A History of Dutch Corruption and Public Morality (1648-1940)

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Cambridge
Scholars
Publishing

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This book first published 2020

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

Lady Stephenson Library, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2PA, UK

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN (10): 1-5275-4980-1
ISBN (13): 978-1-5275-4980-7

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

List of Maps

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This book is based on the research project "Under Construction: The Genesis of Public Value Systems 1650 – 1950", funded by the Dutch Scientific Organization (NWO). The project consisted of people of various backgrounds (in history, political science, public administration, political philosophy, ethics and law); all fascinated with the topic of corruption and public morality. As group members we found each-other in our joint acknowledgement that only interdisciplinary collaboration would be of use to better understand something this complicated. Naturally, our efforts over the past years have included discussing the approach, content and conclusions of this study with many people in various formal and informal settings of conferences, department brown-bag seminars, dinners and drinks. Apart from good conversation this has led to fine-tuning and making improvements. In addition, we have thankfully been told at times to simply throw things away and "kill our darlings".

As a result, we owe gratitude to many colleagues for the inspiration and support provided along the way. We especially thank the other members of the "Under Construction" project: James Kennedy, Mark Rutgers, Joris van Eijnatten and Leo Huberts. We are also indebted to various colleagues from our different university departments, the Institute of Public Administration at Leiden University, the departments of History and of Public Administration and Political Science of Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam (VU) and the department of History at the University of Amsterdam (UvA). In particular, we thank Frits van der Meer, Patrick Overeem and the members of a small Leiden public administration reading group (Andrei Poama, Natascha van der Zwan, Sarah Giest and Alexandre Afonso). Thanks also extend to Bas van Gool, Susan Legêne, Guy Geltner and André Vitória.

Similarly, we thank a great number of people who provided us with useful comments at international conferences and seminars and encouraged us to continue working on our book. Special thanks go to Mark Knights (Warwick), Jens Ivo Engels (Darmstadt), Niels Grüne (Freiburg/Innsbruck), Mark Philp (Warwick), Joël Félix (Reading), Alexander Nützenadel (Berlin), Frédéric Monier (Avignon) and John Watts (Oxford). We also thank the anonymous reviewers of our articles over the past few years and of this book in particular as well as our publisher for the patience and support shown. Dr. Bel Parnell-Berry of

Project·Parnell has provided diligent and thorough reading and editing of the final text. Finally, without support from family and friends, books such as these would of course not be possible.

Toon Kerkhoff, Ronald Kroeze, Pieter Wagenaar and Michel Hoenderboom

The Hague & Amsterdam 2020

CHAPTER 1

A HISTORY OF DUTCH CORRUPTION AND PUBLIC MORALITY

1.1 The Case of Hugo Repelaer

In the early 1780s, Dutch regent Hugo Repelaer (1730 – 1804) was in trouble. For about thirty years he had done quite well for himself as a leading town council member of the important Dutch city Dordrecht. Especially from 1770 onwards, Repelaer had been steering the affairs of Dordrecht city politics in favour of his patron, Stadholder Willem V (1748 – 1806). In a symbiotic relationship both men used each other to further their interests. The stadholder appointed local likeminded "confidants", such as Repelaer, in the town councils to acquire political influence. These confidants then became patrons in their own right and used stadholderly backing to acquire lucrative public offices for themselves, their friends and families and to sell or hand out offices in return for money, favours and political allegiances. In this system, Repelaer had acquired a position of power and wealth, but his good fortune ran out around 1782. While his "corruption" (being part of a patronage system and mixing public and private affairs) had by and large been the norm for city regents and other senior public officials for decades, if not centuries[1], these practices increasingly met with critique in the final decades of the eighteenth century.[2] As we will see in chapter three of this book, in the midst of trans-Atlantic Enlightenment sentiment[3] a powerful current of revolutionary zeal led to a reassessment of the position and functioning of "proper" Dutch public officials. Critique from so-called "Patriot" authors in a blossoming political press was aimed at structural and moral improvement of Dutch administration and society. Other regents, less reform-minded but angry at their own exclusion from power and lucrative offices, joined in.

Across major Dutch cities, similar events occurred as the ability of the stadholder to appoint people in political office – and associated "corrupt" behaviour – was curbed. Sentiments in Dordrecht and other cities turned against both stadholder and men like Repelaer. To many, they had

become symbols of all that was wrong with a Republic believed to be in economic, military and moral decline. As Repelaer's practices and principles became fiercely condemned, the curtain fell with the "Patriot revolt" of 1782. Repelaer – as were many like him – was forced to step down from the city council, lost most of his offices and went into exile. To be sure, as an eighteen-year-old Hugo Repelaer had witnessed the tumultuous events of 1748, when popular revolt broke out, which upset the political-administrative order (see chapter three of this book); he was therefore no stranger to political turmoil. At the same time, the events of 1782 hit him personally, as an adult in his working life. While he would later briefly return to power, his demise and the events of his time point to a slow but steady change in views on public morality. As new or reinterpreted values, virtues and principles of "good" administration unmistakably took root, certain behaviour that had by and large been acceptable before would now be deemed reprehensible by ever larger numbers of people, at least judging by growing amounts of pamphlet literature and more popular protest. While exceptions still existed and change was, of course, neither universal nor immediate, public officials before and after the reform period (1770s – 1790s) were expected to behave quite differently indeed.

