion.

In contrast to the enthusiasm for the civic militias in the 1780s and 1790s, the Amsterdam population could not be motivated to join. It had already been very difficult to mobilising the forces in the first place.<sup>98</sup> The transformation of the civic militias subsequently led to strong public protests, when the King decided to employ two thousand men from the Amsterdam burgher forces in the lines of defence around the city under the command of an army general.<sup>99</sup> On 26 August 1809, a large crowd gathered on the Dam square, shouting slogans against the mobilisation, and starting fights. The initiative for the protests had been taken by the wives of the militiamen, who were enraged that their men were being employed for military tasks outside the city borders. For the Amsterdam population the civic militias were a local defence force, and should remain so. The protests produced immediate results. Louis decided to send the militias back to the city, which effectively also meant the end of attempts to integrate the urban civic militias in the national military apparatus.<sup>100</sup>

Public resistance also undermined a decree of the government, issued in July 1808, for the creation of several royal military training colleges, in which male orphans would be drilled as soldiers. In Amsterdam, the recruitment led to protests from both the orphanages and the population. First, various orphanages sent deputies to the King. When Louis Napoleon refused to see them, the orphanages in turn refused to report the names of eligible boys. Although this conflict could still be resolved through a special meeting between the Minister of Internal Affairs, the Amsterdam Municipality, and the deputies of the orphanages, it proved to be the overture for a public reaction.<sup>101</sup> A few days before the orphans were to be sent to the training college, a crowd gathered in protest in front of the Charity Orphanage.<sup>102</sup> Three days later, on 20 July 1809, the issue came to a head when the orphans were officially told that they would be transferred. Upon hearing this, several orphans rang the bell of the orphanage and started to make a lot of noise to attract the attention of the crowd that had again gathered in front of the orphanage. The mob subsequently tried to force the door to set the orphans free. Even though this action failed, as the crowd did not succeed in breaking down the door, and was quickly dispersed by the

---

<sup>97</sup> de verfoeijelijke hatelijke **requisitie**, die ijsselijke plaag, waardoor reeds geheele Landstreken in Frankrijk ontvolkt zijn, en die Jaarlijks aan tachtig duizend Fransche Jongelingen *het leven kost*, ook hier in te voeren; eerste onder den bedriegelijken schijn van eene *algemeene* Burgherwapening (printed in Joor, 290).

<sup>98</sup> GAA, NSB (arch. nr. 5053) inv. nr. 716 (Minutes of the Burgomaster, 12 August 1809).

<sup>99</sup> Ibid., 19 August 1809.

<sup>100</sup> Joor, 296-97.

<sup>101</sup> GAA, NSB (arch. nr. 5053) inv. nr. 933 (Minutes of Burgomaster and Aldermen, 18-19 Juli; Ibid., inv. nr. 962 (Secret minutes of the Burgomaster and Aldermen, 20 Juli 1809).

<sup>102</sup> Ibid., inv. nr. 962 (Secret minutes of the Burgomaster and Aldermen, 19 Juli 1809).

police officers, this protest sent a strong message to the government.<sup>103</sup> After the first group of 190 Amsterdam orphans was sent to the royal training college, the recruitment slowed down substantially.<sup>104</sup> The Amsterdam population showed that it considered the orphans as part of the local community, and was not willing to simply hand them over to the army.

Thus, overall it proved to be very difficult to eliminate the local corporate system in the years after 1805. Although the breakdown of the democratisation process had greatly simplified the creation of new legislation at the central state level, it also made it much more challenging to find local support for the transformation of the state. In the years between 1795 and 1798, democratic ideals and institutions had slowed down and even obstructed the legislative process. Yet, these same ideals had also enabled the mobilisation of a broad revolutionary coalition which could help overrule resistance against the elimination of the local corporate system. After this coalition collapsed, and the democratic ideals had been abandoned, support for the centralisation and liberalisation of the state became very narrow. Only because the French government had supported the small group of former revolutionary politicians around Schimmelpenninck and Gogel, had it been possible to revive the centralisation process and renew the assault on the local corporate system. However, without substantial local backing, it proved very hard to eliminate the corporate state structure in practice.

### ***Financial Subordination***

This is certainly not to say that the centralisation process was completely unsuccessful. The establishment of the national tax system, on the basis of Gogel's design, can be considered as a major success.<sup>105</sup> And, while the construction of this system was resisted by the Amsterdam Municipality, there were also signs that it set off self-reinforcing mechanisms.

Initially, the Amsterdam Municipality mainly tried to undermine the new tax system. In December 1806, the municipality planned to solve the financial problems of the city by setting up a local amortisation fund of 3 million guilders, and by introducing a new local tax, as security for the fund.<sup>106</sup> These measures were contrary to the national tax system, which neither permitted local governments to create an amortisation fund, nor single-handedly introduce new taxes. Consequently, the financial plans of the municipality were firmly rejected by the departmental and the central state.

First, the departmental government made clear that the municipality could only make plans that conformed to the regulations on local government.<sup>107</sup> Subsequently, Gogel, Minister of Finance, directly intervened, when the municipality tried to obtain the necessary authorisation from the central government.<sup>108</sup> On the authority of the King, Gogel appointed four commissioners to comprehensively examine Amsterdam's local finances. He ordered the municipality to provide the commissioners with the necessary information concerning the finances of all the institutions in the city, as well as on the income and activities of all the city officials and employees. In addition, the Amsterdam administration

---

<sup>103</sup> Ibid., arch. Aalmoezeniers (arch. nr. 343), inv.nr. 34 (Minutes of the regents, 20 Juli 1809).

<sup>104</sup> Joor, 315-16.

<sup>105</sup> For a detailed account see Pfeil, *'Tot redding van het vaderland'*.

<sup>106</sup> GAA, NSB (arch. nr. 5053) inv. nr. 574 (Minutes of Council, 16 December 1806).

<sup>107</sup> Ibid., inv. 575 (Minutes of Council, 3 February 1807).

<sup>108</sup> Ibid., (6 February 1807).

had to give full information on the old and new sources of revenue, and the existing debts.<sup>109</sup> A few weeks later, in March 1807, Gogel sent the Amsterdam governors a series of guidelines through which they should improve the finances of the city. These measures included an advance of 200,000 guilders from the national treasure, but also orders to speed up the collection of various taxes and to transfer money from the city's Chamber of Loans to the treasury of the city. The municipality did not obtain authorisation to create a local amortisation fund, or raise special local taxes.<sup>110</sup> This top down financial intervention firmly put the Amsterdam government in its place.

More importantly, it changed the attitude of the municipality towards the financial unification process. After they had been financially subordinated, it became attractive for the local governors to turn to the national state for financial support. In fact, central state support became incremental, as the freedom of the Amsterdam governors to seek alternative financial sources, such as an amalgamation fund, had been cut off. For example, in 1809, when the Amsterdam Municipality was again faced with a large deficit of half a million guilders, the city Council proposed to demand larger contributions from the central government to the city's finances.<sup>111</sup> It was convinced that the municipality had good reason to do so, as it had in previous years made large expenses for the general good of the country. First, it had, in the years after the coup of 1801, restored the finances of the Amsterdam Bank of Exchange, which had been ruined by large loans to the East India Company. Now the Amsterdam Council argued that the central state should refund the 7,650,000 guilders in bonds of the Company, which the city had obtained in the process. It stressed that since the East India Company was closely connected to the country as a whole, its debts were a responsibility of the central state. Second, the Amsterdam Council demanded a compensation for the local poor relief institutions, such as the Charity Orphanage, the Sint Pieters Guesthouse, and the *Spinhuis* and Workhouse, which all received large subsidies from the Amsterdam administration. The Council asserted that a large part of the expenses of these institutions were for the maintenance of the 'large numbers of poor and destitute people, who come here from all parts of the realm.'<sup>112</sup>

Although the Amsterdam government did not obtain large central state subsidies, the arguments of the city Council do reveal that the municipality, at least in financial terms, no longer attempted to be completely independent, but instead became interested in central state assistance. However, despite these self-reinforcing mechanisms, the project of financial unification, and the related elimination of the local corporate system, mainly provoked local resistance. When no financial gain could be made, the municipality tried hard to hold on to its autonomy and maintain the local corporations.

To successfully break down the local corporate system, and centralise the state, a broad coalition was needed which tied local actors to the central state. While it was clear that the democratic ideals of popular sovereignty and representative government did not provide a particularly stable basis for such a coalition, the financial coalition between the revolutionary politicians from Holland and the French government was much too narrow. Thus, the dismissal of democratic ideals, and the effective abolishment of democratic institutions, did not directly facilitate the transformation of the state. Without democratic

---

<sup>109</sup> Ibid., (12 March 1807).

<sup>110</sup> Ibid., (1 April 1807).

<sup>111</sup> Ibid., inv. nr. 716 (Minutes of the Vroedschap, 27 January 1809).

<sup>112</sup> groot aantal ellendigen en behoeftigen, welke uit alle oorden van het rijk naar herwaards toevloeien (Ibid.)

ideals it was clearly very difficult for central state politicians to obtain the cooperation of local political groups.

## Oppression

In July 1810, the Dutch state was incorporated in the French Empire. The annexation was mainly the result of the failure of the Louis Napoleon administration to enforce the 'Continental System'. This system, which was established in November 1806, tried to completely isolate Great Britain from the European continent. All traffic of persons and goods to England and its colonies was forbidden. Although the French satellite states did not officially fall under this system, the French government repeatedly demanded that the Kingdom of Holland would obey its rules. The government certainly took various measures against smuggling, but this did not really stop the English goods, which continued to flow into the Kingdom in the years after 1806. This was partly due to the fact that it was very difficult to patrol the long Dutch coastline, but it was also the result of attempts of the Louis Napoleon government to protect trade as much as possible. After several confrontations, Napoleon finally decided to dismiss his brother, and integrate the Northern Low Countries in the French Empire.<sup>113</sup>

In many ways, the annexation did not seem to fundamentally change Dutch politics. Political authority remained centralised, as it had been in previous years, and the monocratic form of government was retained. Although various state officials now got French names - the *drost*, for example, became *préfet* and the Burgomaster *maire* - their authorities were very much the same as before. They were still appointed by the head of state, who was now the Emperor.<sup>114</sup> During the first year and a half after the annexation, Gogel's tax system continued to function. After January 1812, the French system was introduced, but this did not bring about a radical change either, as it resembled Gogel's system.<sup>115</sup>

Not only was the centralised state structure maintained, the attempts to eliminate the local corporate system continued as well. Most importantly, the mobilisation of the population for military and police purposes was fully brought under central state control. First, conscription was introduced in February 1811, which was relative late in comparison with the other French-occupied regions.<sup>116</sup> However, once introduced, it had a major impact on Dutch society. In the period up to November 1813, when the French occupation ended, more than 30,000 young Dutchmen were conscripted.<sup>117</sup> Besides the conscription, a new National Guard was created in March 1812. In this guard, which was established throughout the French Empire, men between the ages of 20 to 60 were eligible to serve. However, only the group from 20 to 26 had to really perform military tasks. The National Guard fully replaced the armed burgher force, or civic militias. In its place, a real domestic army was established, with the task to maintain public order, and guard the borders. In

---

<sup>113</sup> L. Wichers, *De regeering van Koning Lodewijk Napoleon, 1806-1810* (Utrecht: Van der Post, 1892), 199-223.

<sup>114</sup> Kocken, 195-98.

<sup>115</sup> F.N. Sickenga, *Geschiedenis der Nederlandsche belastingen sedert het jaar 1810*, vol. I (Utrecht: Beijers, 1883), 3-109.

<sup>116</sup> Broers, *Europe under Napoleon*, 63.

<sup>117</sup> Joor, 340-42.

practice, various cohorts of the National Guard were also employed in international warfare, when France suffered massive losses at the end of 1812 and the beginning of 1813.<sup>118</sup>

The assault on the guild system also continued after the annexation. As we have seen, the Amsterdam guilds were still operative, even after the law on occupational associations. The Intendant General of Domestic Affairs, François d'Alphonse, a former French prefect, was alerted to this by a request from a wagon maker from Amsterdam.<sup>119</sup> The wagon maker refused to pay the contribution to the carpenters' guild, which, in November 1810, had decided that a craftsman would have to separately register and pay contribution for each craft he practiced, even if these crafts were regulated by one guild.<sup>120</sup> Protests against this rule forced d'Alphonse to study the laws on the guilds and corporations. He ordered the prefects to strictly supervise the execution of the corporate law.<sup>121</sup> But this merely served to demonstrate that the attempts to abolish the corporate system and centralise the state continued as before.

