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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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## 5. PERSONAL CONNECTIONS AND DIRECT LOBBYING

In February 1647, Pieter Coets, who was claiming 29,750 guilders from the WIC, sued the Company for its subsidies for a rescue fleet to Brazil at the court in Arnhem. The court ruled in his favor and ordered the quarter of Veluwe to instruct their delegates to ‘annul’ their previous decision and to only consent to the subsidy if Coets could be a preferential creditor. This forced the Provincial delegates of Guelders to retract their original consent to the High-Mightinesses and stalled the decision-making process regarding the relief effort for Brazil. On 18 February, the directors from the WIC appealed to the States General to overrule the decision of the Arnhem court and to create a precedent for further claims. The High-Mightinesses sided with the Amsterdam directors and the crisis was – somewhat – averted.<sup>635</sup> When people claiming arrears to the WIC from the colony in Brazil were inventoried in 1663, Pieter Coets still held a claim from the WIC.<sup>636</sup> This example illustrates the inability of Coets to have a judicial sentence executed through interference. Moreover, it showcases how difficult it could be to reach a decision on the details for the relief effort for Brazil. Even though, as the previous chapter has demonstrated, a decision seemed to have been made in 1645 to send a rescue fleet, it would take until late 1647 before the fleet was dispatched.

It did not help that the winter of 1645 was unusually cold and marked the start of the Maunder Minimum.<sup>637</sup> This put the administrative life of the Dutch Republic to a near standstill and slowed down the final process of decision making on the details for a Brazilian rescue fleet. Nevertheless, the WIC and the States General succeeded in commissioning a new government for the colony to relieve Bullestrate, Bas, and van Hamel from their posts. Meanwhile in Brazil, João Fernandes Vieira continued his ‘guerilla warfare’ besieging Recife from the surrounding rural area. This made assistance from the Republic essential.

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<sup>635</sup> NL-HaNA, 1.01.02, inv. nr. 5759, 3-Apr-1647, Letter from the directors Vogelaer and Man that included appendices with resolutions and correspondence [scan: 40-46].

<sup>636</sup> C.J. Wasch, "Braziliaansche pretensiën," *Maandblad van het Genealogisch-heraldiek genootschap "De Nederlandsche Leeuw"* 5, no. 8 (1887).

<sup>637</sup> G. Parker, "Crisis and Catastrophe: The Global Crisis of the Seventeenth Century Reconsidered," *The American Historical Review* 113 (2008). The Maunder Minimum is a significant low number of sun spots per year.

Alexander Bick has argued that Amsterdam was isolated in its opposition to a rescue fleet.<sup>638</sup> But as the previous chapter has argued, the city was actually persuaded quite quickly through the force of public opinion. From then on it was the province of Friesland that acted as the main adversary since their wish to have a chamber in the VOC and WIC became intertwined with the rescue of Brazil.

This chapter investigates how personal connections were important for lobbying and how individuals succeeded in influencing, slowing down, and obstructing the decision-making process. The previous chapters have demonstrated outside lobbying by means of public opinion, this chapter investigates direct lobbying via personal connections. The main source for this is the private diary of Hendrick Haecxs, member of the High Government in Brazil. He was commissioned by the High Government to deliver a report on the situation in the colony in the summer of 1647. Since he was originally a merchant and not experienced in politics, his diary is full of anecdotes that he found noteworthy or interesting. This makes his diary a rich source to study direct lobbying in relation to the WIC. Moreover, it demonstrates very clearly the importance to control or influence information. Haecxs' journal is complemented with the journal of the Frisian Stadtholder, Willem Frederik van Nassau-Dietz, who also concerned himself with Brazilian affairs. Lastly, this chapter relies on the archives of the States General to determine the effects of the lobbying. Before diving into the narrative of Hendrick Haecxs it is important to understand seventeenth-century notions of personal connections.

## 5.1. PERSONAL CONNECTIONS AND SOCIETAL CAPITAL

In 1984, Henk van Nierop wrote that even though historians tend to agree that patronage or clientelism existed in the early modern period 'a useful definition of the concept of patronage is nowhere to be found in the historiography of this period'.<sup>639</sup> Van Nierop defined patronage as an asymmetric relation between two individuals that benefited both parties. It is personal and goal-oriented; the goal is the reason of the relation and the relation itself is not a goal. This often translates into the term *fidélité* that explains the mental component of

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<sup>638</sup> Bick, "Governing the Free Sea," 76-77.

<sup>639</sup> Nierop, "Patronage in de Habsburgse Nederlanden," 652.

this relationship which is intimate and enduring. Nevertheless, patronage can exist without the mental component. The patron has (access to) certain scarcities such as a job, money, protection, or food. The client can offer loyalty, service, and often political support in return.<sup>640</sup> Later in the 1980s Sharon Kettering, studying sixteenth- and seventeenth-century France, laid the basis for many of the studies between patronage and politics. She convincingly showed that patron-client relations were a permanent underlying social structure of early modern politics and that patronage is part and parcel of the early modern state. Patron-client relations were neither exclusive, nor permanent and clients could easily change alliances, or they could belong to several networks at the same time.<sup>641</sup>

Luuc Kooijmans made an important contribution to the study of personal relations in the Dutch early modern period in 1997. In his study of 'friendship' he argued that having friendship relations was essential for maintaining one's position in society and 'societal capital'.<sup>642</sup> He borrowed this term from the Dutch sociologist Cees Schmidt who studied the Teding van Berkhout family and made a three-part distinction for this definition. The first distinction is socio-political capital and describes the influence on local, regional, or national politics. The second is socio-economic capital, which corresponds to financial wealth. The third and last is socio-cultural capital, or the status and prestige of an individual.<sup>643</sup> In other words, socio-political capital, or the influence on political decision-making, is connected to the other forms of capital, and are part of this greater whole of societal capital. Moreover, all of these three elements are social in essence. Building and maintaining a network of relations was essential to wield any form of power in the seventeenth-century Dutch Republic. The use of the word 'capital' in this context is, incidentally, not anachronistic in the slightest. In the seventeenth century using capital, and in particular credit, was a way of describing these personal relations.<sup>644</sup> Patronage alone thus does not sufficiently describe the social element of political decision-making in the seventeenth century, and societal capital is more appropriate

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<sup>640</sup> Ibid., 653-654.

<sup>641</sup> S. Kettering, "Patronage and Politics during the Fronde," *French Historical Studies* 14, no. 3 (1986): 409-411.

<sup>642</sup> Kooijmans, *Vriendschap*, 14-19.

<sup>643</sup> C. Schmidt, *Om de eer van de familie. Het geslacht Teding van Berkhout 1500-1950* (Amsterdam: De Bataafsche Leeuw, 1986), 9-14. In contrast to Bourdieu's interpretation of social capital, societal capital is less associated with the (re)production of social inequality.

<sup>644</sup> Kooijmans, *Vriendschap*, 18n19.

to describe the complex structure of intimate personal relations that could influence political decision-making.

Sending and receiving gifts was one way of 'attachment' to another person.<sup>645</sup> If the receiver accepted the gift he or she was 'imbonded' (*verobligeren*) to the giver. It was, however, possible to reject or return a gift. Joan Huydecoper (1625-1704), who was a prominent Amsterdam Burgomaster and a director of the VOC for example, once returned a 'joyful monkey' because it had broken a small table and glassware. Moreover, as a father of six he was already 'well provided with talking monkeys'.<sup>646</sup> Huydecoper kept a detailed daily register (*dagregister*) of his visits and societal capital. In 1659, he made a balance sheet of 'gifts received' and 'gifts sent' and he carefully noted people to whom he had a bond relation and people he was unbonded to (*disobligatie*). One of the people on the latter list was Jan Vos (1610-1667), a poet who had 'disgusted' Huydecoper at a concert on 28 August 1659, and had behaved like an 'impertinent beast' less than half a year later.<sup>647</sup> Individuals in this category would be received without food or drink for example, to show them their position.

Despite the examples mentioned above, Geert Janssen rightfully noted in the introduction to his book on patronage at the court of the Frisian Stadtholder Willem Frederik (1613-1664) that in contrast to the French and English cases, early modern Dutch clientelism remains largely unstudied.<sup>648</sup> He attributes this to the view of the Republic as a tolerant, egalitarian, and bourgeois society, that contrasted with the surrounding monarchies. He describes eloquently how the Frisian Stadtholder, like Huydecoper, kept an account book where he managed his social capital. A Stadtholder had the power to appoint certain political positions, such as Burgomasters or provincial deputies. In return, the Stadtholder could later ask for favors; this was part of the imbonded relation. It was not always the case that his clients behaved properly. For example, Willem Frederik noted in his account book: 'N.B. Do not forget that Wydefelt did not thank me, after I appointed Ziercksma based on

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<sup>645</sup> There is a vast body of literature on gift-giving in the Early Modern period. For a thorough introduction, see I.K. Ben-Amos, *The culture of giving: informal support and gift-exchange in early modern England* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008). For an overview of literature on gift-giving in relation to Johan Maurits and Brazil, M. Françoze, "Global connections: Johan Maurits of Nassa-Siegen's collection of curiosities," in *The legacy of Dutch Brazil*, ed. M. van Groesen (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 105-110.

