Verscheidenheid maakt Verdraagzaamheid
Diversity creates Tolerance

Origins of American Religious Liberty in New Netherland

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Introduction

From 1624 to 1664 the Dutch owned a colony on the North American mainland, which was called New Netherland. The colony contained the region that we would today consider the Mid-Atlantic of the United States. The Dutch colony was a commercial frontier established by the Dutch West India Company with the main aim of trade in mind. By the eighteenth century the colony was populated by a wide variety of people from the Dutch Republic, England, Ireland, Scotland, Germany, and France. It was therefore the most culturally diverse region in colonial North America. The region has ever since been known for its diversity, and the religious pluralism and toleration that came with it. Several scholars even call it the birthplace of American religious liberty.[1] Since the region was in Dutch hands during the formation of this diverse society, several historians and New York enthusiasts argue that the Dutch are in some form responsible for this outcome. The main question of this thesis therefore is: what was the Dutch role in the making of this American religious freedom according to historical debate?

The Dutch had a phrase to describe the Dutch society in the homeland at the time: *Verscheidenheid maakt verdraagzaamheid*, diversity creates tolerance.[2] The Netherlands was well known for its liberal thoughts and open-mindedness in seventeenth-century Europe. Since trade was the main focus of the country, many different people flocked to Holland.[3] This meant that a form of toleration was needed in order for all of these people to live together peacefully. As James C. Kennedy argues in his very recent book *A Concise History of the Netherlands*, toleration was used by the Dutch in order to trade and deal within this

[1] Evan Haefeli, *New Netherland and the Dutch Origins of American Religious Liberty* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012), 2.
[2] George Smith, *Religion and Trade in New Netherland: Dutch Origins and American Development* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1973), 245.
[3] Benjamin Kaplan, "'Dutch' religious tolerance: celebration and revision," in *Calvinism and Religious Toleration in the Dutch Golden Age*, ed. Henk van Nierop and R. Po-Chia Hsia. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 8.

pluralistic society.[4] But what did this toleration entail and where did it originate? Can we speak of religious toleration, demanding religious freedom? When the Dutch founded their colony in the New World, on the North-American mainland, did they bring this toleration with them? In the discussion of religion in the colony of New Netherland questions such as these arise. In order to find the answers to these questions this thesis will outline the historical debate on the Dutch influence on American religious liberty through the colony of New Netherland. Within this analysis, attention will be given to the authors' opinions on religious toleration. How do they define this toleration, and how do they think it originated? Thereby, this thesis tries to contribute to the wider debate on the origins of religious toleration.

The methodology for this thesis is historiographical, which entails discussing the most important written contributions made by historians to the debate on this particular topic. While the debate has a long history and transpires the entire last century, the contributions will be discussed thematically rather than chronologically. Every chapter of this thesis discusses another theme, another aspect to be considered when defining toleration and looking at the Dutch influence on American religious liberty. The first chapter will look at Dutch origins of toleration in the Netherlands itself. The second will discuss the commercial aim of New Netherland and the consequences this had for religion in the colony. Third on the list is the influence of enlightenment thinking on tolerance ideas and the way these ideas came to America. Finally we will consider the diversity that the Dutch created in North America as a form of Dutch influence on religious liberty. In order to clarify the debate, it is of importance to start out with a source that argues a general conception: namely the thought that since the Dutch were very tolerant towards different religions, their colony must have been also, and thereby it must have influenced America with their religious liberty. The source that will be used to defend this conception is the book *Holland, the Birthplace of American*

[4] James C. Kennedy, *A Concise History of the Netherlands* (Amsterdam: Promotheus, 2017), epilogue.

Political, Civic and Religious Liberty written by Henry Albert Willem van Coenen Torchiana in 1915.

Not all scholars agree with this idyllic assessment of Dutch influence on American religious history. Many argue against this theory and think it is a general misconception that the Dutch colony of New Netherland was tolerant towards different religions. Frederick Zwierlein's contributions to the debate are well known, not only because they are some of the earliest, written in 1910 and 1918, but also because he strongly argues that the colony practiced a repressive religious policy.[5] Two of his works will therefore be discussed thoroughly, especially since they influenced many of the contributions to the debate: his book written in 1910, called *Religion in New Netherland, 1623-1644* and his article that was published in the *The Catholic Historical Review* in 1918, named "New Netherland Intolerance". Jaap Jacobs, writing in 2005, agrees that New Netherland was not religiously tolerant. He clearly states his opinions on these matters in his book *New Netherland: A Dutch Colony in Seventeenth Century America*, which will likewise be discussed as an argument against the general conception.

The rest of the scholars whose work will be discussed are of the opinion that even though the colony was not completely tolerant towards religion, the Dutch still influenced American religious liberty. However, the way in which the Dutch had an influence differs in all of their opinions. The first theme that will be discussed within these opinions is commercialism. In his book *Religion and Trade in New Netherland: Dutch Origins and American Development* of 1973, George Smith argues that mercantilism dominated over religion in the colony and that thereby a religious pluralism survived and influenced the later United States. Paul Finkelman, writing in 2012, is of the same opinion that the colony was based on trade and therefore a slighter form of toleration naturally grew out of the,

[5] Frederick Zwierlein, *Religion in New Netherland, 1623-1644* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1971), 216.

particularly economic, circumstances. His article that will be discussed here, "The Roots of Religious Freedom in Early America: Religious Toleration and Religious Diversity in New Netherland and Colonial New York," was published in the *Nanzan Review of American Studies*.

Russell Shorto wrote a big contribution and game changer to the debate in 2004. His book *An Island at the Center of the World* sparked an interest for the Dutch history of New York among many scholars and laity alike. When considering the Dutch influence on American religious liberty, he mainly focuses on the Dutch tolerance ideas that were brought to the colony by figures such as Adriaen van der Donck, ideas that influenced the Flushing Remonstrance. He thereby shifted the focus of the debate towards the Dutch enlightenment thoughts on toleration and away from the actual toleration in the colony. Jeremy Dupertuis Bangs published an article in the *Church History* in 2010, named "Dutch Contributions to Religious Toleration," in which he argues against the statements made by Shorto. He does stick to the theme of Dutch thoughts and ideas as the influence on America. However, he claims it was John Locke who was influenced by Dutch enlightenment ideas and brought these over to the New World.

In his book *New Netherland and the Dutch Origins of American Religious Liberty* (2012), Evan Haefeli criticizes Bangs's opinions and steers back towards the ideas of Jacobs, who said the colony had no influence on American religious liberty. He approaches the topic of Dutch toleration from an Atlantic world history view. When discussing New Netherland he mainly focuses on the diversity of the peoples in the region and discards the direct Dutch influence. According to him the Dutch influence was indirect, namely by bringing diversity to the Mid-Atlantic area. Willem Frijhoff, the last contributor to the debate discussed here, published an article in 2013 called "Religion and Toleration in Old and New Netherland." In this article Frijhoff also approaches the concept of toleration from an Atlantic perspective.

However, his conclusion concerning Dutch influence on religious liberty in America differs slightly from Haefeli's. He states that true toleration only came about after the English took over the colony in 1664.

Ultimately, this thesis will argue that even though the colony of New Netherland was not very tolerant in its rule, Dutch toleration ideas that originated in the province of Holland were still applied in order to deal with the colony's diversity. It was this diversity that the Dutch created in the region which allowed a pluralist religious area to develop that would eventually produce American religious liberty.

Throughout this thesis several terms will occur frequently. Therefore the definitions of the most important terms will be specified here. First and foremost, the term toleration needs to be clarified. Toleration is generally understood as a kind of open-mindedness in relation to (people with) differing opinions, attitudes and beliefs. The term tolerance seems very similar and is therefore often used interchangeably with the term toleration. However, these two terms need to be differentiated. Tolerance is an attitude, the willingness to admit that contradictory viewpoints are valid. Toleration is a social or political practice, in which forms of dissent are allowed.[6] Often toleration entails a majority and minorities, in which the majority tolerates and the minorities are tolerated. Acts of toleration do not always entail actual tolerance, for example when one is told to tolerate certain behavior even though one does not want to. Toleration can be divided into different forms, of which two need to be defined: public toleration and private toleration. A clear way to explain the difference between these two terms is through the example of the "don't ask, don't tell" policy that was created by Bill Clinton in 1993. Before this policy was legislated, American citizens who were homosexual, bisexual, or of any other sexual preference than straight, were not allowed to serve in the United States army. Clinton's policy allowed these banned citizens into the

[6] Andrew R. Murphy, "Tolerance, Toleration, and the Liberal Tradition," *Polity* 29, no. 4 (1997): 595-596.

Vmilitary by prohibiting people to ask or tell about their homo- or bisexual preferences.[7] This is a perfect example of private toleration, in which the majority allows the minority to have its own sexual preferences, as long as they are not discussed publicly. Today sexual preferences are no longer considered an issue to enter the United States armed forces, which means that homo- and bisexuals can now publicly express their sexual preference. Thereby the private toleration has turned into public toleration. The majority in the U.S. military publicly tolerates the minority.

Because tolerance is difficult to measure, within this thesis the focus will mainly be on religious toleration (even though a few of the historians discussed here talk about tolerance and its connotations). Religious toleration is the allowance of several forms of organized dissent from the legally established or socially dominant church.[8] What makes religious toleration quite complex is that when one religious group is dominant, this group does not necessarily have to be the majority. In some cases the dominant religious group solely allows the tolerated religious groups to practice their beliefs in private, which means that these groups are allowed to believe, but not to express these beliefs publicly. This is therefore called the freedom to believe, which is a form of private toleration. In other cases the minorities are free to express their beliefs and worship their gods/spirits in the public domain. This is called the freedom to worship and it is a form of public toleration. The balance between these two forms of religious toleration differs in every situation, depending on the local factors and influences. Toleration can therefore be seen as a dynamic concept that adapts to its surroundings and does not appear in solely one form or shape. One example of a form of practicing toleration is "connivance," another term that needs defining. Connivance is a practice that was common in Holland during the seventeenth century and it is therefore

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[7] Steve Estes, "Ask and Tell: Gay Veterans, Identity, and Oral History on a Civil Rights Frontier," *The Oral History Review* 32, no. 2 (2005): 21.
[8] Murphy, "Tolerance, Toleration, and the Liberal Tradition," 599.

important to understand for this research. The best way to describe this term is as "turning a blind eye." The tolerating group in this situation is aware of the wrongdoings of other groups, but chooses to ignore them. Because of this connivance, many differing religious groups were able to live in the Netherlands together peacefully.

