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Lobbying in Company: Mechanisms of political decision-making and economic interests in the history of Dutch Brazil, 1621-1656

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0. INTRODUCTION

Dark clouds and an extraordinarily thick mist packed over the Scheldt on 5 November 1647 as a small fleet five ships from Brazil entered the river mouth. As a result of the difficult weather conditions, the ships accidentally got stuck in a shallow part of the Wielingen and had to cast anchor while awaiting higher tide. One of the many small ships from the nearby city of Flushing that visited the fleet was asked to deliver a letter with the news of the imminent arrival to the local directors of the West India Company (WIC). Aboard the Brazilian ships were 1,200 chests of prized Portuguese sugar, a near-mutinous crew, and a member of the High Government in Brazil by the name of Hendrick Haecxs. When Haecxs arrived in Flushing the next day around three in the afternoon, he learned that the directors had chartered a yacht to pick him up, but both parties had been unaware that their paths had crossed due to the dark weather, thick mist, and heavy rain.¹

This brief moment on 5 and 6 November 1647 is illustrative for the history of the WIC-colony in Brazil. The dark clouds foreshadowed the eventual loss of the colony in 1654 following a revolt that started in 1645 and the thick mist symbolizes the limited view the directors in the Republic had of the situation in Brazil. The weather conditions that forced the ships to anchor an extra night just outside the harbor perfectly demonstrate the sometimes limited bandwidth of maneuverability for Haecxs who had crossed the Atlantic to lobby for the relieve of Brazil.² Finally, the directors' idea to send a yacht to pick up Haecxs is evidence that good intentions do not necessarily lead to the desired outcome.

This thesis focuses on the history of the WIC in Brazil to study the role of lobbying for political decision-making in the seventeenth-century Dutch Republic and argues that lobbying was the primary tool for people to implement, shape, and maintain institutions. Considering this impact, it is astonishing that lobbying has been underappreciated and regularly neglected by historians of all sub-disciplines.³ It is important to study lobbying in an Atlantic context to highlight the influence of people for institutional development. There

¹ S.P. l'Honoré Naber, "Het dagboek van Hendrik Haecxs, lid van den hoogen raad van Brazilië (1645-1654)," *Bijdragen en Mededeelingen van het Historisch Genootschap Utrecht* 46, no. 1 (1925): 211-212.

² For more details on Haecxs' lobby campaign, see Chapter 5.

³ L.H. Roper, *Advancing Empire: English Interests and Overseas Expansion, 1613-1688* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

certainly has been historiographical attention to popular participation in politics, but most studies have focused on formal-legalistic aspects or on confrontational manifestations rather than cooperative elements.⁴

Since the focus of this thesis is the period of the WIC in Brazil (1630-1654), both Atlantic history and social and economic history are relevant. Lobbying could (and should!) be studied in relation to any topic in history and it is by no means unique to the Dutch colonial experience, but the period in which the WIC ruled Brazil offers a unique insight of a society inside a pressure cooker. In the twenty-four years that the WIC colony existed, it was subject to several major changes that occurred within and around the colony, the Company, and even the highest political levels such as the States General or the Stadtholder. It is a story of enemies becoming friends, and friends becoming enemies, and of protagonists overcoming obstacles and therefore maybe being richer from the experience, but losing everything in the process. The rapid changes in Dutch Brazil lay bare the mechanisms of lobbying as a primary tool for people to structure institutions.

This introduction is divided in four sections. The first section defines lobbying; the second section introduces the conceptual foundation on which this thesis is built and the value of lobbying for historical analysis; the third deals with the historiographical debates that form the backdrop for this thesis; and the fourth and final section brings to the fore the different sources and methodology. The main objective of this thesis is to answer the question: how did individuals structure institutions through lobbying, and why did they choose to lobby instead of other options?

⁴ H.F.K. van Nierop, "Popular Participation in Politics in the Dutch Republic," in *Resistance, Representation and Community*, ed. P. Blicke (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997); H.F.K. van Nierop, "Private Interests, Public Policies: Petitions in the Dutch Republic," in *The Public and Private in Dutch Culture of the Golden Age*, ed. A.K. Wheelock and A. Seeff (London/Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2000); M. Boone and M.R. Prak, "Rulers, patricians and burghers: The great and the little traditions of urban revolt in the Low Counties," in *A Miracle Mirrored: The Dutch Republic in European Perspective*, ed. K. Davids and J. Lucassen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); M.R. Prak, "Popular politics before the advent of liberal democracy," *Journal of Early Modern History* 2, no. 3 (1998).

0.1. LOBBYING

What is lobbying? Lobbying is defined as the activity by which individuals or organized interests seek contact with political mandataries in an attempt to influence decision-making.⁵ I would like to dissociate between *political lobbying* and *soft lobbying*. The difference lies in the relation between the suppliant and the addressee. In the case of soft lobbying, the suppliant requests something that is givable by the addressee; for instance a charter, a patent, money, or a job.⁶ Successful soft lobbying always involves a transfer; for example of rights, property, or authority. Political lobbying, on the other hand, does not necessarily require a transfer from one party to the other as it is also possible to lobby for maintaining the status quo or for a regulation. Typically, but not necessarily, there are two conflicting interests when it comes to political lobbying.

Theories of lobbying further make a distinction between direct lobbying and outside lobbying. Direct lobbying has the aim of convincing a majority of decision-makers, whereas outside lobbying has the aim of pressuring a majority of decision-makers through the use of public opinion and to increase popular support for a particular cause. These processes can occur simultaneously, but they are different means and processes to achieve the same goal. There were several ways to direct lobby. Petitioning was an obvious option, but direct lobbying also included employing patronage networks and giving oral presentations to political mandataries. Outside lobbying could take the form of a demonstration, that increased and showed popular support. It 'socialize[d] the conflict'.⁷ Mobilizing popular support was an important quality for both powerful and weak lobbyists.

An excellent way of studying outside lobbying in the early modern Dutch Republic is by analyzing pamphlets. In the case of Brazil, for example, there was a heated debate on free

⁵ G. Vermeesch and L. Geervers, "Inleiding," in *Politieke belangenbehartiging in de vroegmoderne Nederlanden: de rol van lobby, petitie, en officiële delegaties in de politieke besluitvorming*, ed. G. Vermeesch and L. Geervers (Maastricht: Shaker Publishing, 2014), 3.

⁶ Examples of soft lobbying in Dutch history are quite abundant even though they are not always described as lobbying, see for example P. Knevel, *Het Haagse bureau: Zeventiende-eeuwse ambtenaren tussen staatsbelang en eigenbelang* (Amsterdam: Prometheus/Bert Bakker, 2001); A. Nobel, "'Elc liep met de zijnen inden Hagh': Hollandse dorpbestuurders en hun belangenbehartiging bij de gewestelijke staten, 1568-1700," in *Politieke belangenbehartiging in de vroegmoderne Nederlanden: de rol van lobby, petitie, en officiële delegaties in de politieke besluitvorming*, ed. G. Vermeesch and L. Geervers (Maastricht: Shaker Publishing, 2014).