<sup>646</sup> 'dog redelijck van spreckende apen' was voorzien, Kooijmans, *Vriendschap*, 150.

<sup>647</sup> N. Geerdink, *Dichters en verdiensten: De sociale verankering van het dichterschap van Jan Vos (1610-1667)* (Hilversum: Verloren, 2012), 83-84.

<sup>648</sup> Janssen, *Creaturen van de Macht*, 15.

Wydefelt's recommendation'.<sup>649</sup> The Count suspected that Zierckma considered it revenge to not appoint one of his other friends, Haubois, as provincial deputy. What makes the Frisian Stadtholder further stand out is that he was also an intermediary who brokered between the Holland Stadtholder and his own clients.

That even a bourgeois society had numerous accounts of clientelism becomes further evident from Paul Knevel's book on civil servants in the seventeenth century. Even during the period of 'true freedom' when there was no Stadtholder in the majority of the provinces (1650-1672), there are many examples of the use of societal capital. Knevel, for example, introduces two examples in which Johan de Witt, the famous Grand Pensionary (r. 1653-1672), was approached for a job. The first happened in 1654, when Hieronymus van Beverning expressed his interest in the office of *Thesaurier-Generaal*. De Witt wrote to van Beverning that in order to land him the job De Witt would 'exert all his powers, and employ [societal] credit and friends'.<sup>650</sup> Information on how to employ credit and friends is shown in the second case, in which Johan de Witt three years later advised his father, Jacob (1589-1674), on how to get selected as the *Rekenmeester* of Holland. Jacob would have to inform his close friends of his ambitions, and Johan and Cornelis (the brother of Johan) would instruct their network, both political and social, to vouch for Jacob. Furthermore, it was important that the salutation in letters was done correctly, and Johan 'deemed it also not inexpedient' if Jacob would contact former colleagues from his diplomatic mission to Denmark.<sup>651</sup> Johan also provided his father with a list of names in different cities on who to contact and of family members who could use their own network. Their cousin Fannius would be going on commission to North Holland on behalf of the city of Brielle anyway, so that would certainly not harm their cause. In the city of Schoonhoven, Johan did not know anybody, but he told his father to ask around within the magistracy of Dordrecht (where Jacob was a member of the council) because there surely would be someone who was acquainted, or even connected through marriage, with someone in that city.<sup>652</sup> The potential network for Jacob consisted of family, friends, acquaintances, former colleagues, friends of family, family of friends, and

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<sup>649</sup> 'N.B. Niet te vergeten, dat my Wydefelt niet bedanckt heeft, dat ick op sijn recomandatie Zierckma heb een ampt gegeven', quoted in *ibid.*, 111.

<sup>650</sup> 'alle onse crachten in te spannen, ende alle credit en vrunden te employeren', R. Fruin, ed. *Brieven van Johan de Witt, dl. 1 (1650-1657)* (Amsterdam: 1906), 143; Knevel, *Het Haagse bureau*, 61.

<sup>651</sup> 'ick meyne dat sulx niet ondienstig wesen soude', Fruin, *Brieven van Johan de Witt, dl. 1*, 476.,

<sup>652</sup> *Ibid.*, 477.

even acquaintances of close colleagues – who were probably either family or friends anyway. One has to take into account that family was an elastic concept in this period. Some people even called people that were eight degrees removed still kin, and Johan de Witt certainly had a similar notion of family.<sup>653</sup> On 4 May, a little over two months after the initial correspondence between Johan and his father, the States of Holland voted on the matter and Jacob de Witt became the new *Rekenmeester*.

The last piece of advice that Johan gave his father was to send a letter to Franco Riccen, councilor (*Raadsheer*) of the High Court of Holland and Zeeland, and ask what more was desired – if anything – from Jacob to have the decision go his way.<sup>654</sup> This suggests that a small bribe or a token of appreciation was not uncommon to get the desired result. However, for people in the seventeenth century, there was a sharp contrast between a gift out of appreciation and a bribe to achieve a goal.<sup>655</sup> Similarly, it made Huydecoper angry when he received the request from a cousin in the East Indies to be appointed as extraordinary council of the Indies in exchange for two full years of wages. ‘I must admit that I have never encountered a more annoying, more scandalous case’, Huydecoper responded to his cousin. He should have known better than to imply that his uncle was so poor that he was forced to sell offices and ‘thus tarnish my good name and fame with such a disgusting and disallowed rent-seeking’.<sup>656</sup> The Frisian Stadtholder, however, supposedly spent ‘notable sums’ to acquire the Stadtholderhip of Groningen.<sup>657</sup> Furthermore, his diary shows a more cavalier use of bribes and corruption. During the peace negotiations in Münster, for example, French diplomats allegedly paid up to 16,000 guilders to delay a resolution from the States General. Amsterdam supposedly was ‘not corruptible’, but the French had another 80,000 guilders and ‘wanted to exert all their credit’ to sway the rest of the province of Holland.<sup>658</sup> The

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<sup>653</sup> Adams, *The Familial State*, 77.

<sup>654</sup> Fruin, *Brieven van Johan de Witt*, dl. 1, 479.

<sup>655</sup> Knevel, *Het Haagse bureau*, 162; N. Japikse, "Cornelisch Musch en de corruptie van zijn tijd," *De Gids* 71, no. x (1907): 504-505.

<sup>656</sup> ‘Ick moet bekennen dat mijn noijdt ergerlijcker, noch schandeleuser saeck is voorgekomen’ (...) ‘en gevolgelijck mijn goede naem en faem door soo een vuijl en ongeoorlooft gewin komen te besoedelen’, Kooijmans, *Vriendschap*, 157-158.

<sup>657</sup> Janssen, *Creaturen van de Macht*, 28.

<sup>658</sup> ‘Seide oock dat Vranckrijck geweldich mit gelt hier in 't landt speulde en wel 15 à 16 duysent gulden voor een resolutie gaf, dat hij niet koste weten wat se aen Amsterdam gaven, omdat die niet corruptibel waeren, dat Brasset noch 80 duysent gulden uyt Vranckrijck verwachtete, om hier te



Stadtholder also describes how among Frisian provincial delegates votes were sold for about 6,000 guilders.<sup>659</sup> The acceptability of offering favors, jobs, or votes in exchange for financial compensation was thus not fully uniform in the seventeenth-century Dutch Republic.<sup>660</sup>

The use of societal capital and patronage was not limited to bourgeois regents, nor to the nobility, nor to the *ius patronatus* of clerics.<sup>661</sup> Merchants also needed to know how to manage their societal capital in order to distinguish between the 'us' they traded with, and the 'them' they did not trade with. Business transactions relied on trust, and marriage was one strategy to consolidate business relations and to increase trust and profit. The entire family typically relied on the success of the business and merchants therefore tried to limit their risks to avoid jeopardizing the societal and financial capital of their friends, family members, descendants, and creditors. Trust and societal capital are in the literature on merchants referred to as 'reputation' and managing societal capital equaled managing one's reputation.<sup>662</sup> There is further evidence to support that lower classes also knew how to manage their societal capital. The gardener and wet nurse of the aforementioned Huydecoper, for example, also successfully employed their societal capital to obtain favors for themselves or their friends and family; functioning as broker for their clients.<sup>663</sup> Extensive networks of patronage are what D.J. Roorda termed 'factions' in his 1961 dissertation. Factions are created by local (urban) elites and their followers. Their bondedness is based on each individual self-interest. Factions are contrasted with parties which are as large as possible supraregional congregations based on more or less idealistic foundations instead of self-interest.<sup>664</sup>

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distribueren, soodat se nu al haer credijt sullen aenwenden om Hollandt op haer sijde te kriegen', Visser and Plaat, *Gloria parendi*, IV/213.

<sup>659</sup> 'Yijtsma seide mij, dat Jacob Stevens 6000 gulden ahn Zijr Claesen had gepresenteert voor sijn stem', *ibid.*, IV/252.

<sup>660</sup> See also the special issue on Early Modern corruption in the Low Countries between 1400 and 1800 in the *Tijdschrift voor Sociale en Economische Geschiedenis* 2.4 (2005).

<sup>661</sup> Nierop, "Patronage in de Habsburgse Nederlanden," 653.