1.2 A Question of Continuity, Change and Diversity

The story of Hugo Repelaer is much more than a mere historical anecdote, as it shows the power of "public opinion", scandal and revolt in opening up discussions on what is right and wrong. Yet, arguably the most important message this case has to offer is that ideas on public morality clearly vary over time and between individuals and groups in different societies. History suggests that practices that were acceptable at one time can become reprehensible at other times. Nepotism (the granting of favours to family and friends), for example, is nowadays considered not done. The reverse can of course also be the case, for instance concerning the behaviour of public officials in private. While it is common these days for politicians to be divorced or gay, this would most likely have been considered a sign of a corrupted character in earlier times. What is "good" now was therefore not always considered as such and might again be "bad" tomorrow and vice versa. Societal ideas on what is laudable and reprehensible official behaviour constantly change in a complex social, political and economic environment. While this might seem an obvious observation to some, the underlying question often remains largely out of sight. In other words: much is still unknown about how, when and why we can see continuity, change

and diversity[4] in understandings of (public) corruption and public morality in political-administrative history. As a result, this is the question of this book as we look at what happened in the Dutch context, between 1648 and 1940 – from early modern to modern Dutch history. As will be outlined below, the book therefore focuses on public debates surrounding corruption scandals. They serve to understand the complex and intricate totality of – potentially opposing – views on right or wrong held by individuals or groups in Dutch society; the various ideas, values and norms that are held about how public life should be lived and what people in the public sphere should and should not do.

Finding an answer to this question is important for various reasons. Crucially, knowledge of the circumstances under which different views on what was acceptable public behaviour are shaped, offers insight into the history and functioning of public administration and politics. Equally, it enlightens the history and functioning of public service delivery and public policy. The latter, after all, are all about what is valued, what actions government undertakes to realize those values and how government officials should behave in the process. In addition, historical investigation of changing public morality is important to shed light on the history and meaning of important concepts, values and virtues, the public, the private, the common good, corruption, integrity, representation or accountability. It helps to assess what actually constituted public morality at different moments in time, for instance by exploring how it is constantly re-defined in the context of state and nation building, bureaucratization, democratization or politicization. In fact, the history of public morality aids the quite fundamental exploration of the origins of the moral foundations of present-day politics and government.

1.3 A Brief Historiography

The focus of this book on corruption scandals to assess change, continuity and diversity of perceptions of corruption and public morality is relatively rare in an academic world where attention seems more often devoted to legal, economic and political change. A specific fine-grained account of *moral change* in the (Dutch) public sector therefore seems relevant. The book also adds to a specific, but varied, landscape of research on "good governance" and the integrity (or lack thereof) of public officials as well as political-administrative systems as a whole. It adds to Dutch and European historiography on the topic and also chooses relatively underexplored methodological and theoretical angles.

With regard to Dutch historiography, existing work on corruption cases is rarely linked in a diachronically comparative way for the purposes of a specific history of corruption and public morality. Until now – a few exceptions notwithstanding[5] – most works on Dutch political history have instead tended to deal with corruption and public morality as side notes to studies on patronage, brokerage, gift giving, criminality, state formation or the legal system.[6] This book, on the contrary, places Dutch corruption (scandals) and public morality on centre stage. It is based on research performed over the past few years that has been part of a unique effort in Dutch historiography to pay attention to these topics as worthy of independent and systematic historical examination in and of themselves.[7] This adds to and deviates from existing Dutch scholarship on the seventeenth to the twentieth century. For the seventeenth and eighteenth century, older historical work, for instance, offers a rather one-sided portrayal of the supposed immorality of early modern Dutch politics and administration. These periods have generally been presented as rife with abuse of office. This has been noted, among others, by historian Henk te Velde who wrote how "the early historians" (mainly Robert Fruin and Norbert Elias[8]) were quick to present an image of a closed, pedantic, hypocritical clique of regent administrators who simply served their own needs.[9] It was an image which furthermore remained dominant well into the 1970s.[10]

For all their scholarship and all the good they have brought, the writings of historians such as Rogier[11], Blok[12], Geyl[13] and Jan and Annie Romein[14] are also at times characterized by presentism – or the anachronistic introduction of present-day ideas and perspectives into depictions or interpretations of the past. This means that for today's reader historical works on early modernity have as much, if not more to say about contemporary as about past conceptions of what was right or wrong public official behaviour. It means that the works of Fruin and others are in themselves historical sources and a sign of the times. In addition, modern historians who were apparently aware of these "problems" of the old "moralizing corruption studies" have been reluctant to rectify the issue.[15]

As such, while various mostly early modern corruption scandals have been investigated this has, save some exceptions[16], rarely been done from a viewpoint which acknowledges that the concept and practice of corruption are always for a large part socially and historically constructed. Contrary to most Dutch historiography until the 2000s, this book acknowledges that earlier times simply had quite different political-administrative practices and therefore had their own views on what constitutes corruption and "proper" public behaviour. By seeing the inherent

contextual nature of corruption and public morality, we aim to provide an image of how the Dutch have understood corruption and public morality within the specific context of time and place. Dutch administrative practices of the past are in turn not condemned outright as morally wrong. Instead, countering the danger of presentism, they are assessed by considering the standards of the time in which these administrators actually lived and worked.[17] This is also in line with a more general so-called "cultural" or "historical" turn in recent Dutch historiography, in which the world of Dutch public administrators is understood not according to present but according to past standards – as exemplified by such authors as Kooijmans, Panhuysen or Janssen.[18] Such an approach offers a more nuanced, detailed, contextual and therefore sometimes messy but "honest" and realistic view on ideas of corruption and public morality, as they become apparent from archival material on historical corruption scandals.