⁷ K. Kollman, *Outside Lobbying: Public opinion and interest group strategies* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), 3-12.

trade versus monopoly in the pamphlets.⁸ Pamphlets were a prime vehicle for individuals outside lobbying for their own interests. As various monographs have made clear in recent years, contributing to the public debate in pamphlets was an essential part of politics in the seventeenth-century Dutch Republic.⁹ Due to a wave of recent publications on pamphlets in the Dutch Republic, and even specifically in relation to Dutch Brazil, pamphlets receive relatively little attention in this thesis. The focus is instead, as can be seen in more detail in chapter 4, the emerging practice of organizing petition drives, by which petitions were signed by an increasing number of individuals. They did, however, not reach the tens of thousands of signatories as in England during the civil war.¹⁰ Nevertheless, the changing practice of [1] putting one's own signature, and [2] collecting signatures, or canvassing, to show and increase support fundamentally altered the mechanisms of outside lobbying in the first half of the seventeenth century. This shows how petitioning was not only a way of *convincing* the political mandataries, but also a way of *pressuring* political mandataries through public opinion and public discourse, thus making petitioning an essential tool for outside lobbying.

Lobbying is a way of highlighting the influence of people in history. That includes, but is not limited to, 'ordinary' people. Ordinary people are defined by Wayne te Brake as 'those that are excluded from the realm of officialdom; subjects as opposed to rulers'.¹¹ What makes people 'ordinary', according to te Brake, is their status as political subjects, which may be at odds with their economic, social or cultural position in society. However, the term ordinary might be too restrictive to describe all the actors in this thesis. In particular since the term is associated with other descriptions such as 'commoners', 'folk', 'the vulgar', 'the unlearned'

⁸ J.J.S. van den Tol, "Monopolizing arguments: outside lobbying in the Dutch Republic for free trade to Brazil, 1630-1638," in *Mechanisms of global empire building* ed. A. Polonia and C.A.P. Antunes (Porto: CITCEM/Afrontamento, 2017).

⁹ F. Deen, D. Onnekink, and M.H.P. Reinders, eds., *Pamphlets and Politics in the Dutch Republic* (Leiden: Brill, 2011); H.J. Helmers, "The Royalist Republic: literature, politics and religion in the Anglo-Dutch public sphere, 1639-1660" (Unpublished PhD thesis, Leiden University, 2011); J. Pollmann and A. Spicer, eds., *Public Opinion and Changing Identities in the Early Modern Netherlands: Essays in Honour of Alastair Duke* (Leiden: Brill, 2007).

¹⁰ For information on English petition drives, see for example: A. Fletcher, *The outbreak of the English civil war* (London: Edward Arnold, 1981), 191-227; W.A. Pettigrew, "Free to Enslave: politics and the escalation of Britain's Transatlantic Slave Trade, 1688-1714," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 64, no. 1 (2007): 11-13.

¹¹ W. te Brake, *Shaping history: ordinary people in European politics, 1500-1700* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 2.

or 'the lower sort'.¹² In this thesis, these people are the non-mandataries who, like moths gravitating towards a light, seek contact with the political center of decision-makers. The influence of people nuances the importance of for instance the Company or the State.

It should be remembered that lobbying was by no means the only way to demand favorable resolutions; popular collective action would be another notable example. However, typical examples of popular collective action, such as protests, riots, or strikes, are much more discordant than lobbying. In studies of the relationship between subjects and political authority, cooperation has been greatly overlooked.¹³ Lobbying, thus, includes the reciprocal, cooperative, and social elements of patronage and clientelism for politics.

Seventeenth-century examples of the mechanisms of patronage and clientelism are reasonably well-known in the literature.¹⁴ Similarly, as discussed above, there is a vast body of literature on pamphlets and the relation with the public sphere.¹⁵ Thirdly, from a formal-legalistic point of view it is established that there was a foundation for the use of petitions, and petitions have been used to describe the position of different social groups – particularly within cities.¹⁶ Even the political success rate of petitions in for instance the city of

¹² M.C. Jacob and C. Secretan, "Introduction," in *In Praise of Ordinary People: Early Modern Britain and the Dutch Republic*, ed. M.C. Jacob and C. Secretan (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 2-3.

¹³ A possible explanation might be the relatively high number of Marxist (leaning) scholars in this particular field, see for example: C. Tilly, *From Mobilization to Revolution* (Reading: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1978); R. Dekkers, "Labour conflicts and working-class culture in Early Modern Holland," *International Review of Social History* 35, no. 3 (1990); K. Davids, "Seamen's Organizations and Social Protest in Europe, c. 1300-1825," *International Review of Social History* 39, no. S2 (1994).

¹⁴ G.H. Janssen, *Creaturen van de Macht: Patronage bij Willem Frederik van Nassau (1613-1664)* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2005); G.H. Janssen, "Patronage en corruptie: publieke en private rollen van een stadhouder in de Republiek," *Tijdschrift voor Sociale en Economische Geschiedenis* 2, no. 4 (2005); H.F.K. van Nierop, "Willem van Oranje als hoog edelman: patronage in de Habsburgse Nederlanden," *BMGN* 99, no. 4 (1984); L. Kooijmans, *Vriendschap en de kunst van het overleven in de zeventiende en achttiende eeuw* (Amsterdam: Bert Bakker, 2016).

¹⁵ C.E. Harline, *Pamphlets, printing and political culture in the Early Modern Dutch Republic* (Dordrecht: Martinus Nijhoff, 1987); G. de Bruin, "Political Pamphleteering and Public Opinion on the Age of De Witt (1653-1672)," in *Pamphlets and Politics in the Dutch Republic*, ed. F. Deen, D. Onnekink, and M.H.P. Reinders (Leiden: Brill, 2011); M.H.P. Reinders, *Gedrukte Chaos: Populisme en moord in het Rampjaar 1672* (Amsterdam: Balans, 2010); M. Stensland, "Peace or no peace? The role of pamphleteering in Public Debate in the run-up to the twelve-year truce," in *Pamphlets and politics in the Dutch Republic*, ed. F. Deen, D. Onnekink, and M.H.P. Reinders (Leiden: Brill, 2011).

¹⁶ Nierop, "Petitions in the Dutch Republic.;" G. Vermeesch, "Professional Lobbying in Eighteenth-century Brussels: The Role of Agents in Petitioning the Central Government Institutions in the Habsburg Netherlands," *Journal of Early Modern History* 16, no. 2 (2012); G. Vermeesch, "'Miserabele personen' en hun toegang tot het stadsbestuur. Pro deo petities in achttiende-eeuws Antwerpen," *Tijdschrift voor Sociale en Economische Geschiedenis* 12, no. 4 (2015); G. Vermeesch and L. Geever, eds., *Politieke belangenbehartiging in de vroegmoderne Nederlanden: de rol van lobby, petities, en officiële delegaties*

Amsterdam has been calculated; 40 percent of the petitions resulted in a bylaw, many copying a petition verbatim.¹⁷ Moreover, I am not the first to argue that ‘petitions were a preferred and acceptable vehicle to communicate [political] claims to the authorities’.¹⁸ However, what lobbying adds to the understanding of early-modern political interaction is that it unites these different elements.