<sup>662</sup> L. Kooijmans, "Risk and reputation: on the mentality of merchants in the early modern period," in *Entrepreneurs and Entrepreneurship in Early Modern Times*, ed. C. Lesger and L. Noordegraaf (Den Haag: Stichting Hollandse Historische Reeks, 1995).

<sup>663</sup> Kooijmans, *Vriendschap*, 158-160.

<sup>664</sup> Roorda, *Partij en factie*, 2-4.

Although not the focus of this chapter, there is also evidence that suggests that employing societal credit was not limited to males.<sup>665</sup> This suggests that there is broad support the claim that ‘patronage and clientage are so pervasive that proving the existence of patronage relationships in any given early modern social system is often doing no more than proving the obvious’.<sup>666</sup> Though this claim is predominantly based on case studies of monarchical societies, it seems that the Republic was not different in this matter.

How to move forward from the observation that patronage and societal capital were a way of life for early modern people? One solution could be to study patronage in a comparative perspective; how does male or female societal capital differ, or how are the French different from the Dutch. Another question could be: *why* did patronage exist at all? Douglas Allen, an economist, argues that it existed simply because it was the most efficient institution to remove uncertainty in human interaction. In other words, patronage existed because it had the lowest transaction costs when assessing someone’s reputation and could efficiently align the interests of the monarch with the interests of his clients. Only when other, reliable, more efficient, institutions to measure someone’s reliability came up, Allen argues, was patronage largely replaced.<sup>667</sup>

Consequently, patronage and employing societal credit is not ‘proven’ in this chapter. Rather, it is accepted as a reality that everyone, including an organization such as the WIC, needed to live with when they were lobbying. It is, in a sense, an explanatory tool. For example, it explains why the Board of Directors asked the States General’s representatives to employ their societal credit ‘both in their public and their private capacity’ to save the company.<sup>668</sup> It can also explain why the WIC sometimes employed certain individuals. In 1650 the Amsterdam directors wrote to the colony in New Netherland that they employed Francis Deckers as supercargo on board the *Fortuijn*. Deckers was a cousin of Gijsbrecht van der Hoolck, a representative of Utrecht in the meetings of the States General and a prominent

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<sup>665</sup> J.L. Hocking, "Aristocratic women at the late Elizabethan court: politics, patronage, and power" (Unpublished PhD Dissertation, University of Adelaide, 2015).

<sup>666</sup> R.G. Asch, "Introduction," in *Princes, patronage, and the nobility: the court at the beginning of the modern age*, ed. R.G. Asch and A.M. Birke (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 18.

<sup>667</sup> Allen, *The institutional revolution*.

<sup>668</sup> ‘oock de aenwesende heeren gecommitt[eerd]e van hare ho: mo: versocht met alle goed officien de Intentie van de comp: te seconderen het welcke by hare Ed: aengenomen ys te does met alle middeln redennen ende motiven al omme soo int publicq als in het particulier’, quoted in Bick, "Governing the Free Sea," 73.

member of its commission for West Indian affairs. The Amsterdam director thus urged Stuyvesant to appoint Deckers in the North American colony 'for we desire to captivate [van der Hoolck's] favor by all means'.<sup>669</sup>

Three years later, during the first Anglo-Dutch War, the WIC directors in Amsterdam complained that there was no-one in the Amsterdam City Council that could further their interests. At least 'one of the Burgomasters has always been absent as a commissioner here or there', while another was plagued by illness.<sup>670</sup> Considering 'the weakness of the honorable collegiate board', the directors deemed it ill-advised to submit their request at this time.<sup>671</sup> Clearly, the WIC directors deemed their personal connection to the remaining two Burgomasters (Joan van de Poll and Nicolaes Corver) not strong enough to trust them to further the WIC's interests, or, alternatively, the societal capital of van de Poll and Corver in The Hague was not enough to achieve anything meaningful. Either way it underlines the point that personal connections and societal capital were paramount to achieve anything in the political system of the Dutch Republic. Thus patronage and societal capital were a reality that help explain why Brazil was lost and help to understand the world in which early modern lobbyists operated.

## 5.2. APPOINTING A NEW HIGH GOVERNMENT IN BRAZIL

The States General had not only consented to send a rescue mission to Brazil in 1645, they also confirmed a new High Government. This new government would consist of four members and a president. The selection procedure had started on 14 April 1645. The Board of Directors had poached several individuals, but most people did not aspire to an Atlantic adventure or preferred to continue their current position, as was the case with the Burgomaster of Groningen. As president, the WIC was able to select Wolter van Schonenborch, then Groningen's deputy to the States General. The position of president had given rise to a battle of interests, and many individuals were eager to put their clients in a

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<sup>669</sup> C. Gehring, *Correspondence 1647-1653*, vol. XI, New Netherland Document Series (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2000), 93-94.

<sup>670</sup> 'altijt iemandt van derselver regerende burgemeesteren hier ofte daer gecommitteert ende absent sijn geweest', New York State Archives, Albany, NY (US-nar), A1810, *Correspondence 1647-1653*, 11:90 (1) [4 November 1653].

<sup>671</sup> 'het collegie geheel swack sijnde', US-nar, A1810, *Correspondence 1647-1653*, 11:90 (1).

powerful position in Brazil. The name of Jacques Specx, a former high-ranking VOC official and subsequently director in the Amsterdam chamber, circulated, as well as the names of Albert Ruyl, Nanning de Keyser, and Hendrik van der Capellen. Especially the last one is interesting in this regard. He came from a noble Guelders family and his brother and father were investors in the WIC. He was also a trusted adviser of Stadtholder Frederik Hendrik.<sup>672</sup> Nevertheless, the Stadtholder preferred to send Johan Kuin as his client to Brazil.<sup>673</sup> That enabled the Groningen chamber to further its interest through the selection of Wolter van Schonenborch.

On 27 June, one director from the Amsterdam chamber, Carel Loten, further reported to the Board of Directors that two people had promised to accept the function of ordinary member: Michiel van Goch, Pensionary (*Stadspensionaris*) of the city of Flushing, and Simon van Beaumont, secretary (*secretaris*) of Dordrecht. The problem, however, was that ‘these persons are more experienced in government and politics than they were in trade’.<sup>674</sup> After all, with the WIC financial reserves in a continuous state of worry, merchant expertise would not be a bad thing for the government of the colony. Thus, for the two remaining positions they appointed Abraham Trouwers, a director from the Amsterdam chamber, and Hendrick Haecxs.

Haecxs was a nobody. The best way to illustrate that is through the note the States General received to remind them to formally appoint the five new members of the High Government. The note is brief, but introduces the five individuals in their relevant capacity. Wolter van Schonenborgh was ‘former Burgomaster of the city of Groningen and delegate on behalf of the province of Groningen at the meeting of the States General’. Michiel van Goch was ‘*Raadspensionaris* for the city of Flushing’, Simon van Beaumont a ‘lawyer of the WIC’, and Abraham Trouwers was ‘director and delegate to the Company’s general auditor’s office (*Rekenkamer*)’. By contrast, Hendrick Haecxs had no description whatsoever to add societal credit to his persona; he was a nobody.<sup>675</sup> What is known about him is also rather limited. He lived in Amsterdam but was originally German. He had been a private trader in Recife in the

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<sup>672</sup> Bick, "Governing the Free Sea," 139-155.

<sup>673</sup> Visser and Plaat, *Gloria parendi*, V/210.

<sup>674</sup> ‘personen meer ervaren in t stuck van regering en polityc, als wel in de coopmanschap’, NL-HaNA, 1.01.07 inv. nr. 12564.17, 27-Jun-1645 “Extract van de vergadering van de Heren XIX”.

<sup>675</sup> NL-HaNA, 1.01.02, inv. nr. 1.01.02, inv. nr. 5758, xx-Nov-1645, “Memorie dienende om de commissien haer Hooge Mogende te depecheren voor de heeren...” [scan 176].

late 1630s and early 1640s. The Brazilian historian Gonsalves de Mello characterizes him as an usurer requesting interest rates as high as 42 per cent per year, but also as someone who emancipated his enslaved housekeeper Juliana and her daughter Domingas after eight years of loyal service.<sup>676</sup>

Haecxs had been a guest at the wedding of Joseph Coymans (1621-1677) the Younger and Jacomina Trip (1622-1678) on 29 June 1645. Jacomina was the daughter of the famous merchant Elias Trip (1570-1636) and Joseph was the grandson of the illustrious merchant Baltasar Coymans (1555-1634). Their marriage was just one of the many alliances that the Coymans and Trip families forged in this period. Decades later, Joseph and his brother Balthasar would be involved in the *asiento* for the Spanish slave trade.<sup>677</sup> That Haecxs was attending this wedding demonstrates that he had at least some societal capital through his merchant career, despite never having obtained any public offices before he was appointed to Brazil.

