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## Patriots, contracts and other patterns of trust in a polyarchic society: the Dutch 17th century

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### *Introduction*

It is sometimes appropriate to look at things in a slightly different light, and transpose their meaning to a different level. In this contribution to patriotism in the early-modern period I intend to show that at least part of this deconstruction lived in the imagination of the actors of the period. Thus when I claim that patriotism in the late-sixteenth and seventeenth Dutch centuries might be regarded as one of the alternatives (and a discarded one, for that matter) in the quest for political and social stability, and that religion was considered a better candidate, I will try and validate this claim by textual proof from the sources. This can be only partial, however, since it would be strange to try to impute the sociological theory of functional equivalents to these Dutchmen who constructed their world. Therefore, this article will contain more explicit theory than is customary in the history of political thought. I hope the reader will bear with me, promising that I will take up this article in a larger argument where I may need no longer to refer to the black and white of modern theory.

If sustainable society is about the co-ordination of the behaviour of individuals, political thought is mostly the contextually dependent reflection of this co-ordination, its structure, pre-conditions and ensuing constraints on the behaviour of citizens. It is to be expected that when 'traditional' patterns of co-ordination are under pressure, or when the sustainability of a society is in danger, these reflections roam wild. Then, it is said, the basic concepts of social life are essentially contested, and it is by way of the study of these political debates that historians of political thought try to obtain an insight into the nature of the society in question, and preferably as well into the nature of society as such.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The literature on this issue is wide-roaming. The classical study is D. Lewis, *Convention. A philosophical study*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1969. Modern versions are Francis Fukuyama, *Trust: making and breaking cooperative relations*. New York, Free Press 1995; P. Johnson, *Frames of deceit. A study of the loss and recovery of public and private trust*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press 1993 and B.A. Misztal, *Trust in modern societies. The search for the bases of social order*. Cambridge, Polity Press 1996. See also: D.E. Eberly,

In itself, to define life in society as a co-ordination *problem* is typical of living in dynamic societies. It is our modern view of the world, in which we experience the problematic nature of co-ordination all the time, as we try to conceptualise and influence its solution. For a student of the Dutch seventeenth century it cannot come as a surprise that this society of which the sustainability was threatened, and which consequently was required to make a tremendous effort at joint action to ward off attempts at its very existence, was like modern societies in many respects. We will see that such an approach of the Dutch seventeenth century is supported by the fact that traditional concepts to define the co-ordination problems involved are noticeably absent. Neither feudal conceptions of co-ordination, nor classical republican ideas of the common good were prominent. On the contrary, a strong sense of the appropriateness of particular and particularist interests and rights called for a different perspective. In the Dutch case, particularism was for various reasons a virtue, not a vice. And if the Dutch rallied behind a common cause, it was never understood as a mere overcoming of these particularist interests, but rather as their ultimate consequence. 'What's in it for me/for us?' was, already then, the natural question to ask. Dutch seventeenth century society was (and still is) a bargaining society geared at solving the co-ordination problems by contract and agreement rather than force or tradition.

As we know (and we will see that the seventeenth-century Dutch would soon learn this as well) bargaining involves a particular kind of costs: transaction costs. As it is in the nature of a co-ordination problem, the outcomes of individual actions partly depend on the actions of others, and in order to make one's individual actions worthwhile specific actions by others have to be ensured. We must be able to rely on the behaviour of others, they have to be predictable, and in the absence of one strong centralised power the best way to guarantee this predictability is by contract, an enforceable contract that is. Like any co-ordination procedure, a contract involves costs: bargaining costs, surveillance costs, enforcement costs. These so-called transaction costs can take various forms. Hobbes's solution was to have one, encompassing and generalised contract, meant to make further contracts superfluous: it was a contract to prevent all future transaction costs (in particular those of civil war). Hobbes's aim was to replace the cost-inefficient feudal contract, obsolete when a commercially influenced Parliament had claimed its rights. Classical republicanism, on the other hand, meant to gear its citizens to the common good by means of civic virtue and its rewards. As long as the contents of civic virtue are well-defined

*The essential civil society reader : classic essays in the American civil society debate.* Lanham, Md., Rowman & Littlefield 2000. The application to the historical context as well as to the issue of nationalism has been attempted i.a. by Liah Greenfeld: *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity.* Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press 1992;. *The spirit of capitalism. Nationalism and economic growth.* Cambridge Mass, Harvard University Press 2001.

and its compliance guaranteed by social control or otherwise, the principle of public spiritedness is another way of overcoming co-ordination problems without overburdening transaction costs. But critics like Machiavelli have pointed out that this is highly unlikely to succeed: skilled politicians will feign civic virtue in the pursuit of their private interests, and once this is generally recognised, create a situation of general distrust producing the opposite of what was intended. As we will see later on, distrust creates even larger transaction costs than situations where individual interests are considered respectful and expressed in public, and hence subject to contract.

Friendship, family and *clientela* are another way of bringing co-ordination about. In one sense at least, patriotism is a generalised form of this: the 'friends and family first' is generalised into 'right or wrong my country'. However, like feudalism, Leviathan-like absolutism, or republicanism, patriotism does require a particular supportive structure, which may or may not be available. To create patriotism where it is absent involves a social transformation which may or may not be possible, and in any case will not be without its costs. Maybe it is the case that in order to establish a general sense of patriotism, a country needs a standing army, a national church and a centralised power structure, in addition to having enemies abroad. Whether this is generally the case or not, one can agree with Edmund Burke that the sublime qualities of a political order should be generally recognisable in order for its citizens to be able to identify with it, and live in its awe. This question of preconditions – supportive structures – is essentially a matter of effectiveness. It may, e.g., involve very few costs to have an undisputable allegiance to one's family, but it will not always deliver the goods. In cases such as international trade, therefore, it may seem attractive to adapt the family structure to the requirements of circumstance, i.e. to marry into a foreign family; or, more drastically, to forego the very reliance on family, or other structures of basic solidarity, in the expectation to shift to a more flexible and more dependable mechanism, that of interest. Such a shift will have noticeable costs, e.g. that of a good education (the three R's, competence in languages), that may deter many. For the very same reason, it may attract others who want to thrive on the ensuing competitive advantage.<sup>2</sup>

Societies go in one direction or another in function of the emergence of resilient practices.<sup>3</sup> I will defend here the thesis that the resilient practices of the United States turned increasingly around

<sup>2</sup> This way of approaching the issue of patriotism is indeed highly abstract. Its aim is not to understand the historical phenomenon of patriotism without doing the tedious work of an historian. Its aim is to develop sensitivity for the alternatives to patriotism in the historical development of a nation: 'if the Dutch did something else from developing a full-fledged patriotism, what kind of thing this "something else" might be?' This question is functionalist on purpose, in asking for functional alternatives to patriotism.