That means that it adds the cooperative element to other forms of collective popular participation in politics, it adds the political impact of the discussions in the public sphere, and it adds an important political context to the act of petitioning. In other words, it offers an analysis that goes further than the explanations of personal relations, pamphlets, and petitions which individually cannot fully explain the importance of (ordinary) people for the creation, shaping, and maintenance of institutions. Moreover, the study of lobbying (groups) helps to identify differentiating group interests; a corporation does not have a singular interest, neither do merchants, and neither do colonists for instance.¹⁹ Lobbying alliances demonstrate the transcendental nature of shared interests. Lastly, it is important to provide a definition of lobbying for early-modern historical analysis as the word is typically used as a catch-all term to describe a process in which a historian is unsure how or why something happened exactly.²⁰

in de politieke besluitvorming, vol. 13 (Maastricht: Shaker Publishing, 2014); Nobel, "Elc liep met de zijnen."; J. Roelevink, "'t Welck doende etcetera', Lobby bij de Staten-Generaal in de vroege zeventiende eeuw," *Jaarboek Geschiedkundige Vereniging 'Die Haghe'* (1990).

¹⁷ Nierop, "Popular Participation," 285-288.

¹⁸ M.R. Prak, "The people in politics: early modern England and the Dutch Republic compared," in *In Praise of Ordinary People: Early Modern Britain and the Dutch Republic*, ed. M.C. Jacob and C. Secretan (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 150.

¹⁹ This differentiates from how for instance Jan Glete described the Republic as ‘a consciously created constitutional framework for the articulation of interest and decision-making, where the socio-economic elite groups had a voice and the elite ran the administration’, see: J. Glete, *War and the state in early modern Europe. Spain, the Dutch Republic and Sweden as fiscal-military states, 1500-1660* (New York/London: Routledge, 2002), 147-148. Glete assumes the local elites and their aggregate interests as too monolithic.

²⁰ A query on JSTOR for lobbied AND “early modern” resulted in 394 hits, and lobbying AND “early modern” even provided 828 results. Examples of undefined descriptions of lobbying activities include: “In Quebec, Loyalists lobbied the metropolitan government to establish an assembly,” in E. Mancke, “Early Modern Imperial Governance and the Origins of Canadian Political Culture,” *Canadian Journal of Political Science / Revue canadienne de science politique* 32, no. 1 (1999): 17. “More important still, the two founders lobbied for and secured the financial and political support of the French Court of Louis XIII,” in U. Strasser, “Early Modern Nuns and the Feminist Politics of Religion,” *The Journal of Religion* 84, no. 4 (2004): 544. “Londoners were active in support of their beliefs, petitioning, lobbying,

0.2. CONCEPTS

Studying lobbying assigns a considerable amount of agency to people. This thesis is primarily concerned with the agency of people for the creation, shaping, implementation and maintenance of institutions. Following the definition of Douglass North, institutions are ‘the humanly devised constraints that structure political, economic and social interaction. They consist of both informal constraints (sanctions, taboos, customs, traditions, and codes of conduct), and formal rules (constitutions, laws, property rights)’.²¹ They are ‘the rules of the game’. Institutions are typically used by economists or economic historians to explain the relative economic prosperity between two or more units of analysis; some areas are economically more prosperous than others because they have institutions that are more conducive to economic growth.²² Although one could make all kinds of arguments against this notion, that is not the point of this thesis. Rather, this thesis is concerned with how institutions change; why do certain institutions exist?

Broadly speaking, there are four explanations for why certain institutions exist: [1] they are the most efficient solution to a problem; [2] they are the result of path-dependent historical trajectories; [3] they are the result of continuous marginal adjustments; or [4] they are the result of revolutions and war. By efficient, economists mean those institutions that require the lowest transaction costs. Transaction costs are ‘costs necessary to establish and maintain any system of rules and rights’.²³ In an example of long-distance-trade, transaction costs are thus not only the cost of a ship or a crew, but also the costs to prevent the crew or sellers from cheating behavior. If institutions are the rules, transaction costs are the costs necessary to maintain the rules. The second explanation is partly a contradiction of the first explanation. It proposes that some institutions exist because they have historically grown or evolved this way. The most well-known example is probably the QWERTY keyboard which initially followed the first theory as it was efficient in ensuring that typewriters would not

placarding, demonstrating”, V. Harding, "Recent Perspectives on Early Modern London," *The Historical Journal* 47, no. 2 (2004).

²¹ D.C. North, "Institutions," *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 5, no. 1 (1991): 97.

²² Among others, this argument is made by D. Acemoglu and J. Robinson, *Why nations fail: the origins of power, prosperity, and poverty* (London: Profile Books, 2012).

²³ D.W. Allen, "What are transaction costs?," *Research in Law and Economics* 14 (1991); R.H. Coase, "The problem of social cost," *The Journal of Law & Economics* 3 (1960).

get jammed. Despite the technological advances of the computer, the opportunity costs of learning to type on a new keyboard are simply too high to warrant a new keyboard style – despite the 20-40% increased efficiency of those new keyboards.²⁴ In other words, the typewriter created a path-dependent trajectory for the present-day keyboard. The third explanation is somewhat related to the second. It is a way of explaining incremental change to path-dependent trajectories that builds on existing patterns. Douglass North points specifically to the developmental trajectory of common law, and calls continuous marginal adjustments ‘the dominant way by which societies and economies have evolved’.²⁵ The fourth example is in a way also related to path dependency, but focuses on drastic changes in the path as the result of war or revolution; these are critical junctures.²⁶ The Glorious Revolution would be a case in point.²⁷

Economic theory ignores the element of power. Political scientist, in attempt to include power in their explanation for institutions, argue that institutions serve the interest of the most powerful group.²⁸ The economic historian Sheilagh Ogilvie followed a similar logic when she convincingly argued that guilds and its institutions cannot explain the economic growth of certain cities because they do not affect *efficiency* – the size of the economic pie – but *distribution* – the way the pie is divided.²⁹ However, there are several examples that illustrate that institutions do not necessarily reflect the interest of the most powerful group. Multiple chapters in this thesis showcase how ideology, pragmatism, or the art of the compromise can influence decision-making and as such the institutions they produce.

In order to include lobbying to explain why institutions exist – particularly formal regulations and bylaws as these are the clearest outcome of a decision-making process – this

²⁴ P.A. David, "Clio and the Economics of QWERTY," *The American Economic Review* 75, no. 2 (1985).

²⁵ D.C. North, *Institutions, institutional change and economic performance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 96-101.

²⁶ G. Capocchia, "Critical junctures and institutional change," in *Advances in Comparative-Historical Analysis*, ed. J. Mahoney and K. Thelen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 147.

²⁷ D.C. North and B.R. Weingast, "Constitutions and Commitment: The Evolution of Institutional Governing Public Choice in Seventeenth-Century England," *The Journal of Economic History* 49, no. 4 (1989). Note that recently this was disputed through an emphasis on the practice of lobbying (without calling it so), see: A.L. Murphy, "Demanding 'credible commitment': public reactions to the failures of the early financial revolution," *The Economic History Review* 66, no. 1 (2012).