At the wedding Haecxs was approached by Daniel Bernart, who poached him on behalf of Jacob Pergens, a director in the Amsterdam chamber of the WIC, who wanted to know if he would be interested in a membership of the High Government in Brazil. A few days later, on 5 July, Haecxs had a more formal appointment with Carel Loten and two other delegates from the Board of Directors who told him that the Board had unanimously accepted to send Haecxs an invitation. This was strange and surprising to Haecxs as he did not know any of the gentlemen, and they did not know him either. 'Do not worry,' Loten responded rather mysteriously, 'let it be enough that we know you through not knowing you'.<sup>678</sup> Haecxs realized very well that he would be risking his 'entire honor and reputation' when he accepted the position, and thus requested a few days to consider the offer and talk with some friends. Haecxs did accept the position within a day though after receiving positive advice from his friends. When he travelled to Zeeland to meet the rest of the Board of Directors on 19 September the news about the revolt had already broken.<sup>679</sup> The diary does not mention

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<sup>676</sup> Gonsalves de Mello, *Nederlanders in Brazilië*, 156, 191.

<sup>677</sup> The two sisters of Jacomina married a member of the Coymans family: Balthasar Coymans (1589-1657) married Maria Trip (1619-1683); Johannes Coymans (1601-1657) married Sophia Trip (1614-1679).

<sup>678</sup> 'Laetet u genoech wesen, dat wij u niet kennende kennen', l'Honoré Naber, "Het dagboek van Hendrik Haecxs," 149-150.

<sup>679</sup> See chapter 4.

any worry about the state of Brazil until 27 November though, when two more ships arrived bringing an update on the situation. On 12 December, he went to see Wolter Schonenborch because he had heard rumors that Schonenborch was reconsidering his acceptance of the task in Brazil. Schonenborch confirmed to him that, indeed, the day before he had notified the Board of Directors that he was no longer interested in the position. Haecxs wrote to his future colleague van Beaumont that he too was of the opinion that Brazil would be assisted better by 'sending soldiers rather than regents'. When the WIC directors learned about this letter they summoned him, and started providing him with a bribe (*steekpenning*) in order to stop him from discouraging his colleagues. One of the directors further asked him bluntly if he preferred to stay in the Republic or if he would want to go without further conditions, to which Haecxs replied that he was happy that they offered him a way out. This quick response surprised the Board of Directors and they emphasized the bad reputation a refusal would bring him. Haecxs consulted again with some friends, who complimented him on speaking his mind to the WIC, and in the end helped him realize that it would be better for everyone if he would accept the position in the High Government of Brazil.<sup>680</sup> Schonenborch eventually also backtracked on his earlier decision to give up on the position, and all five dispatched for Brazil on 9 May 1646, arriving in Recife on 11 August 1646. The five would quickly transform into a foursome after the untimely death of Abraham Trouwers.

Haecxs was a political nobody without any previous experience in public office. He had some understanding of social conventions in the higher societal arenas. He was well aware of his societal capital and, more importantly, how accepting the task in Brazil could potentially risk his capital and his honor. Even though he had planned to retire from travelling and enjoy his life and friendships in the Republic, the WIC succeeded in convincing him to accept the job. The first challenge for his reputation came after the news arrived in November 1645 that the situation had deteriorated in Brazil. However, by remaining willing to accept the job, he surprised the Directors with his 'courage', which increased his societal capital in the long run.

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<sup>680</sup> l'Honoré Naber, "Het dagboek van Hendrik Haecxs," 150-156.

### 5.3. BACKGROUND ISSUES

That the High Government of Brazil felt that they could not sufficiently trust the directors to advocate the needs of the colony in the Dutch Republic becomes clear from the journal of Hendrick Haecxs. After the High Government was only just able to withstand an attack of about 2,000 soldiers around 3 o'clock at night, the High Government decided to draw straws on 10 August 1647 and to send one of their members to the Republic to lobby for military relief.<sup>681</sup> This individual, Hendrick Haecxs, would 'plainly argue the distress and fear in which the conquest of Brazil was currently finding itself'.<sup>682</sup> Haecxs left Brazil on 3 September to arrive in Zeeland on the evening of 5 November 1647. Haecsx arrived in a country that was politically far from peaceful and facing two main issues that had become intertwined with the rescue for Brazil.

#### 5.3.1. Peace negotiations in Münster

During the first half of the year 1647 the States General had been occupied with peace negotiations with Spain that would eventually culminate in the Treaty of Münster in 1648. The rescue of Brazil had become part of the negotiations on the peace issue between representatives of Holland and Zeeland.<sup>683</sup> In short, Zeeland wanted to continue war with Spain, and spend more money to save the colony. Holland, on the other hand, considered Brazil a failed project, and thought it was a waste to spent money there, preferring a peace with the Spanish crown. The first reason was that merchants from Holland were traditionally more involved in the European trade than Zeeland merchants, meaning that the rank and file of the 'Holland party' could profit from a peace with Spain. Secondly, the Stadtholder derived much power from his position as the leader of the army. A peace with Spain would decrease the necessity of a large army, thus limiting the powerbase of the Stadtholder. The continuous party struggle between Orangists and State-supporters thus played a role in the peace negotiations as well. What further complicated the issue was the province of Friesland that sided with Zeeland, not because of party lines, but because it was only willing to support a rescue of Brazil in exchange for its own chamber in the WIC (this issue will be visited in more detail below).

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<sup>681</sup> Ibid., 218.

<sup>682</sup> Ibid., 188-189.

<sup>683</sup> J.J. Poelhekke, *De vrede van Munster* ('s-Gravenhage: Martinus Nijhoff, 1948), 455-457.

When representatives of Zeeland proposed more money and an army for the rescue of Brazil, they received support from the land provinces. This meant that they had a majority in the States General and that in theory this plan could be set in motion. However, Holland was opposed and without the financial support from the province that paid more than half of the budget, it was vain hope to think that they could rally the necessary capital. In order to force Holland to side with the rescue party, Zeeland brought the peace negotiations in Münster to the table. Matters of war and peace required a unanimous decision from all the provinces, and Zeeland was threatening to refuse to sign the peace treaty if Holland did not pay for the rescue of Brazil. This created a standoff on both issues that was solved when Zeeland agreed to a peace with the Spanish crown on 29 July 1647, and Holland to financially support a rescue fleet to Brazil a few days later. All provinces now supported the rescue for Brazil and the Peace of Westphalia – except Friesland.<sup>684</sup> Both decisions were formalized by the States General on 10 August 1647.<sup>685</sup> It can indeed be called ironic that this happened on the same day that the High Government of Brazil decided to send one its members as a representative to lobby for the rescue of Brazil.

### 5.3.2. A Frisian chamber in the WIC

The second issue was the position of the province of Friesland. The province had always wanted to have an independent chamber in the WIC, as well as the VOC. There had been no principal objections to the province obtaining their own WIC chamber at the charter negotiations in 1621, but as the Frisians were unable to raise the required 500,000 guilders to establish the chamber, it had been solely Groningen that had a WIC chamber in the north of the Republic. A second attempt by the Frisians to negotiate their own chamber in 1630 again failed because of insufficient funds. By the time the WIC charter had needed to be renegotiated in 1644 the Frisians decided against this, according to Den Heijer, because of the dire situation of the Company. However, as will become clear from what follows, the Frisians tried to obtain a chamber again in 1647. When the charter of the VOC needed to be

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<sup>684</sup> Tresoar (NL-04-0041-000), 7, inv. nr. 659, "Uittreksels uit de resoluties van de Staten-Generaal betreffende West-Indische zaken".

<sup>685</sup> H. den Heijer, "Het recht van de sterkste in de polder. Politieke en economische strijd tussen Amsterdam en Zeeland over de kwestie Brazilië, 1630-1654," in *Harmonie in Holland: Het poldermodel van 1500 tot nu*, ed. D. Bos, M.A. Ebben, and H. te Velde (Amsterdam: Bert Bakker, 2007), 86-87; Hoboken, *Witte de With*, 6-9, 18-24.



renewed, so Frisian investors offered 1,4 million guilders in the Company in exchange for chamber VOC. This was double the nominal value of the shares of the VOC and thus seems a good deal at first sight. However, the shares were at that moment traded at the Amsterdam Exchange for fivefold the nominal value and the Frisians thus wanted something for nothing. The Frisians in the end obtained the right to appoint one of the directors in the VOC chamber of Amsterdam in return for their support. This Frisian episode was part of a greater plan to merge the VOC and WIC into one company for all the oceans. This was a bad deal for the VOC, which, in contrast to the WIC, was quite profitable. The VOC succeeded in buying off the merger plan for 1,5 million guilders.<sup>686</sup>

This, however, did not mean that the Frisians now supported the rescue mission for the WIC. The States General had received a letter from Cornelis Haubois, a Frisian delegate, who relayed the information to them that 'there is no affection for the Brazialian affair, principally because the Province is not included in the charter of the VOC when that expired'. 'Thus, it will not be possible to achieve anything favorable or fruitful for the WIC'.<sup>687</sup> The High-Mightinesses therefore decided to commission three of their own (Hendrik van Eck, Frans Dirksz Meerman, and Roelof van Langen) to Friesland in an attempt to secure the necessary funds. Moreover, they immediately wrote a letter to the Frisian Stadtholder, who was at that moment in The Hague. In the letter, they requested that Willem Frederik 'would go through the trouble' to recommend to the province to 'align itself with the other six provinces'.<sup>688</sup> Or, as the Count noted in his private diary: the States General 'requested that I would go to Friesland to support the West Indian affair'. His diary further provides evidence that beyond the States General several individuals, including Philip Ernst Vegelin van Claerbergen (his secretary) and Cornelis van Beveren (a member of the States General, see also below), also requested this from the Stadtholder in their private capacity. This shows how the States General also relied on the societal capital of their members to move political

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<sup>686</sup> H. den Heijer, "Plannen voor samenvoeging van de VOC en WIC," *Tijdschrift voor Zeegechiedenis* 13, no. 2 (1994): 119-120.