In a similar way, this book also aims to add to the Dutch historiography on nineteenth and twentieth century Dutch corruption. Here something slightly different seems to have occurred. On the one hand, it is difficult to find many thoroughly investigated case studies of corruption for this period.[19] On the other, and perhaps due to this lack of cases, many have presumed and some still presume that nineteenth and twentieth century "modern" government had made a clean break with the supposed corruption and decay of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in which administrators were believed to simply serve their own needs. After the Liberal constitutional reform of 1848, so the story often goes, corruption in Dutch history more or less ceased to exist. Typical is historian Chris te Lintum, who in 1913 referred to the words of Robert Fruin when he wrote that because of the Liberal reform of 1848, the corruption "of past times" had vanished.[20] This was restated by Johan Huizinga who argued in 1934 that serious corruption in the Netherlands had become impossible because of "a high standard of public honesty" on the part of the Dutch bourgeoisie, which had supposedly reached maturity in the nineteenth century.[21] In the twentieth century Dutch politicians as well as scholars by and large maintained that corruption was a past relic and/or mostly a "non-Western" phenomenon.[22] In Dutch historiography, the advent of modern politics and the absence of corruption have therefore clearly been regarded as entwined. This book will correct this image. Corruption, as we will see, did not disappear in the nineteenth century. Rather, supposedly corrupt behavior became a matter of ideological conflict and for political debate.

A second reason this book occupies an important space in the landscape of historical research on public morality and corruption is that it explicitly aims to present the characteristics of the Dutch context to enable

(future) comparison with European developments, as described in European historiography. The relevance of general Dutch administrative and political history for other parts of Europe has hardly been underestimated, as becomes apparent from much historical international scholarship, especially on the period of the Dutch Republic.[23] Yet, in terms of the specific history of corruption and public morality, much can still be learned from a comparison with other national contexts that have thus far been explored in more detail, such as the Britain, France, or Germany/Prussia.[24] Adding the Dutch case to this existing European historical scholarship improves our knowledge of the influence in wider European history of elements, such as new democratic ideas (compare the notion of popular sovereignty) and democratic practices (such as suffrage), on changing ideas of corruption and public morality.[25] Other important elements for comparison are the influence of state formation and bureaucratization on debates about the moral responsibilities of public officials.[26]

A third reason for this book's importance lies in its explicit historical and long-term approach. It offers a detailed historical comparative view on public morality and corruption over the course of three hundred years of Dutch political-administrative history. This has not been done before for the Dutch context. For other national contexts, some exceptions notwithstanding[27], it remains a rarity. Especially in what has become a mini-industry of sorts of work on corruption, integrity and "good governance" in fields such as political science, economics, public management and public policy studies, longitudinal historical analysis of the topic is rare indeed.[28] This book however contends that historical research is especially well-equipped to investigate changing public morality and corruption, because of its long-term perspective and its attention to the intricate, incremental and contingent workings of institutional contexts. Historical work on public morality and corruption can and should then fill the lacuna that is left in part by political scientists, economists as well as practical policy makers and advisors. After all, too often scholars as well as practitioners fail to adequately pay attention to the influence of long-term social, political, economic and cultural trends and context on change, continuity and diversity of public morality in general, and corruption specifically. Too frequently this leads to universal and therefore not altogether useful understandings of corruption. Indeed, we argue that the concept of corruption is itself in need of historical fine-tuning.[29] In addition, in the few instances where social scientists, in particular, have taken something akin to a historical perspective, such studies are hardly ever based on actual historical research; i.e. using primary sources and archival material. This book aims to be different and in doing so is part of a new trend in which

historians are actively included to look at the construction and role of corruption and anti-corruption in the past, in a bid to influence debates on "good governance" in the present.[30]

Apart from describing what happened, this book also aims to understand why, when and how things happened. Rather than generating universal laws we adopt Max Weber's concept of *Verstehen*.[31] The essential aim of the book is to understand by means of establishing meaningful relations between occurrences and highlight potential reasons for continuity and change over time given all the historical diversity there is.[32] To be sure, the book does not present a model by delineating some set of factors that "always" lead to changing ideas on corruption and public morality. It would be impossible to identify such causality. For one, there is and will likely always be much uncertainty on what *public values* actually are as these change with changing environmental circumstances (e.g. the social, economic, political and cultural context).[33] Establishing such causality would also go against our view on corruption as an inherently contested social phenomenon. Still, a range of factors and mechanisms is provided to better understand changing public morality. The cases presented in this book are not isolated and fragmented impressions. Instead, they are seen as events that are part of a larger and longer narrative in the Dutch history of administration, politics and political ideas.