Yet, Dutch politics did change in one fundamental respect: the political basis of the transformation process was further narrowed by the oppressive policies of the French government. Ever since the French revolutionary armies had invaded the Republic in 1795, a variety of Dutch political groups had cooperated with the occupiers. They had done so because it allowed them to gain the upper hand in the struggle with other groups, and because it enabled them to introduce political, financial, social, and economic reforms, which could not be realised without the assistance of a military force. Although some of these reforms were imitated from the French, the majority were genuinely desired by at least a portion of the Dutch politicians and a portion of the population. The French on their part had not interfered with the specifics of the Dutch state transformation process. But they did support at crucial instances those political groups, which they thought best promoted the French interests. For the most part, however, the various French regimes tried to maximise the Dutch financial and military contribution to their war efforts. The pressure this put on the various Dutch governments notwithstanding, it did leave them substantial freedom to reorganise the political and financial system as they saw fit. This was even the case during the administration of Louis Napoleon. Only towards the end of his reign, in 1809, but especially after the Dutch state was incorporated in the French Empire, did the French influence become really oppressive.

The annexation decree of 1810 introduced a series of measures that made life much more difficult for Amsterdam and the rest of the country. First and foremost, the French regime decided to reduce the interest payments on the national debt to one third.<sup>122</sup> The reduction of the interest payments dealt a major blow to the private finances of the Amsterdam elite, as well as to the middle class burghers, which as a result of the forced loans of the previous years had also become investors in the national debt. Apart from personal financial loss, the reduction also undermined the already deteriorating economy. The purchasing power of the population decreased and the credit system of the merchants,

---

<sup>118</sup> Ibid., 336-39.

<sup>119</sup> Wiskerke, 192.

<sup>120</sup> GAA, NSB (arch. nr. 5053) inv. nr. 934 (Minutes of Burgomaster and Aldermen, 8 November 1810).

<sup>121</sup> Wiskerke, 192-94.

<sup>122</sup> H. Smitskamp, and L.C. Suttrop, *Historische teksten: stukken betreffende de vaderlandsche geschiedenis* (Zwolle: Tjeenk Willink, 1949), 181-83.

which was for a large part based on the investments in the national debt, collapsed as well.<sup>123</sup> Consequently, the economy further declined.<sup>124</sup>

On top of this financial disaster, the French also intensified the border patrols to enforce the Continental System. In Amsterdam alone, more than four hundred French customs officers were stationed. The total number of officers in the whole country must have been many times greater, as they were stationed in virtually every town and village near the border. These French customs officers had far-reaching authority to search ships and houses, confiscate goods, and arrest people.<sup>125</sup> The strict border patrols almost completely paralysed international trade.<sup>126</sup> By 1811, the Amsterdam trade volume had dropped to about one quarter of its 1805 level, which was already low. This brought about a general crisis in all sectors of the Amsterdam economy.<sup>127</sup>

The oppressive and economically disastrous measures of the French regime vaporised any remaining enthusiasm of the central state politicians from Amsterdam for the alliance with the French. In a letter to Gogel, Canneman wrote in August 1810 about the annexation: 'the beginning is misery, the blow has been too generally felt and has overthrown too much, to find medication that can revitalise the weak and decrepit woman from her miserable state.'<sup>128</sup> Central state politicians tried to limit the damage to the Dutch finances and its economy. For example, in July 1810, Goldberg, who was still a member of the Council of State, sent a letter to Napoleon, in which he tried to alert the Emperor to the interests of the investors in the Dutch national debt. Goldberg underlined that he was the only member of the Dutch government, who, in the past years, had supported the incorporation of the Netherlands in the French Empire. He then went on to argue that the investors were suffering at the moment, but he insisted that once the interest payments would recommence, the situation would greatly improve.<sup>129</sup>

In addition, to promoting the interests of the investors, the central state politicians from Amsterdam made an effort to mitigate the damaging effects of the Continental System on Amsterdam trade. Gogel, Cornelis Six, and Van Brien en tried, as deputies from Holland in Paris, to convince the French government that the measures taken in the context of the Continental System were much too strict. They emphasised that many of the articles that were confiscated in Amsterdam by the customs officers were no longer in the hands of smugglers, but in the hands of people who thought that they had rightfully purchased these products. Consequently, these merchants should not be punished severely. They also insisted that many of the confiscated goods came from the United States instead of England, which was not forbidden under the Continental System. Finally, they asked the Emperor to care for the well-being of all, and to not to ruin a great number of his new subjects. Gogel, Six, and Van Brien en asserted that there were certainly some who deserved to be punished, but the great majority was innocent and did not intend to break the rules.<sup>130</sup>

---

<sup>123</sup> Government bonds widely served as credit deposits in this period.

<sup>124</sup> Van Zanden, and Van Riel, 95-96.

<sup>125</sup> Joor, 425-27.

<sup>126</sup> Van Zanden, and Van Riel, 95.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid., 89-90.

<sup>128</sup> de aanvang is ellende, en de trilling is te algemeen gevoeld en heeft te veel omvergesmeten dan dat het mogelijk zijn zoude geneesmiddelen te vinden om de zwakke uitgeteerde vrouw uit dien ellendigen staat op te beuren (NA, arch. Gogel (arch. nr. 2.21.005.39) inv. nr. 25 (Letter of Canneman to Gogel, 11 Augustus 1810)).

<sup>129</sup> Colenbrander, *Gedenkstukken*, vol. VI, 3.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid., 1425-26.

Thus, as the relationship between the Dutch and the French changed from cooperation into oppression, the main concern of the central state politicians from Amsterdam and Holland became damage control.

It is important to note that the change from cooperation to oppression was accompanied by the introduction of French personnel at almost every level of the Dutch administration. Many of the prefects and central government Ministers, as well as most of the customs officers, were French. In this sense, the Netherlands followed the same development as the other French satellite states, albeit a few years later. As part of the larger effort to integrate the occupied regions more closely into the French Empire, the Napoleonic regime had installed French officials in the various satellite states. These officials had been pivotal in executing unpopular measures, such as the conscription, which could only be implemented by coercive means.<sup>131</sup> After 1810, the French had the same experience in the Netherlands, when they tried to enforce the Continental System, and introduce the conscription. As the Dutch became less willing to collaborate, the French were increasingly forced to resort to top down imposition.

### ***Intensified Local Resistance***

The change in the relationship between the Dutch and the French triggered further local resistance. In Amsterdam, one of the most contentious issues was the increased border patrols, which greatly damaged Amsterdam trade, but also finally ended the status of Amsterdam as an independent trading city. Consequently, the border patrols inevitably led to confrontations. For example in September 1810, an angry mob clashed with the French customs officers after they had searched a house on the Keizersgracht. The situation got completely out of hand when the mob began to throw stones, and customs officers started to fire into the crowd. Various people got injured and one died. The confrontation only stopped when the burgher force, a detachment of soldiers, and a deputation of the municipality intervened.<sup>132</sup> This clash was one of several confrontations between the Amsterdam population and the French authorities in the years between 1810 and 1813. In total, there were six minor revolts.<sup>133</sup>

One of the other causes of the local revolts was the conscription, which had already been an issue during the governments of Schimmelpenninck and Louis Napoleon. The conscription effectively ended the tradition of local corporate burgher forces, which had always been perceived as a cornerstone of the early modern Republic. The departure from Amsterdam of the first cohort of conscripts, on 11 April 1811, immediately led to clashes. These clashes were ignited when a girl in the Jodenbreestraat was prevented by French soldiers from saying goodbye to her brother, who had been drafted. This greatly angered bystanders. Riots broke out and demonstrations were held in the Jewish neighbourhood and in the Jordaan, lower middle and working class district.<sup>134</sup> The French authorities immediately issued a prohibition on public gatherings, and established a Military

---

<sup>131</sup> Broers, *Europe under Napoleon*, 63-71; Ibid., "Centre and Periphery in Napoleonic Italy: The Nature of French Rule in the *départements réunis*" in *Collaboration and resistance in Napoleonic Europe: state formation in an age of upheaval, c. 1800-1815*, ed. M. Rowe (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003): 55-68; Woolf, 232.

<sup>132</sup> Joor, 440-41.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid., 799-807.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid., 347.

Committee with the authority to execute people. In relation to the April riots, twenty-three Amsterdam inhabitants were condemned, of which three were given the death penalty. They were executed by a firing squad.<sup>135</sup> Thus, the French response was more repression.

Not only the Amsterdam population resisted the elimination of the local corporate system, the municipality was equally active. As in previous years, the municipality concentrated its efforts on protecting the guilds. For this purpose, the Amsterdam Burgomaster Van Brien en, who had in 1810 replaced Van de Poll, wrote a memorandum to the French Minister of Internal Affairs defending the usefulness of the guilds. He once again repeated the arguments, which time and again had been advanced by the guild commissioners. He claimed that the guilds were an effective instrument to maintain public order, control the quality of production, and collect certain taxes. They provided support to the poor, which relieved the city treasury.<sup>136</sup> Above all, the memorandum demonstrated that the Amsterdam Municipality still tried to protect the privileges of the guilds. Consequently, it is not surprising that d'Alphonse received complaints from Amsterdammers about the former guilds, which issued verdicts against 'foreign merchants and peddlers'.<sup>137</sup> When d'Alphonse confronted Van Brien en with these charges, the latter did not see the problem.<sup>138</sup>

Hence, the same conflict resurfaced, as during the Schimmelpenninck and Louis Napoleon governments. The Amsterdam Municipality defended local privileges, while the central government tried to liberalise the economy without creating general chaos. In January 1812, De Celles, prefect of the Zuiderzee department in which Amsterdam was situated, tried to end the confusion by officially abolishing the guilds. After obtaining d'Alphonse's approval, De Celles ruled that only a patent was required to set up a business or work as a craftsman. Having bought a patent, the craftsman or shopkeeper was no longer obliged to submit to the regulations of the corporations. Like Gogel, De Celles tried to use the patent law to abolish the guild monopolies. However, once again, the Amsterdam government took action to protect the local system of privileges. Van Brien en wrote to De Celles that the abolishment would have disastrous consequences for a large part of the Amsterdam population. He disputed the legitimacy of the decision of the prefect, as the Minister of Domestic Affairs had decided, in the previous year, that the law on the corporations should be maintained. When both De Celles and d'Alphonse strictly stuck to their decision, Van Brien en directly approached the Minister in Paris. This again gave the Amsterdam guilds a little breathing space, since the ambivalent responding letter neither backed up the Burgomaster, nor the prefect and Intendant General.<sup>139</sup> As the French occupation ended before the struggle between the Burgomaster and the prefect was decided, at least part of the Amsterdam guilds managed to survive the revolutionary period.

Overall, resistance against the centralisation of the state and against the elimination of the local corporate system only grew stronger after the annexation in the French Empire. As the oppressive French policies had alienated the central state politicians from Holland, who were effectively the last French coalition partners, political reform could now only be pursued through top down imposition. In Amsterdam, this triggered, as we have seen,

---

<sup>135</sup> Ibid., 664.

<sup>136</sup> Wiskerke, 195.

<sup>137</sup> Colenbrander, *Gedenkstukken*, vol. VI, 1188.

<sup>138</sup> GAA, NSB (arch. nr. 5053) inv. nr. 718 (Minutes of Burgomasters, Juli 1811).

<sup>139</sup> Wiskerke, 198-201.



various revolts, and it strongly motivated the municipality to continue its resistance against the abolishment of the corporate system. Although the efforts of the Schimmelpenninck and Louis Napoleon administrations had failed to win the support of the Amsterdam elite and population, these administrations had at least regularly used their local contacts to consult the municipality about crucial matters, such as the abolishment of the guilds and the transformation of the civic militias. After the annexation such consultative practices disappeared. Consequently, there were no mechanisms left to reduce the friction between, on the one hand, the central government, and, on the other, the Amsterdam Municipality and population.