<sup>687</sup> 'daer bevinde gans geen genegentheijt wegens de saecke van Brazijl. Ende dat principelijck omdat men de provincie niet heeft ingelaten in het octroij van Oostindien doen het was geexpereert, soo dat ick bij dese gelegentheijt niet en sijt iets vruchtbaerlijckx uut te rechten tot profit van de Westindische Comp:', NL-HaNA, 1.01.02, inv. nr. 5759, 15-Sep-1647 letter from Cornelis Haubois [scan 134-135].

<sup>688</sup> 'ende neffens d'andere ses provincies te willen conformeren' (...) 'oock sijne hoocheijt [...] de moeijte te willen nemen', NL-HaNA, 1.01.02, inv. nr. 5759, 15-Sep-1647 letter to Count Willem van Nassau [scan 327-328].

affairs in the Dutch Republic and that at least one individual had asked Vegelin to function as a power broker for access to the Frisian Stadtholder.

Willem Frederik was not immediately convinced of the mission and showed the letters to Amalia van Solms, the recently widowed mother of the Holland Stadtholder Willem II. The message of the States General did not please her. She did not want Willem Frederik to leave her court and advised against it. Frederik Hendrik thus wrote only to Vegelin that he received the letter 'without anything else'.<sup>689</sup> The three delegates from the States General (Eck, Meerman, and van Langen) meanwhile travelled to Friesland. When the Stadtholder arrived there late September 1647 they approached him and spoke with him, again, on the affairs of the West Indies for two days in a row and how they had not been able to receive an audience. The Frisian Stadtholder considered it some more and brought it up with the agenda committee of the Provincial assembly (*Mindergetal*). This told him 'they did not feel like it'.<sup>690</sup> So Willem Frederik started to mediate between the parties by inviting them both for a meal, which softened the attitude of the *Mindergetal*, and a few days later he was able to note that the three delegates from the States General visited him and were 'jolly'.<sup>691</sup>

Now that the Provincial Diet was considering support for the mission in Brazil, the High-Mightinesses' delegates had some time to work on their relationship with the Stadtholder. Eck was the first to visit the Stadtholder on 5 October 1647. Together they looked at the Count's horses and went for a stroll around the city while discussing international politics and the peace negotiations in Münster. The next day Meerman went for a horse ride around the city with the Stadtholder, who noted that afterwards 'we became good friends'. The two new friends and van Langen met each other over dinner at a local Frisian regent that same evening. Here the Stadtholder and Meerman 'became even better friends'. Van Langen's father and the father of the Frisian Stadtholder (Ernst Casimir van Nassau-Dietz; 1573-1632) had been good friends during their lifetime, 'so therefore [they] also became even better friends'. Subsequently, Meerman and van Langen started, presumably drunk, praising the Stadtholder's reputation and virtue, claiming that he was

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<sup>689</sup> Visser and Plaat, *Gloria parendi*, V/231.

<sup>690</sup> 'daer se geen sinn toe hadden', *ibid.*, V/238-239.

<sup>691</sup> *Ibid.*, V/250-251.

loved all over the world, wishing that Willem II was so upbeat as his Frisian relative. And so, they talked and drank until two in the morning.<sup>692</sup>

The next few days the Frisian Stadtholder received numerous visits from deputies from cities and rural quarters asking his opinion on West Indian affairs. He recommended favorably to all of them and asked other influential Frisian regents too to recommend favorably on the affairs on his behalf. All of them obliged amicably to the request. On 8 October, the Provincial assembly had consented to half of the requested sum in exchange for a Frisian chamber in the WIC. This greatly upset the delegates of the States General. It was primarily the quarter of Oostergo that was blocking further negotiations and forbade its delegates to consent to the money for Brazil. The Stadtholder complained about the situation in his diary and noted about the Frisians that they were ‘a weird people, villainous, tumultuous, stubborn and libelous’.<sup>693</sup> Oostergo’s stubbornness can partly be explained through the resentment and jealousy over who was in the Frisian committee for East Indian affairs; Oostergo was not represented. Willem Frederik sought a solution and presented an ultimatum to the quarter of Oostergo that they either could change their mind, or leave the decision to the discretion of their delegates (who were willing to sign). Now Oostergo requested to propose their supported candidates in two municipalities (*Grietenij*) in return. The Stadtholder simply told them he was not going to consider anyone if they did not consent to pay the money requested by the States General. The Stadtholder noted in his diary that this would be his last attempt and that he did not even care who became mayor (*Grietman*) in the end; ‘I do this in my official capacity to bring peace to the country’ and not because of a personal stake in the matter.<sup>694</sup> This apparently worked as a few days later Willem Frederik went to sign the resolution that consented to pay for the rescue of Brazil on

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<sup>692</sup> ‘Meermans reedt mit mij te peerdt om de wal, en wierden wij goede vrunden. - Dess avonts adt ick bij Sminia en bleef tot twe uir, en wierden Meerman en ick noch beter vrunden. Langens vaeder en mijn vaeder waeren heel goede vrunden geweest, en daerom wierden wij oock noch beter vrunden; hij bedanckte al sijn geluck noch aen mijn heer vaeder saliger. Presen mijn goede renommé en deuchden, seyden dat kost mij noch eens goedt doen bij wijlen en tijden en dat ick bij alle de werelt gelieft wass en bemindt. Men wost niet, hoe het mit S.H. gaen kost, en bij sijn ooverlijden had ick groote kans. Meermans seyde hij wold dat S.H. van mijn humeur wass, en soo prateden wij den geheelen avondt (...); the next morning Willem Frederik noted that he did not have a hangover ‘wass heel niet gealtereert van het drincken’, *ibid.*, V/253.

<sup>693</sup> ‘want het iss hier wonderlijck volck, vylain, veranderlijck, hoofdich en heel quaetspreeckent’.

<sup>694</sup> ‘Ick stelle het voor om bestewil, ick hebber geen insicht in, nae dit sal ick er niet meer in doen; dat ick doe, dat geschiet amptshalven om het landt in ruste te herstellen, dan oft Walta of Sicksma gritman iss, dat iss mij all eens, gelijk oock Scheltinga of Hans Lijckelma’

23 October.<sup>695</sup> For the Frisians the issue of colonial ambitions of course was not completely settled, but Willem Frederik noted in his diary one year later that, based on the report Aernout Gijssels, he was toying with the idea of aligning the Frisian aspirations with either France or Brandenburg.<sup>696</sup>

The gentlemen Eck, Meerman and van Langen had returned to The Hague before this resolution had taken its final shape, but had spoken highly of the actions of Willem Frederik to the other High-Mightinesses. The general assembly promptly drafted a letter for the Frisian Count and thanked him for ‘the good efforts’ the Stadtholder had made to ‘favor the WIC and the rescue of Brazil’.<sup>697</sup> This was all part of the proper political etiquette. This Frisian episode demonstrates perfectly how socio-political capital could be employed for certain political means in an attempt to influence decision-making and also how important it was to properly manage one’s societal capital.

It is somewhat mindboggling that part of the money for the rescue of Brazil had become dependent on whether someone named Scheltinga or Lijckelma was elected *Grietman* of Baarderadeel. This story perfectly underlines how decisions can come down to personal vendettas and jealousy. Here, in *het Landtshuys* in Leeuwarden the Frisian experiences of the adventures in the Atlantic were reduced to whose client obtained a seat in a Frisian rural municipality. There was no ideology, no ‘great design’ or a ‘lawful war against a Catholic enemy’; the WIC conquests in Brazil had been reduced to a faction battle that was fueled by resentment over the loss of a VOC chamber.