<sup>3</sup> See for an analysis of resilient institutions: Phillip Pettit, *Republicanism. A Theory of Freedom and Government*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997.

self-interest and the ensuing supportive structures (the relative independence of markets from politics, as a matter of fact, but also in terms of a contract oriented juridical apparatus; the relative independence of religion from politics; the international success of trade as an alternative for war). Even while the investigation into the nature of self-interest started from a classical Roman notion of patria (pro aris et focus)<sup>4</sup>, its two-fold development – from religion (predestination) to international politics (manifest destiny) resulted in a general recognition among the main political formations in Dutch politics that self-interest is the major underlying force of the political structure and cannot and should be replaced by the notion of a common good or common patria precisely because these notions are essentially contested and must remain so given the stalemate between the major political formations. We will notice that in partisan propaganda regularly a self-ascription of ‘true fatherlander’ or ‘real patriot’ can be found. Closer inspection as to the justification of this self-ascription reveals, however, that true patriots are those who counter noxious claims to the common good by their opponents as these would run counter to the legitimate interests of the citizens. The paradigmatic cases are twofold. In religion, we find the Counterremonstrant position that too many religions leads to no religion at all, and the Remonstrant position that one religion leads to the oppression of consciences (neither of these relies essentially upon *dogmatic* truth). A corollary of this is the discussion about sects and the economy present as early as in Grotius’s *History of the Low-Countries* (1606): sects lead to economic welfare; and its opposition: sects do not endanger the necessary doctrinal purity of the established church. On the other hand, we find the identification of international peace with economic prosperity, and the promotion of peace by international trade. In explicit opposition to the wicked and volatile reference to the abstract national interest of an ‘universal monarchy’ or of national prestige, the peace-promoting implications of economic interest are defended, in a transcendence as it were of the opposite positions of the peace and war factions in Dutch politics. Here as much as in the religious debate, we must stress that as such the notions, and arguments, and discourses are not fully new. They were taken from a long tradition of realist political analysis. Their application, however, was new and had important innovative consequences, so much so that the Dutch republic has been regarded as the first modern nation and that important political thinkers have been heralded as the founder of liberalism (Spinoza) or as the precursor of Adam Smith (Pieter de la Court). Both claims are exaggerations. The Dutch were not in the process of overcoming an ill-directed mercantilism or the centralising tendencies of an absolute monarchy. Far from it. They developed these new and innovative ideas as an alternative to mercantilism and as an alternative to absolute monarchy. In terms of historical genesis, one should relate this development of an alternative to patriotism as a critical discussion with classical

4 It still will resound in Spinoza’s *Tractatus Politicus* (VIII, 9), even while the general outlook is no longer that of classical republicanism.

republicanism; even if the Dutch didn't have an issue with the *Serenissima*, and the cutting edge of Dutch political self-legitimation was in terms of religion and ancient rights.

The most remarkable aspect of the political ideology of the United States is its continuity and effectiveness over more than two centuries, notwithstanding important changes in the international context. By hindsight one is tempted to say that patriotism would not have achieved a similar result. For the actors themselves there was no such choice, as they swiftly found out the advantages of the language of 'verus et divinus sui amor', as Grotius introduced it in *De jure praedae* [Hamaker, 9), as he had shown its workings in his *History of the Low-Countries* (1606). There would be nothing essentially new in Pieter de la Court's 1660-laudation of self-interest as the fountain and foundation of the common good, nor in Spinoza's infamous 1676 remark that the big fish eat the small by natural right (which is the power of nature).

As we discuss seventeenth century ideas about contract, fatherland, interests and the nature of the political system, we will naturally do this with the advantage of hindsight provided by the emergence of a self-declared movement of patriotism in the later eighteenth century when the Dutch Republic was drawing to its end, or as contemporaries were apt to say, was attempting to come to its own. In other words, I am definitely not going to argue that patriotism in a republic is unlikely, but rather that it was so in the seventeenth century, in this Republic, and I will point this out by way of an analysis of the concepts just mentioned. They have their theoretical origins in the so-called institutional economics, or neo-institutionalism for short, a style of doing economics that attempts to span the economy, politics and law. The cutting edge of their notion of transaction costs is that it explains the choice between market solutions and political solutions. I will use this approach in the explanation of the Dutch 'choice' between patriotism and market-like institutions for the provision of the coherence of the state, and as I take it, appropriately so in the study of the first large-scale commercial republic of the modern era. Just as religion was largely privatised in that the established church was at a distance from politics and a substantial proportion of the population catered for their religious needs elsewhere, so the international politics of the Republic was largely privatised by semi-political corporations and other state-monitored private enterprise.<sup>5</sup>

My hypothesis is that even while the vocabulary of patriotism had developed in the sixteenth century with the contribution of Erasmus, Junius and Grotius, to name only them,<sup>6</sup> it nonetheless

<sup>5</sup> In his *History of the Low-Countries*, Grotius remarks that the American Indians in Nieuw-Amsterdam are difficult to deal with and that they require dominion rather than contract. Therefore, he concludes, there is no future lost to this colony.

<sup>6</sup> On the use of patriotism and patria in the Dutch Republic see: N.C.F. van Sas,

did not develop into the institution of patriotism because the vocabulary of interests and the development of political institutions based on contract was more successful. The question is not so much: did or didn't the Dutch love their country, but rather into what institutional practices did or didn't this *amor patriae* develop. The availability of an alternative to patriotism that could provide the same goods in a more cost-efficient manner turned to be crucial, *even* in the presence of a nicely developed vocabulary of patriotism.

The over-all theoretical principle of neo-institutionalism is that of rational behaviour. But as we know that institutions may be the outcome of human action, though normally not of human design, the development of this or that institution is a historical process. In contradistinction to analysts of patriotism, who see the rise of patriotism essentially connected to 'modernity', it seems more appropriate to consider patriotism as just one among other possible consequences of modernisation. The purpose of this contribution is to describe the process by which in the Dutch Republic the patriotic outcome was eschewed, to the benefit of other practices that we would now be tempted to call 'really' modern. It is to this exposition that I now turn.