Before diving into the debate at hand, a short historical overview of the Dutch colony of New Netherland will be given as a backdrop to the historical debate. It all starts in 1609, when Henry Hudson is sent by the VOC, the Dutch East India Company, to find a northeast passage to the Orient.[9] After realizing he would not find a way through the ice of the north pole, he decides to reroute towards the west in the hope of finding a passageway through the American mainland. Hudson and his men sail into the river that now bears his name, thinking it will bring them to the Orient. After a while the river narrows down and the men realize it is not the passageway they were looking for, so they give up and return back to Europe. Hudson thinks of his mission as failed, but on his return does tell all about the rich landscape he and his crew encountered. [10] The Dutch are intrigued by the land he has found and in 1623 colonists start making their way over to, what we would now call, the New York Bay.[11]

The newly founded Dutch West India Company took upon itself the role of controlling this new colony. Soon the colony started growing, a public administration was established and the first director was named in 1625: Willem Verhulst. He started the building of the fort New Amsterdam, but was replaced by a new director within a year. His successor, Peter Minuit, was the director from 1626 to 1632. Minuit is well known for buying the Manhattan Island from the local natives for the meagre amount of 60 guilders. After a five-year interlude under the directorship of Wouter van Twiller, it was Willem Kieft who started the urbanization of

[9] Barbara van der Zee, *A Sweet and Alien Land: the Story of Dutch New York* (Viking Press, 1978), 7.
[10] Firth Haring Fabend, *New Netherland in a Nutshell: A Concise History of the Dutch Colony in North America* (Albany, NY: New Netherland Institute, 2012), 33.
[11] Russell Shorto and Geert Mak, *1609 De vergeten geschiedenis van Hudson, Amsterdam en New York* (Amsterdam: Stichting Henry Hudson 400, 2009), 51.

New Amsterdam in 1638. He also brought order to the administration and society in general. Unfortunately, he started two wars with local natives in 1643 and 1644 that made his rule less popular. The Dutch colonists barely survived Kieft's wars. The WIC heard of the situation and sent over a new governor to replace Kieft. It is this man who will be of a lot of interest to us when discussing religion in New Netherland, namely Peter Stuyvesant.[12]

The official religion in the colony was that of the Dutch reformed church, a Calvinist-Protestant version of the Christian faith. Among the colonists who came to the new land were also pastors, who wanted to spread their beliefs among the heathens in the area. However, the native people they encountered spoke another language and were so estranged from the colonists that they soon decided not to try to convert them.[13] Until the arrival of Stuyvesant a policy of connivance, "turning a blind eye," had been in order in the colony. This was the policy of the Dutch in the homeland at the time, but Peter Stuyvesant had different ideas for the colony. Since he was a pastor's son, he was deeply attached to the Dutch Reformed Church. Stuyvesant came to be known as an authoritarian ruler, who wanted to create a religiously uniform society in New Netherland. His rule was often challenged. Three religious groups formed the biggest challenges, namely the Lutherans, the Jews and the Quakers.[14]

After the Thirty Years' War ended in Europe, many Lutherans flocked to the Dutch colony in America. Since their beliefs only differed from the Dutch Reformed Church slightly, Stuyvesant hoped he could win them over to the Reformed community. The Lutherans did not want to give up their own religion and wanted to be able to practice their own faith publicly.

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[12] Willem Frijhoff and Jaap Jacobs, "The Dutch, New Netherland and thereafter (1609-1780s)." in *Four Centuries of Dutch-American Relations, 1609-2009*, ed. Hans Krabbendam, Cornelis A. van Minnen and Giles Scott-Smith (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2009), 38-42.

[13] Fred van Lieburg, "The Dutch and their Religion." in *Four Centuries of Dutch-American Relations, 1609-2009*, ed. Hans Krabbendam, Cornelis A. van Minnen and Giles Scott-Smith (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2009), 156.

[14] Joyce D. Goodfriend, "Practicing Toleration in Dutch New Netherland," in *The First Prejudice: Religious Tolerance and Intolerance in Early America*, ed. Chris Beneke and Christopher S. Grenda (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), 100.

Stuyvesant could not assail them for having different beliefs, since he had to adhere to the Union of Utrecht of 1579 that stated the principle of liberty of conscience. When the Lutherans applied to call a minister from Holland in 1653, he made sure it was denied by the States-General in Holland. As a result, the Lutherans started assembling secretly to practice their faith. Stuyvesant found out about the secret assemblies and together with his council issued an ordinance in 1656 that banned conventicles altogether.[15]

The Lutheran community did not give up easily. After petitioning for an exception and being denied once again, they decided to bring over a reverend themselves; Johannes Goetwater. Stuyvesant obviously was not pleased with the situation and did everything to make sure that the Staten-General forbade Goetwater to preach in the colony. With all these actions, Stuyvesant effectively suppressed the Lutheran congregation in his colony. Even though some Lutherans decided to come to the Reformed Church for public services, a Lutheran community continued to exist in the colony. Their common cause might even have brought them closer together.[16]

The second religious group to challenge Stuyvesant was the Jewish. In 1654 the Dutch lost their hold over Brazil and twenty-three Jews fled the former colony and made their way to New Netherland.[17] Stuyvesant was obviously not too pleased with the arrival of this group; he saw them as a threat to his religiously uniform society. He requested the WIC directors to be allowed to deport the Jews from his colony, calling them "a deceitful race" that could only do the colony harm.[18] Contrastingly, Portuguese Jews were accepted members of the community in Amsterdam at the time, who even had quite some political influence. So the WIC directors were not persuaded by Stuyvesant's request, since they wanted to keep the

[15] Goodfriend, "Practicing Toleration in Dutch New Netherland," 101-102.
[16] Ibid., 103.
[17] Russell Shorto, *The Island at the Center of the World: The Epic Story of Dutch Manhattan and the Forgotten Colony that Shaped America* (New York: Doubleday, 2004), 331.
[18] Goodfriend, "Practicing Toleration in Dutch New Netherland," 105.

local Jews content. On top of that, they argued that the colony was in need of settlers, so the Jews were welcome to stay.[19]

Stuyvesant, who was not satisfied with the response of the company directors, did not make the lives of the Jews in the colony easy. He taxed them more than he did other residents; he banned them from joining the colony's militia; and he tried to keep them from settling by not allowing them to buy real estate. The Jews were not content with this situation in which they paid more than others, but had fewer rights. One of these Jews, Asser Levy, therefore applied for "burgherschap" (official citizenship) in 1657.[20] Stuyvesant denied the request, thereby clearly showing his intent to keep the Jews out of the community. In June of 1656 he wrote a letter to the directors in Amsterdam stating that the Jews had on multiple occasions petitioned for the right of public worship, but he did not grant them this wish. Eventually, most Jews left the colony before the British takeover in 1664. They either moved on to Amsterdam or other places that were interesting trading places for them, so Stuyvesant's problem solved itself.[21]

Besides the Lutherans and the Jews, another group challenged Stuyvesant's rule, namely the Quakers. In August 1657 a ship without a flag or salute sailed into the Dutch harbor in New Netherland, which was highly uncommon at the time. The ship appeared to be a Quaker ship. Not much later two women were found in the street "shaking" and screaming, preaching their faith. After the women sat in prison for eight days, Stuyvesant had them put on a ship straight to Rhode Island, an English colony where more Quakers lived. The Quakers did not give up, since they wanted to spread their message. An example of this is Robert Hodgson, who came to Long Island to spread his beliefs. He soon was brought to New Amsterdam to await judgment, where he was given the choice to either pay a 100 guilders

[19] Goodfriend, "Practicing Toleration in Dutch New Netherland," 104-106.
[20] John Webb Pratt, *Religion, Politics, and Diversity: the Church-State Theme in New York History* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1967), 63.
[21] Goodfriend, "Practicing Toleration in Dutch New Netherland," 107-112.

fine or to work at the wheelbarrow. He refused to do either, which resulted in Stuyvesant summoning Hodgson to be whipped multiple times. Stuyvesant's message was clear; he did not want anything or anyone challenging his religiously uniform society.[22]

However, Quakers continued to assemble on Long Island and Stuyvesant continued to punish them for it. In a town called Flushing, "Vlissingen," a group of Calvinists gathered and decided to complain about the treatment of their Quaker neighbors. They put together a petition, which is famously known as the Flushing Remonstrance. In this document, they called upon the Dutch law and liberty of conscience. The featured authors in this thesis discuss the nature of this document more thoroughly. Stuyvesant was furious and punished the men who put together the petition. He soon sent out a proclamation for a day of prayer on which he denounced the "heresy" that were the Quakers, telling the residents that he would not accept them in his colony. In May 1663, after another incident in which he sent away a Quaker, he enacted a new ordinance in which he prohibited captains from bringing into the colony any "Vagabonds, Quakers, or other fugitives" on their boats.[23] The directors of the WIC were not pleased with Stuyvesant's actions towards the Quakers and told him to "allow every one to have his own belief, as long as he behaves quietly and legally, gives no offense to his neighbors and does not oppose the government."[24] Hereby the directors allowed the Quakers to live and practice their beliefs in the colony, so Stuyvesant's mission to suppress Quakers in New Netherland failed.[25]

Meanwhile, the Dutch had been at war with England over supremacy in trade and shipping for a decade. In 1664 the English king gave the order to take over the Dutch colony of New Netherland. When their ships sailed into the Manhattan harbor, the Englishmen found

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[22] Goodfriend, "Practicing Toleration in Dutch New Netherland," 112-114.
[23] Ibid., 116.
[24] Ibid.
[25] Chris Beneke and Christopher S. Grenda. *The First Prejudice: Religious Tolerance and Intolerance in Early America*, ed. Chris Beneke and Christopher S. Grenda (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), 13.

New Amsterdam almost defenseless and they took over the colony quickly. When the English took over they installed their own church. However, when they seized the colony it was so ethnically and religiously diverse that they decided not to impose the English church on the local colonists. Hereby the diverse society in the area continued to exist and the religious diversity was carried on under the English rule.[26] Whether religious toleration made its way into the future United States, and whether this toleration existed at all, has all been discussed by the previously mentioned scholars and will be the topic of the rest of this thesis.

[26] Van Lieburg, "The Dutch and their Religion," 159.