#### 5.4. CONTROL OF INFORMATION

The importance of information in from the colony became clear as soon as Haecxs disembarked in Flushing. Not only were the Zeeland WIC directors eager to treat him to a nice meal and hear from him, but also Zeeland privateers that were active of the Brazilian coast tried to meet with him – which Haecxs politely declined. When he travelled to Middelburg the next day, other WIC directors were already waiting for him. The president

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<sup>695</sup> Visser and Plaat, *Gloria parendi*, V/255-262.

<sup>696</sup> ‘lass dat werck van Oostyndiën van Gijssels, ‘twelck tuschen Vranckrijck en Chur-Brandenburch solde geopserveert worden, en hadden geerne de Vriesen dahrbij’, *ibid.*, 6/160.

<sup>697</sup> NL-HaNA, 1.01.02, inv. nr. 5759, 24-Oct-1647, to the Lord count Willem van Nassau [scan 339].

of this WIC chamber, van de Perre, was eager to hear from him, but after a brief description of the current situation in Brazil, Haecxs was forced to tell them that his main mission was to deliver his reports, letters, and writings to the Board of Directors, the States General, and the Stadtholder.<sup>698</sup> These three organizations were important because they were the primary actors that could control or decide on the military support for the colony.

Via Dordrecht and Rotterdam, Haecxs travelled to The Hague, arriving after two days on Sunday 10 November at eleven in the morning. He took residence in the '*Doelen*', where he encountered two deputy directors (*gecommitteerde bewindhebbers*): one from Amsterdam, Ferdinand Schulenborch, and one from Zeeland, Pieter Moorthamer. Haecxs asked if they could call a meeting of the deputy directors so he could deliver his reports. They wasted no time and that same afternoon there was an *ad hoc* meeting where apart from the aforementioned two directors, Nicolaas ten Hove, from the Rotterdam chamber, Harmen Willemsen, from the Enkhuizen chamber, Johan Ruffelaer from Groningen, and the lawyer of the Company, Gijsbert Rudolphi were present. It becomes clear that, no matter where he went, people were eager to meet Haecxs and to hear from him.

After the necessary ceremonies, Haecxs started his exposé on the colony in Brazil. He warned the meeting that the conquests in Brazil would be quickly lost if nothing changed; military support was needed more now than in 1645. The directors were – in the words of Haecxs – 'baffled' by this news. However, when Haecxs asked if he could deliver his reports to this meeting, the lawyer replied that unfortunately this meeting did not have the necessary quorum to legally accept his reports. Thus, Rudolphi suggested that Haecxs would come back the next day.<sup>699</sup> As will become clear from what happened the next days, this *ad hoc* meeting on the Sunday afternoon functioned as a tool for several powerful individuals in the Republic to control the information that Haecxs was bringing from Brazil in order to influence the decision-making process in the Dutch Republic. This emphasizes, that control of information by the WIC did not just occur in the world of news, but was also of paramount importance for the political arena.<sup>700</sup>

When that same Sunday Haecxs returned to his accommodation at the *Doelen*, another individual was waiting for him: Hendrick Thibault, one of the Burgomasters of Middelburg.

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<sup>698</sup> l'Honoré Naber, "Het dagboek van Hendrik Haecxs," 211-213.

<sup>699</sup> Ibid., 214-215.

<sup>700</sup> See chapter 4, and Groesen, *Amsterdam's Atlantic*.

Thibault was one of the most influential regents in the province of Zeeland, being the placeholder for Stadtholder Willem II (r. 1647-1650) in the meetings of the States of Zeeland.<sup>701</sup> He was also an investor in the WIC, involved in Zeeland privateering as a ship owner, and a land speculator.<sup>702</sup> Thibault came to him with a message from three members of the States General. These were Jacob Veth, Rutger Huijgens, and Hendrick van der Capellen.<sup>703</sup> These three gentlemen were closely involved with the WIC on behalf of the States General as members of the committee 'for Brazilian affairs' or 'West Indian affairs', or as representative of the States General in a meeting of Board of Directors.<sup>704</sup>

Thibault communicated to Haecxs that Veth, Huijgens, and van der Capellen asked Haecxs to soften the tone in his report before he would present it to the States General. Apparently, before Haecxs had shown his official report to anyone, the information had filtered up to members of the States General. In fact, these members of the States General were so worried about what they had heard through the unofficial channels that they came to Haecxs with the request of toning down his report. Because of the peace negotiations in Münster, the members of the States General did not want to cause too much pressure on the internal relations of the States General. Veth, Huijgens, and van der Capellen were afraid that worrisome news from Brazil could cause representatives of certain provinces to no longer agree to a lasting peace with Spain.<sup>705</sup>

Because (reliable) information was scarce, being able to control the information was a vital tool to influence the decision-making process. If the situation of Brazil would be worse than (especially) the Province of Holland thought, the province might decide that it was a lost cause and spending money would be a waste. This would not only impact the rescue of Brazil, but could very well have a spill-over in the peace negotiations in Münster. Haecxs

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<sup>701</sup> As the representative of the 'first noble' (Eerste Edele) he was able to appoint the magistracy in Veere and Flushing and was the first to speak in the provincial states of Zeeland.

<sup>702</sup> Israel, *De Republiek*, 833; Hart, "Autonoom maar kwetsbaar," 55-56.

<sup>703</sup> In his journal Haecxs does not provide a first name for van der Capellen from Overijssel. It is likely that he means Alexander van der Capellen, who was the chair of the special WIC committee in the States General in the month of November 1647. In that case Overijssel is a small mistake and it should be Gelderland. Alexander was preceded by his brother, Hendrik van der Capellen, so in theory it could also be him. See also: J. Jacobs, "De frustratie van Adriaen van der Donck, kolonist in Nieuw-Nederland," *Holland* 31, no. 2 (1999): 84. For Alexander van der Capellen as chair in November 1647, see NL-HaNA, 1.01.02, inv. nr. 4845, fol 287r.

<sup>704</sup> For special committees see chapter 1.

<sup>705</sup> l'Honoré Naber, "Het dagboek van Hendrik Haecxs," 215.

writes in his journal that 'even though the honorable gentlemen knew and understood that I came here with great worries and plenty of reasons to complain', the three gentlemen succeeded in convincing Haecxs of the importance of toning down his report.<sup>706</sup> When Haecxs proposed a revised report the next morning, the three representatives approved.<sup>707</sup> Unfortunately the original report no longer survives, but the toned-down version already relays how the people in Recife did not dare to leave the fort. The only information that is missing in the new report, but that does percolate through the rest of Haecxs' diary is how close the colony was to being lost, and the report never mentions that a certain number of soldiers was required.

Seeing as his report was now approved for presentation by the members of the States General, Haecxs went on his way to the general meeting that same Monday 11 November. Upon arriving there he was told that the meeting was busy with other important things, so he could not be granted an audience. Instead, he was invited to present his report at the special committee for Brazilian affairs that was having a meeting in one of the two antechambers adjacent to the general meeting hall.<sup>708</sup> Upon entering the room Haecxs saw the familiar faces of van der Capellen (president), Veth, and Huijgens, and the new faces of Cornelis van Beveren from Dordrecht, and Gijsbrecht van der Hoolck from Utrecht – all members of the States General. It is impossible to reconstruct party lines for individuals, but it seems telling that the three High-Mightinesses that Haecxs had already met the day before all came from 'Orangist' provinces, and/or had provable links to the Stadtholders such as van der Capellen (see above). Dordrecht on the other hand was in Holland where the State party was firmly in the saddle. Thus, it should not be ruled out that it was the Orangist party that succeeded in steering the information stream. The representatives from the WIC were also present in this meeting. Unsurprisingly, these were the directors Schulenborch, Moorthamer, Ten Hove, Willemsen, en Ruffelaer. In other words, the official report that the representatives from Dordrecht and Utrecht would receive was perhaps new for them, but every other member in this meeting was well aware that this was a toned-down version that was far from portraying reality. It must thus have been surprising for Haecxs when, after he

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<sup>706</sup> 'Hoewel Haere Ed. wel wisten en alle reets hadden verstaen, dat Ick met groote becommeringe overquam en redenen genoech hadde om te clagen'.

<sup>707</sup> l'Honoré Naber, "Het dagboek van Hendrik Haecxs," 215-221.

<sup>708</sup> Knevel, *Het Haagse bureau*, 13-14.

sat down at the end of the table, the president van der Capellen who had approved Haecxs' report that same morning asked him if he 'had something to present to the gentlemen', and 'what was the actual reason for Haecxs' trans-Atlantic journey'?<sup>709</sup> The present deputies of the States General were asked by the general assembly – van der Capellen could not do enough to emphasize their busy and important affairs once more – to hear from Haecxs. The delegate from the High Government in Brazil started a rough sketch of the miserable conditions in Brazil. Just as he was getting up to steam, a messenger entered the room requesting the presence of the members of the States General in the general assembly. The rest of Haecxs' exposé would have to wait until the next day.

