

## Reform, Ideology, and Morality in Early Modern Dutch Public Administration (1748 – 1800)

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## Introduction & Questions

- Development of morality in Public Administration
- *Realpolitik* and Ideology: different dimensions of moral reform in public administration
- The paper: ideology and the (re) shaping of morality: A sample of Dutch authors
- Two questions
  1. Practical morality: values, assumptions and context?
  2. Change and continuity of morality

## Moral Reform in the Dutch Republic 1750 – 1800

- Early modern Dutch authors on moral reform

Doelisten (1740's – 1750's)

- *Jean Rousset de Missy* (1668 – 1762)
- *Hendrik van Gimmig* (mid 18<sup>th</sup> century)

Patriots (1770's - 1780's)

- *J. Van der Capellen* (1741 – 1784)
- *The Grondwettige Herstelling* [*constitutional redress*] (1784)

- Consequential & consecutive movements
- Decisive moments in Dutch (Western) administrative history
- Lesser known authors on morality and public administration

- Foreign pressures and internal struggles in the Republic.
- Increasing objections to oligarchic rule and abuses of office.
- Failure of leaders to instigate civic reforms
- Doelisten

## Doelisten: J. Rousset De Missy and H. van Gimmig

- General:
  - Participation and political influence
  - Ending oligarchic rule and patrician authority
  - Popular sovereignty
  - Ending abuses of office: nepotism and venality
- *Rousset De Missy*:
  - Particular and common interests
  - Wasting public money
  - Abusing people's trust
  - Denouncing hypocrisy and *Realpolitik*
- *Van Gimmig*:
  - Regents' greed
  - Sale of offices for common good
  - Against faction strife
  - Democratization and popular influence.

- 'Failure' of Doelisten
- Increasing patronage and abuse of office
- Republic in decline
- Patriot Revolution

### Patriots: J. van der Capellen

- Influence of American Revolution;
- Greater and freer involvement in politics;
- Popular sovereignty: government answerable to people;
- Safeguarding Republican community: participation as a duty;
- Notions of accountability and legitimacy: ruler as custodian;
- Selfless behavior, taking care of common good.



### Patriots: The *Grondwettige Herstelling*

- Usurpation of power by Stadholder and oligarchies;
- Economic, political and moral decay;
- Against venality and rotation of offices;
- Appointments based on merit;
- Problem of dirty hands;
- Focus on trust between ruler and ruled;
- Lofty ideal *and* practical requirements;
- Public good and ending arbitrariness.

### Conclusions (1): values and assumptions

- Explicit practical morality and values:
  - See appendix 1
- General arguments:
  - Individual good – Common good;
  - Popular Sovereignty and Democratic tendencies;
  - Responsibility – Accountability – Legitimacy;
  - Importance of Merit and clear and open regulations.



### Conclusions (2): *Realpolitik* and Ideology

- External environment and internal pressures:
  - social, political and economic influences
  - ‘Rational choice’ and a-priori ideology:
  - Authors were selfless;
  - Argued for common good;
  - Battled established practices;
  - Consciously fought the good cause;
  - Purposefully designed proper administration.

### Conclusions (3): change and continuity in morality

- Consecutive and consequential movements: no major differences apart from the ‘success rate’
- Short term failure:
  - ideas were new
  - shows consistency and coherence
- But also long term success:
  - new ideals, values, assumptions would only flourish from end of 18<sup>th</sup> century
  - consistency and coherence 1750 – 1800 shows continuity until now and change/break around 1750



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All comments are appreciated!