²⁸ F.R. Baumgartner et al., *Lobbying and Policy Change: who wins, who loses, and why* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 20.

²⁹ S. Ogilvie, *Institutions and European Trade: Merchant guilds, 1000-1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 3-4.

thesis borrows from Anthony Giddens' structuration theory. Giddens' structuration theory was developed as a 'third way' between studies emphasizing the importance of the structure for the outcome of events, and studies emphasizing the importance of agents for the outcome of events. The theory attempts to integrate human agency in structuralist theories within the social sciences.³⁰ Structures are the recursive complex set of rules that enable, guide, and limit interaction between actors. Agents, or human actors, are both enabled and limited by structures, while simultaneously shaping that very structure with their actions and the structure being a sum of all their previous actions.³¹ This is what Giddens calls the duality of structure; the structure both constitutes and depends on the agent.³²

Giddens illustrates this abstract concept with the following example. When a man speaks a sentence, he draws upon a complex set of rules that allow him to be understood. The structure of a language creates the (implicit) rules that form the basis for understanding, while the act of speaking refers to the continuous existence of the structure.³³ When a correct sentence is being spoken it is a reproduction of the rules for creating a sentence.³⁴ This means that when a researcher observes the sentences being spoken he simultaneously observes the structure. The two cannot be seen separately. Structuration is a condition for the reproduction of a system. A system is the reproduced relations between individuals and/or collectivities.³⁵

His duality of structure does not deny the influence of structure on the outcome of events, but implies the unalienable relation with human actors. Moreover, it highlights the possibility for agents to change the structure; even the most disruptive changes involve structuration.³⁶ Giddens dissociates four different types of structural change. [1] Step-by-step change that is inherent to the duality of structure; [2] changes as a result of conflicting social

³⁰ Without going into too much detail about the structuralist approach, it can be summarized as emphasizing the structure as determining factor for sociological or historical interactions. Other concepts with a similar meaning are objectivism and determinism.

³¹ A. Giddens, *Modernity and self-identity: self and society in the late modern age* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991), 204.

³² A. Giddens, *The constitution of society: outline of the theory of structuration* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 19, 25-28.

³³ Q.J. Munters, *Anthony Giddens: een kennismaking met de structuratietheorie* (Wageningen: Landbouwwuniversiteit, 1991), 22.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 24.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 23.

³⁶ A. Giddens, *Central problems in social theory: Action, structure and contradiction in social analysis* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1979), 70.

systems; [3] change as a consequence of a change in material resources; and [4] intentional attempts for change by groups or social movements that are aware of the possibilities of structuration.³⁷ In particular the fourth type of structural change seems relevant to describe how lobbying changes institutions. This obviously does not exclude the other options of happening at the same time.

In order to use Giddens' structuration theory to argue that lobbying is a means of changing institutions, it is important to consider to what extent it is possible to equate North's definition of institutions ('the humanly devised constraints that structure (...) interactions') to Giddens' definition of structure ('rules and resources, organized as properties of social systems'). He defines a (social) system as 'the reproduced relations between actors or collectivities, organized as regular social practices'.³⁸ It seems that North's informal institutions (e.g. taboos, customs, traditions) are quite similar to what Giddens describes as systems; in particular because of its emphasis on the reproduction of recurring social practices. Moreover, through North's definition of institutions as *humanly devised* constraints there is the implicit acknowledgement that these are the product of social practices. This leaves open the discussion of how similar institutions are to structures?

The primary issue is that Giddens is wary of using 'rules of the game (...) as illustrative of characteristics of social rules'.³⁹ It is more important to know how to adhere to the rule, he argues, and he adds that 'rules generate (...) practices'. In other words, rules cannot be interpreted as generalizations of what people do. Secondly, Giddens vehemently disagrees that structures are merely constraints as this would imply a binary distinction between freedom and structures, which contradicts his definition of the duality of structure.⁴⁰ That being said, North would probably disagree with an interpretation of institutions that overemphasizes the element of constraint, since his institutions also facilitate interactions. The third issue is that Giddens has his own definition of institutions. He describes these as 'the most deeply-layered practices constitutive of social systems'.⁴¹ By deeply-layered, he

³⁷ A. Schuurman, "Mensen maken verschil: sociale theorie, historische sociologie en geschiedenis," *Tijdschrift voor Sociale Geschiedenis* 22, no. 1 (1996): 176. (Giddens does not summarize these four typologies himself as far as I am aware.)

³⁸ Giddens, *Central problems*, 66.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 65-66.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 70.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 64-65.

refers to the spatial breadth and the temporal duration. In other words, the most deeply-layered practices are those that have the greatest reach in time and space, which should be seen in contrast to the 'timeless snapshots' of structures.⁴² This might be the root of the difference between Giddens and North. For North an institution is what structure is for Giddens. As a result, North is of the opinion that institutional change 'typically consists of marginal adjustments'; he sees institutions as sequences of timeless snapshots.⁴³

This thesis builds on North's definition of institutions, but aims to integrate human agency, or people, in the explanation of institutional change. Institutions are 'rules and resources' because they simultaneously limit and facilitate human interactions. In North's definition, institutions are the structure. There is some overlap between Giddens' explanation of structural change and North's explanation for institutional change. What Giddens' structuration theory offers to the study of institutional change are the intentional attempts for change by groups or social movements that are aware of the possibilities of structuration. Lobbying in this sense is a case in point of 'intentional attempts for change'. As such, lobbying is a process of structuration and adds people to institutional analysis. Lobbyists are the knowledgeable actors aware of the possibilities of structuration. Lobbying is a social undertaking; it must be carried out and therefore understood within the context of social systems. Lobbying is a way to study the permeability of institutions and is defined as the activity by which individuals or organized interests seek contact with political mandarines in an attempt to influence decision-making.⁴⁴

0.3. *DEBATES*

0.3.1. **Interest groups**

Influencing decision-making within the British Atlantic is perhaps the best studied field of historical lobbying. As early as 1921 Lilian Penson wrote an article on role of a 'West Indian Interest' in eighteenth-century England and other publications have appeared roughly once

⁴² Ibid., 198.

⁴³ North, *Institutions, institutional change*, 83.