*Truth and custom: particularism and the public church*

Justus Lipsius argued against 'amor patriae' in his *De constantia* as well as in *De politicorum libri sex*. His basic line was that 'amor patriae' is an inconstancy leading to civil war. Leaders of seditions 'under a pretext of the publike profit, doe each of them strive for their private authoritie'.<sup>7</sup> In a Tacitean vein Lipsius argued here that the use of notions of the common good conceal private interests and are therefore the more dangerous to the public peace. He did not continue this line of argument to the conclusion that later Dutch Tacitists would draw, and eschew the notion that private interests are less harmful if openly recognised. Lipsius typically wrote a political theory without a nation, emphasising the mutual obligations of the prince to good rule and the subjects to good obedience. History contingently produced the geographical distribution of states, which do not depend on 'nationalistic' feelings. Although Lipsius wanted the subjects to live virtuously, he did not require any particular civic virtue other than obedience, even to a tyrant. Civil war produces more mischief than it might resolve. Lipsius quotes Alexander the Great: 'The clemencie of kings and leaders, consisteth not so much in themselves, as in their disposition who do obey. Government is mitigated by obedience'.<sup>8</sup>

ed. *Vaderland. Een geschiedenis vanaf de vijftiende eeuw tot 1940*. Amsterdam: AUP, 1999.

<sup>7</sup> *Six books of politickes or civil doctrine*. London 1594, 202.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid*, 201.

This connection between civil war and the citizens' attempts to appropriate the public good, while denying them a right of resistance, was to be resolved by a double historical argument in two early works of Hugo Grotius. Here we find a justification for the Dutch Revolt (located in the historical freedom of the Batavian nation) and an awareness of the 'sociological' preconditions of good government. Resistance to a tyrant is for Grotius a logical consequence of the tyrant's attempts to encroach upon the time-honoured institutions of a nation, which are the just locus of *amor patriae*. Grotius wants his readers to believe that different regions and different nations call for particular morals and politics. In particular in the case of the Batavian nation, where the central concept always has been 'liberty', we find 'a greater desire and affection to such a government'.

Because antiquity comes somewhat next to God, by a certain equivalence to eternity. Hence also arises that a reverence for old age is inborn in our hearts. Such old age must be honoured more in a republic than in men, since for men, who are mortal, old age is a sign of decline. But since a republic is instituted with the hope of immortality, it derives its power from the passing of time and grows more powerful when getting older. The continuity is a sure sign of a well-formed polity. From hence arises a trust and love of the government in the hearts of the inhabitants. And moreover, the most important reason why a republic continues to exist, is since it did so in the past.<sup>9</sup>

Whereas Lipsius criticized patriotism for its tendency to disturb orderly government, Grotius sees in the excellence of government a just object of admiration and love and trust. The difference between the two political philosophers is maybe more apparent than real. According to Lipsius, patriotic zeal undermines the obedience due to the ruler, it is an inconstant as well as competing passion that makes subjects unreliable and prone to sedition. Grotius, in his *De antiquitate* that is, stresses the possibility of patriotic zeal directed to precisely that same political order that happens to lead towards the utopian *respublica aeterna*. Patriotism can become a *constant* passion, because the republic itself is constant, and 'from hence arises a trust and a lover of the government in the hearts of the inhabitants'. Both Lipsius and Grotius clearly concentrate on the state rather than the nation,<sup>10</sup> and look for the connection between *amor patriae* and the state's flourishing. This coheres with the judgement of one historian of Fatherland in the Dutch pamphlets of the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, who claims that the particularist, local origins of the notion of Fatherland – identifying Fatherland with the city or county one was born in – remained present until the virtual demise of patriotism in the 1670s.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>9</sup> *Liber de antiquitate reipublicae Batavae*. Leiden 1610, praefatio.

<sup>10</sup> With Liah Greenfeld – in her *Spirit of capitalism*, 92 – we may well ask whether there was a Dutch nation at all. Greenfeld suggests that on the argument of a polyarchic, open political and mercantile system – as is emphasised by various Dutch historians – the question becomes: 'where does one draw the line between the Dutch economy and the European, indeed, the world economy?'

<sup>11</sup> G. de Bruin. "Het begrip 'vaderland' in de pamfletliteratuur ten tijde van de Republiek, 1600-1750." In *Vaderland. Een geschiedenis vanaf de vijftiende eeuw tot 1940*, edited by N.C.F. van Sas, Amsterdam: AUP, 1999, 143-61. In his conclusion, De Bruin laments the connection of patriotism with 'emotions, in

No doubt, therefore, there was a good reason to deny patriotism an independent value in Dutch politics, as particularist tendencies were among the greatest dangers in the young Republic. This was particularly the case in matters of religion, where church organisation was taking a very local shape. For sure, the Heidelberg Catechism and the Forms of Unity defined the Dutch Reformed Church, but the organisation of the church itself followed the local preferences and distribution of power.<sup>12</sup> The exciting last two decades of the sixteenth century witnessed a series of upheaval around independent minds like Dirk Coornhert (1522-1590), Caspar Coolhaes (1536-1615), Hubertus Duyfhuis (1531-1581), Cornelis Wiggertsz (ca. 1555-1624), en Hermannus Herberts (1540?-1607) and Taco Sybrants (? -1615), who challenged an emerging religious-political order. As Wiggerts aptly remarked when censured by a States of Holland committee headed by Johannes Wttenbogaert: 'I therefore despise our new customs, just like the old decrees of Popery, because Christ said: "I am the Truth", not: "I am the custom" ...'.<sup>13</sup>

Thus Cornelis Wiggerts, just like his predecessors in religious purity, expressed his dismay of the collegial style of church government that rated unity above truth, even if he maybe did not draw the right consequences from this insight. The political and religious elite in the Republic – possibly partly on the instigation of Lipsius's Tacitean warnings about the ordinary people – were indeed very much concerned about concord and the containment of religious unrest and independence. The answer, they were about to find out, was to tolerate sects like the Mennonites provided they did not draw attention or went around to proselyte; and for the rest maintain a modicum of unity within the established church. Wiggerts himself was going to experience this

particular religious and partisan emotions. This was a source of both the strength and the weakness of patriotism. Both tendencies were reinforced by manipulative techniques and propaganda which happened widely. Many writers of pamphlets used the term for their own purposes', p.161. It still is worthwhile to draw attention to the fact that rhetorical strategy and historical accuracy in early-modern Europe were part of the same scholarly process: so let's enjoys these emotions rather than lament them. See also: Jacob Soll, 'Introduction: The Uses of Historical Evidence in Early Modern Europe', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 64 (2003) 149-157, [special issue: The Uses of Historical Evidence in Early Modern Europe].