Because of its aim of *Verstehen*, the book is implicitly informed by different theories that help shed light on change and continuity in how public morality and corruption may acquire meaning. For one, we believe the institutional design of political systems to be a core element. According to this logic, institutions are believed "to shape behaviour". Therefore, as De Graaf et al. write: "to act appropriately means to act in accordance with institutionalized practices of a collective. Corruption or deviance from accepted norms and standards occurs when institutions do not fulfil this 'sense making' function and therefore create uncertainty and disorder".[34] This kind of normative institutionalism, according to Peters, "has direct relevance for understanding corruption" as it "stresses the central role of appropriateness within organizations and institutions and assumes that individual behaviours can be shaped by institutional values, symbols, myths and routines".[35] Naturally, this helps us to understand why a certain type of behaviour was or was not considered corrupt in its own context and when and why this may have changed. Historical Dutch notions of corruption can only be understood within the context of institutions. Furthermore, as institutions changed, so did ideas on the boundaries between proper and improper behaviour.

A second idea that has informed this book (see also section 1.6 below) is based on the work of Max Weber and the role of bureaucratization. According to this view, the more bureaucratic a society becomes, the more "patrimonial" behaviour is seen as unacceptable. This is a dominant view in many analyses of corruption, especially in the disciplines of political science and public administration. Certain patrimonial forms of administrative praxis, such as gift-giving or nepotism, were increasingly seen as corrupt due to the growing adherence to a professionalized bureaucracy. As bureaucratic rules and regulations, as well as adherence to values such as neutrality and hierarchy were on the rise, ideas on "proper" moral behaviour changed accordingly. As we will see in chapter three, for example, this can be used to understand how, when and why certain practices slowly came to be perceived as corrupt in different times and places.[36]

At the same time, while Max Weber's work is a useful tool we cannot ignore the fact that for Weber – as Rubinstein and De Graaf write – "corruption was the hallmark of an earlier, more 'primitive' stage of society, and would eventually vanish with the triumph of a professionalized bureaucracy".[37] In other words, Weber's understanding of corruption is in itself also a historical phenomenon and not just a neutral method to objectively establish what was corruption in the past. Weber saw the existence of corruption as the result of deficient rationalization of the public service. Doing so, he provided a "modern" understanding of corruption based on a difference between a primitive corrupt past and a developed and corruption-free future (although he was also very critical about this "bureaucratic future"). Weber's projection was thus related to a new understanding of historical change – from cyclical to linear – that became more prominent from the end of the eighteenth century onwards. As we will see in Dutch discussions on corruption from then on, attempts to incorporate "Weberian-style" bureaucratization and policies to implement bureaucratic standards were (and often still are) more than neutral efforts to improve administration. They were also ideologically inspired pleas, linked to new ideas and principles of good governance, separated from a non-bureaucratic and therefore supposedly "corrupt" and immoral past.

Finally, as has already become apparent from elements we mentioned earlier in this chapter, this book adopts an overarching approach of "social constructivism". As we argue how corruption is always for a large part socially and historically constructed, we are interested in how various actors choose to define corruption. However, the key question here is not so much what the term "corruption" meant, but rather "who got to decide what it meant and how widely those decisions were accepted".[38] Very much in

line with this approach is the work of political scientist Michael Johnston – also underlying this book's approach – whose understanding of corruption is based on the notion that corruption (or administrative misbehaviour or maladministration in general[39]) is constantly defined through (political) debate and contestation by various individuals and groups in society, about the meaning of other core concepts such as public, private or the common good in specific places and periods. This urges us to have an open outlook and to view individual actions within broader contextual processes of consent, power, influence and authority.[40]