Chapter 1: Dutch origins

In the scholarly works about its history, The Netherlands has generally been accepted as the most liberal country in seventeenth-century Europe.[27] Henry Albert Willem van Coenen Torchiana was most definitely of this opinion. This can be seen in the book he wrote in 1915, called *Holland, the Birthplace of American Political, Civic and Religious Liberty*. As the title of his book suggests, Torchiana argues that Holland laid all the foundations for liberty in America. He claims that the United States owe a lot to the Netherlands, since it defended the principles that characterize America today.[28] He calls the Netherlands the home and refuge of religious liberty. Holland was the first country in the western world that founded religious toleration. He sees this religious toleration as one of the main foundations of "American Idea," if not the greatest.[29] Before the United States was formed, all the colonies shared some political ideas. Among these ideas religious liberty was one of the most important, says Torchiana. According to him there was only one nation in the western world at that time that embodied those ideas. This was unmistakably the Republic of the Netherlands, the home of religious freedom and toleration. In their struggle with Spain the Dutch had shown their persistence by cutting the dykes and flooding the lowlands, showing that they would not give up their liberty for anything. Torchiana goes even further than religion when it comes to the Dutch influence on America. He is of the opinion that the United States has also learned from Holland's government structure, freedom of speech, charities, prison systems, land distribution and law.[30]

So far we have seen that Torchiana is of the strong opinion that the Netherlands influenced America on multiple aspects, including religious liberty. But now the question

[27] Frijhoff and Jacobs, "The Dutch, New Netherland and thereafter," 34.
[28] Henry Albert Willem van Coenen Torchiana, *Holland, the Birthplace of American Political, Civic and Religious Liberty (*Chicago: James H. Rook Company Publishers, 1915), X-XI.
[29] Ibid., 35-57.
[30] Ibid., 3-21.

arises: how did this Dutch influence on America come about? According to Torchiana there are three ways in which the Dutch influence got to America. First of all, he is of the opinion that the Netherlands influenced the rest of Northern Europe with its culture and progress prior to colonization. Secondly, English soldiers who were stationed in Holland brought back the ideas to England and later to America. Third and mostly, it was the direct contact with the Dutch enlightened ideas of the American colonies' founders. The prevalent example of this last form of influence is the story of the Pilgrims who resided in Holland for twelve years before making their way to America. The Pilgrims had fled to Holland because of their persecution in England and they ended up staying in Leiden for most of the time. "Holland was the Mecca of the Pilgrims' desires," says Torchiana. They saw the religious liberty and civic freedom and implemented these Dutch customs when they made it to the colonies. Of course, the fifty years' stay of the Dutch in New Netherland was also of influence. This direct contact of the Dutch with the colonies naturally shaped American ideas, states Torchiana.[31] He gives one example of Dutch influence on New York, the former New Netherland. New York was the first state in 1777 to repeal all laws that could hold back any denominations or ministers in practicing their beliefs, thereby setting the example for all the other states to follow. He concludes by saying that through the Pilgrims, through New Amsterdam, "from these and many other sources came the great force that made Holland the real Mother Country of the United States."[32]

Torchiana's viewpoint within the debate is clear: the Dutch had a major influence on America, including on its religious liberty. His viewpoint is an elaborate argument focused on the general conception that Holland was the most tolerant nation in Europe in the seventeenth century. He does not offer an explanation or any proof for this conception; he assumes its truth. He likewise does not offer a definition for religious toleration. Apart from legislation,

[31] Torchiana, *Holland, the Birthplace,* 5-42.
[32] Ibid., 16-45.

e.g. the example of a piece of New York legislation in 1777, Torchiana does not offer much proof for any of his arguments. Because he does not make use of annotation or a bibliography in this book, unfortunately his statements are not very reliable. It is also hard to figure out Torchiana's intentions in writing this book, since there is very little known about him. What we do know is that he worked for the consulate general of the Netherlands in San Francisco.[33] His work for a Dutch consulate in the United States could be a reason for him wanting to prove the Dutch influence on the country. This is, however, mere speculation: no conclusions on the reasons underlying his perspective on religious history can be drawn. Nevertheless, for the sake of this discussion of the debate on the Dutch influence on American religious liberty, Torchiana offers an interesting defense of the argument that this religious liberty has Dutch origins. To continue the discussion, we will now look at two scholars who disagree with this statement. Both Frederick Zwierlein and Jaap Jacobs argue the opposite from Torchiana: in their work, they refer to colonial policies of religious intolerance.

Frederick Zwierlein, a professor of church history in Rochester, N.Y., published his dissertation from the University of Louvain in 1910. This elaborate work is named *Religion in New Netherland; A History of the Religious Conditions in the Province of New Netherland, 1623-1664*. Zwierlein's main aim with this dissertation is to break with the general conception created by nineteenth-century historians that the Netherlands was very tolerant towards religion and therefore its colony was too.[34] In order to undermine this conception, Zwierlein starts his book with a chapter on "The Dutch Background of the Religious History of the Province of New Netherland." In this chapter he tries to prove that the Dutch Republic actually was not that tolerant at all. After stating this point he dives into a description of the place of the church in New Netherland and he discusses the colony's religious history thoroughly. This discussion includes three separate chapters on Peter Stuyvesant's clashes

[33] Torchiana, *Holland, the Birthplace,* preface.
[34] Smith, *Religion and Trade in New Netherland,* 17.

with the Lutherans, Quakers and Jews. His article, "New Netherland Intolerance," was published in *The Catholic Historical Review* eight years later. The article is in essence a shortened version of this book, a summary in which he clearly states his arguments again and debunks the reviews of his critics.

According to Zwierlein, historians have often made mistakes when writing on the foundations of the State of New York. They did so because of the mistaken conception that the Netherlands was the home of religious liberty in the seventeenth century and that its colony took over these traits.[35] In order to understand the religious development of the colony, he says it is important to understand the religious conditions in its mother country, especially since the church in the colony of New Netherland was identical to that of the Netherlands.[36] In his opinion the Netherlands did not have religious liberty at all. He substantiates this argument by showing oppressive religious ordinances against Catholics that were adopted starting in 1581 and lasting through the period of Dutch authority in New Netherland.[37] The Protestant minority that ruled was intolerant and oppressive, says Zwierlein. The Catholics did not enjoy any of the toleration in Holland that was given to Jews, Muslims and other "sects" in Amsterdam.[38] He makes a fair point that the Dutch were not tolerant towards Catholics during the time that they were trying to shake of the Spanish yoke and the Protestants took over control. However, as Zwierlein says himself, there were still many different groups and sects living together. They especially lived in the provinces of Holland and Zeeland, where they were tolerated because of the commercialism in the bigger cities.

After concluding that the Dutch did not have religious liberty at home, Zwierlein argues that "consequently there is no temptation to jump to the conclusion that the Dutch in

[35] Zwierlein, *Religion in New Netherland*, v-vi.
[36] Ibid., 9.
[37] Zwierlein, "New Netherland Intolerance," 187-188.
[38] Zwierlein, *Religion in New Netherland*, 23-24.

New Netherland granted it to every one,"[39] He then shows a list of oppressive colonial religious legislation, just like he did to prove his point about the Dutch intolerance. These laws were based on the charter of 1640 that allowed only the Reformed religion in the colony of New Netherland. He hereby wants to show that the spirit of intolerance was latently apparent in the colony as well as in the mother country.[40] Further substantiating his argument, he discusses thoroughly the directorship of Peter Stuyvesant and his willingness to suppress other forms of religion besides that of the Dutch Reformed Church. By discussing in three chapters Stuyvesant's fight against the Lutherans, Quakers and Jews, he tries to prove the existence of a consistent religious policy of repression. He says this policy was fostered by the provincial government and local clergy, and backed by the directors of the WIC and the Dutch Reformed Church.[41] He then concludes his work with the statement that this policy of religious repression that was apparent in the colony of New Netherland was not unique to this colony, or to Stuyvesant. According to him, the colony's policy was similar to the repressive policy in the Netherlands itself.[42]

Unfortunately, we have little knowledge on the background of Frederick Zwierlein, so it is once again hard to understand why he tried to debunk the general conception of Dutch toleration. One reason to consider is his religious background, which was coined in *The Historical Review* of October 1910: "Mr. Zwierlein as a Roman Catholic may be suspected of some bias; but his conclusions are based on a very large amount of documentary material."[43] Zwierlein quotes this positive criticism in his article, thereby debunking that his religious background influences his argument. Nonetheless, this Catholic influence could provide reasoning for him wanting to debunk the general conception of Dutch toleration.

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[39] Zwierlein, "New Netherland Intolerance," 190.
[40] Zwierlein, *Religion in New Netherland*, 1.
[41] Ibid., 5-7.
[42] Zwierlein, "New Netherland Intolerance," 216.
[43] "Short Notices," *The English Historical Review* 25 (1910): 821.

Many scholars are aware of Zwierlein's contributions to the debate and have used his work as an example or have argued against him. This will be seen when we discuss these scholars further on. Zwierlein's arguments and statements are substantiated; he makes a convincing argument. Throughout his elaborate work, he uses his sources well and all of his chapters add up to his final aim: to prove that the Netherlands was not as tolerant as usually thought and neither was its colony. However, when arguing that the Netherlands did was biased towards Catholics, he ignores the toleration that is enjoyed by many different groups of foreigners, religions and sects in the Dutch Republic. Most of these were to be found in the provinces of Holland and Zeeland, since that is where the bigger cities were. However, that does not mean this religious liberty was not influential. It were these provinces that were most visited by foreigners and where the VOC and WIC were stationed, which led the journeys to foreign colonies and thereby influenced their cultures. By focusing solely on the Dutch origins of the religious aspects of the history of New Netherland, Zwierlein overlooks the main reasons why the Dutch went to America: the commercial reasons—reasons that according to other scholars explain Dutch toleration. More than one aspect is in play when it comes to the Dutch influence on America, but Zwierlein fails to look at this bigger picture. Further on in this thesis these aspects of commercialism, the intellectual environment, and diversity will be discussed to prove that they all work together influencing America with Dutch traits of religious liberty.

For now, because its arguments have an impact on Zwierlein's perspective, we will take a look at Jaap Jacobs's *New Netherland: A Dutch Colony in Seventeenth Century America*. This book describes the development of New Netherland from the trading post that it started out to be, into the settlement colony it became later on. Jacobs's central question is how and to what extent culture was transplanted from the Dutch Republic to New Netherland

and what factors were of influence on the colonial culture.[44] When it comes to ecclesiastical matters, he states that the control over the church in New Netherland was located in Amsterdam. In the colony the church organization was similar to that in the Dutch Republic. The church in the mother country was the example. The directors of the WIC did keep in mind that the colony was a young and delicate society, in which religious uniformity needed to be preserved. Conversely, they were convinced that a form of religious freedom was needed in order for the colony to flourish. This is where Jacobs makes a distinction between two forms of freedom; namely the freedom of conscience and the freedom to worship. He claims that the directors of the WIC, the director general and the ministers based their policy towards the Lutherans, Quakers and Jews on the idea that freedom of conscience was sacred. This meant that they were allowed to worship privately, but did not enjoy the freedom of public worship since that would endanger the society.[45] The authorities had to uphold this freedom of conscience, as long as it did not form any problems in society. This custom of connivance was well known in Amsterdam and the directors were of the opinion that it was suited for the colony as well, says Jacobs. Even though the edict on the conventicles was still in force, the directors told Stuyvesant and his ministers that the increase of population was more important.[46] However, Stuyvesant and his ministers did not take this advice gladly. Jacobs argues that it was their tough attitude that stood in the way of toleration in New Netherland.[47] It was the tolerant views of the directors in Amsterdam that allowed the Jews to stay and that upheld the connivance, so there is no evidence of exceptional tolerance in the

[44] Jaap Jacobs, *New Netherland: A Dutch Colony in Seventeenth Century America* (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 4.
[45] Ibid., 477-479.
[46] Ibid., 310.
[47] Ibid., 325.

colony itself, concludes Jacobs. He thereby argues that the Dutch colony of New Netherland had little place in the history of American religious liberty.[48]

Overall, Jacobs's book is a good overview of the history of the New Netherland colony. However, as Christine Kooi argues in her 2006 review of the book, this history is more descriptive than it is analytical. Another valid point she makes is that Jacobs does not engage in any debates with other scholars who have written on the topic. He does not refer to any other literature and he does not offer a historiographical background.[49] Without this scholarly context it is difficult to assess his aims and his willingness to contribute to the debates about New Netherland history and its impact. When it comes to his discussion of religious liberty in the colony, however, his distinction between freedom of conscience and freedom of worship is very insightful. The understanding of what was accepted privately in contrast to what was accepted publicly shows a distinction that was well known by the Dutch at the time, but might be overlooked by historians today. Nonetheless, his conclusion that the director general and his ministers stood in the way of toleration in the colony and that it were only the directors of the WIC who were tolerant and that as a result the Dutch had no influence on American religious liberty, is not very convincing. Even though the policy of the authorities in New Netherland were not always tolerant, the fact that their superiors told them to show connivance tells us something about the Dutch toleration ideas. This connivance was mainly motivated by the need for the colony to flourish, the need for commercial success. The directors also had to keep the Jewish community in Amsterdam content, a community that was very influential. This once again shows that there are multiple causes in action when it comes to the Dutch ideas on toleration and their influence on America.