<sup>12</sup> See for this side of the Revolt: Jan Juliaan Woltjer. "Political moderates and religious moderates in the revolt of the Netherlands." In *Reformation, revolt and civil war in France and the Netherlands 1555-1585*, ed. Philip Benedict, et.al. Amsterdam: Koninklijke Nederlandse Akademie van Wetenschappen, 1999. 185-200; Idem, *Tussen vrijheidsstrijd en burgeroorlog over de Nederlandse opstand 1555-1580*. Amsterdam: Balans, 1994.; Alistair Duke. *Reformation and revolt in the low countries*. London: Hambledon Press, 1990. Among the older literature H.C. Rogge is highly relevant: see his biographies of Johannes Wttenbogaert and Caspar Coolhaes.

<sup>13</sup> Quoted in H. C. Rogge. *Caspar Janszoon Coolhaes, de voorlooper van Arminius en der Remonstranten*. 2 vols. Amsterdam: Y. Rogge, 1865, vol. II, 204.

strategy, as he was ordered to appear before various Provincial synods and committees to admonish him and re-establish unity. When finally this was unsuccessful, he was excommunicated and severed from the Reformed church. Wiggerts nevertheless continued to preach in private, as he might well do. In this he was supported by the Magistrate of his town of Hoorn, who gave him a life-long pension.<sup>14</sup> There were good grounds for this policy. It had been a successful strategy in the early days of the Revolt to allow all denominations – and thus generate broad support for the Revolt –, and this was laid down in the Union of Utrecht.

This history had been one of continuous bickering and contention, as e.g. in Frisia where Mennonites dominated the scene.<sup>15</sup> Parties can be distinguished according to their position on the nature of sin, and the issue of doctrinal unity versus Biblical purity.<sup>16</sup> Frisia was paradigmatic in this respect for the rest of the Republic, and here the great debates were conducted or at least started. Two ministers from the city of Sneek in Frisia – Bogerman and Geldrop – edited and translated Beza's *De haereticis puniendis* as a contribution to the confusion.<sup>17</sup> In their introduction they established that the Mennonites were their target, as well as those who contested the catechism and the Apostolic truth. They want to fight impiety 'relentless, stoutly and courageous against all support and office of the Devil, who with all the cunning of a fox, and tyrannical violence of a roaring lion comes to fight us all the time, either in person or through his companions in order to harm in us Christ's honour and rule'.<sup>18</sup> This Machiavellian reading of the devil's routing is complemented by a strong distinction between the order of politics and of religion. According to our two Sneek ministers, many support the devil by desiring both salvation and earthly goods and aiming at a 'middle way'. This is not possible, because God is displeased by those who serve two lords. The only appropriate practice is to follow God by crushing Satan.

<sup>14</sup> See Rogge, *Caspar Coolhaes*, vol. II, 197ff.

<sup>15</sup> See J. J. Woltjer. *Friesland in Hervormingstijd*. Leiden: Universitaire Pers, 1962.

<sup>16</sup> See J. Reitsma. *Geschiedenis van de Hervorming en de Hervormde Kerk der Nederlanden*. Edited by J. Lindeboom. 3 ed. Utrecht: Kemink, 1916, 445ff. Reitsma argues the importance of discipline in the church, understanding this as orthodox extravagance versus the moderation of the more ecumenical reformers. He does not discuss the feasibility of moderation as a principle of social organisation.

<sup>17</sup> Theodorus Beza. *De haereticis a ciuili magistratu puniendis libellus, aduersus Martini Bellii farraginem, et nouorum academicorum sectam*. Geneva: Robert Estienne, 1554. The edition is: Théodore de Bèze, [tr. and intr. Johannes Bogerman]. *Een schoon tractaet des godtghelerden Theodori Bezae vande straffe, welcke de wereltlijcke overicheydt over de kettters behoort te oeffenen, teghen Martini Bellii tsamenraepsel, ende der secte der nieuwe Academisten*. Tot Franeker: by Gillis van den Rade, 1601.

<sup>18</sup> 'met een onvertzaecht/ cloeck ende dapper ghemoet teghen alle behulp ende dienst des Duyvels souden uitvoeren/ de welcke met alle listicheyt als een Vos/ ende tyrannisch ghewelt als een briesschende Leeuw ons steeds oft in eygener persoon of door zijn trawanten comt bevechten/ om door ons Christi eere ende Rijck eenighe afbreuck te doen.' - *Een schoon tractaet*, ii<sup>v</sup>.

Two offices exist to that purpose: that of the church and that of the civil authority. The latter should support the former because only God may rule our conscience. The devil rules if all kinds of 'opinion' were permitted. The Mennonites may well deny the civil magistrate a role in matters of religion, but thereby they come to the support of Satan. It becomes even worse, when the argument is proposed that sects should be tolerated because otherwise we would lose commerce and industry, as heretic merchants and riches would flee the country. 'It is better to possess little and have peace and love, than possess much and be hated by other men; indeed, one would prefer the greatest hardship as a sign of God's friendship to the greatest riches combined with the greatest enmity. ... The Lord does not suffer the souls of the righteous to hunger.'<sup>19</sup>

This and similar admonishments aimed at placates against the Mennonites, Lutherans and Catholics, which indeed were issued in Frisia and the neighbouring Groningen. They were not really enforced, however. Hugo Grotius cannot contain his malicious delight when he suggests to his adversary from Frisia – Sybrandus Lubbertus – that he rather expel the Mennonites from Frisia than reprove the States of Holland because they appointed Conrad Vorstius to Arminius' chair in Leiden.<sup>20</sup> And right he was. But his explanation of the *nature* of this necessary tolerance did not recognise the precarious balance that also the supreme authority had to reckon with. In fighting the doctrine of collateral powers and arguing that necessarily the church was subordinate to the state, however, Grotius did not help the Counterremonstrants understand their own position.

Grotius held two central propositions:

1. Toleration instead of Truth: 'Non quaero iam quid verum sit ... an intolerabile', says Grotius in the *Ordinum pietas*.<sup>21</sup>

- 2. Distinction between 'private' sects and 'public' church: 'every individual is judge over his own religious conviction ... but nobody has the right to decide on the faith of the Church inasmuch as it is public, except for him in whose hand and power all public bodies lie.'<sup>22</sup>

Hugo Grotius, together with Johannes Wtenbogaert, might well rebuke the notion of collaterality – i.e. the existence of two collateral powers, that of church and state – as inconsistent, it very well described actual practice, as 'Dordt' and later Dutch history were to show. The

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> Hugo Grotius. *Ordinum Hollandiae ac Westfrisiae pietas*. [orig. publ.: Leiden: Ioannes Patius 1613]. Translated and edited by Edwin Rabbie. The Hague: E.J. Brill, 1995, §31: 'Hos [i.e. anabaptistos] Frisia si potes expelle'.