Everybody rose up from their seat, but in the informal standing van der Capellen approached Haecxs with questions. Was he aware of the decision by the High-Mightinesses from the 10 August to honor the WIC's request and send 6,000 men to Brazil? And did he think this would be enough? Haecxs replied that he indeed had learned with great joy of the decision by the States General, but because a journey across the Atlantic lasted roughly twelve weeks, he did not know this when he left. In response to the question whether 6,000 soldiers would be enough, Haecxs replied that even if the States General would be able to raise 6,000 men, and an additional 2,000 sailors, and if this would be combined with 1,750 WIC recruits, it would be questionable if it would be enough to save the colony. He argued that one third of the soldiers would die, desert, get sick, get cripple or be unable to fight in general. Van der Capellen answered that he thought these estimates were a little steep, but he had to leave and asked Haecxs to keep himself available the next day to meet the general assembly of the States General.<sup>710</sup> This is most likely the issue that Haecxs needed to tone down. The States General had previously already consented to 6,000 soldiers, despite Johan Maurits' recommendation of 12,000.<sup>711</sup> Through this informal question by van der Capellen, it seems that the committee had sufficient faith in Haecxs not to compromise the peace negotiations in Münster by mentioning a higher number of soldiers for Brazil. It also appears that Haecxs picked up on the 'subtle hint' of van der Capellen that the committee opined that the proposed soldiers, sailors, and recruits were sufficient to assist Brazil.

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<sup>709</sup> '[Had hij] haere Ho. Mo. ijets aen te dienen', 'Wat [was] doch eijgentlijck d'oorzaecke' van Haecxs' 'overcomste'?

<sup>710</sup> l'Honoré Naber, "Het dagboek van Hendrik Haecxs," 221-222.

<sup>711</sup> Hoboken, *Witte de With*, 37-46.



Later that same evening Haecxs was visited at this accommodation at the *Doelen* once more. The abovementioned deputy directors, together with a director from Amsterdam, Johannes de Laet. Apparently with de Laet the meeting did meet the quorum because they now accepted Haecxs' report and other papers, and requested Haecxs to make an additional three copies to be presented at the States General, the Stadtholder, and the meeting of the Board of Directors.<sup>712</sup>

The next day, Haecxs was expected at the meeting of the High-Mightinesses at nine in the morning, attended by roughly twenty provincial delegates. Haecxs was asked to wait a little while in one of the two antechambers, but was shortly afterwards called into the large meeting hall. Haecxs' arrival was accompanied by a letter of credence from the rest of the High Government urging the High-Mightinesses to listen to him as if he was the entire council.<sup>713</sup> After providing an oral account, he handed in his written reports. The members of the States General asked him several questions assisted with a map of Brazil. The tension rose slightly when Jacob Cats, the Grand Pensionary (*Raadspensionaris*) of Holland, asked why the WIC did not offer more assistance to the High Government in establishing a fort on *Punto das Baleas*. Johannes de Laet responded: 'My lord, you are well familiar with our inabilities'.<sup>714</sup> And that was the end of it.<sup>715</sup> The general meeting then thanked Haecxs and he left. The assembly then briefly deliberated and resolved to put the decision in the hands of the special committee on West Indian affairs.<sup>716</sup>

The first thing that becomes clear from this part of Haecxs' story is that the distance between Brazil and the Dutch Republic made everybody very interested in what he had to say; there was a hunger for first-hand information. Secondly, it shows how the control of this information was essential for influencing the decision-making process in the States General. Even though the decision to send a rescue fleet to Brazil had formally already been taken, the individuals in the special committee on Brazilian affairs were actively trying to manipulate the information that was going to be presented at the general meeting. The committee thus did not just filter the information, but also tried to manipulate it.

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<sup>712</sup> l'Honoré Naber, "Het dagboek van Hendrik Haecxs," 223.

<sup>713</sup> NL-HaNA, 1.01.02, inv. nr. 5759, 12-Nov-1647 letter from the High Government in Brazil [scan 199-200].

<sup>714</sup> 'Mijn Heer, U is ons onvermogen wel bekend'.

<sup>715</sup> l'Honoré Naber, "Het dagboek van Hendrik Haecxs," 223-224.

<sup>716</sup> NL-HaNA, 1.01.02, inv. nr. 4845, fol. 287-287r.

## 5.5. PERSONAL RELATIONS

Because Haecxs was such a nobody and inexperienced in political affairs, his journal is full of little bits and pieces of information on the practice of lobbying that he considered worthy of writing down. At the States General for example, he noted how a clerk put three chairs, with cushions, opposite the president for him and the two WIC directors that introduced him at the general assembly. The president told them to take a seat, and put on their hat. As soon as Haecxs got up to deliver his exposé, the entire meeting ushered him to sit back down and to keep his hat in his hand.<sup>717</sup> This was different at the States of Holland. Haecxs noted, indeed, almost complained, in his journal that he was not offered any chair at the States of Holland, let alone a chair with cushions. Moreover, no-one asked him to put his hat back on. On the other hand, his interlocutors did listen very attentively, and he was back outside within two hours.<sup>718</sup> Combining these two bits of information it seems that it was not uncommon for an oral presentation at the States General to last several hours, and it must have been boisterous and noisy while individuals gave their presentation there or delivered a petition.

After visiting the States of Holland, Haecxs continued his journey to the Stadtholder, Willem II (1626-1650) on 12 November. It is quite exceptional that de Laet and Haecxs received an audience by the Stadtholder in this period. From the diary of the Frisian Stadtholder it becomes clear that Willem II was, possibly due to the recent death of his father, behaving oddly in this period: 'He hardly gives anyone audiences and does not think of prostitutes, games, or hunting. This provides him with neither love, nor [societal] credit, nor glory from the people', according to Willem Frederik.<sup>719</sup> Haecxs writes how the Stadtholder himself came to open the door, and sent his page out of the room when they started talking. They started off by exchanging civilities; Haecxs expressed his condolences about Willem's father, Frederik Hendrik, who had died in March of that year, and Willem remarked how swiftly Haecxs' travel across the Atlantic had been. Only after the exchange of pleasantries, Haecxs brought up the dire situation in Brazil. He provided the Stadtholder

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<sup>717</sup> l'Honoré Naber, "Het dagboek van Hendrik Haecxs," 224.

<sup>718</sup> *Ibid.*, 225.

<sup>719</sup> 'S.H. stelt sich vreemt ahn, doet niet mit fatsoen af, gheeft niemandt haest audiëntie, denck niet als op hoeren, speulen ofte jaeghen, 'twelck hem geen liefde, credijt noch loff gheeft bij het volck', Visser and Plaat, *Gloria parendi*, V/233-234.

with an oral presentation that was an abridged version of what he had told the States General and the States of Holland. In contrast to the States of Holland, Willem II did receive a written report, just like the States General. During all of this both Haecxs and the Stadtholder had not sat down, and all of them keeping their hats in their hands. Haecxs writes in his journal that this limited him in expressing his reverence to the Stadtholder. He tried to overcome this limitation by emphasizing his respect in his spoken words. This sorted the desired effect, as Willem II told him: 'It is reasonable that the company receives support, I promise you that I will exert myself'.<sup>720</sup>

Even though the personal relation here was forged through a broker, Johannes de Laet, the words of Willem II's commitment highlight the intimate personal relation that was established. 'I promise you' emphasizes the personal commitment of the Stadtholder to Haecxs. He did not promise this to the Company or to the people in Brazil, but instead to the individual in front of him. Moreover, the words 'I will exert myself' further underline the personal bond that the Stadtholder created here, promising to contribute his societal capital. Less than one week later the States General wrote to all the Provinces and to each of the chambers of the WIC that they 'took no other state affair as much to heart as the advancement of the relief of Brazil' and therefore had ordered the Admiralties to prepare the required ships.<sup>721</sup>

After his visit to the Stadtholder, Haecxs returned to a meeting of the deputy directors of the WIC. They had studied the details of the report and reached the conclusion that the High Government was complaining a lot. Did they not appreciate the efforts made by the directors? The directors had to leave 'their houses and families for six, eight, even ten weeks at a time', to visit 'the States General and the Stadtholder night and day' in an attempt to rescue Brazil. Haecxs needed 'to believe them, that they were not sitting idly by'.<sup>722</sup> This was not just rhetoric. Johannes de Laet also emphasized in personal correspondence in 1643 that

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<sup>720</sup> 'Het is billick dat de Compagnie in dese extremiteijt haest werde geholpen, Ick beloove U dat Ick het mijne daer toe sal contribuieren', l'Honoré Naber, "Het dagboek van Hendrik Haecxs," 225-226.