In November 1813, when the French troops left Amsterdam to fight an invading army of Cossacks, it became clear that the tension between the Amsterdam population and the French had significantly increased in the last years of the occupation. Angry crowds set fire to the French customs offices, while customs officers were physically assaulted. Moreover, the homes of the French authorities were attacked. Confronted with this mass uprising, the remaining French officials fled the city, which meant the end of more than eighteen years of French occupation. The Dutch members of government stayed behind, most of them even stayed in office when the General Dutch Government was proclaimed on 21 November 1813. Only Gogel refused to break his oath to Napoleon, and left for Paris at the end of November.

## **Conclusion**

In 1805, the centralisation process was revived by the Schimmelpenninck government. This revival was remarkable in two respects. First, it was notable because it was not, as in the years between 1795 and 1798, accompanied by a struggle for democracy. Secondly, because of the strong local resistance against the revived centralisation process, and against the elimination of the local corporate system. This resistance only increased in the years after 1805. This chapter demonstrates that the absence of a democratic struggle, and strong local resistance were related. It turned out to be very difficult to force, or motivate local political groups to cooperate with the centralisation process, without the unitary democratic ideal to tie these groups to central state actors.

The political basis for the recovery of the centralisation process had been established through a coalition between a small group of former revolutionary politicians from Holland, and the French government. After the struggle for democracy had collapsed in 1801, politicians from very different ideological backgrounds were able to start cooperating with each other. Consequently, politicians such as Schimmelpenninck, Van Stralen, and Gogel, who had clashed in previously years, were able to collaborate in their common concern over the financial policies of the federalist government, which, in their mind, were unfavourable for Holland. In 1804, these men obtained the opportunity to reverse this situation, when the French government indicated that it was looking for a more centralised Dutch state, which could make a larger contribution to the French war effort.

Although the alliance with the French government, allowed the revolutionary politicians from Holland to revive the process of financial unification, and renew the attack on the local corporate system, it became almost inevitably an increasingly isolated coalition. It did not include any local political groups. Both the Schimmelpenninck administration and the following government of Louis Napoleon tried to change this.

However, these efforts, which were specifically directed at the Amsterdam elite and population, largely failed, as the central state governors discovered that it was very difficult to mobilise a broad coalition for political change without the unitary democratic ideal.

Thus, even though the democratic paradox no longer complicated the process of political change in the years after 1805, the breakdown of the democratic struggle, and the subsequent elimination of the democratic checks and balances, did not make it any easier to centralise the state, and eliminate the local corporate system. While the elimination of democratic procedures certainly simplified the legislative process at the central state level, the collapse of the democratic struggle made it much more difficult to mobilise local support. Consequently, the governments of Schimmelpenninck and Louis Napoleon were forced to transform the state through top down imposition, which in turn triggered much local resistance. The Amsterdam Municipality, which remained sceptical about the effectiveness of a centralised state structure, worked hard to protect the guild system, whereas the Amsterdam population revolted against the transformation of the civic militias into a national conscription army.

Very similar observations concerning the importance of local collaborators have also been made by other studies on the revolutionary period around 1800. For example, John Breuilly remarks in his examination of Napoleonic Germany:

*The princes and officials who pursued such reforms could take this beyond a transformation of central and perhaps provincial government only if they could find extensive sets of collaborators within their territories. In many cases they could not and this meant that such reforms stalled at a local level, or at best created a political vacuum.*<sup>140</sup>

It was clearly very difficult to pursue a fundamental transformation of the state and society without the cooperation of local and provincial groups. Without a powerful central state and an effective system of direct rule, 'extensive sets of collaborators' were necessary to break local resistance, and establish new institutions and policies.

The resistance against the breakdown of the local corporate system only grew stronger after the Dutch state was incorporated in the French Empire. The Amsterdam population repeatedly revolted against the conscription, and against the intensified activities of the French customs officers. At the same time, the municipality continued its defence of the guilds. Since the repressive French policies had now also alienated the central state politicians from Holland, the political basis for the state transformation process completely disappeared after the annexation. As a result, tensions between the French and the Dutch came to a head, and the transformation of the state could only be pursued through coercive means, which the French authorities did not hesitate to use. Hence, it is not surprising that the French, who were in 1795 welcomed by the Dutch as liberators, left the Netherlands as oppressors, accompanied by riots and rebellions.

---

<sup>140</sup> Breuilly, 126.

## 6 Conclusion

The larger aim of this book is to understand the problematic nature of the European political modernisation process. Political modernisation was not a progressive straightforward development, but everywhere in Europe it was characterised by sudden reversals in democratisation and centralisation from the late eighteenth to the end of the nineteenth century. To gain insight in the turbulent dynamic of the European political modernisation process, this study has focussed on the Dutch Revolution, which was characterised by various reversals in democratisation and centralisation. Frequently, the process of revolutionary change went in a completely different direction than unitary democracy.

This becomes immediately clear when we consider the Patriot Revolt (1780-'87). Although this revolt produced new liberal democratic ideas, ultimately it led to a limited corporate form of democratisation, which was directly opposed to the liberalisation and centralisation of the state. The following revolutionary phase, between 1795 and 1798, did generate important advances towards unitary democracy. Yet, they were achieved by highly undemocratic means. Moreover, these rapid advances were reversed after only three years, in 1801. In effect, this entailed the end of the democratisation process, which could only be restored in the 1840s. And, while the centralisation process was revived from 1805 onwards, it met with very strong local resistance.

To account for these contradictions and reversals, a political-process approach has been adopted. In contrast to most current explanations of the late eighteenth century revolutions, and the Dutch Revolution specifically, this approach focuses on the process of political interaction, rather than on the cultural, socio-economic, and military problems, which allegedly motivated revolutionaries to seek political change. The assumption of this study is that the revolutionaries were motivated by a variety of problems and opportunities, which were constantly reformulated in the course of the revolutionary period. Consequently, this study has not emphasised the background of the Dutch Revolution, but has instead concentrated on how political identities, actors, and coalitions were constructed and reconstructed in the revolutionary process itself. Changes in political identities, actors, and coalitions, as part of the revolution as such, can explain the advances and reversals in democratisation and centralisation. In turn, this will help us to understand the problematic character of political modernisation.

The political-process analysis of the Dutch Revolution has produced two types of conclusions. On the one hand, more general historical sociological conclusions can be drawn concerning the processes of democratisation and centralisation, as will be discussed in the next three paragraphs. On the other hand, the investigation has led to a number of observations which specifically address the debate on the Dutch Revolution. These observations will be considered in the last paragraph.

### **The Democratic Paradox**

Democratic ideals were, in the years between 1780 and 1798, very powerful instruments to

mobilise large groups of people for the reform of the early modern state and political regime. In Amsterdam, revolutionary clubs, and militias were created and used to mobilise thousands of people to put pressure on the local, provincial, and central state government. In 1787, the Amsterdam patriots gathered as many as 16,000 signatures on petitions addressed to the local government, and, in 1795, the neighbourhood assemblies organised similar numbers of people throughout the city. Moreover, political magazines, such as *De Post van den Neder-Rhijn*, *De Politieke Krayer*, and *De Democraten*, created a national platform, on which democratic ideals could be presented and discussed. Part of these ideals and practices directly challenged the local corporate framework, on which the early modern Republic was based.

Yet, the same democratic ideals, as well as the democratic procedures which were established in the course of the revolution, formed an obstacle for change, as they gave a broad range of political groups the opportunity to resist the elimination of their political, economic, social, and religious privileges. During the Patriot Revolt the more radical ideas for reform were abandoned, when the various revolutionary groups were, according to the democratic ideals of consultation and cooperation, accommodated in one broad Patriot coalition. While revolutionary intellectuals, like Rutger Jan Schimmelpenninck, were actively involved in this coalition making process, they were unable to pursue their ideas for the liberalisation of the economic and political system. As the majority of the Patriot revolutionaries was set on defending local privileges, the revolutionary intellectuals were forced, in the course of the coalition-making process, to discard their plans for a liberalisation of the corporate system. Consequently, the Patriot Revolt indeed produced new democratic ideas and practices, while at the same time reinforcing the local corporate state structure.

The revolutionary years after 1795 created a very different dynamic of democratisation and centralisation. However, as during the Patriot Revolt, the democratic paradox continued to complicate the process of political change. Although a major part of the Dutch revolutionaries now supported vital elements of the unitary democratic state model, most of them simultaneously resisted the elimination of their own privileges. After the revolution of 1795, Schimmelpenninck, for instance, was a strong proponent of the financial unification of the state, and of the abolishment of the local corporations. However, at the same time, he resisted the elimination of the political autonomy of the Amsterdam government. Paradoxically, the democratic ideals, as well as the newly created representative institutions, provided the perfect platform for this kind of resistance. In the Spring of 1795, the Amsterdam government, headed by Schimmelpenninck, obstructed the transfer of authority from the city to the province, by invoking the sovereignty of the people of Amsterdam. A similar tactic was used by the provincial representatives of Friesland, Groningen and Zeeland, when they were asked to give up the sovereignty of their province to the new National Assembly. Thus, the same democratic ideals, which helped to mobilise a broad revolutionary movement for the reform of the early modern corporate state, were employed to resist the elimination of this state.

Although this research project has not investigated the democratic paradox beyond the late eighteenth century revolutionary period, it is clear that liberal representative institutions were established and consolidated in various Western European states from the middle of the nineteenth century onwards. It was through these institutions that modern welfare states were created. This suggests that the democratic paradox, at least in Western Europe, by then no longer complicated the development of unitary democratic states. This impression is confirmed by Gregory Luebbert's *Liberalism, Fascism, or Social Democracy*

(1991), which discusses democratisation processes in Western Europe during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. This study shows how democratic institutions, instead of obstructing political change, facilitated the further democratisation and transformation of the state. Luebbert demonstrates how electoral competition between political elites led to the incorporation of new social groups in the political process. By giving outside groups the right to vote, political elite groups hoped to gain the upper hand in the struggle over political power. Moreover, the political incorporation of new groups subsequently led, in most of these states, to far-reaching social and economic reforms, which created the basis of the modern welfare state.

Of course, we can only speculate about the reasons why the democratic paradox seemed to disappear in the course of the nineteenth century. Our analysis suggested that democratic ideals and institutions proved to be an obstacle in particular for political change, as they gave a variety of groups the opportunity to resist the elimination of their special political, social, economic, and religious privileges. This in turn suggests that the democratic paradox could only be resolved, and the democratisation process successfully pursued, after the early modern corporations and systems of privileges had been eliminated. Only when the political nation was no longer divided in a variety of privileged groups, each resisting particular aspects of the unitary democratic state, was it possible to successfully transform the state through democratic institutions and procedures.

## **Coalitions**

Changes in the organisation of the state and society could only be successfully pursued through the cooperation between a variety of political actors. No political group, or government, could single-handedly implement political change. Consequently, the type of coalition which was constructed very much determined the pace and direction of the processes of democratisation and centralisation. More specifically, the coalition-making efforts determined whether the democratic paradox was confirmed, or could be circumvented.

The Patriot coalition of the 1780s clearly confirmed the democratic paradox. Precisely the collaboration between the various revolutionary groups made it impossible to pursue a liberalisation of the political and economic system. As the Patriots had been organised on the basis of the corporate identities of regent and burgher, the cooperation between the revolutionaries reinforced, rather than undermined the local corporate system. Consequently, only a limited, corporate form of democratisation could be pursued.

In the years between 1795 and 1798, a very different coalition was constructed, which did challenge the local corporate state structure. This coalition, which included various groups of unitary-minded politicians, the French regime, and popular revolutionary clubs and assemblies, made it possible to temporarily circumvent the democratic paradox by overruling obstructing representative institutions, and eliminating political opponents. Especially the group of Amsterdam revolutionaries around Isaac Gogel and Samuel Wiselius played a central role in the construction of these alliances. By pushing the ideal of a national democratic state, they were able to win the support of the revolutionary clubs and assemblies, who in Amsterdam and many other cities across the Republic, were engaged in struggles over the democratisation of local government. In turn, the French regime was willing to cooperate, as it was under the impression that a unitary democratic Dutch state

would be financially more beneficial for the French state. This coalition was able to break the resistance of the Amsterdam government, and of the provincial assemblies of Friesland, Groningen, and Zeeland. Moreover, it allowed the unitary-minded politicians to take control of the National Assembly in January 1798, and establish a unitary democratic constitution in May 1798.