[48] Haefeli, *New Netherland and the Dutch Origins*, 2-4.
[49] Christine Kooi, review of *New Netherland: A Dutch Colony in Seventeenth Century America*, by Jaap Jacobs, *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 37 (2006): 1100.

Throughout this chapter we have seen three different views by scholars on the role of the Dutch in the making of American religious liberty. All three of these scholars look at the Dutch origins of religious toleration and all three come up with different conclusions. As has been seen, Torchiana defended the general conception that the Netherlands was the most liberal country in seventeenth-century Europe. He consequently argued optimistically that New Netherland took over these traits and that Holland thereby influenced America. However, Torchiana's work is not very reliable because of its lack of scholarly evidence. Zwierlein debunked the general conception completely by stating that the Netherlands was not as tolerant as in usually thought and therefore its colony was not either. Zwierlein does not define what he understands as toleration, but it is clear that he focuses too much on repressive legislation. He barely looks at the toleration that was apparent in Holland. He also shows that the policy in New Netherland was not tolerant. Zwierlein's argument solely focuses on the Dutch origins of intolerance and the policy of the authorities in the colony. He does not focus on any other forms of influence on American religious toleration. Jacobs also claims that the mother country was the example for the church in New Netherland, but he does not argue as strongly as Zwierlein that the Dutch Republic was not tolerant at all. According to him, there was a form of toleration in Holland, but it was limited to the freedom of conscience. The freedom to worship was not widespread in Holland, let alone in New Netherland. He says that it was the tough rule of the director general and his ministers that stood in the way of this toleration in the Dutch colony. Just like Zwierlein he only looks at the origins of the general situation of the church in the Netherlands and its role in New Netherland. All three of the authors we have looked at focused too much on the general church situation to explain the alleged Dutch origins of religious toleration and did not take into account any factors such as commercialism, enlightenment thinking and diversity. In order to prove that more factors are at play when answering the question whether the Dutch had any influence on American

religious liberty through the colony of New Netherland, the next chapters will focus on these other themes. We will look first at the commercial contribution.

Chapter 2: Commercialism

Since the main reason for the Dutch to start a colony in America was trade, it is important to take into account this commercial aspect of the colony in this history of the colony's religious influence on America.[50] Therefore this chapter will entail the discussion of two arguments by scholars that focus on the commercial history of New Netherland, namely George Smith and Paul Finkelman. First we will look at Smith's book that was published in 1973, *Religion and Trade in New Netherland*. As the title of the book suggests, Smith tries to look at religion in the colony in the light of the commercial beginnings of the colony. He argues that the religious experience of New Netherland has a different aspect when looked at through the lens of the colony's commercial aim.[51] The main question that Smith poses is what this commercialism meant for the relationship between the church and state in New Netherland from 1609 to 1664. According to Smith, church historians who focused on New Netherland's religious experiences have neglected the commercial aspect of the colony. These historians assumed a central position of religion in New Netherland, basically copying ideas taken from the history of the English colonies, in which religion was of central importance. This is a mistaken assumption that led to misguided ideas, says Smith.[52] Both the Dutch and the English colonies were founded out of a mixture of economic and religious motivations, but their balance of the two was different. For the English the main aim of New England was religion; for the Dutch the main aim of New Netherland was trade. This is what makes the Dutch colony unique from all the colonies in Northeast America at this time, argues Smith.[53]

Starting a settlement of Dutch society in New Netherland was never an aim of the WIC directors. Actual colonization came about as a result of the need for more people to keep

[50] Oliver Rink, *Holland on the Hudson: an Economic and Social History of Dutch New York* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1986), 35.
[51] Smith, *Religion and Trade in New Netherland,* xi.
[52] Ibid., 2.
[53] Ibid., 6-9.

the colony profitable. Because the colony was founded on commercial aims its commercial character formed a situation of religious pluralism. Thus pluralism was automatically accompanied by toleration of multiple religions, states Smith. He further argues that religious pluralism and toleration were typical Dutch traits. These traits were the result of two important Dutch circumstances; the struggle over religion with the Spanish and the commercial character of the Dutch empire.[54] This shows that Smith also takes the Dutch origins of religious struggle into account, but he does not solely focus on that factor. Smith discusses the work of Zwierlein and points out what the issue is with his argument: namely that he neglects the commercial aspect of the Dutch empire and New Netherland when looking at the religious situation. Smith agrees with Zwierlein that the policy of the colonial authorities was of influence on the situation, but he states that the economic needs of the commercial settlement were just as influential.[55] Smith uses the same sources as Zwierlein: he looks at the same list of ordinances, but he comes to a different conclusion. He says that this conclusion is the result of a difference of emphasis; namely the meaning of these ordinances. He doubts whether all of them were taken as seriously as Zwierlein claims. In the Netherlands as well as in New Netherland, the Reformed church envisioned a religiously uniform society. However, the WIC directors, who had commercial aims in mind, preferred a moderate religious establishment with room for some dissent. They preferred the policy of connivance, as it was known in Amsterdam, says Smith. His conclusion is therefore fittingly called: "Connivance, the Dutch Colonial Contribution to American Religious Pluralism." This is how Smith comes to his conclusion that the Dutch colony formed a pluralist society with toleration for religious dissent, which would later on influence a United States constitutional provision for religious liberty.[56]

[54] Smith, *Religion and Trade in New Netherland*, 12-14.
[55] Ibid., 20.
[56] Ibid., 238-246.

Religion and Trade in New Netherland is a very well-written and well-organized book in which Smith effectively substantiates his arguments. He spends the first half of the book looking at the relationship between religion and trade in the Dutch republic, in order to understand the relationship of the two in New Netherland. After establishing the Dutch origins of the colony, he zooms in on the actual situation in New Netherland. He focuses on the different viewpoints in the colony, namely those of the merchants and those of the clergy. By looking at the situation through multiple lenses he develops a broad perspective on New Netherland society's interests and needs. He clearly shows how the desires of the church and the commercial needs clashed in the colony. Smith makes a strong argument by saying that even though religious uniformity was important, the commercial need for profit was just as important, if not more so. He successfully argues that the commercial character of the society led to religious pluralism, which created religious toleration. Smith thereby effectively combines the factor of Dutch origins and the commercial aim of the colony in his argument. However, there is always room for improvement. As Peter Onuf argues in his 1974 review of the book, the fear of the English encirclement might also have had an influence on the needs of the society. The English were settling all around the Dutch colony, which also motivated the Dutch need of a larger population. This motivation would correspond with the WIC's aims. On the other hand, the same presence meant that the Reformed church felt the need of a religiously uniform society to stand strong against the Puritan English, argues Onuf.[57] This shows that there were even more factors, outside of the Dutch origins and commercialism, which were of influence on the religious situation in New Netherland at the time.

Paul Finkelman does take this factor into account when looking at the Dutch role in the making of American religious liberty in his article "The Roots of Religious Freedom in Early America: Religious Toleration and Religious Diversity in New Netherland and Colonial

[57] Peter Onuf, review of *Religion and Trade in New Netherland,* by George Smith, *The Business History Review* 48 (1974): 547.

New York." How he does this will become clear later on. First we will look at Finkelman's main questions, aims and arguments. Finkelman starts his article with a reference to the broader debate on America's history of religious liberty. He states that religious freedom is one of the central principles in the constitution of the United States and that there are multiple sources for this religious freedom, among which are the ideas of John Locke, Roger Williams and those of the Quakers. In this article he wants to show that the Dutch also had influence on this religious freedom in the United States by looking at the history of New York. New York was different from the other founding states in that it did not have religious discrimination and an established church, says Finkelman. It thanks this to its Dutch predecessors in the Dutch colony of New Netherland. Just like previously discussed scholars he first zooms in on the history of Dutch toleration in Europe at the time of colonization, to find where the roots of this religious toleration lay. He claims that the Netherlands were different from all other European countries at the time, because all other countries held to the concept of *cuius regio, eius religio*. This meant that the leader of the region decided what the local religion was. These leaders found religious diversity too dangerous a threat to their rule, which made the Netherlands the most tolerant nation in Europe, says Finkelman.[58]

The reason for this toleration brings us back to the theme of this chapter: commercialism. According to Finkelman, the commercial character of the Dutch society welcomed people into the country if they wanted to participate in the economy. He claims this commercial character was the basis for Dutch toleration. It was also this commercialism that brought the Dutch to North America; Finkelman calls New Netherland a "purely commercial venture."[59] In contrast to the English Puritans, the Dutch were not looking for religious freedom when they come to North America. They were not focused on settling a religious

[58] Paul Finkelman, "The Roots of Religious Freedom in Early America: Religious Toleration and Religious Diversity in New Netherland and Colonial New York," *Nanzan Review of American Studies* 34 (2012): 1-5.
[59] Ibid., 6.