1.4 Scandal and Public Debate

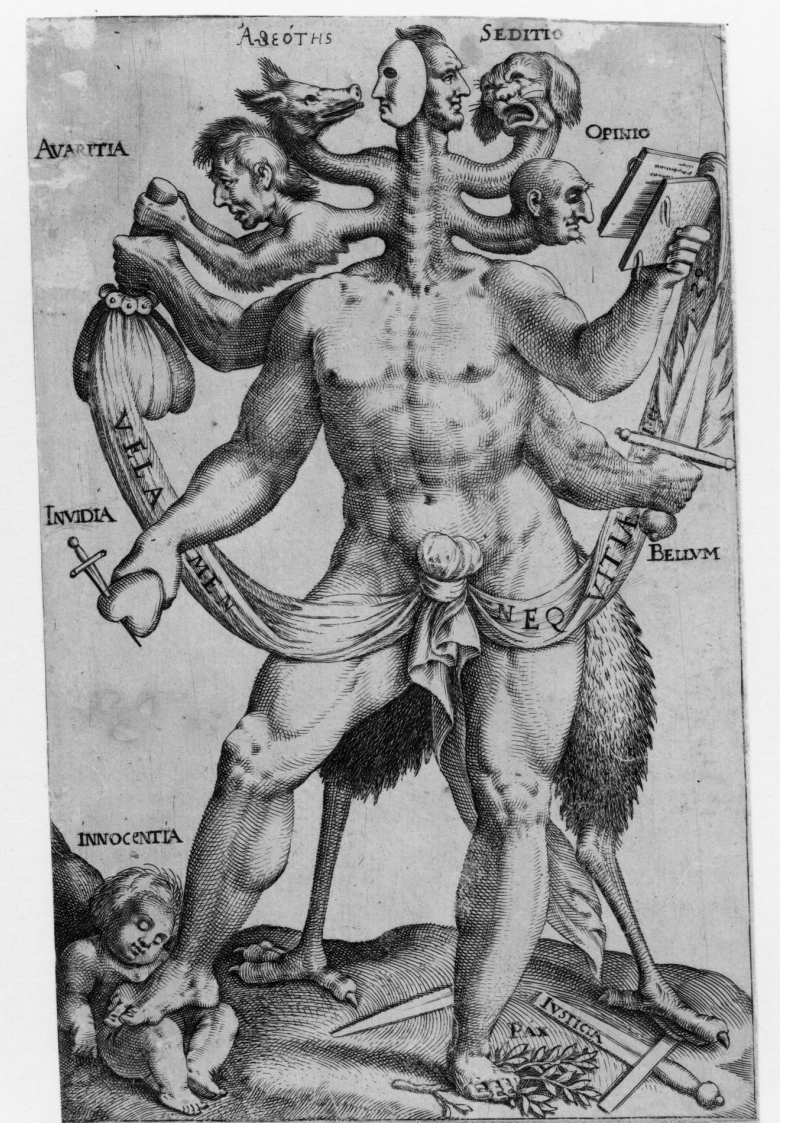
Of course, "locating" change and continuity in public morality by looking at cases of corruption is an arduous task. As mentioned earlier, historical research enables critical reflection on what actually constitutes public morality (as defined earlier: the totality of – potentially opposing – views on right or wrong held by individuals or groups in society) in both past and present. It can do so by understanding public morality and corruption as inherently contextual phenomena; their meaning ever contingent on social, economic and political circumstances as well as public debate. Following a social constructivist approach, this book therefore contends that public morality and corruption are defined and acquire meaning through the contestation over public value(s) in specific places and periods.[41]

Whether behaviour is deemed right or wrong depends on discussion and debate, which is – in turn – mostly found surrounding corruption scandals. This is why scandals are the focus of this book. They are "those complexes of deviant behaviour, revelation and public reaction that together make up a historical event".[42] This description captures the difference between scandals and "normal" political debate. Scandals are "complexes of deviant behaviour" that attract widespread attention. Corruption scandals also generate much more anxiety than "normal" political mistakes and are therefore good indicators of "social declaration and declamation". For a corruption case to escalate into a scandal it needs exposers, but also a public sphere and media where the scandal can be debated with "an audience or public".[43] Scandals essentially present clashes between different views of various societal actors on what is or is not acceptable. In comparing opinions on supposed "corruption", one is able to grasp how, when and why ideas about public morality changed in the context of Dutch political-administrative history. Clearly, this way of working is aided by the increasing availability of popular printing outlets in

the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and the rise of mass media in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Underlying the approach in this study, although not made explicit in our case descriptions, is the work of Dutch social scientist Ben Hoetjes.[44] His work was focused on different so-called "sources of public values"; i.e. societal actors and institutions that all play their part in determining whether something is corrupt or not. Debates surrounding scandals of corruption in Dutch history – as we can imagine elsewhere as well – increasingly reflected the use of pamphlets and newspapers from which an evolving "public opinion" emerged as a source of values. Naturally, such documentation only provides a part of what was said. Court proceedings in corruption cases as well as general legal codes, such as laws and regulations, also present their side of the story as do parliamentary or government records. Values and norms on good government can likewise be distilled from so-called "codes of the shop-floor", found in ego-documents of people who are involved and from witness testimonies. They can also be found in what Hoetjes called the "best-opinion or morality of the time"; the ideas of contemporary intellectuals and scholars – for example in books or political journals – about corruption, moral behaviour and good government.

Plate 1.1. (next page): Allegorical five-headed, four-legged monster. *The monster symbolizes corruption with his heads of "avarice" (avaritia), "impiety or depravity" (in Greek Ἀθεότης), "sedition" (seditio) and "delusion" (opinio). Its loin cloth represents "masked deceit" (velamen nequitia). In his hands it carries the attributes of "envy" (invidia) and "war" (bellum). With these vices it tramples – shown under its feet – the virtues of "innocence" (innocentia), "peace" (pax) and "justice" (justitia).*