However, even though the processes of democratisation and centralisation could be pushed forward, ultimately the revolutionary coalition did not solve the democratic paradox. In fact, the failure to deal with this paradox eventually led to the breakdown of the unitary democratic alliance, and to a reversal of the processes of democratisation and centralisation. The first blow to the revolutionary alliance occurred in the Spring and Summer of 1798, when many clubs and assemblies were closed down by the central government to eliminate potential resistance against the unitary democratic constitution. The revolutionary coalition was further undermined when the unitary-minded politicians clashed over the question whether new elections should be held, as proscribed by the constitution. This conflict was eventually decided through the June 1798 coup, which expelled some of the most determined supporters of the new constitution from politics. Third, as the democratic process was restored in July 1798, the opponents of a fully unitary democratic state were able to return to political power. Subsequently, the representative system was again used to resist political change. This seriously slowed down the implementation of the constitution. The time consuming representative procedures were especially problematic, as the central state was still relatively weak, which, in turn, made it very difficult to eliminate the local corporate state structure. After a few years, in 1801, some of the most prominent revolutionary politicians, including Gogel, Wiselius, and Schimmelpenninck, became so frustrated with the democratic process, that they abandoned the democratic ideal altogether. This was effectively the final blow to the unitary democratic coalition, which had already largely disintegrated after the two coups of 1798 and after Napoleon took control of the French state in 1799.

The breakdown of the unitary democratic alliance subsequently led to a reversal in the processes of democratisation and centralisation. In 1801, a small group of federalist-minded politicians was able, with the assistance of the French, to obtain control of the central administration and establish a new constitution, which greatly reduced the influence of parliament and partly restored the political autonomy of provincial and local governments. In Amsterdam, the federalist constitution of 1801 allowed the municipality to re-establish crucial features of the local corporate community. The Amsterdam government, which after 1801 again consisted of various former regents, such as Johan Pieter Farret, and Hendrik Bicker, succeeded in reinstating its control over the civic militias. The municipality also restored the privileges of the guilds, which implied that the attempts to liberalise the economy were largely undone. And, as all this was done in close collaboration with corporate officials, the local corporate coalition was revived as well.

After the unitary democratic alliance disintegrated, no new coalitions could be constructed which tied local political groups to the central government. Although the financial coalition between the central state politicians from Holland and the French government made it possible to revive the centralisation process from 1805 onwards, this alliance had a very narrow political basis. The Schimmelpenninck and Louis Napoleon governments did make attempts to obtain the cooperation of the Amsterdam Municipality, but these efforts failed. Consequently, the centralising process continuously met with strong local resistance after 1805. This resistance intensified after the annexation, when the oppressive policies of the French regime had alienated all Dutch political groups. Towards

the end of the French occupation, the Amsterdam government frequently clashed with the provincial and central state authorities, while the number of riots in the city increased dramatically.

## **Democratisation & Centralisation**

The particular character of the Dutch Revolution can only be fully understood if we analyse the relationship between the processes of democratisation, and centralisation separately, instead of lumping the two together. So far, explanations of this revolution have either exclusively focused on one of the two processes, or considered them as mutually reinforcing. This book has tried to demonstrate, instead, how the two processes were often in conflict.

This was particularly true during the Patriot Revolt, which led to a local corporate form of democratisation. This type of democratisation was based on the idea that only a restoration of the system of local and regional privileges could safeguard the burghers against the abuses of the Stadholder and regents, and guarantee that their interests would be genuinely represented and protected. As a restoration of the privileges reinforced the political autonomy of the corporations and local governments, the corporate form of democratisation was inherently opposed to the centralisation of the state. In fact, in the minds of the Patriot revolutionaries, centralisation equalled Absolutism, while local autonomy guaranteed the protection of freedom and citizenship.

The perspective of the Dutch revolutionaries changed after the introduction of the French unitary democratic state model. This model presented a new type of democratisation, which was based on the ideals of universal freedom and equality. The new type of democratisation directly conflicted with the local system of privileges, but it could very well be combined with the centralisation process, because precisely a centralised state could guarantee that everyone would have the same social, economic, and political rights. Thus, after the revolution of 1795, democratisation and centralisation were in principle mutually reinforcing processes.

However, in practice this relationship proved contradictory. First, as we noticed repeatedly, many revolutionaries used the democratic ideals and institutions to resist the elimination of their privileges, and to protect the autonomy of local and provincial governments. Hence, the democratic paradox especially complicated the centralisation process. Second, this process was also complicated by the fact that most revolutionaries, such as those organised in the Amsterdam neighbourhood assemblies, continued to aim for a local form of democratisation. Although these local democratic efforts could be used by unitary-minded politicians, such as Gogel and Wiselius, to construct a broad coalition for the creation of a unitary democratic constitution, tension remained between the local and national forms of democratisation. After the January 1798 coup, the central government therefore made a large effort to eradicate any kind of local democratic activity.

In 1801, the relationship between democratisation and centralisation again changed when the revolutionaries abandoned the democratic ideal, as they came to the conclusion that the representative system unnecessarily complicated government, and obstructed the transformation of the state. Initially, this not only led to a breakdown of the democratisation process, but it also set off a refederalisation of the state. Nevertheless, after only a few years, the centralisation process was again revived by the Schimmelpenninck

administration. Strikingly, this revival was not accompanied by a renewal in the process of democratisation. In fact, much to the contrary, the democratic checks and balances were further abolished to make sure that the project of financial unification would not be slowed down, or impeded. Although this greatly simplified the legislative process at the central state level, it did make it much more difficult to obtain the cooperation of local political groups. Without the national democratic ideal, very few people were willing to support the elimination of the local corporate system, and collaborate with the centralisation of political authority.

Of course, the question remains whether the democratic paradox and the contradictions between democratisation and centralisation also complicated the political modernisation process in other European states. The many reversals in democratisation and centralisation in the various late eighteenth century European revolutions certainly suggest as much. However, to confirm this suggestion, detailed historical comparative research on political construction processes in various European countries is necessary.

## **The Debate**

This book started out by challenging the current explanations of the Dutch Revolution. So far the debate on this revolution has concentrated on two issues: its allegedly traditional or modern character, and whether or not it was primarily determined by Dutch political forces. If we now reflect on these issues in the light of our findings, it becomes clear that it is impossible to resolve them either way. As this revolution was at all times determined by a combination of forces, no revolutionary phase, or change, can be categorised as exclusively modern or traditional, Dutch or French.

Concerning the debate over the Dutch or French character of the Revolution, this study showed that, at least in the years between 1795 and 1810, political reform was pursued through changing coalitions between Dutch politicians, revolutionary groups, and the French authorities. Initially, the French only incidentally interfered to help particular revolutionary groups realise their objectives. After Napoleon took control of the government in Paris, the French regime intervened more regularly. Yet, even during most of the Napoleonic era, crucial political changes were achieved through cooperation, rather than unilateral French imposition. Only from 1810 onwards, when the Dutch state was incorporated in the French Empire, did the French regime become really oppressive. Hence, it does very little justice to the Dutch Revolution to either characterise it as externally driven, or as an indigenous revolution. Neither does such a qualification capture the fundamental changes in the relationship between the Dutch and the French over the years between 1795 and 1813.

Equally problematic is the debate over the modern or traditional character of the Dutch Revolution. This debate is based on the assumption that we can identify specific political groups which have promoted the modernisation process: the democrats, unitarists, or radicals, and those that have obstructed it: the aristocrats, federalists, or conservatives. This study suggests we should abandon these analytical categories, as no such unified political actors existed. Instead, revolutionary change was pursued through a series of quickly changing alliances between very different political actors. For example, between 1795 and 1798, unitary-minded politicians collaborated with popular revolutionary clubs, and the French regime in establishing a unitary democratic constitution. Although these



actors cooperated at crucial points, their objectives strongly diverged. The clubs were primarily focused on the democratisation of local government, which potentially conflicted with the ideal of unitary democracy. The French, on their part, were mostly interested in maximising the Dutch financial contribution to the French treasury, and did not have a strong preference for a particular type of Dutch state. Even the unitary minded politicians were internally divided, as at least some of them were only aiming for financial unification, but resisted a completely unitary democratic state. The distinction between modern and traditional is further undermined when we consider that the political actors frequently changed their mind about how the state should be reformed. For example, after 1800, many revolutionaries abandoned the democratic ideal, which they adhered to previously. Taken together, this makes it difficult, if not impossible, to distinguish between modern and traditional political forces, and even more so to label the revolution in these terms.

This critique obviously also undermines the more general historical sociological interpretations of European history, which have considered the late eighteenth century revolutions as part of one large modernisation process. Our analysis indicates that the contribution of these revolutions to the development of the modern unitary democratic state was far from self-evident or unproblematic. Democratic ideals certainly made it possible to mobilise large revolutionary movements for the reform of the political system. Yet, the same ideals, as well as the democratic institutions which were created in the course of the revolution, also obstructed the reform process, as they gave various political groups the opportunity to resist the elimination of their specific privileges and authorities. This resistance especially obstructed the centralisation of the state, which could only be pursued by overruling democratic institutions. Thus, the late eighteenth century processes of democratisation and centralisation were not mutually reinforcing, and certainly did not combine into one all-encompassing process of modernisation. Given these contradictions it is not surprising that the construction of unitary democratic states was, throughout Europe and the rest of the world, characterised by almost as many reversals, as advances.



# Samenvatting

Nadat zij op 19 januari 1795 met Franse hulp het bestuur van de stad hadden overgenomen, riepen de Amsterdamse revolutionairen het toegestroomde volk op de Dam toe: GY ZYT VRY! GY ZYT GELYK! Zoals vele revolutionairen na hen, hadden de Amsterdammers het idee dat zij een cruciale stap hadden gezet in de richting van een nieuwe democratische samenleving. Als we niet al te kritisch naar de eerste jaren na de revolutie van 1795 kijken, dan lijkt dit idee inderdaad gerechtvaardigd. In Amsterdam en in andere Nederlandse steden, alsook op provinciaal en centraal niveau, werden representatieve democratische structuren gevestigd. Daarnaast werd de politieke macht gecentraliseerd; tot 1795 was deze voornamelijk in handen van de stedelijke regenten en de aristocratie. Ten slotte werden de corporaties, zoals de gilden, die in de vroegmoderne Republiek hadden gezorgd voor veel politieke en sociaaleconomische ongelijkheid, formeel afgeschaft. In 1798 werden al deze veranderingen officieel vastgelegd in de eerste Nederlandse grondwet. Kortom, een nieuw tijdperk van unitaire democratische politiek leek te zijn aangebroken.

De democratische eenheidsstaat bleek echter niet zo eenvoudig te realiseren. Al in november 1801 werden de grondwet van 1798 afgeschaft en de nieuwe democratische procedures vleugellam gemaakt. Bovendien werd de politieke macht weer gedeeltelijk gedecentraliseerd, wat de regering van Amsterdam op haar beurt de mogelijkheid gaf om de lokale corporaties te herstellen. Deze terugslag in het democratiseringsproces bleek van langere duur: pas in de jaren veertig van de negentiende eeuw kon de strijd voor democratie worden hervat. En hoewel vanaf 1805 weer pogingen werden gedaan om de staat te centraliseren, stuitten deze inspanningen op krachtig lokaal verzet. Politieke modernisering was dus verre van een rechtlijnig evolutionair proces.