community. Just as Smith argued, Finkelman says that settlement was merely needed for economic success. He further says that the directors of the WIC hoped that New Netherland would be a harmonious society, but soon realized the importance of toleration for the economy to flourish. This is how the colony became cosmopolitan, by accepting people of different backgrounds and different religions to come and settle in the colony. Just like the other scholars, Finkelman discusses the quarrels between Stuyvesant and the Lutherans, Jews and Quakers. On top of that he also discusses the presence of the English Protestants who moved into the region. Where the previously discussed scholars do not take into account the pressure on the Dutch Reformed Church by the presence of the English Puritans, Finkelman does see this as a threat to the colony.[60] They might not have challenged the established church, but they did make the presence of the surrounding Englishmen felt. This gave Stuyvesant another reason to establish a strong religiously uniform society. Once the English took over the colony in 1664, these settlers welcomed them with open arms, according to Finkelman. After the English take over, there was no point to try and establish the Church of England in the region, because of the strong presence of the Dutch Reformed Church and other religious groups. Therefore the English had no choice but to keep up the form of religious toleration that was already present, claims Finkelman. They understood the Dutch belief that prosperity through diversity was more important in the colony than the establishment of the church. This brings him to his conclusion that the region of New York would continue to be shaped by pluralism and religious toleration, up to the Revolution and thereafter.[61]

Unfortunately, Finkelman's article does not offer a clear thesis statement, nor a clear conclusion. His article is more descriptive than it is analytical; it offers a good overview of the Dutch influence on American religious liberty, but does not clearly argue anything. He

[60] Finkelman, "The Roots of Religious Freedom in Early America," 7-9.
[61] Ibid., 23-25.

also does not define what he thinks toleration entails. As he says himself, the article "explores" the Dutch experience in New Netherland and early English New York. Nonetheless, the main thesis that can be derived from the narrative is that commercialism lies at the base of Dutch toleration, in both the homeland and the colony. It was this commercialism, according to Finkelman, that led to the diversity that undermined the Dutch Reformed Church and established religious toleration in New Netherland. This toleration survived under the English rule and found its way into the future United States. Finkelman thereby successfully combines multiple factors of influence that we have discussed before, namely the Dutch origins of toleration; the commercial character that was the incentive for it; the consequential diversity, which includes the presence of the English; and the eventual take-over by the English. Another topic that Finkelman mentions shortly in the very beginning of his article are the other forms of influence, aside from the Dutch, like the thoughts and ideas of John Locke. In the following chapters the influence of this enlightenment thinking and the influence of diversity in the region will be discussed further. By mentioning these other forms of influence, Finkelman positions his article in the broader debate on American religious liberty. His aim within this debate is to prove that the Dutch also had a role in bringing toleration to America through the colony of New Netherland. It can be concluded that Finkelman wrote an effective narrative in which he includes all the main factors of Dutch influence on American religious liberty.

As this chapter has shown, commercialism is one of the most important factors in the discussion about the Dutch influence on American religious liberty, since it was the main reason for the Dutch to come to America. Smith showed us a convincing argument, namely that pluralism arose in the colony as a result to commercialism, which consequently led to religious toleration. He defines this toleration as connivance, merely the acceptance of religious dissent. Smith successfully combined the factor of Dutch origins and the factor of

commercialism in his argument, but he did not discuss the presence of the English or enlightenment thinking. Even though Finkelman did not pose a clear thesis in his article, he did very effectively combine all factors we have discussed so far: the Dutch origins, commercialism, enlightenment thinking and the English presence. This subject of enlightenment thinking that Finkelman touched upon lightly will now be discussed thoroughly in the next chapter: thoughts and ideas.

Chapter 3: Thoughts and ideas

Apart from its famous tolerance, Holland was also a breeding ground for enlightenment thinking. Great thinkers such as Descartes and John Locke found their way to Holland, mainly because of this well-known tolerance.[62] The scholars whose work we will discuss now are of the opinion that it was this Dutch enlightened thinking that influenced America's religious liberty, more so than any other previously discussed factors. In 2004 Russell Shorto published his book called *The Island at the Center of the World: The Epic Story of Dutch Manhattan and the Forgotten Colony that Shaped America*, which would have great popular success. With this book Shorto wants to put New Netherland back on the map, so to say, when it comes to the history of New York and America in general. Historians of American history have often neglected the Dutch history of New York and its influence on the future United States. In the 1970s two things happened that sparked new attention for the subject, says Shorto. First of all, social history became more popular and there was a sudden interest in multiculturalism. Second, the records of the Dutch colony that could be sources for research on its history were finally starting to be translated.[63] However, Shorto is still of the opinion that the Dutch history of New York is under-acknowledged and therefore writes this book to prove that the Dutch belong in America's history.[64] He hereby wants to celebrate the multiculturalist background of nowadays New York. He argues that toleration was a very important factor that came about in New Netherland and influenced New York greatly. Within this argument he makes room for Adriaen van der Donck, a figure who has often been overlooked in the discussions about the history of the Dutch colony. In order to prove his

[62] Jonathan I. Israel, *Enlightenment Contested: Philosophy, Modernity, and the Emancipation of Man 1670-1752* (Oxford: OUP Oxford, 2006), 374.
[63] Danny Hakim, "His specialty? Making Old New York Talk in Dutch," *New York Times*, Dec. 27, 2009, http://www.nytimes.com/2009/12/27/nyregion/27dutch.html
[64] Shorto, *The Island at the Center of the World,* 290.

statements, Shorto first looks at the history of Dutch toleration in the homeland. He then follows Van der Donck's path to New Netherland and discusses the situation in the colony.

Shorto accepts the thesis that Holland had a form of religious toleration during the seventeenth century, which laid a very important base for European enlightenment thinking.[65] He describes tolerance as the relative acceptance of foreignness, of religious differences. He thus mistakenly uses the term tolerance instead of toleration, which has been altered here to avoid further confusion. According to Shorto, the Dutch always had to put up with differences, thanks to their commercial character. So he claims that the commercial aim was the incentive for toleration. This Dutch toleration made it a haven for all kinds of people, including people such as Descartes and John Locke. This toleration was officially written down in the constitution in 1579, after the bloody religious persecution by the Spanish. Shorto says it shaped the societies of both the Dutch Republic and its colony New Netherland. The Manhattan colony had all the Dutch features of toleration, openness and free trade, according to Shorto. He says that it were those features that influenced New York and thereby America.[66] However, Shorto is of the opinion that the idea of New Netherland as the "cradle of religious liberty" has its flaws. He does not call it completely wrong, but he says that the colony was not perfectly tolerant either. "The blanket of tolerance got a bit tattered on the transatlantic voyage," says Shorto when he describes the rule of Stuyvesant and his predecessors thoroughly.[67] He claims that it was Adriaen van der Donck who had a big, maybe the biggest, influence on the situation in New Netherland at the time. Van der Donck came to the colony in 1641 as the "schout" for Rensselaerswyck, after having just graduated from the prestigious Leiden University. Shorto says Van der Donck was imbued with enlightened ideas about democracy and toleration, since many influential thinkers such as

[65] Russell Shorto and Jeremy Dupertuis Bangs, "Response and Rebuttal," *Church History* 80 (2011): 140.
[66] Shorto, *The Island at the Center of the World,* 17.
[67] Ibid., 253.

Descartes were at the university during his time.[68] After serving in Rensselaerswyck, he made his way to New Amsterdam and started influencing the directors and other authorities with his ideas on law and governmental issues. Shorto hereby argues that Van der Donck brought enlightened ideas along to America, which would later on influence American religious liberty. Shorto also discusses the Flushing Remonstrance as an example of Dutch thinking that made its way to America. He says that the Remonstrance is considered "one of the foundational documents of American liberty, ancestor to the first amendment in the Bill of Rights," which guarantees religious freedom in the United States. He then states that the Flushing Remonstrance is clearly based on the guarantee of religious freedom written down in the Dutch constitution, thereby stating that this Dutch idea had an indirect influence on the first amendment and thus on American religious liberty.

As I indicated earlier, Russell Shorto does not claim that the policy of Stuyvesant in New Netherland was religiously tolerant. He argues that it were Dutch enlightened ideas that made their way to America through figures such as Adriaen van der Donck and through documents such as the Flushing Remonstrance that influenced American religious liberty. He thereby raises an interesting new form of influence to be considered, namely Dutch enlightened thoughts and ideas. Shorto argues that it was the Dutch toleration that created the breeding ground for this enlightenment thinking, thereby considering Dutch toleration as a factor of influence also. However, he does not fully take into account the other factors we have discussed, namely the commercial aspect of the colony and the pressing presence of the English. As for his book, *The Island at the Center of the World* is a well written, intriguing history of the colony of New Netherland. However, as Paul Otto critiques in his 2005 review on the book, Shorto's book is an "animated narrative" that does not come across as a

[68] Shorto, *The Island at the Center of the World*, 98.

professional research.[69] Given that Shorto is a journalist and not an actual historian, this is understandable. Nonetheless, this narrative form gives the book a commercial feel, rather than academic. Another good argument that Otto poses is that Shorto is preoccupied with the role of Adriaen van der Donck. Shorto is right that Van der Donck is often overlooked by historians of New Netherland, but the role that he ascribes to the young man as a bringer of Dutch enlightened ideas is taking it too far. The biggest critique that Shorto got on his book, written by Jeremy Dupertuis Bangs, critiques this argument further. J.D. Bangs is therefore the next author whom we will discuss.

J.D. Bangs' article "Dutch Contributions to Religious Toleration" appeared in *Church History* in 2010. This article is essentially an attack on Russell Shorto's *An Island at the Center of the World*. Bangs, an American who got his doctorate at Leiden University in 1972, is of the opinion that Shorto's claims concerning the Dutch contribution to American religious liberty are wrong and even calls his work "journalistic jingoism." He argues that his "fabled Dutch tradition of toleration" needs revising. According to him the Dutch ideas did make their way to American discussion on religious freedom, but not through the colony of New Netherland.[70] He first focuses on debunking Shorto's argument concerning the influence of Adriaen van der Donck before turning to the question of toleration and religious freedom in New Amsterdam. The assumption that Van der Donck was imbued with enlightened ideas about toleration is completely wrong according to Bangs. Van der Donck has written quite a lot during his time in North America, but in none of his writings does he express any interest for religious toleration. Not only does he not write on the topic, he also did not argue for toleration in the colony according to the colony records. Hereby Bangs dismisses the idea that

[69] Paul Otto, review of *The Island at the Center of the World: The Epic Story of Dutch Manhattan and the Forgotten Colony that Shaped America*, by Russell Shorto, *The Journal of American History* 92 (2005): 183.
[70] Jeremy Dupertuis Bangs, "Dutch Contributions to Religious Toleration," *Church History* 79 (2010): 585-586.