<sup>21</sup> Grotius, *Ordinum pietas*, § 44 (p. 138).

<sup>22</sup> *Op.cit.*, § 118.

Counterremonstrant minister Johannes Trigland better reflected the opinion of his day when he explains toleration as a result of the uncertainty of man's understanding of God's word.<sup>23</sup> Consequently, the church must have a way to decide these issues, which failing human mind cannot. Here is a task for the church councils, classes and synods, in order to unite the believers around a probable truth. Brotherly admonition, dialogue and humility were among the mechanisms to prevent the 'ure et seca' that had brought Lipsius in disrepute following his debate with Coornhert.<sup>24</sup>

In these days, amidst these sorrowful disturbances, we see a lot of talk about Peace, also by those who have brought about the harmful confusions of the churches in these lands. And to achieve this peace, it is all 'moderate, suffer and support' that one is proposing. But very imprudently so. Some don't even know what is this 'moderate', or of what it consists. Others consider the points of disagreement of no value, believing they can be passed by in silence. Others desire to cover up and extirpate some pieces of doctrine that have been professed and taught in the reformed churches until now. Still others propose that one should collate a certain Form of doctrine to which supposedly both parties will consent. Again others want that by the authority of the supreme powers the proponents of the high doctrine of predestination (as they call it) are shut up, expecting others to remain quiet. All taken together all shout 'there should be peace' (which we also confess and would like to see). No one, however, shows the right means to this end. Because all that some 'moderators' propose can lead to nothing else but the occultation and suppression of the truth that from the times of the reformation till these days has been publicly confessed and taught and moreover is confessed and taught in concord by all reformed churches.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>23</sup> Jacobus Trigland. *Den rechtmatichden Christen. Ofte vande ware moderatie ende verdraechsaemheyt die tot behoudinge vande waerheyt ende vrede inde gemeynten Christi na Godes woort onderhouden moet worden.* [Knuttel 2209]. Amsterdam: Paulus van Ravesteyn, 1615.

<sup>24</sup> J.J. Woltjer has argued that already during the 1560s the persecution of heretics was no longer in tune with at least part of the juridical conscience. This would suggest that the theory followed - here as well as elsewhere - the practice. See Jan Juliaan Woltjer. "De vrede-makers." In *De Unie van Utrecht. Wording en werking van een verbond en een verbondsacte*, edited by S. Groenveld and H.L.Ph. Leeuwenberg. Den Haag: Nijhoff, 1979, 56-87, cit. on p. 68.

<sup>25</sup> Trigland, *rechtmatichden Christen*, 3-4: 'Daer wort huydens-daeghs onder dese droevighe beroerten seer veel van Vrede ghesproken/ oock by den genen die de Kercken deser Landen in dese schaedelijcke verwarringhe ghebrocht hebben: ende om hier toe te geraeken/ soo ist al van modereren/ dulden ende draeghen dat men spreeckt: Doch alles met groot onverstant. Sommighe en weten selfs niet wat dit modereren is/ ofte waer in dattet bestaet. Andere achten de pointen des verschils van geender weerden/ meenende men canse met stilswijghen wel voorby gaen. Andere willen eenighe stucken [3-4] der leere tot noch toe inde Ghereformeerde kercken bekent ende gheleert/ gantslijck verduystert ende uyt de Kercke gheweert hebben. Andere seggen datmen moet raemen een seecker Formulier van leeren waer in men meent dat beyde partijen sullen consenteren. Andere willen door de Authoriteyt der hooger Overicheyt sommighe yverighe voorstanders vande hooghe Leere der Predestinatie (so zyt noemen) den mont hebben gestopt/ achtende dat andere dan wel sullen swijghen. In somma men roept daer moet vrede zijn (t'welck wy ooc bekennen en niet lievers en saeghen:) Maer men wijst het rechte middel niet om hier toe te geraeken. Want al wat soodanighe moderateurs voorstaen/ en can nergens anders toe ghedijen/ dan tot verduysteringhe ende onderdruckinghe vande waerheyt/ de welcke vanden tyt der reformatien aen in dese

The Dutch Calvinists would not be caught while oppressing consciences. As Trigland remarks: 'Because in these lands for reasons of public tranquillity all kinds of sects such as Ubiquitisten, Anabaptists etc. enjoy sufficient freedom, one doesn't have to press their case so much'.<sup>26</sup> For sure, 'discipline' was desirable to the Lord and in particular his special care for the Republic depended on it. We might well loose these good chances in the wars, if we tolerate heresies and sin. And precisely to exclude any tendency to the persecution of heretics – it might seem – orthodox Calvinism invented the theory of Predestination, distinguishing between the elect and the rejected. As the latter are irredeemably lost, the correction of heresy applies only to the former, to those belonging to God's Church, i.e. the established Dutch Reformed Church. The ultimate act of persecution was the exclusion from the church, as happened to most of the 'essentialists' from Coornhert to the Remonstrants. As part of a larger order, toleration and predestination required – and permitted – each other. Particularism, however, remained a threat to this precarious balance. The real moral of the history of the last three decades of the sixteenth century is that the particularism of individual certainty was certainly unacceptable. Jesus Christ may have been the Truth, the Reformed Church can only find it by way of custom. In this constellation there was no space for a Presbyterian church order, nor for an exclusive state church, and again Predestination helped to justify it. In this way, the Dutch Republic experienced the emergence of a civic religion that was broadly Christian,<sup>27</sup> in its core Calvinist, without alienating the citizens with different preferences.

It may seem that the difficulties of overcoming the divisions of particularism have been concealed behind the veil of toleration. At the same time the doctrinal unity of the elect few stood out against the diversity and ambiguity of the errant and lost. It was a unity that did not require too much and hence did not urge more opposition than could be easily handled. Gradually, membership of the established church became a prerequisite for political office, and eventually would lead to a certain distinction between first and second class citizens. A good patriot was to be a member of the Dutch Reformed Church. This led to a short but noticeable identification of the Republic with God's Elect People.<sup>28</sup>

landen opentlijk beleden ende gheleert is/ ende voorts in alle ghereformeerde kerken eendrachtelijcken beleden ende gheleert wort.'