Daar komt nog bovenop dat dit proces niet alleen gekenmerkt werd door terugslagen, maar ook door een complexe relatie tussen democratisering en centralisatie. Dit wordt meteen duidelijk als we naar de patriottentijd (1780-1787) kijken, wat als de eerste fase van de Nederlandse Revolutie (1780-1813) beschouwd kan worden. Opvallend is dat de strijd voor meer democratie in deze periode vooral leidde tot een versterking van het gedecentraliseerde corporatieve staatsbestel. De patriotten vereenzelvigden lokale autonomie met vrijheid, terwijl zij centralisme gelijkstelden met absolutisme. Na de Franse Revolutie veranderde dit en begon een deel van de Nederlandse revolutionairen het ideaal van de democratische eenheidsstaat te omarmen. Toch gingen ook na 1795 de processen van democratisering en centralisatie niet altijd even goed samen. Zo kon de unitaire democratische grondwet van 1798 enkel tot stand komen door een serie van coups, waarin politieke tegenstanders aan de kant werden geschoven en representatieve procedures buiten werking gesteld.

*The Democratic Paradox* analyseert bovengenoemde terugslagen en tegenstellingen vanaf het begin van de patriottentijd tot het einde van de Bataafs-Franse tijd in 1813. Deze analyse dient inzicht te verschaffen in het problematische karakter van politieke modernisering in Nederland en in de rest van Europa. De constructie van de democratische eenheidsstaat kende namelijk nergens in Europa een evolutionair verloop. Net als in Nederland vonden ook bijvoorbeeld in Frankrijk en Zwitserland langdurige terugslagen plaats in de ontwikkeling van democratie, nadat deze tijdens de revolutieperiode aan het einde van de achttiende eeuw op gang was gekomen. Het unificatieproces leverde een wat

gevarieerder resultaat: de Franse staat werd verder gecentraliseerd in de jaren rond 1800, terwijl in Zwitserland de aanvankelijke ontwikkeling richting de eenheidsstaat werd teruggedraaid. Vergelijkbare sprongen voor- en achterwaarts in centralisatie en democratisering zijn door heel Europa vanaf het einde van de achttiende eeuw tot in de eerste helft van de twintigste eeuw waar te nemen.

Tot nu toe hebben historici en sociale wetenschappers zich vooral beziggehouden met de sociaaleconomische, financiële, militaire en culturele problemen en ontwikkelingen, die ten grondslag zouden hebben gelegen aan de late achttiende-eeuwse revoluties. Hoewel we hierdoor inzicht hebben gekregen in de mogelijke belangen en beweegredenen van de actoren die betrokken waren in deze revoluties, blijft het onduidelijk hoe de verhoudingen tussen de verschillende revolutionaire groepen zich in de loop van de revolutionaire periode hebben ontwikkeld: hoe zij met elkaar hebben gestreden en samengewerkt. In navolging van recente sociologische theorievorming is deze studie gebaseerd op het idee dat dit soort interacties bepalend zijn voor de organisatie en identiteit van politieke actoren, evenals hun onderlinge relaties. Dit betekent dat de dynamiek van democratisering en centralisatie niet begrepen kan worden aan de hand van achterliggende problemen, die de revolutionairen al dan niet gemotiveerd zouden hebben om politieke verandering na te streven. In plaats daarvan werkt *The Democratic Paradox* vanuit de gedachte dat de tegenstellingen en terugslagen in de modernisering van de staat het gevolg zijn van ontwikkelingen in het politieke interactieproces zelf.

De politieke procesanalyse van de Nederlandse Revolutie heeft geleid tot drie conclusies. Ten eerste werd duidelijk dat de modernisering van de Nederlandse staat gecompliceerd werd door wat ik de “democratische paradox” heb genoemd. Ten tweede kwam uit het onderzoek naar voren dat het type coalitie dat in een bepaalde periode geconstrueerd werd de snelheid en richting van politieke verandering bepaalde. De derde conclusie, die samenhangt met de vaststelling van de democratische paradox, is dat democratisering en centralisatie niet noodzakelijk wederzijds versterkende processen waren, maar vaak tegengesteld aan elkaar waren.

## De democratische paradox

Vooraf tussen 1780 en 1798 werden op basis van democratische idealen grote groepen gemobiliseerd voor de hervorming van het vroegmoderne politieke systeem. Zeer opmerkelijk is dat dezelfde democratische idealen, alsook de democratische procedures die in de loop van de revolutie tot stand kwamen, tegelijkertijd een obstakel vormden voor politieke hervorming. Deze idealen en procedures verschaften namelijk uiteenlopende groepen de mogelijkheid om zich tegen de vernietiging van hun politieke, economische, sociale en religieuze privileges te verzetten.

Hoe deze democratische paradox in de praktijk werkte, werd als eerste duidelijk tijdens de patriottentijd. Op het moment dat de verschillende revolutionaire groepen op basis van democratische idealen gingen samenwerken in een brede patriotse coalitie, moesten de radicalere hervormingsplannen worden losgelaten. Weliswaar waren revolutionaire intellectuelen, zoals Rutger Jan Schimmelpenninck, actief betrokken bij de vorming van de patriotse coalitie, toch slaagden zij er niet in om hun ideeën voor de liberalisering van het economische en politieke systeem te realiseren. Aangezien de meerderheid van de patriotse revolutionairen hun lokale privileges wilde verdedigen – wat

zij deed op basis van de democratische idealen van volkssoevereiniteit en coöperatie –, werden de revolutionaire intellectuelen gedwongen om af te zien van hun plannen voor de liberalisering van het corporatieve stelsel. Een groot deel van de patriotten was van mening dat juist een versterking van het corporatieve stelsel zou leiden tot het economisch en politiek herstel van de Republiek. Bovendien zou dit de garantie bieden dat de belangen van de geprivilegieerde burgers werden gerespecteerd en gerepresenteerd. De corporaties en de daarmee verbonden privileges boden hen bescherming tegen, aan de ene kant, het machtsmisbruik door de stadhouder en regenten, en, aan de andere kant, de ongeorganiseerde massa, die in kwantitatief opzicht de meerderheid van de bevolking uitmaakte. Deze massa bleef dan ook uitgesloten van de corporatieve vorm van democratisering.

Maar ook in de jaren na 1795 werd het politieke veranderingsproces gecompliceerd door de democratische paradox. Hoewel nu het grootste deel van de Nederlandse revolutionairen, geïnspireerd door de Franse Revolutie, cruciale elementen van het democratische eenheidsstaatmodel steunde, waren velen van hen tegelijkertijd niet bereid om afstand te doen van hun eigen privileges. Zo was bijvoorbeeld Schimmelpenninck na de revolutie van 1795 een sterke voorstander van financiële unificatie en van de afschaffing van de lokale corporaties. Tegelijkertijd verzette hij zich tegen de opheffing van de politieke autonomie van de Amsterdamse regering. Paradoxaal genoeg vormden de democratische idealen en de nieuwe representatieve instituties het ideale platform voor dit soort verzet. Zo blokkeerde de door Schimmelpenninck geleide Amsterdamse regering, in de lente van 1795, de verschuiving van politieke macht van de stad naar de provincie door zich te beroepen op de soevereiniteit van het volk van Amsterdam. Dezelfde tactiek werd ook gebruikt door de provinciale representanten van Friesland, Groningen en Zeeland, toen hen werd gevraagd de soevereiniteit van hun provincie op te geven aan de nieuwe Nationale Vergadering.

## Coalities

Veranderingen in de organisatie van de staat en de samenleving konden alleen succesvol tot stand komen door samenwerking tussen verschillende politieke actoren. Geen enkele politieke groep of regering kon alleen politieke verandering bewerkstelligen. Dit betekende dat het type coalitie dat werd geconstrueerd grotendeels de snelheid en de richting van de processen van democratisering en centralisatie bepaalde. Specifiek bepaalde het of de democratische paradox werd bevestigd of kon worden ontweken.

De Patriotse coalitie van de jaren tachtig bevestigde overduidelijk de democratische paradox. Juist de samenwerking tussen de verschillende revolutionaire groepen op basis van democratische idealen maakte het onmogelijk om het politieke en economische systeem te liberaliseren. Aangezien de patriotten samenwerkten op basis van de corporatieve identiteiten van regent en burger, versterkte in plaats van verzwakte de samenwerking tussen de revolutionairen het corporatieve stelsel. Het gevolg was dat er enkel een beperkte vorm van democratisering kon worden nagestreefd, waarvan de meerderheid van de bevolking was uitgesloten.

In de jaren tussen 1795 en 1798 werd een heel ander soort coalitie geconstrueerd. Dit type coalitie, dat bestond uit uiteenlopende groepen unitaristisch gezinde politici, de Franse regering en verschillende revolutionaire clubs, maakte het mogelijk om tijdelijk de

democratische paradox te ontwijken door representatieve procedures aan de kant te schuiven en politieke tegenstanders uit te schakelen. Vooral de groep Amsterdamse revolutionairen rond Isaac Gogel en Samuel Wiselius speelde een centrale rol in de constructie van deze allianties. Met behulp van het ideaal van de democratische eenheidsstaat wisten unitaristisch gezinde politici, zoals Gogel en Wiselius, de steun te verwerven van revolutionaire clubs, die in Amsterdam en andere steden in een strijd verwickeld waren over de democratisering van de lokale overheid. Het Franse regime was op z'n beurt bereid om mee te werken, doordat het er van overtuigd was dat een gecentraliseerde Nederlandse staat financieel aantrekkelijker was dan een gedecentraliseerde staat. Deze coalitie slaagde erin het verzet tegen de democratische eenheidsstaat op lokaal, provinciaal en centraal niveau te breken door een serie van coups, waarvan de staatsgreep van 22 januari 1798 de bekendste is. Het eindresultaat was de unitaristisch democratische grondwet van mei 1798.

Ofschoon de Republiek in korte tijd kon worden gedemocratiseerd en gecentraliseerd, slaagde de revolutionaire coalitie er niet in de democratische paradox op te lossen. Dit werd vooral duidelijk na de totstandkoming van de grondwet van 1798. Vanaf dat moment konden de unitaristisch gezinde politici niet langer politieke tegenstanders en democratische procedures aan de kant schuiven zonder hun eigen grondwet te ondermijnen. Het herstel van het democratische proces bood echter ook geen oplossing, aangezien het de verschillende maatschappelijke groepen weer de mogelijkheid gaf om zich te verzetten tegen de opheffing van hun privileges en autonomie. Uiteindelijk leidden deze problemen tot het uiteenvallen van de revolutionaire coalitie en een ommekeer in het moderniseringproces.

Nadat de revolutionaire alliantie uiteenviel, konden er geen nieuwe coalities worden geconstrueerd waarin lokale politieke groepen met de centrale regering werden verbonden. Weliswaar kwam in 1805 een financiële coalitie tussen enkele Hollandse politici en de Franse regering tot stand; deze alliantie had evenwel een hele smalle politieke basis. Zonder het ideaal van de democratische eenheidsstaat bleek het erg lastig om brede steun voor de centralisering van de staat te verwerven. Na 1805 werden pogingen in deze richting dan ook beantwoord met krachtig lokaal verzet.

## **Democratisering en centralisatie**

De derde conclusie, die direct voortvloeit uit de ontdekking van de democratische paradox, is dat de processen van democratisering en centralisatie onafhankelijk van elkaar bestudeerd dienen te worden, in plaats van deze samen als één moderniseringsproces te beschouwen. Het onderzoek naar de Nederlandse revolutie heeft zich tot dusver exclusief gericht op een van de twee processen of deze als wederzijds versterkend getheoretiseerd. Dit boek heeft juist getracht te laten zien dat de twee processen vaak in conflict met elkaar waren.

Dit was zeer duidelijk tijdens de patriottentijd, die leidde tot een lokale corporatieve vorm van democratisering. Dit type democratisering was gebaseerd op het idee dat alleen een restauratie van het stelsel van lokale en regionale privileges de burgers een garantie kon bieden dat hun belangen zouden worden gerespecteerd en gerepresenteerd. Aangezien de restauratie van de privileges zou leiden tot een versterking van de politieke autonomie van de corporaties en de lokale regeringen, was de corporatieve vorm van democratisering

inherent tegengesteld aan de centralisatie van de staat. In de beleving van de patriotten werd centralisatie gelijkgesteld met absolutisme, terwijl de lokale autonomie een garantie vormde voor de bescherming van vrijheid en burgerschap.