Van der Donck is the source of religious toleration in the Dutch colony that would later on influence American religious liberty.[71] When examining whether or not New Amsterdam was tolerant, Bangs looks at the work of Jaap Jacobs, which we have previously discussed. He agrees with Jacobs that the directors of the WIC were responsible for certain tolerant decisions concerning religious dissenters in New Netherland and that therefore those decisions are no evidence of exceptional tolerance in the colony.[72] He then calls the situation in New Netherland "sophistry bordering on hypocrisy."[73] The supposedly tolerant colony allowed anyone outside of the Dutch reformed religion to live there as long as they did not worship outside of their homes, married publicly, held burial ceremonies according to their traditions, or acted on any of their beliefs in public. Basically, people could believe whatever they wanted, as long as they stayed silent about it, says Bangs. Therefore he concludes that the situation in New Netherland was hardly freedom of religion.[74]

Bangs also questions Shorto's argument that the Flushing Remonstrance was a causative forerunner of the Bill of Rights. He states that since the colony did not have religious toleration the remonstrance was denied by the director and consequently forgotten about. This means it could not have influenced eighteenth-century tolerant thinking that led to the Bill of Rights, which guaranteed religious freedom in the United States. How the remonstrance came about in the first place also had nothing to do with religious toleration in New Netherland, says Bangs. Most of the petitioners were English settlers in the Dutch town of Flushing, who had been accepted there by the colonial government since their reformed beliefs were very close to the Dutch reformed religion. When they wrote the remonstrance to support their Quaker neighbors they did so based on Dutch ideas of toleration, which had become popular among Englishmen both in England and America. When stating "Dutch ideas"

[71] Bangs, "Dutch Contributions to Religious Toleration," 587-588.
[72] Jacobs, *New Netherland,* 379.
[73] Bangs, "Dutch Contributions to Religious Toleration," 590.
[74] Ibid., 589-590.

Bangs means ideas that were discussed by Dutch dissenters in Holland, not the Reformed church either in Holland or New Netherland. However, the Englishmen thought that this toleration was still widespread in Holland, since they were unaware of the new local authority of the Dutch Reformed Church. This is where Bangs's reasoning on Dutch ideas becomes very interesting. He explains how the Dutch in Holland were not tolerant towards any other religions outside of the Dutch Reformed Church anymore, like it used to be during the time the remonstrance was written. However, there were dissenting thinkers in Holland who did have ideas about religious toleration and it were these ideas that influenced thinking on religious freedom all through the English world. But how did these dissenting ideas become so influential among the English? Through no one less than the great, influential John Locke, says Bangs. John Locke was intrigued by the ideas on toleration of Dutch writers such as Van Limborch, Episcopius, Arminius and Twisck. These oppressed Dutch thinkers inspired the ideas on mutual toleration in John Locke's writings, claims Bangs. Thanks to these widespread writings their Dutch dissenting ideas found their way into English debates on religious freedom. This is how Bangs comes to his conclusion that it is John Locke, and not Adriaen van der Donck, who brought Dutch ideas of religious toleration to the American colonies. The colonial directors of New Netherland had no sympathy for these tolerant ideas and therefore New Netherland has no place in the history of American religious liberty, according to Bangs.[75]

As can be seen, Bangs concludes just like Shorto that Dutch ideas had influence on American thinking about religious liberty. However, their opinions on how this influence came about differ immensely. Bangs's attack on Shorto is in some places justified and in other aspects less so. He rightfully argues that Adriaen van der Donck showed no interest for religious toleration in any of his writings, or seemed to have protected it in any of the colonial

[75] Bangs, "Dutch Contributions to Religious Toleration," 611-613.

records. Shorto's argument that Van der Donck had an important role in bringing enlightened ideas about toleration to America is therefore very optimistic. However, Bangs's dismissal of the Flushing Remonstrance as an example for the Bill of Rights is not very convincing. Even though the colonial government was not very tolerant and dismissed the petition, this does not mean that the ideas written down in the remonstrance were not present in the colony. Likewise, the fact that the Dutch Reformed Church was no longer tolerant towards dissenters in Holland does not mean that the colonists no longer shared the ideas by which the remonstrance was influenced. Bangs does bring up an interesting new topic, namely the distribution of Dutch ideas throughout England and its colonies. John Locke has been widely accepted as an influence on eighteenth-century American thinking on toleration. However, the Dutch origins of some of his ideas have not been so well known. Thus Bangs's viewpoint that Dutch ideas were brought to America through the English debates on religious toleration is very interesting and should be taken into account. As we have seen, Bangs mainly focuses on thoughts and ideas when discussing Dutch influence on American religious liberty. He also takes the history of Holland and therefore the Dutch origins of these ideas into consideration. However, he does not define the notion of toleration; he only states that it was influenced by enlightenment thinking. Apart from the WIC influence on New Netherland's somewhat tolerant policy towards dissenters, he does not look at any commercial reasons for diversity and toleration in the region. He states that the colony's government was not tolerant and therefore there was no toleration in the colony, thereby dismissing the diversity that the commercial character of the colony brought about. He also does not take into account the pressing presence of the English on the colony's history concerning religion; he only looks at the English as the messengers that brought the tolerant Dutch ideas to America. To conclude on a positive note, Bangs wrote an interesting critique on Shorto, in which he successfully dismissed Van der Donck and brought to light the influence of Dutch ideas on John Locke.

Russell Shorto was not too pleased with Bangs's critique on his book and in 2011 the American Society of Church History gave him and Bangs a platform to debate about the topic once more. In an article called "Response and Rebuttal" Shorto responds and debunks Bangs's critique, after which Bangs gets a chance to rebut Shorto's remarks. In this response Shorto clarifies his argument concerning Adriaen van der Donck and his influence; he says he never claimed that Van der Donck was a banner-waver of toleration or that he put himself in the role of champion of toleration. His goal was not to argue that New Netherland was the source of religious toleration in America, he merely wanted to emphasize its under-acknowledged influence.[76] Bangs's rebuttal to this defense rightfully states that Shorto's argument in *An Island at the Center of the World* seems to differ from what he claims here, when describing Van der Donck as being imbued with enlightened ideas of democracy and toleration, and calling him a great influence on future New York.[77] Nonetheless, the debate between these two scholars has shown us that Adriaen van der Donck had an important role in New Netherland but he was no bringer of religious toleration to America. Dutch ideas about toleration did make their way into America and did influence eighteenth-century discussion on religious freedom. The Flushing Remonstrance needs to be acknowledged as a source of Dutch tolerant ideas. It was based on the 1579 constitution formed at the Union of Utrecht that guarantees religious freedom in Holland and it became an example for the Bill of Rights that was ratified in 1791, which guaranteed religious freedom in the United States. Even though the religious situation in Holland changed after the Union of Utrecht, the ideas written down in the Remonstrance embodied the original ideas on toleration and thereby influenced the eighteenth-century debate on religious liberty in America. When the Dutch Reformed Church gained authority in Holland these ideas on toleration did not disappear, they were still discussed and written down by dissenting thinkers. John Locke was influenced by these ideas

[76] Shorto and Bangs, "Response and Rebuttal," 139-140.
[77] Ibid., 141.

and formed his famous opinions on mutual toleration with these Dutch ideas in mind. Thus, when John Locke's work became widespread in England and the English colonies, so did the Dutch ideas on religious toleration. Bangs has hereby introduced us to another form of influence that needs to be considered when looking at Dutch ways of influencing American religious liberty.

The writers we have discussed here focused mainly on enlightenment thinking and the Dutch origins of those ideas. Shorto recognized the commercial incentive of toleration, which entailed accepting different religions. However, neither took into account the diversity that was caused by commercialism in the colony, including the English presence. Diversity is another aspect that is important to consider in order to answer the main thesis question of how the Dutch influenced American religious liberty. Therefore, the next chapter will discuss two authors that look at the diversity in the region of New Netherland.

Chapter 4: Diversity

All scholars that we have discussed so far, when trying to answer the question of Dutch influence on American religious liberty, looked at the history of the Dutch homeland and at the events in the colony of New Netherland. The two scholars we will discuss now both cast their research net wider than Holland and the colony in North America; Evan Haefeli and Willem Frijhoff look at the topic from an Atlantic, well-nigh global perspective. This field of Atlantic history entails not only Europe and North America in its research, it also includes Africa and Central and South America. Likewise, both scholars focus more on the aspect of diversity when answering the question of Dutch influence on American religious liberty. How they exactly answer the question will be the matter of this chapter.

In 2012, Evan Haefeli published his book *New Netherland and the Dutch Origins of American Religious Liberty*. As the title suggests, with this book Haefeli tries to answer the question whether the roots of religious freedom in America were to be found in Dutch origins. Apart from searching in the history of the Netherlands and New Netherland, he tries to find answers about Dutch toleration outside of the field of American history by placing it against a wider Dutch seventeenth-century background. Haefeli calls his research an example of Atlantic world history; "aware of the connections, comparisons, and differences between various parts of a trans-oceanic community, in this case the Dutch world of the seventeenth century."[78] This approach can clearly be seen throughout his book. He compares the events in New Netherland with towns and provinces all around the Dutch empire, such as the East Indies, Ceylon, Brazil and the Caribbean.[79] Haefeli is also inspired by the new field of borderlands history, which focuses on connections and conflicts between different groups of

[78] Haefeli, *New Netherland and the Dutch Origins*, X.
[79] Charles H. Parker, review of *New Netherland and the Dutch Origins of American Religious Liberty*, by Evan Haefeli, *The American Historical Review* 118 (2013): 1510.

people around border zones.[80] In this case he focuses on the borders between European colonies in North America. Working within these fields, he analyses Dutch toleration throughout the Dutch empire, thereby aiming to contribute to studies on religious liberty in general.

According to Haefeli, religious liberty was a part of America's national character from the very beginning. He says that the roots to this are to be found in America's middle colonies. He calls the Mid-Atlantic "the birthplace of American ethnic and religious diversity, pluralism, and religious freedom."[81] Since this region originally belonged to the Dutch, he wants to figure out whether the Dutch were responsible for the region's future by bringing toleration and religious diversity to America. In order to do so, he examines what this well-known "Dutch tolerance" was and what it entailed. He then defines Dutch tolerance as the form of religious toleration as it was applied throughout the Dutch colonies and the Dutch Republic itself.[82] He says that this toleration is a dynamic concept that constantly changes depending on the place and time, thereby stating that there is not one universal standard of toleration. He sees no difference between tolerance and toleration and describes them both as a relationship between differing religious groups, with one being the more influential or having more authority. When applying this concept to New Netherland, he describes it as the whole process of coexisting religions that was influenced by parties in both Europe and America. Haefeli also takes into account the distinction that Jaap Jacobs makes between a person's liberty to believe and a group's freedom to worship. He criticizes Jeremy Bangs for failing to differentiate between the two when he speaks of the colony's "sophistry bordering on hypocrisy" concerning liberty of conscience.[83] When it comes to commercialism, Haefeli disagrees with George Smith and Paul Finkelman that religious aims grew out of a pragmatic

[80] Glorida Anzaldua, *Borderlands/La Frontera* (San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 1999), 12.
[81] Haefeli, *New Netherland and the Dutch Origins*, 2.
[82] Ibid., 5.
[83] Bangs, "Dutch Contributions to Religious Toleration," 590.

desire for commercial success. He claims that commercial profit and religious piety should not be seen as opposing binaries: simply because the Dutch had a commercial focus does not mean they did not pursue religious goals as well. However, the expansion of trade and colonialism brought them in contact with a lot of religious diversity. Their coping mechanism for this diversity was often criticized by other nations for preferring commercial profit to religious truth. Haefeli warns historians that they should not carelessly adopt these hostile views.[84]

One of Haefeli's strongest arguments is that New Amsterdam was not old Amsterdam and should therefore not be compared with this cosmopolitan center of global trade. According to him New Amsterdam should be compared with a smaller provincial city, where the ideas about religious toleration differed immensely from those in the diverse city of Amsterdam. He says that the clash that followed the Flushing Remonstrance clearly demonstrates the tensions between these cosmopolitan and provincial approaches to Dutch tolerance. He states that Bangs's argument about the English ideas on Dutch tolerance is very important; namely that the English held the Dutch in New Netherland up to heightened expectations.[85] When the English settlers petitioned for toleration towards their Quaker neighbors, they expected Dutch tolerance as it was laid down in the Union of Utrecht in 1579 and was famously known in Amsterdam. They were not aware of the different form of toleration apparent in this Dutch province-like colony, almost a century later. The toleration in the colony was not fully determined by the Dutch Reformed authorities either. The ideals of the inhabitants and the English presence on the colony's borders also influenced the dynamic concept, says Haefeli.[86] Once the English captured the colony, they actively fostered the pluralism that the Dutch Reformed establishment had been trying to limit for so long. The

[84] Haefeli, *New Netherland and the Dutch Origins*, 83-84.
[85] Bangs, "Dutch Contributions to Religious Toleration," 605.
[86] Haefeli, *New Netherland and the Dutch Origins*, 156-178.