<sup>26</sup> *Op.cit.*, 3: 'Want in dese Landen wort om des gemeenen rustes wille allerley secten van Ubiquitisten, Wederdoopers etc: vryheyts genoech gegeven/ so datmen daer op so seer niet behoeft te dringen.'

<sup>27</sup> Even while it required the performance of contracts with heretics, it as a matter of fact only excluded the Socinians who deny Christ.

<sup>28</sup> G. Groenhuis. "Calvinism and national consciousness: the Dutch Republic as the new Israel." In *Britain and the Netherlands*, edited by A.C. Duke and C.A. Tamse, 118-33. The Hague: Nijhoff, 1981.

As patriotism seems to follow wars of religion, the precarious balance of the Republic had no real need for the patriotic mode. It did require, however, a continuous alertness of a possible revival of particularism, and it seems that the Remonstrance – together with the bias for Remonstrant ministers among many city governments – was such a revival that subsequently was fully crushed by the weight of the Synod of Dordt.<sup>29</sup> In the 1610s, the Arminian faction bargained for more than they could get. Their view of the nature of Dutch politics was not in tune with the trend of the time. Their attempts to purge the pulpits from the zealots of predestination were wrong-headed and self-defeating. It was wrong-headed because the history of the 1580s and 1590s had shown that it is custom that counts, not truth. The reliance on the so-called fundamental articles of faith, purportedly defining the essentials of Calvinism, attempted the introduction of the kind of rationalist religion that flourished in Socinianism – and to which it quickly became connected –, while apparently aiming at undoing the double bind between toleration and predestination. If indeed predestination was not essential to salvation – as Grotius argued in his *Pietas Ordinum* (1613) – then why bother? Grotius stressed that the regenten rulers of the Republic were as versed in religion as many a minister, again besides the point: the whole discussion about predestination was not about being right but about being put in the right, a thing that is not normally achieved ‘ex cathedra’, not even from a learned pulpit as Grotius’s.

One is easily misled by the appearance of historical causality in these eventful years, if indeed we represent the later part of the Truce period as a civil war, undoing the achievements of the liberal and tolerant leaders of the Republic by a temporary and reactionary victory of the orthodox Calvinists and aspiring royalists of the Orange faction. On this reading, moreover, the 1660s emerge as a second attempt to introduce enlightened, modern principles in a nation still under the sway of black-clad religious backwardness. The fight between good and bad, however, is not normally so straightforward and it isn’t in this case either. Only by recognising the inherent connection between the events in the 1610s and those of the two or three previous decades can we make sense of the complicated and protracted articulation of the nature and extent of the public realm and its contribution to the establishment of stability in Dutch society. These decades are the theatre of the groping towards a workable church order and public church policy. It arose in the midst of a long series of conflicts and emergencies, like the Duifhuis troubles in Utrecht, the troubles with the Mennonites, as well as unorthodoxy in the Reformed Church itself. Two issues

<sup>29</sup> The association of particularism and independence also seems to hold in the second period we will discuss, that of the 1660s, as in Pieter de la Court’s defence of the secession of Holland from the Union. See Murk van der Bijl. “Pieter de la Court and de politieke werkelijkheid.” In *Pieter de la Court in zijn tijd (1618-1685). Aspecten van een veelzijdig publicist*, edited by Hans W. Blom and Ivo W. Wildenberg. Amsterdam: APA, 1986, 65-91.

were continuously addressed: the nature of toleration, and the nature and extent of the involvement of the supreme powers in the organisation and rule of the church. This is not the place to elaborate on that history, as my intent is only to argue that what appears as a civil war in 1617-1619 really is the conclusion of setting up a workable arrangement for and definition of the public realm.<sup>30</sup>

*The big fish eat the small (national identity as a mission of true interests)*

The peace talks in Münster, Westphalia (1646-7) show a further aspect of the transformation of patriotism. Bringing the war with Spain to a close had been difficult not only on the Spanish side, but also in the republic. Local and factional interests supported the general distrust of a world without war. The peace talks were accompanied by a noticeable outpouring of pamphlets, arguing for and against the cessation of hostilities. Not surprisingly, the identity of the Dutch was prominent in these arguments. 'Princes', wrote the author of a 1646 tract, entitled *Hollandische Sybille*, vow a solemn pledge to their subjects to protect their preservation, good and wellbeing, with all the force, wit, and prudence'.<sup>31</sup>

This is an iron tie that cannot be disturbed or broken by another or a paper tie. Necessity breaks laws, said Sybille. It would be better not to conclude treaties, but necessity often obliges a prince to make them. The same necessity, however, may also sometimes force him maintain them, and sometimes to break them. As long as the foundation and the cause lasts on which the alliance was entered, so long will its maintenance last.

There are no illusions about international politics, and the leap from a Machiavellean Satan to *ditto* Princes is easily made – do not 'the big fishes always eat the small ones'?<sup>32</sup> There is, moreover, in many of these tracts an awareness of the critical role which the Dutch Republic will have to play in the Europe which was to emerge after the conclusion of the Thirty-Years War:

Nevertheless nothing is more useful for the preservation of general peace, than the existence of republics, which can be the intermediaries and mediators between the ambitious designs of kings and their favourites. ... In Italy this duty was often taken care of by Venice, which always prudentially kept the balance between the powerful crowns, while never permitting either one or the other to prevail. The Republic of the United States likewise seems to have been elected by God with the intention of preserving the balance, to be mediators, and to maintain equality and the equilibrium.<sup>33</sup>

This manifest destiny of republics is predicated upon the Tacitean analysis of monarchical ambitions. Monarchs, according to this argument, impose necessarily their private interests upon the world, to the utmost havoc of their subjects and other nations. Their ambition is that of a

30 A very useful survey of recent changes in the historiography of religion is R. Po-chia Hsia, and Henk van Nierop, eds. *Calvinism and religious toleration in the Dutch Golden Age*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.

<sup>31</sup> *Hollandsche Sybille* (Amsterdam: Roelof Heyndrickz., 1646) p. 13.

<sup>32</sup> *Den on-geveynsden Nederlantschen Patriot met den argh-listigen geveynsden Fransch-man t'samen-sprekende op het stuck van den ghesloten vrede tusschen Spagnien ende de Vereenighde Neder-landen* (Alckmaer: Jan Claesz, 1647) p. 4.