Het perspectief van de Nederlandse revolutionairen veranderde na de introductie van het democratische eenheidsstaatmodel door de Franse Revolutie. Dit model was verbonden met een nieuw type democratisering, dat gebaseerd was op de idealen van universele vrijheid en gelijkheid. Het nieuwe type democratisering was in direct conflict met het lokale systeem van privileges. Het kon echter in theorie goed worden gecombineerd met het centralisatieproces, aangezien juist de centrale staat kon garanderen dat iedereen dezelfde sociale, economische en politieke rechten zou hebben. Na de revolutie van 1795 waren democratisering en centralisatie dus in principe wederzijds versterkende processen.

In de praktijk bleek deze relatie echter een stuk tegenstrijdiger. Allereerst, zoals al eerder opgemerkt, gebruikten veel revolutionairen de democratische idealen en instituties om zich te verzetten tegen de afschaffing van hun privileges en om de autonomie van lokale en provinciale overheden te beschermen. De democratische paradox bemoeilijkte dus bovenal het centralisatieproces. Ten tweede werd dit proces gecompliceerd door het feit dat de meeste revolutionairen, zoals de leden van de Amsterdamse wijkvergaderingen, zich vooral bleven richten op een lokale vorm van democratisering. Hoewel deze lokale democratische inspanningen gebruikt konden worden door unitaristisch gezinde politici, zoals Gogel en Wiselius, in hun pogingen om een unitarisch-democratische coalitie te construeren, bleef er spanning bestaan tussen lokale en nationale vormen van democratie. Na de staatsgreep van januari 1798, trachtte de centrale regering dan ook iedere vorm van lokale democratische activiteit systematisch uit te wissen.

In 1801 kwam er weer een verandering in de relatie tussen democratisering en centralisatie toen een groot aantal revolutionairen het democratische ideaal afzwoor. Zij waren tot de conclusie gekomen dat het representatieve stelsel het landsbestuur onnodig compliceerde en een obstakel vormde voor de transformatie van de staat. In eerste instantie leidde deze ideologische verandering niet alleen tot het ineensinken van het democratiseringsproces, maar ook tot een refederalisatie van de staat. Dit duurde echter slechts enkele jaren: de Schimmelpenninck-regering gaf vanaf 1805 een nieuwe impuls aan het centralisatieproces. Opvallend is dat dit niet leidde tot hernieuwde pogingen om de staat te democratiseren. Integendeel: de democratische *checks and balances* werden verder afgebroken, zodat het project van financiële unificatie zo min mogelijk tegengewerkt zou kunnen worden. Aan de ene kant werd het hierdoor veel makkelijker om nieuwe wetgeving te maken op centraal niveau. Aan de andere kant werd het ook een stuk moeilijker om de medewerking van lokale politieke groepen te verwerven. Zonder het nationale democratische ideaal waren maar weinig mensen bereid hun steun te verlenen aan de vernietiging van de lokale corporaties en mee te werken aan de centralisatie van politieke macht.

De belangrijkste conclusie die uit *The Democratic Paradox* naar voren komt, is dan ook dat de vorming van een democratische eenheidsstaat een ingewikkeld proces is dat vrijwel onherroepelijk gekenmerkt zal worden door terugslagen. Democratische idealen zijn krachtige instrumenten om mensen mee op de been te krijgen, maar ze bieden tegelijkertijd de mogelijkheid tot verzet tegen politieke verandering. Zelfs bij de meest overtuigde democraten is in dergelijke situaties de neiging groot om democratische procedures tijdelijk of voor langere tijd aan de kant te schuiven om politieke verandering te bewerkstelligen. Hiermee wordt echter ook meteen de basis van het politieke moderniseringsproces ondergraven: zonder democratische idealen en instituties blijkt het

lastig om brede steun voor de transformatie van staat te verwerven. Alles bij elkaar is het niet verwonderlijk dat de ontwikkeling van de democratische eenheidsstaat in Europa en de rest van de wereld vrijwel nergens een evolutionair verloop heeft gekend.



# Consulted Archives

## **Gemeentearchief Amsterdam (GAA) (Amsterdam Municipal Archives)**

### ***Archief van de familie Backer en aanverwante families (172)***

Gedrukte placaten, kranten en publikaties, inv.nr. 722 (1780)

Gedrukte stukken betreffende de gebeurtenissen van 1787 te Amsterdam, inv.nr. 726

### ***Archief van de familie Bicker en aanverwante families (195)***

Aantekeningen van biografische en politieke gebeurtenissen door Jan Bernd Bicker, lopend over de jaren 1763-1798, inv.nr. 151

Beschrijving van Jan Bernd Bicker van zijn gevangenschap te Wijk bij Duurstede en Leeuwarden, inv.nr. 163 (1798)

Stukken en correspondentie van Jan Bernd Bicker, inv.nr. 297 (1782-1788)

Adviezen van het vroedschapslid B. E. Abbema over verschillende zaken, inv.nr. 305 (1787)

Concept reglement op de regering van Amsterdam, inv.nr. 310 (1787)

Concept voor een advies, uitgebracht door Jan Bernd Bicker, in de Nationale Vergadering om het eerste plan van constitutie aan te nemen, inv.nr. 374 (1796)

### ***Archief van de Aalmoezeniers (343)***

Resoluties, later notulen, van regenten, inv.nr. 34 (1806-1810)

### ***Archief van de Sociëteit De Groote Club Doctrina et Amicitia (684)***

Naamregister van de leden van de Vaderlandsche Sociëteit die overgegaan zijn naar Doctrina, inv.nr. 217 (1783-1809)

### ***Archief van de Vroedschap (5025)***

Vroedschapsresoluties, inv.nrs. 70, 73, 74

### ***Achief van Burgemeesters; Poorterboeken (5033)***

Generale Poorterboeken, inv.nrs. 28-34

### ***Archief van het Nieuw Stedelijk Bestuur (5053)***

Handelingen van het Comité Revolutionair, inv.nrs. 1-2 (1795)

Stukken betreffende de Provisionele Representanten van het volk van Amsterdam, inv.nrs. 3-17 (1795)

Stukken betreffende de Representanten van het volk van Amsterdam en de Raad, inv.nrs. 22-163 (1795-1798)

Stukken betreffende de Administratieve Municipaliteit, inv.nrs. 225-241 (1798)

Stukken betreffende de Municipaliteit en het Intermediair Bestuur, inv.nrs. 254-352 (1798-1801)

Stukken betreffende het Intermediair Bestuur, inv.nrs. 510-541 (1801-1803)

Stukken betreffende de Raad en de Wethouders, inv.nrs. 570-689 (1803-1808)

Stukken betreffende de Burgemeester/Maire, inv.nrs. 715-718 (1808-1811)

Stukken betreffende de Burgemeester/Maire en Wethouders/ Adjoints du Maire, inv.nrs. 931-963 (1808-1811)

Stukken betreffende de Algemene Vergaderingen van de Wijkvergaderingen, inv.nrs. 1063-1077 (1795-1796)

***Collectie Handschriften (5059)***

Stukken afkomstig van burgemeester mr. J. Wolters van de Poll, inv.nr. 60 (1808-1810)

**Nationaal Archief (NA), (National Archives)**

***Archief van de Staten Generaal (1.01.03)***

Geresumeerde minuten van de notulen van de vergaderingen van de Staten-Generaal, inv.nrs. 3085, 3087-3090

Geresumeerde minuten van de secrete-resoluties van de Staten-Generaal, inv.nr. 4513 (1780)

***Archieven van de Wetgevende Colleges, 1796-1801 (2.01.01.01)***

Stukken van het speciale financiële comité, inv.nr. 565

***Collectie Canneman (2.21.005.30)***

Correspondentie, inv.nr. 75

***Collectie Gogel (2.21.005.39)***

Diverse, inv.nr. 2, 3

Brieven van Canneman, inv.nr. 25

***Collectie Roëll (2.21.008.78)***

Correspondentie, inv.nr. 11, 68

***Collectie Goldberg (2.21.192)***

Adviezen in de Staatsraad, inv.nr. 59

Adviezen bij gelegenheid der regeringsverandering in 1806, inv.nr. 60

***Archief van Financie van Holland (3.01.29)***

Rapporten en brieven aangaande de middelen tot betaling van de eerste helft der honderd miljoen aan het Comité de Salut Public ingevolge het Haagse Verdrag van 16 mei 1795, inv.nr. 913

***Archief van de Provisionele Representanten van het Volk van Holland (3.02.01)***

Resoluties van de Provisionele Representanten, inv.nrs. 3, 8 (1795)

Ingekomen missiven, rekesten en adviezen bij de Provisionele Representanten, inv.nr. 41 (1795)

Stukken opgemaakt en/of ontvangen door de Commissie ingevolge resolutie van 1795 maart 19 belast met de regeling van de moeilijkheden binnen de municipaliteit van Amsterdam met betrekking tot het afleggen van de eed der ambtenaren, inv.nrs. 97, 98



# Bibliography

- Aalbers, J. *De Republiek en de vrede van Europa: de buitenlandse politiek van de Republiek der Verenigde Nederlanden na de vrede van Utrecht (1713), voornamelijk gedurende de jaren 1720-1733*. Groningen: Wolters-Noordhoff, 1980.
- Almond, G.A., and S. Verba. *The Civic Culture: Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations*. Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1965.
- Baker, K.M., ed. *The French Revolution and the Creation of Modern Political Culture*. Oxford: Pergamon, 1987-'94.
- Bates, R.H., et.al, eds. *Analytic Narratives*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997.
- Bedenkingen over het aanstellen van regenten, in een vrij gemeenebest*. Amsterdam: J.Verlem, 1787.
- Bendix, R. *Kings or People: Power and the Mandate to Rule*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978.
- . *Nation-Building and Citizenship: Studies of Our Changing Social Order*. New York: John Wiley, 1964.
- Blanning, T.C.W. *The French Revolutionary Wars, 1787-1802*. London: Arnold, 1996.
- Blickle, P. *Resistance, Representation, and Community*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997.
- Blockmans, W.P., and C. Tilly. *Cities and the Rise of States in Europe, A.D. 1000-1800*. Boulder: Westview, 1994.
- Bloemgarten, S. *Hartog de Hartog Lémon*. Amsterdam: Aksant, 2007.
- Breen, J.C. "De regeering van Amsterdam gedurende den Franschen tijd" *Jaarboek van het Genootschap Amstelodamum* 12 (1914): 1-130.
- Breuilly, J. "Napoleonic Germany and State-formation" in *Collaboration and resistance in Napoleonic Europe: state formation in an age of upheaval, c. 1800-1815*, ed. M.Rowe (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003): 121-152.
- . Ibid., "Approaches to Nationalism" in *Mapping the Nation*, ed. G. Balakrishnan (London: Verso, 1996): 146-74.
- Broers, M. "Centre and Periphery in Napoleonic Italy: The Nature of French Rule in the *départements réunis*" in *Collaboration and resistance in Napoleonic Europe: state formation in an age of upheaval, c. 1800-1815*, ed. M.Rowe (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003): 55-73.
- . *Europe under Napoleon, 1799-1815*. London: Arnold, 1996.
- Brood, P., P. Nieuwland, and L. Zoodsma, eds. *Homines Novi: de eerste volksvertegenwoordigers van 1795*. Amsterdam: Schiphouwer en Brinkman, 1993.
- Brugmans, H. *Geschiedenis van Amsterdam*, vol. IV, *Afgaande getij, 1697/1795*. Utrecht: Het Spectrum, 1973.
- Bruijnsters, P.J. "Lesegesellschaften in den Niederlanden" In *Lesegesellschaften und bürgerliche Emanzipation. Ein europäischer Vergleich*, ed. O. Dann (München: Beck, 1981): 143-158.
- Bruin, R.E. de. *Burghers op het kussen: volkssoevereiniteit en bestuurssamenstelling in de stad Utrecht, 1795-1813*. Zutphen: De Walburg Pers, 1986.
- Calkoen, H. *Het politiek systema van de Regeering van Amsterdam, in een waar daglicht voorgesteld*. Middelburg: C. Bohémer, 1780.