AVARITIA
SEDITIO
OPINIO
INVIDIA
BELLVM
INNOCENTIA
PAX
IVSTICIA

1.5 Location and Periodization

The approach adopted in this book is closely connected to its temporal demarcations of a long Dutch history of social and political transformation. In the chapters that follow, debate among societal actors surrounding scandals of corruption is therefore linked to a chronological history of Dutch politics and administration between 1648 – the rise of the Dutch Republic as a sovereign state after the Peace of Münster – and 1940 – the moment when the Netherlands were occupied by the Nazis and Dutch politics came to a (temporary) end. The book does not offer a full-fledged political history since there are, after all, more elaborate books on this topic. However, it does provide an overview – spread out over the chapters to come – in order to connect with developments in public morality. We divide the period 1648 – 1940 into three sub-periods (1648 – 1747, 1747 – 1848 and 1848 – 1940) with which we follow commonly adopted chronological breaks in works on Dutch political-administrative history. In addition, the years 1648, 1747 and 1848 can, we argue, be seen as especially important turning points of institutional development. They allow us to better observe commonalities and differences that are essential to understand the story of when, how and why public morality changed. Over the period 1648 – 1940, the country we now call the Netherlands turned from a fragmented republic of highly autonomous and "individualistic" provinces and cities, into a centralized nation-state, headed by a king and based on a constitution that would become the backbone for the emergence of nineteenth and twentieth century parliamentary democracy. As the scandals are chronologically ordered, they reflect how certain forms of corruption were perceived as more or less problematic in certain periods. It follows that similar types of behaviour could lead to a scandal in one period but not in another. In addition, it means that we should regard the emergence, disappearance and reappearance of certain types of corruption and moments of increasing and decreasing attention for it, within the context of broader socio-political transformations.

A note on the geographical demarcations of this book follows from the aforementioned. The area under consideration (see the two maps in this book) has had changing borders and different names throughout the period of 1648 – 1940. We focus on the Northern provinces, which generally – some relatively minor territorial changes notwithstanding – made up the Dutch Republic (1581 – 1795), the Batavian Republic (1795 – 1806), The Kingdom of Holland (1806 – 1810), the Northern parts of the first French Empire (1810 – 1813), the United Kingdom of the Netherlands (1815 – 1839)[45], and finally the Kingdom of the Netherlands (1839 – present). In addition, although other parts of the Netherlands are also occasionally

discussed, the Western provinces deliberately receive most attention. This is because these provinces – and Holland especially – made up the dominant political powerhouses that brought in the most money, had the most inhabitants and therefore became the centre of politics and administration. Finally, it is important to stress that corruption in empire and colonies deliberately falls outside of our scope. The Dutch of course had an oversees empire and colonial possessions and we know that much behaviour occurred there that was also at the time considered to be corrupt.[46] This context however deserves proper attention in its own right, which would be out of place here. Having said this, the colonial context is not entirely absent, as in chapter four we observe how events that occurred in the Dutch East-Indies would also have a ripple effect in The Hague.

1.6 Two Guiding Themes

Obviously political-administrative developments affect change and continuity in public morality and corruption. This interplay leads to two recurrent and guiding themes that run through this book as well as connect the chapters. We briefly state them here and will return to them in our final chapter.

A first guiding theme concerns the intricate and highly complex relation between centralization, state formation and democratization on the one hand and changing public morality on the other. As power and authority shifted from local to more central levels in the period 1648 – 1940 (and especially from the late nineteenth century onwards), a central state was formed out of what had once been a group of highly autonomous provinces and cities. One consequence of this centralization was the creation of stronger hierarchically organized institutions at various levels, which increasingly set uniform norms and ruled out certain types of behaviour. It seems, for instance, that centralization and stronger central institutions were able to break down local networks of families and relations, which had by and large facilitated supposedly "corrupt" behaviour until then. Another consequence was the development of a much wider public sphere. As a central state increasingly took up responsibility to provide public services for a wider public community, this naturally affected ideas on corruption and public morality. This is linked to the emergence of an increasingly strict division between the public and the private, which made the notion of corruption as the (individual) abuse of public resources for private benefit more dominant. In addition, centralization and state formation aligned with slow but steady processes of democratization. Questions emerged about how the state was to function and what was the appropriate relation and

form of interaction between rulers and ruled and which types of behaviour were therefore deemed legitimate.

A second (and related) guiding theme running through this book concerns the transition between 1648 and 1940 from early modern patrimonialism to modern non-personalized bureaucratic structures of governance. This is closely connected to the ideas of Max Weber (in part already discussed previously) on shifts from patrimonial to rational legal authority.[47] Patrimonialism consisted of interaction, power and authority based on social standing, heritage, charisma and ideals of collegial harmony. A sixteenth or seventeenth century public official by and large obtained his position through such patrimonial structures. However, slowly but surely patrimonial elements were replaced by "Weberian-style" bureaucratic, legal-rational ones. An important connected element of this transition was a shift from *Normenkonkurrenz* (the co-existence of multiple, separate and sometimes conflicting value systems[48]) to a single and dominant bureaucratic ethos (an adherence by most if not all public officials to a single bureaucratic value system). In short, early modern administrators constantly had to deal with two distinct "moral codes": legally and formally fixed norms in service of the community on the one hand and informal or "face-to-face" norms of administrative praxis on the other.[49] While public officials could initially quite easily ignore one of these codes (usually the formal ones), this became harder as time went on. A shift occurred from early modern *Normenkonkurrenz* to a dominant bureaucratic ethos in the nineteenth century. Yet, rather than coming to an end, conflict and competition instead changed, becoming more politically driven as a new corruption discourse emerged in the context of clashing political ideologies. As newly formed political parties started to represent specific group interests, subsequent public debates became focused on what it meant to be a "good" (or "bad") politician – ever more phrased in terms of how the national public interest was best served. Naturally, this also affected notions about right and wrong politics such as, to name but one example, the proper role of political parties during elections.

