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Keeping corruption at bay: A study of the VOC's administrative encounter with the Mughals in seventeenth-century Bengal

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Propositions

1. It is difficult to define corruption; yet corruption can be conceived in several ways.
2. Rather than debating on whether the VOC was a trading concern or a Company-state, it is probably more relevant to focus on the image of the VOC created by the directors with different intentions at different points of time.
3. One needs to be cautious while studying the VOC, for most of its actions and decisions were not unanimous. It is to be remembered that not all members of the *Heeren XVII* and in the *Raad van Staat* in Batavia were always in agreement with each other. Factions, therefore, played a crucial role in the administration.
4. The Mughal administrative space fostered social mobility by embracing *mansabdars* from humble backgrounds, yet it was impossible to enter this arena without political connections.
5. During the early-‘modern’ global encounters, different worlds often managed to comprehend each other. But the language to convey or articulate what they understood remained limited to the boundaries of their cultural paradigms.
6. The solution to bridging the gap between the history of ideas and of practices is to realise that the former is produced as a result of the latter.
7. With leadership in crisis in many parts of the world, wisdom on the art of statecraft such as *munshi* codes and mirrors for princes are more relevant today.
8. History is full of paradoxes. Although it is about the past which at times may repeat itself, new History is produced in the process. History is written through the bias of its actors and sources while all historians have their fair share of bias as well.
9. It is easy to take Leiden and Leiden University for granted if you stay here for a long time. It is only when you have to leave everything and go that you realise how much you start missing the city and your colleagues in the Huizinga building.
10. Netherlands is tempting not only for its good cheese, beers and bread but also for the relative freedom it endows when it comes to matters of gender and sexuality.