⁴⁴ Vermeesch and Geevers, "Inleiding," 3.

every decade since the Second World War.⁴⁵ Planters and merchants with a financial interest in the Caribbean tried to influence trade policy that involved them through the British Society of West India Merchants. This Caribbean rooted Society became a more formal entity at the end of the eighteenth century when it turned into the West India Committee. Virginia tobacco merchants started lobbying somewhere between 1624 and 1673 and held formal meetings in the 'Virginia Walk' on the London Exchange or in Virginia Coffeehouses once or twice a month until at least 1711.⁴⁶ In her study of these Virginia merchant groups, Olson further argues that at least some merchants came to these locations for business such as purchasing insurance or exchanging market information, and not for political purposes. But once inside it was possible for them to be politicized. The leading merchants meanwhile drafted petitions and arranged appearances before the Board of Trade which directed policy regarding British colonies. Because of the opposition by 'a great muster of the tradesmen' that 'talked one after another' in Parliament, raising tobacco duties would successfully be averted more than half of the times it was debated.⁴⁷ Both planters in Virginia and the Caribbean and merchants in Britain seem to have been organized rather loosely and with a varying level of formality.⁴⁸

Reflecting the debates among English historians, Dutch historiography has wondered whether the Dutch Atlantic witnessed a similar concentration of lobby groups with different backgrounds but united in a joint interest during the eighteenth century. Piet Emmer was the most prominent to argue that this was not the case.⁴⁹ Emmer does not further elaborate on this statement in great detail, but other scholars agree with him and find explanations in either the deeply rooted provincialism with its conflicting interests of different provinces or

⁴⁵ L.M. Penson, "The London West India Interest in the Eighteenth Century," *English Historical Review* 36, no. 1 (1921); D. Hall, *A Brief History of the West India Committee* (Barbados: Caribbean Universities Press, 1971); G. Meroney, "The London Entrepôt Merchants and the Georgia Colony," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 25, no. 2 (1968).

⁴⁶ A. Gilbert Olson, "The Virginia Merchants of London: A Study in eighteenth-century Interest-Group Politics," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 40, no. 3 (1983): 367.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 369.

⁴⁸ A.J. O'Shaughnessy, "The formation of a commercial lobby: The West India interest, British colonial policy and the American Revolution," *The Historical Journal* 40, no. 1 (1997).

⁴⁹ P.C. Emmer, *The Dutch in the Atlantic economy, 1580-1880: trade, slavery, and emancipation* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998), 9.

in the close personal ties between the colonial merchant elite and the political mandataries.⁵⁰ The latter is the more questionable of these two explanations. In the first place because this ignores the very large number of petitions sent across the Atlantic and from within the Republic advocating on a wide range of issues. After all, who would waste money, time, and energy in drafting a petition or publishing a pamphlet if close personal ties could result in the same effect? Or who would, even more costly, traverse the Atlantic to present a case in front of the political mandataries? Both of these examples come together in Adriaen van der Donck who travelled from New Netherland to the Republic in 1649.⁵¹ The second reason it is questionable is that the personal ties were not that strong between merchants (or planters) with a West Indian interest and the political elite. This became abundantly clear in the issue of free trade, as discussed in chapter 3. The large foreign population in the colonies, as well as the religious differences between merchants and urban political elite can further serve as a confirmation of weak ties between merchants and the political elite. Moreover, even if there was great overlap between prominent merchants and the political elite, this does not mean that all these merchants shared the same interest.

In the most recent contribution to lobbying interest groups in the Dutch Atlantic, Jessica Roitman and Han Jordaan criticize the Dutch historiography for being too much focused on whether or not there was a West Indian interest similar to the British, and for being too Euro-centric. By Euro-centric they seem to mean that explanations are sought too easily in Europe instead of the colonies. Therefore, they studied a group of merchants based on the island of St. Eustatius in the eighteenth century.⁵² Roitman and Jordaan base their choice of this group of merchants on the theoretical foundations of political scientist Gabriel Almond. He distinguishes between institutional interest groups and non-associational interest groups among others. They argue that the WIC is a prime example of an institutionalized interest group, while the Statian merchants belong to the category of non-associational interest

⁵⁰ H. den Heijer, "A public and private Dutch West India interest," in *Dutch Atlantic Connections, 1680-1800*, ed. G.J. Oostindie and J.V. Roitman (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2014); A. van Stipriaan, *Surinaams contrast: rooibouw en overleven in een Caraïbische plantagekolonie 1750-1863* (Leiden: KITLV uitgeverij, 1993), 31.

⁵¹ R. Shorto, *The island at the center of the world: the epic story of Dutch Manhattan and the forgotten colony that shaped America* (New York: Doubleday, 2004).

⁵² J.V. Roitman and H. Jordaan, "Fighting a foregone conclusion: Local interest groups, West Indian merchants, and St. Eustatius, 1780-1810," *Tijdschrift voor Sociale en Economische Geschiedenis* 12, no. 1 (2015): 80-84.

groups because they were neither permanently organized nor was there continuity in their internal structure. Furthermore, the group was linked by their shared geographical location, one of the links (along with kinship, religion, ethnicity, status, or class) articulated by Almond for non-associational interest groups.⁵³ The lack of formal organization did not make them less successful, though, as they succeeded in preventing a proposed increase in tax tariffs. Contrary to the British, the Dutch colonial interest groups were organized far more diffusely and less formally. This becomes most clear when the Dutch, white creole, and non-Dutch interest groups each petitioned separately, formulated independent proposals for similar new policy, and mobilized their corresponding merchants in the metropole.⁵⁴

Contrary to the case of eighteenth-century St. Eustatius, the seventeenth century witnessed a more mixed background of lobbyists. Therefore, Alison Gilbert Olson's definition of an interest group as a 'group of individuals, conscious of sharing a common concern, cooperating on the borders of power, and seeking to increase their own benefits through bargaining with a political system they accept and influence, but do not attempt to control', seems more useful.⁵⁵ In her monograph on the long-eighteenth-century American interests in London, Olson argues for lobbying mechanisms like petitions, printing (public opinion lobbying), personal connections, and control of information. It is, however, not possible to simply apply her approach to the Dutch case. In the first place, because in Britain the Anglican Church had a larger role in advancing particular interests than any religious organization in the Republic, and secondly because the 'management' of Britain's colonial affairs was left largely in the hands of the monarchy between 1660 and 1760.⁵⁶ It is, however, noteworthy to emphasize the trans-Atlantic ties that formed a shared interest between merchants and planters, while maintaining a rather loose organizational shape. Especially in the earlier period, at the end of the seventeenth century, the lobbying groups did form a singular social entity, but constituted a spectrum, lumping together 'divers Merchants, Masters of Ships, and others' or 'divers of the Gentry, Merchants and others'.⁵⁷

⁵³ G.A. Almond and G. Bingham Powell, *Comparative Politics: A Developmental Approach* (Boston: Little Brown, 1966), 75. Cited by Roitman and Jordaan, "Fighting a foregone conclusion," 86-87.

⁵⁴ Roitman and Jordaan, "Fighting a foregone conclusion," 90-94.

⁵⁵ A. Gilbert Olson, *Making the empire work: London and American interest groups 1690-1790* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992), 2.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 9-12.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 42-44.