English formalized toleration by installing a governor who facilitated between all the colony's religious groups equally. So according to Haefeli, it were the English who officially implemented religious liberty in the region, thereby making the middle colonies America's hearth of religious pluralism. The biggest contribution by the Dutch to American diversity and religious liberty, argues Haefeli, was to import different ethnic and religious groups who would not have been there had the English always ruled the Mid-Atlantic. New Netherland kept the region out of English hands and thereby created a more ethnically and religiously diverse society than in the English colonies. Diversity is thus the Dutch contribution to American religious liberty, concludes Haefeli. But it were the English who implemented formal toleration and created American religious liberty.[87]

New Netherland and the Dutch Origins of American Religious Liberty is a very well written book based on extensive research and it has rightfully gotten many positive reviews by other scholars. James D. Bratt calls Haefeli's work a "meticulously researched and detailed exploration of New Netherland," in which he corrects standard stereotypes about Dutch tolerance in the colony.[88] Another justly praised aspect is his use of Atlantic world history. His focus on the importance of Atlantic and imperial contexts runs through all the chapters "like a red thread," says Andrew Murphy.[89] Unfortunately, Haefeli uses the terms tolerance and toleration interchangeably and incorrectly. Nonetheless, he thoroughly discusses the relevant Dutch history and convincingly defines Dutch tolerance as a concept that differs in context of time and place. However, as Firth Haring Fabend says, he provides a useful orientation on the Dutch background, but does not offer a background to the English Stuart

[87] Haefeli, *New Netherland and the Dutch Origins*, 284-287.
[88] James D. Bratt, review of *New Netherland and the Dutch Origins of American Religious Liberty*, *Journal of American Studies* 47 (2013): 1.
[89] Andrew R. Murphy, review of *New Netherland and the Dutch Origins of American Religious Liberty*, *Early American Literature* 49 (2014): 604.

history. This is especially disturbing since he ascribes the English a very influential role.[90] D.L. Noorlander is not very pleased with Haefeli's conclusion. He calls Haefeli's book "refreshingly pessimistic" and praises his recognition of the limitations of Dutch tolerance, but finds his conclusion unsatisfying. He finds the argument that the Dutch would not have created the same region of religious pluralism as the English did in the middle colonies problematic in the light of the statement that toleration was nonlinear. If the Dutch had controlled the colony longer, the more liberal WIC directors of the 1660s would probably have created the same situation, says Noorlander.[91] Charles H. Parker agrees that this counterfactual conclusion seems ironic coming from a thorough study of historical contingency.[92] Haefeli's conclusion makes you wonder why he spent an entire book on the background of the Dutch, while he argues that the English were the most influential. Noorlander therefore rightfully questions whether this is a very long preface to his next book on the more transformative English period. Nonetheless, the book's decent and valuable research outweighs whatever flaws it has.[93] Haefeli successfully combines the aspects of Dutch origins with broader Atlantic research. He also discusses the commercial character of the colony, finally concluding that the Dutch brought diversity to America.

Willem Frijhoff also works in the field of Atlantic world history and ascribes a role of diversity to the Dutch, although his argumentation for this slightly differs from Haefeli's. When describing his Atlantic history approach, Frijhoff explains that he sees transnational and transatlantic networks as cultural areas that are founded on physical space, not national space. He thereby approaches the topic from a more cultural history perspective. In this 2013 article, *Religion and Toleration in Old and New Netherland*, he focuses on the meaning of

[90] Firth Haring Fabend, review of *New Netherland and the Dutch Origins of American Religious Liberty*, *Pennsylvania History: A Journal of Mid- Atlantic Studies* 80 (2013): 545.
[91] D.L. Noorlander, review of *New Netherland and the Dutch Origins of American Religious Liberty*, *Church History and Religious Culture* 93 (2013): 466.
[92] Parker, review of *New Netherland,* 1511.
[93] Noorlander, review of *New Netherland,* 466.

religion in New Netherland. He wonders how religion developed in the colony and whether there was a form of peaceful coexistence; a form of toleration. Frijhoff therefore analyses the theme of religious toleration in this article. He says that toleration has been at the heart of the Dutch self-image ever since the seventeenth-century, especially religious toleration. American historians such as Russell Shorto think that the Dutch influenced America with this toleration, during the period of Dutch control in New Netherland. They see the Dutch period as the real start of religious toleration in America. [94] Frijhoff disagrees with Shorto; he thinks that Shorto optimistically focuses on ideas about Dutch toleration instead of on facts. In this article, Frijhoff wants to restate the question: is religious toleration a Dutch attitude that the Dutch brought to America? Or is toleration an American value, which developed out of American society? Or is it neither, and did it grow out of the process of community building in the Mid-Atlantic region? In order to answer these questions, Frijhoff takes a closer look at the two key-terms of religion and toleration in New Netherland.

Frijhoff looks at religion more as the people's religious needs than as the policy of the Reformed Church in the colony. He uses an anthropological or sociocultural approach of analyzing religion in the homeland and its transformation in the colony, in order to get a fuller grip on the situation. He sees religion as a part of culture, which adopts the cultural forms of its surroundings. Frijhoff's analysis of the definition of toleration is significantly longer. He starts with looking at the famous public toleration that the Netherlands were claimed to have during the seventeenth century. According to him this toleration only existed in the province of Holland. It was specifically apparent in the bigger cities such as Amsterdam, but not to be found in any of the other Dutch provinces than Holland during the seventeenth century. He also states that the diversity in these cities did not automatically mean toleration, which he

[94] Willem Frijhoff, "Religion and Toleration in Old and New Netherland," *The World of the Seventeenth-Century Hudson Valley*, ed. L.H. Roper and Jaap Jacobs (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2013), 127-128.

describes as the acceptance of this diversity. Toleration could be practiced either actively or passively, says Frijhoff. Active toleration was based on the legal freedom to be different. However, in the seventeenth century this usually did not stand for more than freedom of conscience. Passive toleration is a more or less systematic form of connivance, states Frijhoff. Within the Dutch republic a combination of both active and passive toleration existed, but the dimensions of this differed immensely depending on the town or province. Freedom of conscience was widespread, but the freedom to worship was limited to those bigger cities like Amsterdam. In the Dutch colonies the Reformed Church often had a stronger say in this than in the homeland, meaning that freedom of worship was seldom accepted. However, Frijhoff describes the role of the Reformed Church in the colonies mainly as the adhesive of European community, more so than the bringing of piousness.[95] This brings us to Frijhoff's discussion of the situation in New Netherland. He calls the society one of "cultural Calvinism," which entails that the secular authorities used the Reformed Church as the example of common values and social behavior. This cultural Calvinism was the result of diversity and it caused the laity to accept cultural, Calvinist values, no matter what their denomination was. It was apparent under the directorship of Peter Stuyvesant, who tried everything to reinforce the religious conformity and used the Calvinist values to do so. However, freedom of conscience obliged Stuyvesant to except dissenters, as long as they did not publicly express themselves. Thus, Frijhoff describes the religious experience in New Netherland as a twofold event. On the one hand religion meant the European, cultural values that were enforced by the Dutch Reformed Church. On the other hand religion meant the personal choice of denomination. However, Stuyvesant's personal connection to Calvinism meant that the Dutch Reformed Church had a greater influence in the colony than it did in the Netherlands.[96]

[95] Frijhoff, "Religion and Toleration in Old and New Netherland," 129-131.
[96] Ibid., 133-139.

In order to clarify the religious situation in New Netherland, Frijhoff distinguishes three periods in the evolution of religion in the colony. The first period was the founding phase, from 1624 to roughly 1650, in which the church ensured the cohesion of the colony. The second period, starting in 1650, entailed a more pious approach by the Reformed Church that had to except the religious diversity in the colony. The church had to come to terms with its limitations and formed a variety of toleration for other Christian denominations, says Frijhoff. The third period starts when the English take over the Dutch colony. The English did not expel the Dutch Reformed Church, but it had to share its position in society with the Church of England, according to Frijhoff. He claims that it was this "bi-public" regime that created the real toleration in the region, since the two churches had to live together and work out coexistence. This is where American toleration started, says Frijhoff, when two intellectually related, yet different churches, confronted one another. He concludes his article by saying that this analysis has shown us that toleration is the answer to diversity in a community. It is therefore not a quality of any population or nation, but a developing social and cultural practice.[97]

As has been seen, Willem Frijhoff focused on the cultural aspect of religion when analyzing its role in New Netherland. When discussing religious toleration, he wisely differentiates between Holland and its big cities, and the other Dutch provinces. Just like Haefeli, he understands that toleration was different everywhere, depending on the social and cultural surroundings. He therefore argues that the Dutch Reformed Church had way more influence on society in the colonies, such as New Netherland. According to Frijhoff, the church was the social glue of society in the colony. This is a refreshingly new viewpoint, which shows the social role of the church in the colonies. Frijhoff says that during the start of New Netherland, the church did not focus much on spreading the faith. However, once

[97] Frijhoff, "Religion and Toleration in Old and New Netherland," 140.