<sup>721</sup> 'dat ons over alle andere lantssaecken niet meerder ter herten gaet als de bevordering van het secours van Brazijl', NL-HaNA, 1.01.02, inv. nr. 5759, 17-Nov-1647 letter to all the Provinces; 19-Nov-1647 letter to all the chambers of the WIC [scans 347-350].

<sup>722</sup> 'huijsen en familien dicwils 6, 8, ja 10 weken' moeten verlaten, om 'nacht en dach bij Haere Ho. Mo. en Sijn Hoogheijd' de redding van Brazilië mogelijk te maken. Wilde Haecxs dan niet 'vrijelijck gelooven, dat wij hier ooc niet stille hebben gestaen', l'Honoré Naber, "Het dagboek van Hendrik Haecxs," 226-227.

he had been busy travelling back and forth to The Hague all summer and could 'not promise myself any rest'.<sup>723</sup> At the meeting De Laet asked Haecxs if he had the idea that he could resort more effect at the States General than de deputy directors and Board of Directors. Haecxs avoided answering this question directly by stating that hardly any of the High-Mightinesses had a sense about the reality of Brazil, so Haecxs' expertise was necessary to cure the cancer of the company. After some mutual recriminations about poor quality meat and idleness in exchange for 800 guilders a month, the dispute was settled by some Rhine wine provided by Schulenborch.<sup>724</sup> When Haecxs visited the presiding WIC chamber of Amsterdam a few days later, one of the Amsterdam directors, Isaac van Beeck, also asked if Haecxs 'was of the opinion that his presence and soliciting with the High-Mightinesses could possibly have more effect than the efforts undertaken by the deputy directors?'.<sup>725</sup> The tarnished relation between the directors and Haecxs or the High Government surfaced once more on 16 December when Haecxs paid a third visit to the States General. This time he came to voice concerns on behalf of the soldiers, sailors, and officers that were about to leave for Brazil. Not only were their weapons of poor quality, but they also lacked ammunition. Moreover, despite falling short of the targeted 6,000 soldiers, it was muggy and cramped on the ships and there were insufficient beds. The Board of Directors let Haecxs know that they did not appreciate him telling this to the States General without consulting them, or letting them know first.<sup>726</sup>

The repeatedly expressed frustration about the way Haecxs operated shows first of all that Haecxs and the rest of the High Government of Brazil were in the dark about the *decorum* of lobbying. Furthermore, they were unaware of the unwritten rules and hierarchy within the WIC for making contact with the States General and the Stadtholder. The High Government was supposed to report to the presiding chamber and/or the Board of Directors, who in turn would direct their deputies in The Hague. By sidestepping this procedure, Haecxs clearly annoyed some of the individuals involved; it was a no-confidence motion. And this questioned the reputation and societal credit of the Board of Directors, effectively

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<sup>723</sup> Bick, "Governing the Free Sea," 80.

<sup>724</sup> l'Honoré Naber, "Het dagboek van Hendrik Haecxs," 228-230.

<sup>725</sup> 'vermeijnde dat [sijn] presentie ontrent de sollicitation bij haer Ho. Mo. meer soude connen uijtwercken als alle debvoiren, soo bij d'Hrn. Gecommitteerdens der XIX wierden aengewent', *ibid.*, 241.

<sup>726</sup> *Ibid.*, 251-255.

making that criticism very personal. It also created perhaps a scary precedent that people would start to cross the Atlantic more often to lobby for the Brazilian interests. This happened indeed, as can be seen in the following chapters. With these individuals providing their point of view, it would become more difficult for the Board of Directors to present their narrative and to control the flow of information. Already they complained that the people in the streets were often more in the know about what happened in Brazil than they were.

The question remains whether this was a successful lobby campaign by Haecxs. It is hard to measure because the resolution to send a rescue fleet to Brazil was already passed before Haecxs arrived. Perhaps it should even be considered a failure. After all, despite Haecxs' presence, the States General could only supply 5,700 of the promised 6,000 soldiers, and the WIC only 425 of the intended 1,350 recruits. This was despite the pamphlets that were trying to attract soldiers by describing beaches plentiful of fish, excellent hospitals in case of illness, and the promise that 'ashore and on the beach (...) one could earn a decent penny with very little effort'.<sup>727</sup> It is impossible to assess whether Haecxs had any positive influence on this disappointing result. What can be measured is the effect of Haecxs last visit to the general assembly of the High-Mightinesses when he complained about the abysmal quality of weapons and lodging for the soldiers. The solution by States General was to not pay the supplier. This was good from their perspective, but of course did not help those trying to save the colony. Poor weapons that were not paid for remained poor weapons. The High Government and other inhabitants in Brazil must have considered it useful and effective to send one of themselves to the States General as they did it again in 1652, 1653, 1654, and 1656 – as will be clear from the next two chapters.<sup>728</sup>

Apart from the social norms that become apparent from Haecxs' account, such as holding the hat in your hand and standing or sitting while giving a presentation, the journal reveals another detail about personal direct lobbying. It could be of importance to have a contact person that introduced you. These were Johannes de Laet and Pieter Moorthamer when Haecxs was introduced to the States General, but De Laet also stayed with Haecxs for

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<sup>727</sup> 'int Landt ende aen Strant (...) met weynich arbeyt een goede stuyver te verdienen', Van Alphen 195: Staten-Generaal, *Beneficien voor de Soldaten gaende naer Brasil* ('s-Gravenhage: De weduwe ende erfgename van wijlen Hillebrant Jacobsz van Wouw, 1647).

<sup>728</sup> See also: L. Hulsman, "Brazilian Indians in the Dutch Republic: The remonstrances of Antonio Parapaba to the States General in 1654 and 1656," *Itinerario* 29, no. 1 (2005).

his visit to the Stadtholder. Through the connections made in the WIC, Haecxs was able to 'use' some of the societal capital of the WIC directors.

## 5.6. CONCLUSION

The decision to send a rescue fleet to Brazil was connected to other political issues which limited the bandwidth for lobbying. There were interests that tried to use the fleet to Brazil to obtain favors in other arenas ranging from the peace negotiations in Münster to personal vendettas over jobs or money. This meant that the decision to send a rescue fleet was also created in a delicate equilibrium, which new information from the colony about its worrisome state threatened to upset. Thus, when Hendrick Haecxs arrived in the Republic it was of paramount importance that his story did not shift this fragile balance. This explains why the committee for West Indian affairs and the deputy directors of the WIC jointly labored to have Haecxs tone down his report. If he would have told the general meeting that the planned 6,000 soldiers would not be enough, Holland might backtrack on its consent for the rescue fleet, which could disturb the peace negotiations.

The entire episode surrounding the decision to dispatch a rescue fleet further demonstrated the need of societal capital, and in particular socio-political capital, for direct lobbying in the early modern Republic. Haecxs needed the societal capital of Johannes de Laet to introduce him to the States General, the States of Holland, and the Stadtholder. He added know-how on the proper *decorum* and credibility to the societal nobody of Hendrik Haecxs. To what extent direct lobbying relied on personal relations becomes further apparent through the words of Stadtholder Willem II that emphasized the personal relation between the two men. The States General as a body, as well as their delegates, also relied on societal capital. They politely asked the Frisian Stadtholder Willem Frederik to employ his societal capital for the West Indian affairs in Friesland. The personal relations between the High-Mightinesses' delegates and the Count were further strengthened over social activities such as walking, horse riding, and of course drinking. The delegates returned the favor of the Count's company and hospitality by reporting positively to their colleagues at the States General even though at that time his efforts had not yielded any results. Within Friesland Willem Frederik employed the societal capital through his personal connections by 'recommending favorably' on the Brazilian affair. However, when push came to shove he

employed his power not through his personal means, but through his capacity as Stadtholder, and he made a point about writing this in his diary.

The direct lobbying through personal connections brings to light that, even though lobbying was the main tool for people, a surplus of societal capital could increase one's chances. Societal capital was essential to help obtain access and to request and deliver favors. Patronage structures influenced the decision-making process and showcase that often political decisions were averse to ideology or great plans. In the end, a large share of the people cared more about private goals like becoming *grietman* of a rural municipality in Friesland or obtaining their money than they cared about the great contribution the Brazilian colony was making to the prestige of the Dutch Republic, or how profitable it was for the commonwealth. Direct lobbying by making use of personal connections and societal capital demonstrates how difficult it was, or at least could be, to navigate all these small interests.

Finally, studying the personal connections and accounting for the societal capital demonstrate the importance of humans, human interactions, and social behavior for the reality of political decision-making. The result of these people coming together and lobbying for a rescue mission was that a fleet led by Admiral Witte Cornelisz de With left for Brazil at the end of the year 1647. As such, people *did* make a difference for the course of history.