0.3.2. Organization

Historians have long viewed the WIC, like its East Indian counterpart the VOC, as an economic innovation. Its joint-stock system, limited liability, transferability of shares, and contractual agreements allowed these enterprises to economically outcompete other types of merchant organizations. Their success was not based on their monopoly or use of violence, the argument goes, but on their ability to compete on the market.⁵⁸ This idea is corroborated by economists studying the twentieth century who argue that data show that societies with open access order outcompete societies with limited access order. The limited access order has a predominance of social relationships organized along personal lines, whereas open access order has widespread impersonal social relationships.⁵⁹ The first is an example of adherent organization, the latter an example of contractual organization. This argument by modern economists is thus similar to the argument that impersonal corporations such as the WIC or the English East India Company (EIC) outcompeted personal trading networks that were based on familial, religious, or national connections that limited or overcame traditional problems such as issues of trust or reliable information.⁶⁰

However, historical evidence shows that this transition is neither self-evident nor unambiguous. For example, family networks (adherent organization) remained of great importance for the success of the English Levant Company (contractual organization).⁶¹ Similarly, the Scots formed their own organization within the EIC. After one got in, he included the rest of this personal (patronage) network, which was based on his 'nation',

⁵⁸ N. Steensgaard, *Carracks, caravans and companies. The structural crisis in the European-Asian trade in the early 17th century* (Lund: Studentlitteratur, 1973); O. Gelderblom, A. de Jong, and J. Jonker, "The Formative Years of the Modern Corporation: The Dutch East India Company VOC, 1602-1623" (paper presented at the ACSGA Seminar, Amsterdam, 06/12/2012 2012). That is not to say that this is uncontested however, see: M.A.P. Meilink-Roelofs, "The structures of trade in Asia in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Niels Steensgaard's 'Carracks, Caravans, and Companies', the Asian trade revolutions, a critical appraisal," *Mare Luso-Indicum* 4 (1980); M.P.M. Vink, "Between profit and power: The Dutch East India Company and Institutional Early Modernities in the Age of Mercantilism," in *Between the Middle Ages and Modernity*, ed. C.H. Parker and J.H. Bentley (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2007).

⁵⁹ D.C. North, J. Wallis, and B.R. Weingast, *Violence and social orders: a conceptual framework for interpreting recorded human history* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 2-8.

⁶⁰ N. Steensgaard, "The Dutch East India Company as an institutional innovation," in *Dutch Capitalism and World Capitalism*, ed. Maurice Aymard (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982).

⁶¹ M. Fusaro, "Cooperating mercantile networks in the early modern Mediterranean," *The Economic History Review* 65, no. 2 (2012).

within this contractual organization.⁶² Or, as Boyajian has argued, that the Portuguese in Asia largely relied on a network of (predominantly new Christian) private traders who had better information about market demands.⁶³ Yet, these types of adherent organizations are predominantly organized along the lines of “nations”, religion, ethnicity, empire, or culture, which are all forms that are not inclusive. A remarkable exception to this is the cross-cultural networks of the eighteenth-century Sephardic traders in Livorno described by Francesca Trivellato.⁶⁴ She shows how these Jewish merchants cooperated with Christian agents in Lisbon, Hindu merchant-brokers in Goa, and competent individuals rather than kin for the Amsterdam market. While the examples of the English East Indian and Levant Companies raises the question to what extent ‘modern’ contractual organizations are a dramatic shift from traditional forms of organization, the example of Trivellato challenges the notion that extent blood ties or shared identity created bonds that gave traditional forms of organizations a competitive edge. What Trivellato describes as a familiarity of coreligionists, is a form of ‘free agent organization’ by ‘intersectional networks’. These were networks that were self-organized, often pluri-religious, multi-ethnic, and cross-cultural, but more importantly had intersecting interests that they lobbied for together and that operated parallel to tradition adherent networks based on religion or kin. It was exactly this intersecting interest that united them in their undertaking.

These networks were similar to adherent organization because they were not third-party enforced, but free because they were not limited by traditional organizational bounds such as family, religion or ethnicity. Lastly, I would like to emphasize that it remains to be seen whether competition and rivalry created these forms of self-organization, as North, Wallis, and Weingast posit, or rather that it was cooperation and reciprocity that sparked and forged these bonds.

The divide between contractual and adherent organization can be illustrated through an example of contract enforcement. How do parties prevent being cheated by each other when

⁶² G.K. MacGilvary, *East India patronage and the British state: the Scottish elite and politics in the eighteenth century* (London: Tauris Academic Studies, 2008).

⁶³ J.C. Boyajian, *Portuguese trade in Asia under the Habsburgs, 1580-1640* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2008). Though his book and his conclusions received mixed reviews with criticism focusing particularly on his assessment of inter-Asian trade.

⁶⁴ F. Trivellato, *The familiarity of strangers: the Sephardic diaspora, Livorno, and crosscultural trade in the early modern period* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2009). See also her discussion of the works of Avner Greif in the introduction for a deeper understanding of cross-cultural relations.

doing business? Theory dictates that an adherent organization is made up of a homogenous group, united by kin or religion for example, and that fraudulent behavior would be punished by defamation or exclusion from the rest of the group. In other words, the 'sunk costs' of social capital make faulty behavior very costly and acts as an informal mechanism to keep the partners in check.⁶⁵ If the group is heterogeneous trust would be assured through third-party enforcement, though homogenous groups can make use of formal enforcement.⁶⁶ Cheating behavior would be punished by fines or imprisonment. As formal enforcement raises the transaction costs (drafting a contract is not free, and neither is suing someone over it) and relies on reliable (efficient) measurement, informal enforcement remained competitive until at least the industrial revolution, argues Douglas Allen.⁶⁷ Along a similar line, Avner Greif argued that public-order formal enforcement is implemented (pending availability) when economic agents find these institutions profitable.⁶⁸

The dichotomy in scholarship between adherent (e.g. family) and contractual (e.g. WIC) organization can easily be explained through the availability of sources and data. As the history of European expansion traditionally paralleled the history of the companies and highlighted success stories, the companies became synonymous with (economic) success. It was further beneficial that these large corporations left behind collections of often indexed source material, ready to be used by historians or economists. A similar argument can be made for the contribution attributed to guilds earlier in history. Scholars of alternative narratives relied on archival collections from for example religious orders, family archives, or otherwise homogenous groups. As a consequence, the alternative that historians presented to contractual organizations was adherent organizations, which were based on some sort of common denominator.

To challenge the dichotomy, one can study adherent organizations such as freemasons or Scotts within contractual organizations in order to demonstrate that the divide is not always as straightforward as presumed. Another way is to study other organizational forms,

⁶⁵ D.W. Allen, *The institutional revolution: measurement and the economic emergence of the modern world* (Chicago/London: University of Chicago Press, 2012), 45-79.

⁶⁶ A. Greif, "The Maghribi traders: a reappraisal?," *The Economic History Review* 65.2 (2012).

⁶⁷ Allen, *The institutional revolution*.

⁶⁸ A. Greif, "Commitment, Coercion and Markets: The Nature and Dynamics of Institutions Supporting Exchange," in *Handbook of New Institutional Economics*, ed. C. Ménard and M.M. Shirley (Berlin: Springer, 2008), 776-778.

in particular the free agent organization. However, as the full extent of free agent organization typically leaves limited traces because it did not exclusively rely on contracts, how can one prove its existence? Is it not merely a theoretical possibility unable to be proven? I argue that it is possible that lobbying highlights the existence of these intersectional networks, as it studies an interaction with other organizations that did leave archival traces. Lobbying is just one aspect of such interaction. Court cases would be a notable other example – albeit less cooperative.