- Capellen tot den Pol, J.D. van der. *Aan het volk van Nederland*. Amsterdam: De Bezige Bij, 1966.
- Colenbrander, H.T. "Aanteekeningen betreffende de vergadering van vaderlandsche regenten te Amsterdam, 1783-1787" *Bijdragen en Mededelingen van het Historische Genootschap* 20 (1899): 77-192.
- . *De Bataafsche Republiek*. Amsterdam: Meulenhoff, 1908.
- . *De Patriottentijd: hoofdzakelijk naar buitenlandsche bescheiden*. Den Haag: Nijhoff, 1897-'99.
- . *Gedenkstukken der algemeene geschiedenis van Nederland van 1795 tot 1840*. Den Haag: Nijhoff, 1905-1922.
- . *Schimmelpenninck en Koning Lodewijk*. Amsterdam: Meulenhoff, 1911.
- Concept-Reglement op de regeerings bestelling van de provincie Utrecht*. Utrecht: B. Wild, 1784.
- Connelly, O. *Napoleon's Satellite Kingdoms*. New York: The Free Press, 1965.
- Corrigan, P., and D. Sayer. *The Great Arch: English State Formation as Cultural Revolution*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1985.
- Courier van Europa
- Dagverhaal der handelingen van de Nationaale Vergadering representeerende het Volk van Nederland*. Den Haag: Van Schelle en comp., 1796-1798.
- Dagverhaal der handelingen van het Vertegenwoordigend Lichaam des Bataafschen volks*. Den Haag: Van Schelle en Comp., 1798-1801.
- Dahrendorf, R. *Society and Democracy in Germany*. New York: W.W. Norton, 1967.
- Dalton, R. "Communists and Democrats: attitudes toward democracy in the two Germanies" *British Journal of Political Science* 24 (1994): 469-493.
- . *Citizen Politics in Western Democracies*. Chatham House, NJ: Chatham House Publishers, 1996.
- Decreten der Constitueerende Vergadering representeerende het Bataafsche Volk*. Den Haag: ter 's Lands Drukkery, 1798.
- Decreten der Nationale Vergadering representeerende het Volk van Nederland*. Den Haag: ter 's Lands Drukkery, 1796-1798.
- De Democraten*
- Diederiks, H. *Een stad in verval: Amsterdam omstreeks 1800: demografisch, economisch, ruimtelijk*. Amsterdam: Historisch Seminarium van de Universiteit van Amsterdam, 1982.
- Downing, B.M. *The Military Revolution and Political Change: Origins of Democracy and Autocracy in Early Modern Europe*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992.
- Dudok van Heel, S.A.C. "Waar waren de Amsterdamse katholieken in de zomer van 1585?" *Jaarboek van het Genootschap Amstellodamum* 77 (1985): 13-53.
- Eene gepaste aanspraak aan 't volk van Nederland in 't algemeen, en aan de inwoonders der stad Amsterdam in 't byzonder*. Rotterdam, 1780.
- Eisenstadt, S.N., and S. Rokkan, eds. *Building States and Nations*. Beverly Hills: Sage, 1973.
- Elias, A.M. "Van Raad van State, Comité te Lande en Staatsraad (1795-1810)" in *Raad van State 450 jaar*, ed. H.C.C.de Schepper (Den Haag: Staatsuitgeverij, 1981): 113-139.
- Elias, A.M., and C.M. Schölvinck. *Volksrepresentanten en wetgevers: de politieke elite in de Bataafs-Franse Tijd 1796-1810*. Amsterdam: Van Soeren, 1991.
- Elias, J.E. *De Vroedschap van Amsterdam, 1578-1795*. Haarlem: Loosjes, 1903-1905.
- . *Geschiedenis van het Amsterdamsche Regentenpatriciaat*. Den Haag: Nijhoff, 1923.

- Ertman, T. *Birth of the Leviathan: Building States and Regimes in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.
- Evans, P.B., D. Rueschemeyer, and T. Skocpol. *Bringing the State back in*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985.
- Eyoh, D. "Modernization" in *New Dictionary of the History of Ideas*, vol. IV, ed. M. Horowitz (Detroit: Charles Scribner's Sons, 2005): 1485-87.
- Fritschy, J.M.F. *De patriotten en de financiën van de Bataafse Republiek: Hollands krediet en de smalle marges voor een nieuw beleid (1795-1801)*. Den Haag: Stichting Hollandse Historische Reeks, 1988.
- Fruin, R. T. *Robert Fruin's verspreide geschriften*, vol. IV, *Historische opstellen*. Den Haag: Nijhoff, 1901.
- Furet, F. *Penser la Révolution française*. Paris: Gallimard, 1978.
- Gabriëls, A.J.C.M. *De heren als dienaren en de dienaar als heer: het stadhouderlijk stelsel in de tweede helft van de achttiende eeuw*. Den Haag: Stichting Hollandse Historische Reeks, 1990.
- Geyl, P.C.A. *Revolutiedagen te Amsterdam: (Augustus-September 1748): Prins Willem IV en de Doelistenbeweging*. Den Haag: Nijhoff, 1936.
- Godefroi, L.S. *De eerste fase van de financiële unificatie van Nederland*. Rotterdam: Erasmus Universiteit, 1986.
- Gou, L. de. *De Staatsregeling van 1798: bronnen voor de totstandkoming*. Den Haag: Bureau der Rijkscommissie voor Vaderlandse Geschiedenis, 1988.
- . *De staatsregeling van 1801*. Den Haag, Instituut voor Nederlandse Geschiedenis, 1995.
- . *De Staatsregeling van 1805 en de Constitutie van 1806*. Den Haag: Instituut voor Nederlandse Geschiedenis, 1997.
- . *Het Ontwerp van Constitutie van 1797: de behandeling van het Plan van Constitutie in de Nationale Vergadering*. Den Haag: Nijhof, 1983.
- . *Het plan van constitutie van 1796: chronologische bewerking van het archief van de eerste constitutiecommissie ingesteld bij decreet van de Nationale Vergadering van 15 maart 1796*. Den Haag: Nijhoff, 1975.
- Grondwettige herstelling, van Nederlands staatswezen zo voor het algemeen bondgenootschap, als voor het bestuur van elke byzondere provincie*. Amsterdam: Johannes Allart, 1784-'86.
- Habermas, J. *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere. An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1989.
- Hall, M.C. van. *Herinneringen van mr. Maurits Cornelis van Hall, 1787-1815*. Amsterdam: Blikman & Santorius, 1867.
- Higley, J., and R. Gunther. *Elites and Democratic Consolidation in Latin America and Eastern Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992.
- Hunt, L. *Politics, Culture, and Class in the French Revolution*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984.
- Inglehart, R. *Culture Shift in Advanced Industrial Society*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990.
- Irhoven van Dam, W. van. *Vyfde missive van Candidus, aan den schryver van het Politiek Vertoog, diende ter wederlegging van het zelve*. Rotterdam, 1782.
- Israel, J. *The Dutch Republic*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995.
- Jaarboeken der Bataafsche Republiek*. Amsterdam: Wessing en Van der Hey, 1795-98.
- Jong, M. de. "Het einde eener staatkundige figuur" *Jaarboek van het Genootschap Amstelodamum* 28 (1931): 225.

- Joor, J. *De adelaar en het lam: onrust, opruiing en onwilligheid in Nederland ten tijde van het Koninkrijk Holland en de inlijving bij het Franse keizerrijk (1806-1813)*. Amsterdam: De Bataafsche Leeuw, 2000.
- Jourdan, A.R.M. "Les Gaulois en Batavie: des relations diplomatiques machiavéliques" in *Remous révolutionnaires, République batave, armée française*, eds. A.R.M. Jourdan, and J.T. Leersen (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1996): 91-117
- Karl, T.L. "Dilemmas of Democratisation in Latin America" *Comparative Politics* 23, 1 (1990): 1-21
- Klein, S.R.E. "Republikanisme en Patriottisme. Rutger Jan Schimmelpenninck en de klassieke wortels van het republikeinse denken (1784-1785)" *Tijdschrift voor geschiedenis* 106 (1993): 179-207.
- . "Republikanisme en Patriottisme. Rutger Jan Schimmelpenninck en de klassieke wortels van het republikeinse denken (1784-1785)" *Tijdschrift voor geschiedenis* 106 (1993): 179-207.
- . *Patriots republikanisme: politieke cultuur in Nederland (1766-1787)*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1995.
- Klein, S.R.E., and J.G.M.M. Rosendaal. "Democratie in context: nieuwe perspectieven op het Leids Ontwerp (1785)" *De Achttiende Eeuw: documentatieblad van de Werkgroep Achttiende Eeuw* 25.1 (1994): 71-100.
- Kloek, J., and W.W. Mijnhardt. *1800: Blauwdrukken voor een samenleving*. Den Haag: Sdu Uitgevers, 2001.
- Knevel, P. *Burghers in het geweer: de schutterijen in Holland, 1550-1700*. Hilversum: Verloren, 1994.
- Kocken, M.J.A.V. *Van stads- en plattelandsbestuur naar gemeentebestuur: proeve van een geschiedenis van ontstaan en ontwikkeling van het Nederlandse gemeentebestuur tot en met de gemeentewet van 1851*. Den Haag: Stichting Gemeentelijk Cultuurfonds, 1973.
- Kuijpers, E., and M. Prak. "Burger, ingezetene, vreemdeling: burgerschap in Amsterdam in de 17e en 18e eeuw" in *Burger*, eds. J. Kloek, and K. Tilmans. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2002.
- Kuiper, J. *Een revolutie ontrafeld, politiek in Friesland 1795-1798*. Franeker: Van Wijnen, 2002.
- Lange, H. de. "De politieke actie van een bewuste publieke opinie" *De gids: nieuwe vaderlandsche letteroefeningen* 134.8 (1971): 505-515.
- Latour, B. *Reassembling the Social*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.
- Leeuwen, M.H.D. van. *Bijstand in Amsterdam, ca. 1800-1850: armenzorg als beheersings- en overlevingsstrategie*. Zwolle: Waanders, 1992.
- Lefebvre, G. *The Coming of the French Revolution*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1947.
- Lennep, F.J.E. van. *Late regenten*. Haarlem: H.D. Tjeenk Willink, 1962.
- Lerner, M.H. "Privileged communities or Equal Individuals: The Political Culture of *Freiheit* and *Liberté* in the Swiss Public Arena, 1796-1847." PhD thesis, Columbia University, 2003.
- Limburg Brouwer, P. van. *Het leven van Mr. Samuel Iperuszoon Wiselius*. Groningen: P. van Zweeden, 1846.
- Linz, J.J., and A. Stepan. *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996.
- Lipset, S.M. "Some Social Requisites of Democracy: Economic Development and Political Legitimacy" *American Political Science Review* 53, 1 (1959): 69-105.