<sup>33</sup> *Op.cit.*, p. 28. For more detail, see my "Oorlog, handel en staatsbelang in het politieke denken rond 1648." *De Zeventiende Eeuw* 13 (1997): 89-99.

universal monarchy, in which dominion and tyranny are indistinguishable.<sup>34</sup> There is a subtext to this argument, as will come visible two years after the Treaty of Westphalia, in an internal use of this Dutch version of reason of state. Here the argument is directed against the prince of Orange, when after the latter's attempt at Amsterdam (1650), a pamphleteer says: 'I see now that you Hollanders butcher the children whom are given puppets to play with; you enjoy and adorn yourself with the name of Free Hollanders, and your States are forced by a young governor' [i.e. prince William II].<sup>35</sup> But we will see that this possibly anti-Orangist use of the True Interests-versus-Satanic Monarchical Self-interest argument was easily countered in due course by a kind of constitutional argument.<sup>36</sup>

The language of interest that comes to the fore in this understanding of the Dutch Republic in the theatre of nations is, I take it, interesting for two reasons. On the one hand it shows a way to distinguish the Republic from other states. On the other hand, it emphasises the importance of interests as a basic category in politics. In important ways, this dual use of the language of interests – itself an offspring of the literature on reason of state – prefigures the republican theories of the 1660's as articulated by De la Court and Spinoza. Whereas Lipsius drew attention to the inconstancy of patriotic zeal, and Grotius for some time believed that a properly understood republic could command a constant love, it now became apparent that only in true interest constancy was to be found. But then the very notion of the state should be based on interests as well.

This is no doubt a remarkable sway in the use of the vocabulary of reason of state. Originally used as a main stay in the Revolt, since necessity breaks laws, it now is forged to resist the pernicious stratagems of princes, and as a weapon to secure peace. True interests are a reliable guide, and apparently republics do embody these true interests. The importance of this move can barely be overestimated, since on the classical Ciceronian reading, a dedication to the public interest, or the patria for short, is meant to overcome the derisive effects of private interest (and

<sup>34</sup> See Mario Turchetti. *Tyrannie et tyrannicide de l'antiquité à nos jours*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2001, 481ff.

<sup>35</sup> *Hollants praatjen tusschen vier personen, een Gelderman, een Hollander, een Vries, en een Brabander. Aangaande de souverainiteyt van Syn Hoogheyt, en tot justificatie van de Ed. Mog. Heeren Staten van Hollandt, en de Achtbare Heeren Burgemeesters en Regeerders der Stadt Amsterdam. Het eerste deel*. (Antwerpen: Jeronimus Verdussen, 1650) Bv.

<sup>36</sup> This appears in Valckenier's *'t Verwerd Europa*, with some interesting remarks on tolerance and self-interest as well. See my "Toleranz in den Niederlande: Ambiguitäten in Praxis und Verständnis." In *Asyl, Toleranz und Religionsfreiheit. Historische Erfahrungen und aktuelle Herausforderungen*, edited by Günter Frank, Jörg Haustein and Albert de Lange. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2000, 189-208.

thus to replace it). So how could interests, short of the public interest, possibly solve the Ciceronian version of the co-ordination problem?

It is against this background that Pieter de la Court's contribution to the discourse of republicanism must be understood. Adorned with a repertoire of Tacitean learning, his works attempted to provide a realistic moral psychology as the basis for an objective definition of the good. As he is best known for the one book which was translated into English and French, the *Aanwysing* (1669) – a revised edition of the *Interest van Holland* – there is a tendency to regard De la Court as primarily a student of international relations. Since, furthermore, these publications went under the name of John de Witt, they were widely regarded as the theoretical foundation of De Witt's and accordingly of Dutch foreign policy. Because of this, it is easy to overlook the fact that the reason of state literature became a very powerful argument in the republican debates in the middle of the seventeenth century and aimed at some sort of re-introduction of the 'people' into the workings of the body politic.

#### *Passions and interests*

The core of Pieter de la Court's thought is thus embedded within a interest-based view of politics that had entrenched itself within Dutch political debate. In his well-known phrase:

the interest of every country consists in the well-being of its rulers and subjects together, and it is dependent on a good form of government, and therefore that is the foundation on which the well-being of the commonwealth is built; so one has to understand, that a good form of government is not where the well- or ill-being of the subjects depends on the virtue or vice of the rulers, but (and this should be noted) where the well- and ill-being of the rulers, by necessity follows from, or depends on the well- or ill-being of the subjects.<sup>37</sup>

Interest is well-being, as yet undefined, but structurally conditioned by the interconnection, or interdependence, of the interests of rulers and subjects. But what safeguards these interests? In effect, nothing. Fundamentally interests are a species of passions, but it is evident that not all passions can qualify as interests: they have to conform to the formula of interdependence of the well-being of citizens and rulers alike.

These attempts to articulate a republican theory in terms of self-interest did not, of course, go uncontested. Most of the arguments directed against the *Interest of Holland* are, however, all too familiar. To take but one example: freedom of religion, it is said,

'would be but the bellows to fan the wrath of God, and destroy the country as Sodom and Gomorra. ... This man only looks for this world, and not for the hereafter, but if one is out of favour with heaven, how little use are the goods of this world. Lipsius would say: Unam Religionem in uno regno servandam. ... In statu Aristocratico-plebeo where each man may and can speak, not just those who rule the country, but also John, Peter and Paul; and may not only speak, but also trust that theirs is the ultimate verdict. In this danger, and to

<sup>37</sup> *Aanwysing*, p. 2.

the destruction of the country, the author of the Interest of Holland advises us to place a foolish trust in even greater profits. ... but one should limit one's luxury and useless consumption'.<sup>38</sup>

The allusions here to excesses of liberty and commerce are interesting precisely because they admit the basic discourse of interests. Also other critics attempted to meet De la Court on his own ground. The anonymous author of *Den herstelden Prins*, (*The Prince Restored*), set out to prove that a *stadhouder* is in the interest of the United States, mainly because the same self-interest, the desire for respect and reputation, that drives the *regenten* to contribute to the welfare of the state operates also for the *stadhouder*. Just as *regenten* are recruited from well-established families, so, too, are the *stadhouders*. There is no disagreement here over human nature. In the well-ordered republic of the United States, so the 'restorer' argues, there are ample means to keep the *stadhouder* within his legitimate bounds. And thus he is an outstanding instrument to develop the role of the Republic as the balancer of power within the new Europe.