0.3.3. The Atlantic

Recent scholarship indicates that the Atlantic was an ideal playing ground for free agent organization and intersectional networks. Traditionally the Dutch Atlantic was characterized by quotes such as “the Dutch were not very important in that part of the world”, talking about a Dutch Atlantic “makes as much sense as ‘Dutch Asia’ or the ‘Dutch Mediterranean’”, “the Dutch . . . were not until the nineteenth century an imperial power in any meaningful sense of the word”, or “there was no such thing as the Dutch Atlantic”.⁶⁹ However, at least since 2003 this position is no longer widely accepted. Johannes Postma and Victor Enthoven edited a volume arguing that despite the failed company there was an abundance of profitable Dutch economic activity in the Atlantic. Simplified, the argument was that the Dutch did in the Atlantic what they did so well in Europe: transporting goods.⁷⁰ Dutch merchants did so long before the WIC, and they did so to and from colonies that were not Dutch. The year 2014 witnessed two edited volumes that brought the ‘Dutch’ Atlantic up to par with the historiography of the other Atlantics, in particular the British.⁷¹ The books did not maintain that the Atlantic should be studied outside the company’s spheres, but stressed that the national paradigm was not particularly useful for the Atlantic, and that there was a sort of informal parallel Atlantic that transcended national boundaries. Especially after an

⁶⁹ Emmer, *The Dutch in the Atlantic economy*; P.C. Emmer and W. Klooster, “The Dutch Atlantic, 1600-1800: Expansion without empire,” *Itinerario* 23, no. 2 (1999); A. Pagden, *Lords of all the world: ideologies of empire in Spain, Britain and France, c.1500-c.1800* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995); B. Schmidt, “The Dutch Atlantic: From Provincialism to Globalism,” in *Atlantic History, a Critical Appraisal*, ed. J.P. Greene and P.D. Morgan (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).

⁷⁰ J. Postma and V. Enthoven, eds., *Riches from Atlantic Commerce: Dutch Transatlantic Trade and Shipping, 1585-1817* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2003); V. Enthoven and M.J. van Ittersum, “The mouse that roars: Dutch Atlantic History,” *Journal of Early Modern History* 10, no. 3 (2006).

⁷¹ M. van Groesen, ed. *The legacy of Dutch Brazil* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014); G.J. Oostindie and J.V. Roitman, eds., *Dutch Atlantic Connections, 1680-1800* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2014).

edited volume on *The British Atlantic World* published in 2002, the general consensus was that – in the words of Bernard Bailyn in the preface – the ‘economic involvement in the Atlantic world far transcended the constraints of its nationalist, mercantilist regulations; it radiated through the entire inter-hemispheric system’.⁷² In other words, the various colonies, conquests and captaincies in the territorial Atlantic were not much more than national façades that masked an international, pluri-religious, multi-ethnic, and borderless cooperative reality.⁷³

Thus, the historical imagination of the Atlantic changed from a (nationalist) hub-and-spoke-model, where the European hub (center/metropolis) had bilateral connections with its different colonies (periphery), to a spider-web-model where the different peripheries were also connected with each other.⁷⁴ This is in the Dutch case illustrated through economic histories, but studies of the Iberian empires showcase a similar poly-centric formation on a political level.⁷⁵

The economic approach fitted very well with the image that was created of the Dutch as carriers of goods to, from, and between colonies. One of the two edited volumes, fittingly called *Dutch Atlantic Connections*, highlighted the interimperial contacts that formed the lines between the various other peripheries in the spider web. The interactions between Dutch and non-Dutch in the Atlantic were, according to different chapters in this book, far-reaching. Silvia Marzagalli went as far as to state that ‘French colonial trade originated, flourished and persisted only through the collaboration of non-French merchants and non-French markets’.⁷⁶ The Dutch featured prominently here. Karwan Fatah-Black reiterated Marzagalli’s point in his dissertation where he argued that non-Dutch trade, especially that

⁷² B. Bailyn, "Preface," in *The British Atlantic World, 1500-1800 (2nd edition)*, ed. D. Armitage and M.J. Braddick (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), xv.

⁷³ W. Klooster, "Inter-Imperial smuggling in the Americas, 1600-1800," in *Soundings in Atlantic History: Latent Structures and Intellectual Currents, 1500-1825*, ed. B. Bailyn and P.L. Denault (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009); R. Drayton, "Masked Condominia: Pan-European collaboration in the History of Imperialism, c. 1500 to the present" (paper presented at the Workshop Transitions to Modernity, New Haven, 24/09/2012 2012).

⁷⁴ D. Hancock, "Self-organized complexity and the emergence of an Atlantic market economy," in *The Atlantic economy during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries*, ed. P.A. Coclanis (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2005), 31.

⁷⁵ P. Cardim et al., eds., *Polycentric Monarchies: How did Early Modern Spain and Portugal Achieve and Maintain a Global Hegemony?* (Sussex: Sussex Academic, 2014).

⁷⁶ S. Marzagalli, "The French Atlantic and the Dutch, late seventeenth-late eighteenth century," in *The Dutch Atlantic Connections, 1680-1800*, ed. J.V. Roitman and G.J. Oostindie (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2014), 117.

coming from northern America, was of paramount importance for the colonization of Suriname.⁷⁷ For New Netherland, Susanah Romney described these networks that she centered around women as 'intimate', and argued that the 'intimate networks people constructed, rather than actions taken by formal structures or metropolitan authorities, constituted empire'.⁷⁸

And that of course makes sense. Working from the premise that indeed these intersectional networks were of paramount importance to make the Atlantic 'work', it seems at least odd that historians have only considered these as responsive to metropolitan decisions in relation to the making of the Atlantic. At the same time, Oostindie and Roitman wrote in the introduction of *Dutch Atlantic Connections* that 'as much as we may acknowledge that there was room for self-organisation and cross- and interimperial connections, we cannot dismiss the centrality of the metropolitan state and its institutions'.⁷⁹ Similarly, Hancock, in his book on the Madeira wine complex, writes that 'producers and distributors responded to mercantilist master plans by taking advantage of the opportunities the plans created, if they created opportunities, and by tolerating, ignoring, or evading them if they did otherwise'.⁸⁰ Oostindie, Roitman, and Hancock portray the intersectional networks in the periphery as bystanders primarily reacting to a constantly changing reality imposed on them by a state or other authority operating from the metropolitan center. This presupposes a 'state' or Company that was much stronger and well-defined than it actually was.⁸¹

This thesis posits that the intersectional networks did not stand by idly as the world changed around them, but instead actively lobbied for their own interests. Important decisions were of course made in the European center, and these decisions were partially

⁷⁷ K. Fatah-Black, *White Lies and Black Markets: Evading metropolitan authority in colonial Suriname, 1650-1800* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2015).

⁷⁸ S. Shaw Romney, *New Netherland connections: intimate networks and Atlantic ties in seventeenth-century America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014), 18.

⁷⁹ G.J. Oostindie and J.V. Roitman, "Introduction," in *Dutch Atlantic connections, 1680-1800: linking empires, bridging borders*, ed. G.J. Oostindie and J.V. Roitman (2014), 2.

⁸⁰ D. Hancock, *Oceans of wine: Madeira and the emergence of American trade and taste* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), xvii.