- Lipset, S.M., K.R. Soong, and J.C. Torres. "A Comparative Analysis of the Social Requisites of Democracy" *International Social Science Journal* 136 (1993): 155-175.
- Luebbert, G.M. *Liberalism, Fascism, or Social Democracy: Social Classes and the Political Origins of Regimes in Interwar Europe*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1991.
- Manen, I.J. van, and K. Vermeulen. "Het lagere volk van Amsterdam in de strijd tussen patriotten en oranjegezinden, 1780-1800" *Tijdschrift voor Sociale Geschiedenis* 7 (1981): 3-42.
- Manen, I.J. van, and K. Vermeulen. "Het lagere volk van Amsterdam in de strijd tussen patriotten en oranjegezinden, 1780-1800" *Tijdschrift voor Sociale Geschiedenis* 6 (1980): 331-356.
- Manger jr., J.B. *Recherches sur les relation économique entre la France et la Hollande pendant la Révolution Française (1785-1795)*. Paris: Honoré Champion, 1923.
- Marx, K., and F. Engels. *Collected Works*, vol. III. London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1975.
- Marx, K., and F. Engels. *Collected Works*, vol. V. London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1976.
- Mathiez, A. *The French Revolution*. New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1964.
- McAdam, D., S. Tarrow, and C. Tilly. *Dynamics of Contention*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.
- McDonough, P., S. Barnes, and A. Lopez Pina. "The Nature of Political Support and Legitimacy in Spain" *Comparative Political Studies* 27 (1995): 349-380.
- Mijnhardt, W.W. "The Dutch Enlightenment" in *The Dutch Republic in the Eighteenth Century: Decline, Enlightenment, and Revolution*, ed. M.C. Jacob, and W.W. Mijnhardt (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992): 197-223.
- Moore, B. *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy: Lord and Peasant in the Making of the Modern World*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1966.
- Moore, M. "Democracy and Development in Cross-National Perspective: A New Look at the Statistics" *Democratisation* 2, 2 (1995): 1-19.
- Mouffe, C. *The Democratic Paradox*. London: Verso, 2000.
- Nationaale Bataafsche Courant*
- Nierop, H. van. "Popular participation in politics in the Dutch Republic" in *Resistance, Representation and Community*, ed. P. Blickle (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997): 272-290.
- Nieuwe Nederlandsche jaerboeken*. Leiden: Pieter van der Eyk, 1767-1799.
- Ontwerp om de Republiek door eene heilzaame vereeniging der belangen van regent en burger, van binnen gelukkig, en van buiten gedugt te maaken*. Leiden: L. Herdingh, 1785.
- Otten, J., and H. Reitsma. "De omwenteling in Amsterdam" *Amstelodamum* 82.1 (1995): 10-20.
- Palluel-Guillard, A. "Les Pays-Bas a l'impérialisme français" in *L'Europe de Napoléon*, ed. J. Tulard (Le Coteau: Horvath, 1989): 249-272.
- Palmer, R.R. *The Age of Democratic Revolution*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1959-1964.
- Paulus, P. *Verhandeling over de vrage: in welken zin kunnen de menschen gezegd worden gelyk te zyn? en welke zyn de regten en pligten, die daaruit voortvloeien?* Haarlem: C. Plaat, 1793.
- Pfeil, T. *'Tot redding van het vaderland': het primaat van de Nederlandse overheidsfinanciën in de Bataafs-Franse tijd 1795-1810*. Amsterdam: NEHA, 1998.
- Plan ter oproeping der burgers van Nederland tot het verkiezen eener Nationaale Conventie, gearresteerd by de vergadering der provisioneele Representanten van het volk van Holland, op vrydag den 24 July 1795*. Den Haag: Lands Drukkery van Holland, 1795.

- Poell, T. "Liberal Democracy versus Late Medieval Constitutionalism" *Redescriptions: Yearbook of Political Thought and Conceptual History* 8 (2004): 114-145.
- . "Het einde van een tijdperk: de Bataafs-Franse tijd 1795-1813" in *Geschiedenis van Amsterdam*, vol. 2.2, *Zelfbewuste stadstaat, 1650-1813*, eds. W. Frijhoff, and M. Prak (Amsterdam: SUN, 2005): 428-499.
- . "Local Particularism Challenged (1795-1813)" in *The Political Economy of the Dutch Republic*, ed. O. Gelderblom (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008): forthcoming.
- De Politieke Kruyer*
- De Post van den Neder-Rhijn*
- Prak, M. "Aristocratisering" *Spiegel historiael: maandblad voor geschiedenis en archeologie* 23 (1988): 226-232.
- . "Burgers in beweging. Ideaal en werkelijkheid van de onlusten te Leiden in 1748" *Bijdragen en medelingen betreffende de geschiedenis der Nederlanden* 106 (1991): 365-393.
- . "Citizen Radicalism and Democracy in the Dutch Republic: The Patriot Movement of the 1780s," *Theory and Society*, 20.1 (1991): 73-102.
- . "Individual, Corporation and Society: the Rhetoric of Dutch guilds" in *Individual, Corporate and Judicial Status in European Cities (Late Middle Ages and Early Modern Period)*, eds. M. Boone, and M. Prak. (Apeldoorn: Garant, 1996): 255-279.
- . "Revolutie in Friesland, 1795-1798" *De vrije Fries* 83 (2003): 201-210.
- . "The Dutch Republic's City-State Culture (17th-18th centuries)" in *A Comparative Study of Thirty City-State Cultures: An Investigation Conducted by the Copenhagen Polis Centre*, ed. M.H. Hansen. Copenhagen: C. A. Reitzels Forlag, 2000.
- . *Republikeinse veelheid, democratisch enkelvoud: Sociale verandering in het Revolutietijdvak 's-Hertogenbosch 1770-1820*. Nijmegen: SUN, 1999.
- Priestley, J. *An Essay on the First Principles of Government: and on the Nature of Political, Civil, and Religious Liberty*. Dublin, 1768.
- Przeworski, A. "Democracy as a contingent outcome of conflicts" in *Constitutionalism and democracy*, eds J. Elster and R. Slagstad. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988.
- Reinhard, W. ed. *Power Elites and State Building*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996.
- Reitsma, H. "Genootschappen in Amsterdam en de revolutie van 1787" in *1787: De Nederlandse revolutie?*, eds. Th. van der Zee, J. Rosendaal, and P. Thissen (Amsterdam: De Bataafsche Leeuw, 1988): 146-165.
- . "Lesegesellschaften und bürgerliche Revolution in Amsterdam" in *Lesegesellschaften und bürgerliche Emanzipation. Ein europäischer Vergleich*, ed. O. Dann (München: Beck, 1981): 159-180.
- Rendorp, J. *Memorien, dienende tot opheldering, van het gebeurde gedurende den laatsten Engelschen oorlog*. Amsterdam: Johannes Allart, 1792.
- Resink, B., and J. Verhoeven. "De stem van het volk: de Amsterdamse wijkvergaderingen in de eerste jaren der Bataafse revolutie" *Amstelodamum* 82.2 (1995): 33-43.
- Rosendaal, J.G.M.M. *Bataven!: Nederlandse vluchtelingen in Frankrijk, 1787-1795*. Nijmegen: Vantilt, 2003.
- Rostow, W. *The Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1960.
- Rowe, M., ed. *Collaboration and resistance in Napoleonic Europe: state formation in an age of upheaval, c. 1800-1815*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003.
- Rowen, H.H. *John de Witt, Grand Pensionary of Holland, 1625-1672*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978.

- Rozman, G. "Modernization Theory" in *New Dictionary of the History of Ideas*, vol. IV, ed. M. Horowitz (Detroit: Charles Scribner's Sons, 2005): 1487-90.
- Rudé, G. *The Crowd in the French Revolution*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967.
- Rueschemeyer, D., J.H. Stephens, and E. Stephens. *Capitalist Development and Democracy*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992.
- Sas, N.C.F. van. "Politiek als leerproces: het patriottisme in Utrecht" *Jaarboek* (1987): 9-42.
- . "Scenario's voor een onvoltooide revolutie, 1795-1798," *Bijdragen en mededelingen betreffende de geschiedenis der Nederlanden* 104(1989): 622-637.
- . "The Patriot Revolution: New Perspectives" in *The Dutch Republic in the Eighteenth Century: Decline, Enlightenment, and Revolution*, ed. M.C. Jacob, and W.W. Mijnhardt (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992): 91-120.
- . *De metamorfose van Nederland: van oude orde naar moderniteit, 1750-1900*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2004.
- Schama, S. *Patriots and Liberators: Revolution in the Netherlands, 1780-1813*. New York: Knopf, 1977.
- Schimmelpenninck, G. *Rutger Jan Schimmelpenninck, en eenige gebeurtenissen van zijnen tijd*. Den Haag: Van Cleef, 1845.
- Schimmelpenninck, R.J. *Verhandeling over eene wel ingerigte volksregeering*. Leiden: Frans de Does, 1785.
- Schmitter, P., L. Whitehead, and G. O'Donnell eds. *Transitions to Democracy: Latin America and Southern Europe*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986.
- Schulte Nordholt, J.W. *The Dutch Republic and American Independence*. London: University of North Carolina Press, 1982.
- Sickenga, F.N. *Geschiedenis der Nederlandsche belastingen sedert het jaar 1810*. Utrecht: Beijers, 1883.
- Sickesz, C.J. *De schutterijen in Nederland*. Utrecht: T. de Bruyn, 1864.
- Sillem, J.A. *De politieke en staathuishoudkundige werkzaamheid van Isaac Jan Alexander Gogel*. Amsterdam: Müller, 1864.
- Skocpol, T. *States and Social Revolutions: A Comparative Analysis of France, Russia, and China*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979.
- Smitskamp, H., and L.C. Suttorp, *Historische teksten: stukken betreffende de vaderlandsche geschiedenis*. Zwolle: Tjeenk Willink, 1949.
- Soboul, A. *The French Revolution, 1787-1799: From the Storming of the Bastille to Napoleon*. New York: Vintage Books, 1974.
- Sutherland, D.M.G. *France 1789-1815: Revolution and Counterrevolution*. London: Fontana Paperbacks, 1985.
- Swildens, J.H. *Vaderlandsch A-B boek voor de Nederlandsche jeugd. Eerste beginsels van het cyfferen en van alle kunsten en handwerken*. Amsterdam: W. Holtrop, 1781.
- Tarrow, S., and C. Tilly. *Contentious Politics*. Boulder: Paradigm Publishers, 2007.
- Te Brake, W.Ph. *Regents and Rebels: the Revolutionary World of an Eighteenth-Century Dutch City*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1989.
- . *Shaping History: Ordinary People in European Politics, 1500-1700*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998.
- Tilly, C., ed. *The Formation of National States in Western Europe*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975.
- . *Coercion, Capital and the European State: AD 990-1992*. Cambridge: Blackwell, 1992.
- . *Contention & Democracy in Europe, 1650-2000*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.

- . *European Revolutions 1492 – 1992*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1993.
- Verzameling van wetten van Zijne Majesteit den Koning van Holland*. Amsterdam: J. Allart, 1809-10.
- Waisman, C.H. "Capitalism, the Market, and Democracy" *American Behavioral Scientist* 35, 4/5 (1992): 500-516.
- Wetten der Sociëteit voor Een- en Ondeelbaarheid, opgericht in Amsterdam, den 27 maart 1797* (1797).
- Wichers, L. *De regeering van Koning Lodewijk Napoleon, 1806-1810*. Utrecht: Van der Post, 1892.
- Wiersma, G. *Mietje Hulshoff, of De aanslag op Napoleon*. Amsterdam: Bakker, 2003.
- Wiselius, S.I. *De staatkundige verlichting der Nederlanderen, in een wijsgerig-historisch tafereel geschetst*. Brussel: Brest van Kempen, 1828.
- Wiskerke, C. *De afschaffing der gilden in Nederland*. Amsterdam: Paris, 1938.
- Wit, C.H.E. de. *De strijd tussen aristocratie en democratie in Nederland, 1780-1848: kritisch onderzoek van een historisch beeld en herwaardering van een periode*. Heerlen: Winants, 1965.
- Witte van Citters, J. de. *Contracten van correspondentie en andere bijdragen tot de geschiedenis van het ambtsbejag in de Republiek der Vereenigde Nederlanden*. Den Haag: Nijhoff, 1873.
- Woloch, I. *Jacobin Legacy: the Democratic Movement under the Directory*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970.
- Woolf, S. *Napoleon's Integration of Europe*. London: Routledge, 1991.
- Zanden, J.L. van, and A. van Riel. *Nederland 1780-1914: staat, instituties en economische ontwikkeling*. Amsterdam: Balans, 2000.
- Zappey, W.M. *De economische en politieke werkzaamheid van Johannes Goldberg*. Alphen aan den Rijn: Samsom, 1967.
- Zoodsma, L. *Inventaris van het archief van de Provisionele Representanten van het Volk van Holland, 26 januari 1795-2 maart 1796*. Den Haag: Nationaal Archief, 1987.



# **Curriculum Vitae**

Thomas Poell (Haarlem, 1973) studied political science, history, and philosophy at the University of Amsterdam and a year at The New School for Social Research in New York. In 1998, he graduated cum laude from the University of Amsterdam, where he earned a MA in Political Science, and a MA in Political and Social-Cultural Sciences. From 2000 until 2005, he has worked as a Ph.D student at the Research Institute for History and Culture of Utrecht University. Currently, he is employed as a lecturer at the Department of Media and Culture Studies of Utrecht University.