1.7 Chapters to Come

In the following chapters the period between 1648 and 1940 is divided into three parts, following our periodization of major shifts in Dutch political-administrative history. Chapter 2 offers cases of corruption, scandal and subsequent public debate in the period of 1648 – 1747. This period falls entirely in what can be described as the Dutch ancien régime (until 1795) and is demarcated by the Peace of Münster of 1648 and the rise of the Dutch

Republic as a sovereign state on the one hand, and the return of a strong and hereditary Dutch stadholder in 1747 on the other. The period marks the so-called Dutch "golden age" of prosperity, which radically transformed society and thereby set the stage for political struggles in the decades to come. The scandals in this chapter revolve around the so-called "Harmonious Society". Politics and administration during this time were characterized by regent rule, patronage and the bestowal of office on the basis of rotation and seniority. The preservation of this "harmony" in local administration was key and gift-giving endured as an essential part of the political culture. At the same time *Normenkonkurrenz* was characteristic for this period, as a tender, proto-bureaucratic value system could also already be discerned. In various scandals concerning early modern officials, we trace the discussions this yielded for public officials and what this tells us about public morality and corruption during this time. One scandal, for example, focuses on abuse of office by Jacob van Zuylen van Nijevelt (1699 – 1753). As bailiff of the city of Rotterdam he was certain to profit from criminal cases and influenced the bestowal of seats in the Rotterdam city council. This would lead to problems, but not in a way that we would expect to see today.

Chapter 3 deals with cases of corruption from the period 1747 and 1848. The start of this period is distinguished by the "crisis year" of 1747, when increasing complaints concerning the Republic's dire financial-economic, military, political and moral situation were in part addressed by reinstating a now hereditary and therefore more powerful Stadholder Willem IV (1711 – 1751). This ended a long period (from 1702) in which the Republic's provinces (apart from Friesland and Groningen) had not had a stadholder and were solely ruled by the regents instead. Although in part effective, the stronger position of Willem IV did also lead to an increasing internal power struggle in the Republic between those loyal or opposed to the stadholderate. In addition, in this period Dutch ideas on corruption and public morality changed considerably in the context of major developments of Enlightenment and trans-Atlantic revolutions. An emerging political press became an outlet for people and groups that had been largely ignored before. New and/or much more vocal social groups got involved in public opinion – also concerning matters of public morality and corruption. The scandals discussed in this chapter show that earlier ideals of harmony and *Normenkonkurrenz* were slowly but steadily replaced by discord in an increasingly centralized institutional setting. The cases show how Dutch ideas on what was acceptable would change quite fundamentally in the course of the century. One case, for example, discusses corruption by the Batavian executive government in its dealing with the French in 1798. The

case offers a view on corruption and morality in the context of state formation, democratization and politicization and the drawing of new lines between the public and the private sphere.

Chapter 4 offers a view on the period of 1848 – 1940, starting when Dutch Liberal leader Johan Rudolph Thorbecke (1798 – 1872) presented his revised constitution. With it, he heralded the advance of Dutch Liberal-bourgeois politics and a constitutional monarchy with parliament – instead of a king – in charge. The scandals discussed in this chapter describe how from 1848 onwards the Dutch political-administrative system developed into a parliamentary democracy, in the broader context of a much more bureaucratic state and a pluralist society that was formally guaranteed by the rule of law. Naturally, this affected understandings of corruption and public morality. For example, the so-called *Letters Affair* of 1865 was all about the meaning of corruption in relation to free elections in a period in which parliamentary democracy, modern parties, political campaigning and mass media were still very much developing. How were these "modern" inventions to be dealt with? In addition, the chapter assesses the clear link in this period between several important socio-political developments of the modern era (most notably the effects of industrialization, state-building and further politicization by emerging party politics) on the one hand, and change and continuity of public morality and corruption on the other. At the end of the period, we see how corruption was largely understood in the context of fierce ideological and party struggle, which dominated politics during the inter-war period.

Finally, Chapter 5 offers a conclusion as well as a condensation of three centuries of developments in Dutch thinking on corruption and public morality. To this end, the chapter returns to the two guiding themes of the book and briefly connects these to the main events and processes described in the cases of the previous chapters. Furthermore, this final chapter summarizes by comparing Dutch developments with the wider European historiography on the topic, touching on some important implications for the present.