Spinoza took much the same line. He had no difficulty in maintaining the same position as the one articulated the *Hollantse Sybil*: contracts between states 'will remain in force as long as its basis –namely, the consideration of danger or advantage–persists'.<sup>39</sup> For a ruler 'cannot keep whatever promise he sees likely to be detrimental to his country without violating his pledge to his subjects, a pledge by which he is most firmly bound, and whose fulfilment usually involves the most solemn pledges'.<sup>40</sup> The big fishes still eat the smaller ones, but they do so now by natural right.<sup>41</sup> Tolerance is a matter of political convenience, as it was for the 'restorer':

So however much sovereigns are believed to possess unlimited right and to be the interpreters of law and piety, they will never succeed in preventing men from exercising their own particular judgment on any matter whatsoever. ... Indeed, since they cannot so act without endangering the whole fabric of the state, we can even argue that they do not have the absolute right to do so. For we have demonstrated that the right of sovereigns is determined by the power.<sup>42</sup>

For those who regard Spinoza primarily as a follower of Hobbes, this might seem an unexpected move. But it is not so, for Spinoza the participant in the discussions over the state of Holland, for whom the concept of sovereignty had clearly ceded pride of place to the much more important

38 Anon., *De gantsche distructie van den nieuw-gebooren Hollantschen Cromwel, alias Leydtschen Quaker; genaemt t'Interest van Hollandt, ofte gronden van 'sHollants welvaren Ende de stadhouderlicke regeringe respectie, door de waerhey, en gerechtighey van stuck tot stuck bestreden, en gevelt. Verhandelt door een t'samensprake van vier personen, een predikant, advocaet, Gelderman, ende Zeeuw. Eerste deel.* Schiedam: Jacobus Sanders 1663. On page 112 the 'attorney' refers to Grotius' *De antiquitate*.

39 *Tractatus Theologico-politicus* (Ed. B.S. Gregory. Tr. S. Shirley. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1989) chapter 16, p. 244.

40 *Op.cit.*, p. 245.

41 *Op.cit.*, p. 237.

42 *Op.cit.*, p. 292; the proof of the identity of might and right is in chapter 16.

problems of the functional processes in politics.<sup>43</sup> In his *Tractatus Politicus*, Spinoza pursues precisely this line of argument. First of all, he tries to sort out the puzzles of the republic. While he follows De la Court in his description of the aristocratic form of government, he is very close to the 'restorer's' argument about the government of States and *stadhouder* in his presentation of what we would now call 'constitutional monarchy'. In discussing the latter, he is mainly concerned with the various councils which advise the monarch, and he endorses the opinion of the 'restorer', that in a well ordered state, a monarch is tied by his self-interest to the well-being of the state. In this way, the differences between the various forms of government is thus gradually erased. The essential characteristic of a well ordered state is the co-ordination of the interests of the rulers and ruled. In the Republic, 'men of every race and sect live in complete harmony; and before entrusting their property to some person they will want to know no more than this, whether he is rich or poor and whether he has been honest or dishonest in his dealings'.<sup>44</sup> In other words, republics are such that trust is available, in particular in the pursuit of individual wellbeing.

*A perennial republic: trustworthy institutions*

In his treatment of the dangers that threaten republics – in chapter X of the *Tractatus Politicus* – Spinoza makes the following observation:

Also statues, triumphant ceremonies and other incitements to virtue are symbols of slavery rather than signs of freedom, because it is to slaves and not to free men that virtue is rewarded. I certainly recognise that men are encouraged by these measures, but if, in the beginning, the great men are rewarded, with the increase of envy, one will end by rewarding indolent and pompous men, to the great indignation of the good citizens.<sup>45</sup>

According to Spinoza, the celebration of patriotism leads to indignation and eventually to the fall of the republic. This is not to say that a state based on interests is easily established, or that citizens should not have a positive identification with the state. There surely should be a sense of piety towards the *civitas*, reflecting the conviction that its laws should be obeyed. But this sense of piety follows, rather than precedes the well-ordered republic. The well-ordered republic gears the citizens' interests, predominantly the *affectus avaritiae* and the *cupiditas gloriae*, into the safeguarding and maintenance of a free and peaceful state.<sup>46</sup> The most important lesson Spinoza has for both rulers and citizens is that it is their own interest to obey the laws which comprise the collective wisdom of the *civitas*. Responsive government and self-interested obedience should go

43 The centrality of Spinoza to Dutch political thought can best be seen from the fact that his political views were hardly contested. He was evidently suspected of being a partisan of Johan de Witt. But criticism was directed against his theological position. In other words, Spinoza underestimated, just like Grotius had done half a century earlier, the wrath of the theologians when outsiders and laymen meddle in their pristine science.

44 *Op.cit.*, p. 298.

45 *Tractatus Politicus*, X, 8.

46 *Tractatus Politicus*, X, 6.

hand in hand. Naturally a lot of bickering and bargaining will go into the process. It is of no importance, says Spinoza,<sup>47</sup> 'that each city looking after its own interests, makes the others jealous, that there are often disputes among them and that they lose time in discussions. No doubt, while the Romans deliberated, Sagunthus perished, but it is also true that when only a few decide the matters according to their affections, freedom and the commonwealth perish.'<sup>48</sup>

Interests are indeed a suitable basis for developing a suitable sense of common identity, such as *pietas erga patriam*, provided they are clearly recognised, publicly stated, and bargained about in a state that allows so. Lipsius was right: one cannot base the Dutch state upon *amor patriae*, but that was not to exclude the possibility of arguing that a good, a free state can produce piety in support of its continued existence. To ask for the nature of that piety is to question the nature of Dutch political thought in the seventeenth century. From Grotius's *Ordinum pietas* to Spinoza's *Tractatus theologico-politicus* the manifest destiny of the United States had shined through the harsh reality of historical events. Predestination and self-interest proved a powerful pair in understanding the Dutch ways to peace and order. These notions sometimes came close to the language of patriotism – Dutch Israel, e.g. – but never really changed character.<sup>49</sup>

47 *Tractatus Politicus*, IX, 14.

48 *Ibid.*

49 See for an elaboration of manifest destiny my "The Republican mirror: the Dutch idea of Europe." In *The idea of Europe. The politics of identity from Antiquity to the European Union*, edited by Anthony Pagden. New York/Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002, 91-115; for predestination: my "Providence, determinism and the nature of liberty: Necessity as an argument for freedom." In *Dal necessario al possibile. Determinismo e libertà nel pensiero anglo-olandese del xvii secolo*, edited by Luisa Simonutti. Milano: FrancoAngeli, 2001, 177-98.