Stuyvesant became director the church started focusing more on religious piety again. Because of the freedom of conscience, Stuyvesant and the rest of the authorities were obliged to form a variety of toleration towards dissenters. Nevertheless, it was not this toleration that influenced American religious liberty, says Frijhoff. It was the bi-public regime that came about in the region after the English took over the colony and installed the Church of England. Since the English did not dismiss the Dutch church, the two had to live together and find a way to coexist. This is where true toleration originated, according to Frijhoff. This argument ignores the other religious groups that lived in the colony at this time. He speaks of a bi-public regime of the two predominant churches. However, aside from the Dutch and English churches there were many more religious denominations in the region when the English took over. Haefeli did take this pluralism into account, when he argued that the Dutch had created the diversity in the region.

Both Evan Haefeli and Willem Frijhoff looked at the religious situation in the Dutch colony of New Netherland through an Atlantic perspective. Both authors rightfully state that religious toleration is a dynamic concept, which develops and adapts itself within a pluralistic society. They agree that in New Netherland this toleration consisted solely of the freedom of conscience. Both eventually conclude that it was diversity that led to actual toleration once the English had taken over the colony. However, Haefeli rightfully claims that the Dutch were responsible for letting in a lot of different groups that would not have been there had the English controlled the area. The Dutch thereby created a religious diversity in the region. It was not just the bi-public dynamic that Frijhoff suggested that led to religious liberty in this region. This chapter has shown us the convincing argument that the Dutch brought religious diversity to the Mid-Atlantic region of North-America, thereby influencing the English society which would be constructed afterwards. The English accepted the different religious groups living in the area, thereby installing official toleration. Diversity therefore is a very

important aspect to consider in the history of the Dutch influence on American religious liberty. However, this does not mean that the other aspects we have discussed are not of importance at all.

What can be concluded from this analysis is that multiple factors are at play when one looks at the Dutch influence on American religious liberty. All of these aspects have been discussed throughout the chapters. These themes entail the Dutch origins of toleration, the Dutch commercial character as an incentive for toleration, Dutch enlightened toleration ideas, and the diversity of New Netherland, which includes the presence of the English. All these factors come together in the answer to the main question, namely what the Dutch role was in the making of American religious liberty.

Conclusion

Throughout this thesis many different authors have been discussed, regarding their opinions on the Dutch influence on American religious liberty. Many different factors of influence came to the surface and many different definitions of religious toleration have been defended. By discussing the views of nine authors within four different themes, we can successfully answer the main question of this thesis: what was the Dutch role in the making of American religious liberty, according to historical debate? The Dutch influenced American religious liberty both directly and indirectly. The concept of toleration, in the shape of freedom of conscience and the act of connivance, was apparent in New Netherland. The Dutch thereby created a society of great ethnic and religious diversity. These traits would be acknowledged by the English and remained prominent in the region after their takeover. Dutch enlightened toleration ideas also found their way to North America, namely through the English discussions on religious freedom.

As has been seen, all three of the authors that were discussed in the first chapter of this thesis have too easily made assumptions on the Dutch origins of toleration. Torchiana simply took on the assumption that Dutch toleration made its way over to America. Zwierlein too easily did away with toleration in New Netherland, since the Netherlands would not have been tolerant. Jacobs assumed that since Stuyvesant was not willingly tolerant, Dutch ideas on toleration did not make their way over to America at all. Both Zwierlein and Jacobs thereby overlooked the connivance that was apparent in New Netherland, whereas Torchiana too optimistically assumed the presence of religious toleration. Nonetheless, this chapter showed us what is thought about the origins of toleration in The Netherlands. Torchiana, working for the consulate general of the Netherlands in the United States, most likely wanted to depict a story of Dutch influence. He thereby told the straight forward story that was common thought during the nineteenth century. Zwierlein, wanting to debunk these exact thoughts brought new

life to the debate by fiercely stating that the Dutch were not tolerant at all. The most likely reason for Zwierlein to fight the thought of Dutch toleration is his Catholic belief, since he claims that Catholics were not tolerated in the Netherland during the described time period. Jacobs, writing in 2005, actually avoids the debate that had blossomed over the last century and thus does not bring new insights. Nevertheless, the debate shows that there was definitely a form of religious toleration apparent in The Netherlands, which was uncommon in Europe at that time.

In the second chapter both authors focused on the commercial incentive of Dutch toleration, in the homeland as well as in the colony. Both Smith and Finkelman see commercialism as the base for religious toleration. Writing during the 1970s, Smith could well have been influenced by the popularity of social history at that time and the tendency of historians to focus on multiculturalism. This can be seen in his interest for the religious pluralism in this multicultural region. Finkelman, writing almost forty years later, placed his discussion in the currently ongoing broader debate on American religious liberty. Yet they both argue that the Dutch did not come to America to build a society; according to them settlement was only needed for commercial success. Therefore, they are both of the opinion that commercialism was more important in the colony than religion. According to them commercialism did create diversity and thus toleration, thereby influencing American religious liberty. Thus both Smith and Finkelman too easily do away with religious means for toleration. Their thoughts raise the noteworthy question of whether the toleration in the colony was really apparent, if solely based upon commercial goals. The historic events of New Netherland show otherwise. For example it is unlikely that a minister could take down the colonial governor for ruling too strict, if there were no religious reasons behind the toleration in the colony at all. Therefore, the commercial reasons are not sufficient to explain religious toleration in New Netherland. Nonetheless, this chapter showed us the importance of

the commercial factor, since commercialism lies at the base of the diversity that led to religious toleration.

The third chapter showed two authors who looked at the theme of enlightenment thinking. Two authors with completely different backgrounds, Shorto being a journalist and Bangs a historian specialized in American history. According to Shorto, toleration created the breeding ground for enlightenment thinking in Holland. He is of the opinion that enlightened ideas about toleration found their way to New Netherland through the figure of Adriaen van der Donck and through the Flushing Remonstrance. Hereby, Shorto depicts Adriaen's story and the enlightenment history more gloriously than it was. Bangs rightfully dismisses Adriaen van der Donck as a source of Dutch toleration and concludes that Dutch enlightened toleration ideas came to America through the English. Both twenty-first century writers thus displayed a prevalent interest in the Dutch enlightenment history, however where Shorto romanticized the story, Bangs wanted to set the historical record straight. This chapter thereby has shown us the argument that Dutch toleration ideas were both the basis and the result of enlightenment thinking in Holland. These ideas came to America through the English, eventually influencing religious liberty in the region.

In the fourth chapter the topic of diversity was discussed, following the views of Haefeli and Frijhoff. These two scholars offer the most current contributions to the debate and both represent the wider modern-day interest in Atlantic world history. According to Haefeli, the English implemented the real toleration when they took over the colony and accepted every religion apparent in the region. According to Frijhoff, when the English took over the situation changed into a bi-public church system, which led to toleration. He does not take into account the other religious groups that lived in the region and added up to the diversity. Altogether, this chapter has shown the importance of the diversity that the Dutch created in the Mid-Atlantic region. By keeping the English out and importing different ethnic and

religious groups, the Dutch created a pluralistic society, which the English later transformed into the middle colonies of the United States. It also showed an interesting approach to the notion of toleration; namely as a dynamic, developing concept, which adapts to its surroundings.

After having thoroughly explored this debate on the Dutch influence on American religious liberty, it has become clear that most authors do not look at the full picture. By focusing on solely one theme and by using mistaken conceptions of the term toleration, most authors do not offer satisfying answers to the question of the Dutch influence. As explained in the introduction, a distinction needs to be made between tolerance and toleration. Tolerance defines an attitude, the willingness to admit that contradictory viewpoints are valid. Whereas toleration defines a social or political practice, in which forms of dissent are allowed. Throughout this thesis multiple definitions of religious toleration have been given, some more convincing than others. It can be concluded that Dutch religious toleration is a dynamic concept. Within this concept there is a difference between the freedom of conscience and the freedom to worship. The freedom of conscience was more common in the Netherlands and it was often accepted through the act of connivance. In Holland, freedom of worship could sometimes be found in the bigger cities. This Dutch religious toleration was the result of the diversity in Dutch society, which was created by the Dutch commercial character. In the colony of New Netherland, the same commercial character was apparent. However, the Dutch Reformed church had more say in this province-like colony. Therefore, the dissenting religious groups in New Netherland enjoyed solely the freedom of conscience. This shows how Dutch religious toleration was different in the small colony on the North-American mainland, in comparison to the big international city of Amsterdam.

The Dutch practice of connivance made its way to America through the colony, but this is not the only way that the Dutch influenced American thinking on religious freedom.

During the enlightenment, Dutch toleration ideas became incredibly famous through the work of thinkers such as John Locke. These ideas were spread throughout the English world, which includes the English colonies in North America. The English colonists living in the Dutch colony, in the town of Flushing, were also inspired by these Dutch toleration ideas. Thus when they wrote down the Flushing Remonstrance, they applied for Dutch religious toleration as they had heard of. Unfortunately for them, Peter Stuyvesant and the ministers of New Netherland only allowed the freedom of conscience in their colony, not the freedom to worship. However, by allowing the different religious groups to live in the Dutch colony, the region became very ethnically and religiously diverse. Once the English took over the colony from the Dutch in 1664, they found a pluralistic society. The English decided to establish the Church of England, but not to enforce it on the local inhabitants. They tolerated the religious groups that already lived in the region, thereby creating an even more religious pluralistic society. Whereas Stuyvesant and his ministers had tried to suppress all religious dissenters, the English accepted these differing denominations. Thus when the English formed the middle colonies of the United States, the region contained the most ethnic and religious diversity in all of North America. It is here then, in the Mid-Atlantic, that American religious liberty finds its roots.

By answering the question of Dutch influence on American religious liberty, this thesis provides an overview of the most important contributions within this debate. Containing contributions that span over the entire twentieth century and into the twenty-first, this analysis shows how historians treated and now treat the Dutch colony in North America. The debate depicts the trends that were common in history writing during this time frame. It likewise shows how scholars have interpreted the concept of toleration over this span of time. Several tendencies of historians in this debate stand out. Firstly, some scholars too easily make assumptions about toleration in New Netherland based on resources and knowledge

about The Netherlands, or merely Stuyvesant's beliefs. Also, many scholars discussed here often overlooked other views in order to uphold their own. For example, certain historians focus solely on commercial means when discussing toleration, without taking any religious reasoning into account. Another tendency common with historians, especially those writing for a broader, commercial audience, is that of depicting (their country's) history more beautifully than it was. When using the works of these writers as historical sources, one needs to be careful of such exorbitance.

Presumably, not all has been said concerning the Dutch influence on North-American religious liberty and more research on this topic will likely follow. Hopefully those historians will take into account the fuller picture and not give in to the above-mentioned tendencies. This discussion on the debate of Dutch influence on American religious liberty raises more interesting questions for research. For example, when looking at Dutch toleration as a dynamic concept, it raises the question whether it influenced any other regions in the world, besides North America. Within the broader debate on religious liberty, it would also be interesting to research if toleration such as the Dutch form originated anywhere else in the world. Likewise, how did the concept of toleration develop into the modern era? Thus, this research answers one important question on the Dutch-American legacy, but raises many more interesting questions to be researched in the future.

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