Notes

[1] On the mixing of public and private and the role of leading families in early modern European public service delivery see Van der Heijden, *Civic Duty*; Adams, *The familial state*.
[2] See Gabriëls, *De heren als dienaren*; Van der Heijden, *Civic Duty*, 28-29.
[3] Bayly, *The birth of the modern world*; Hobsbawm, *The age of revolution 1789-1848*.
[4] Tholfsen, *Historical thinking: an introduction*, 6-7.
[5] Consider a 2005 special journal issue: Wagenaar, Van der Meij, and Van der Heijden, "Corruptie in de Nederlanden, 1400-1800."; Van der Meer and Raadschelders, "Maladministration in the Netherlands in the 19th and 20th centuries."
[6] Compare Egmond, "Recht en krom."; Faber, "Driemaal de waarheid over compositie."; Huiskamp, "Tussen centrum en periferie."; Hovy, "Institutioneel onvermogen."; Japikse, "Cornelis Musch en de corruptie van zijn tijd," *De Gids*, 1907; De Bruin, *Geheimhouding en verraad*; Blockmans, "Patronage, brokerage and corruption."; Gabriëls, *De heren als dienaren*; Janssen, *Creaturen van de macht*; "Patronage en corruptie."; Thoen, *Strategic Affection*.
[7] See for example Van Eijnatten et al., "Corruption and public values."; Hoenderboom, *Scandal, Politics and Patronage*; Kerkhoff, *Hidden Morals*; Kroeze, *Een kwestie van politieke moraliteit*; Wagenaar, Van der Meij, and Van der Heijden, "Corruptie in de Nederlanden, 1400-1800."
[8] Fruin, "Het recht en de rechtsbedeeling," 389ff; "De correspondentiën," 189; Elias, *Geschiedenis van het Amsterdamsche Regentenpatriciaat*; Lindemann, "Dirty Politics," 582.
[9] Te Velde, *Regentenmentaliteit*, 4-5.
[10] Kerkhoff, *Hidden Morals*, 33.
[11] Rogier, "De ware vrijheid," 292-311.
[12] Blok, *Geschiedenis van het Nederlandsche volk*, part II, 267, 423-427; part III, 376-378, 431-437.
[13] Geyl, "Historische biographieën," 105.
[14] Romein and Romein, *De lage landen*, 247, 260ff.
[15] See for example Damen, *De staat van dienst*; Frijhoff and Spies, *1650: bevochten eendracht*.
[16] See, apart from the cases presented in this book, also the seventeenth- and eithteenth-century scandals in Hoenderboom, "Steekpenning of welkomstgeschenk?."; "Corruptie in de Republiek."; Hoenderboom and Kerkhoff, "Corruption and Capability."
[17] Van Eijnatten and Wagenaar, "Dutch administrative thought," 271-284; Kroeze, Vitória, and Geltner, "Introduction," 3.
[18] Kooijmans, "Patriciaat en aristocratisering."; Panhuysen, *De ware vrijheid*.; Janssen, *Creaturen van de macht*.

[19] Despite a few well-known scandals such as the *Lintjesaffaire* (1909) or the *Lockheed scandal* (1976). See also Kerkhoff and Overeem, *In opspraak*; Bekker, *Ja, vriend*.
[20] Te Lintum, *Een eeuw van vooruitgang, 1813-1913*, 156.
[21] Huizinga, "Nederlands's geestesmerk."
[22] See for example Brasz and Wertheim, *Corruptie*.
[23] Schama, *Patriots and liberators*; *The embarrassment of riches*; Israel, *The Dutch Republic*; Leeb, *The ideological origins*; Jacob, "Radicalism in the Dutch Enlightenment."; Jacob and Mijnhardt, *The Dutch Republic*; Palmer, "Much in little."; Frijhoff, "The relevance of Dutch history."
[24] Compare the work of J. I. Engels. See: Engels, "Aufsätze."; "Politische Korruption in der Moderne."; "Politische Korruption und Modernisierungsprozesse."; *Die Geschichte der Korruption*; "Corruption as a political issue."; Engels, Fahrmeir, and Nützenadel, *Geld, Geschenke, Politik*; See also on France: Monier, Dard, and Fahrmeir, *Scandales et corruption*; and on England: Knights, "Anticorruption."; Searle, *Corruption*; And for various national contexts: Kroeze, Vitória, and Geltner, *Anticorruption in History*.
[25] Consider Bayly, *The birth of the modern world.*
[26] Compare Tiihonen, *The history of corruption in central government*.
[27] For another long term comparison see Engels, *Die Geschichte der Korruption.*
[28] For an overview of publications in this field see Van der Wal, Nabatchi, and De Graaf, "From Galaxies to Universe."; See also Kroeze, Vitória, and Geltner, "Introduction."
[29] Buchan and Hill, *An intellectual history*; De Graaf, Wagenaar, and Hoenderboom, "Constructing corruption," 107-109.
[30] See Kerkhoff and Wagenaar, "History, public ethics."; Kroeze, Vitória, and Geltner, *Anticorruption in History*.
[31] Elwell, 1996, "Verstehen: The Sociology of Max Weber"
[32] Compare Raadschelders, "Administrative History."
[33] Kerkhoff, "Public Value Dynamics."; Granovetter, "The Social Construction of Corruption."
[34] De Graaf, Von Maravic, and Wagenaar, "Introduction: Causes of corruption," 18-19.
[35] Peters, "Institutional Design," 83; cf. Tavits, "Clarity of Responsibility and Corruption."
[36] cf. Kerkhoff, "Organizational Reform and Changing Ethics."; Schattenberg, "Die Ehre der Beambten."
[37] Rubinstein and De Graaf, "Max Weber, Bureaucracy, and Corruption," 21.
[38] LeBillon, "Corruption, Reconstruction and Oil Governance in Iraq," 686; Op cit. in De Graaf, Wagenaar, and Hoenderboom, "Constructing corruption," 101.
[39] Van der Meer and Raadschelders, "Maladministration in the Netherlands in the 19th and 20th centuries."
[40] Johnston, "The search for definitions," 333.
[41] De Graaf, Wagenaar, and Hoenderboom, "Constructing corruption," 99.
[42] Moodie, "On Political Scandals and Corruption," 873, 879.