⁸¹ Cardim et al., *Polycentric Monarchies*; F. Bethencourt, "Political configurations and local powers," in *Portuguese Oceanic Expansion, 1400-1800*, ed. F. Bethencourt and D.R. Curto, *Political configurations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

negotiated around geopolitical, military, and economic circumstances.⁸² But these decisions were also based on the information that was supplied by the individuals from the periphery. In addition, the individuals actively engaged in the political decision-making process by personally crossing the Atlantic from Brazil to the Dutch Republic to deliver their opinion. Or they submitted petitions to either colonial or metropolitan governments, or even both, thus steering the decision-making. Moreover, they wrote and/or printed pamphlets defending their interests, thus contributing to a public debate that was transatlantic. It needs to be acknowledged, however, that lobbying was not the only form of structuration. Moreover, the lobbying bandwidth, as becomes apparent in chapter 1 for instance, could limit the maneuverability of individuals. Similarly, as Nicholas Cunigan has argued for the WIC colony Brazil, uncontrollable circumstances such as weather conditions could further drastically limit the agency of (particularly colonizing) people on cultural, social, economic, agro-ecological, and geopolitical forces.⁸³

In other words, this thesis argues that the (Dutch) Atlantic was the outcome of a permanent process of structuration by lobby groups formed through free agent organization based in cooperative practice and intersecting interests. This means that (aggregates of) people made a difference.

0.4. SOURCES AND METHODOLOGY

The largest body of systematically studied primary sources of this thesis is comprised of petitions (*requesten*). Petitions to the States General regarding the possessions of the WIC in the Atlantic can be found in the Liassen WIC in the National Archive in The Hague. It is uncertain what percentage of petitions have survived, but the Liassen are organized per year usually and comprise about fifteen centimeters of loose, sometimes unsorted, folio so what has survived is at least substantial. A petitioner would supplicate his request, and would receive an apostille as answer on the margin of the document as proof of the decision. At

⁸² E. Mancke, "Negotiating an empire: Britain and its overseas peripheries, c. 1550-1780," in *Negotiated empires: centers and peripheries in the Americas, 1500-1820*, ed. C. Daniels and M.V. Kennedy (New York/London: Routledge, 2002).

⁸³ N.J. Cunigan, "Weathering extremes: climate, colonialism, and indigenous resistance in the Dutch Atlantic" (Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Kansas, 2017).

least, for simple *soft lobbying* this would typically be the case. For *political lobbying*, however, the decision would typically be to 'place the petition in the hands of the commission on West Indian affairs'. As such, the petitions requesting political action have typically survived in the archives and provide a rather complete image of the lobbying through petitions. The effect of petitions can be studied through a consultation of the resolutions of the States General. Initially the resolutions had been part of the general resolutions of the States General, but on 16 April 1638 the High-Mightiness decided to put all resolutions regarding the WIC in a separate book of West Indian resolutions. Separate copies of resolutions on a variety of specific topic related to the WIC can be found throughout the different archives in the Republic, or otherwise as evidence attached to petitions.

Are petitions a trustworthy source? Yes, they were official documents with a limited legal basis and therefore there is less incentive to lie. Moreover, I have not encountered any complaints about individuals lying in petitions. There might have been the occasional exaggeration as part of the rhetorical armor of the petitioner, after all having 'no friends' sounds worse than 'one friend who refused to help me', but on whole petitions are quite trustworthy. Petitions had been largely standardized. A book by Willem van Alphen for standard petitions for the Court of Holland had been printed as early as 1642 and was called *Parrot, or formulary book* and contained a blueprint for petitions on a variety of topics. The title describes the book as 'very useful for those frequenting the courts'. The first example is to receive payment on an obligation, but another example would be a petition for guardianship over minors. A 'new and improved' version came out in 1649 and again in 1658. By 1682, a fifth print was circulating in the Republic and throughout the eighteenth century several updated or reprinted editions would come out.⁸⁴ Even though these petitions were supposed to be used for the Court of Holland, the form and style are very similar to the petitions found in the archives of the States General, and demonstrate the standardized form petitions were presented in. Books such as the *Parrot* helped professionals, as well as others, to draft petitions.

⁸⁴ W. van Alphen, *Papegay, ofte Formulier-boeck van alderhande requeste mandamenten, conclusien etc. ghelijck die ghebruyckt ende gepractiseert werden voor de respectieve hoven van iustitie in Hollandt. : Seer nut ende dienstigh alle practisyngs den voorsz hove, ofte andere recht-bancke, frequenterende* ('s-Gravenhage: Johannes Verhoeve, 1642).

Petitions to provincial assemblies and cities showcase a similar uniformity. Even though they are fewer in numbers, they cannot be neglected in the study of political lobbying. In the colonies petitions are typically absent. The colony in North America had a 'book of petitions' which has not survived. Both the colony in North America and Brazil kept their petitions as part of their minutes. However, in contrast to New Netherland, the government in Brazil did not keep originals and only copies. The petitions that were used in the colony for *soft lobbying* have not survived, but remarks in passing about 'receiving several petitions' on a topic without further traces of those petitions indicate that they were used.

Since not much is known about seventeenth-century political petitioning to the States General it was necessary to look at a variety of petitions to the States General and the provincial assemblies beyond the topic of the WIC to understand the role and function of petitions.⁸⁵ This suggests that petitions on behalf of multiple people, as well as petitions resulting in a printed document have survived in larger numbers compared to individuals petitioning for a *passport* for example. Both the States General and the provincial States kept requests in separate folders that at this point are at best chronologically organized. Petitions to the States of Holland between 1583 and 1747 for example are seemingly without order stored in four boxes. This suggests that submitted petitions were kept for record keeping, but not regularly consulted.

For this research, the petitions to the States General have been used as a starting point to identify moments of lobbying that were of interest. The resolutions of the States General, in combination with correspondence between the WIC and the States General, correspondence between the States General and the provincial States, cities, or Admiralties, and correspondence between the colony in Brazil and the States General or the WIC have been used to reconstruct lobbying. This of course misses the important element of the informal, and the dimension of the personal contact. As this typically leaves no paper trace it can be hard to identify, but fortunately some personal documents and correspondence have survived to complete this part of the lobbying process. The diary of the Frisian Stadtholder

⁸⁵ Notwithstanding the publications of in particular Van Nierop, Fockema-Andreae and Vermeesch this step was necessary to get a proper understanding of petitioning practice at the States General, see: S.J. Fockema Andreae, *De Nederlandse Staat onder de Republiek* (Amsterdam: Noord-Hollandsche Uitgevers Maatschappij, 1975); Nierop, "Popular Participation."; Nierop, "Petitions in the Dutch Republic."; Vermeesch, "Professional Lobbying."; Vermeesch, "Miserabele personen."; Roelevink, "'t Welck doende etcetera'."

Willem Frederik, for example, helps to understand the power a Stadtholder could wield informally on issues of the WIC. The diary of one of the members of the High Government in Brazil, Hendrick Haecxs, has further been a source of paramount importance to understand the informal control of information and the function of committees around the States General. Other reflections on political tensions could be found in private correspondences that have been made digitally available in recent years. The economic interests of some individuals could be reconstructed through Cátia Antunes' database of seventeenth-century Amsterdam notary deeds.