

Revolution in the Dutch Republic and resolutions in Batavia

A quantitative approach to the perspective of the VOC in Batavia between 1790-1806



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Introduction

Information enabled those in power to control vast areas and peoples throughout history. Running an empire becomes nigh impossible without the knowledge of what is going on in the more distant parts through reporting and bookkeeping. The production of paper in the form of books, bookkeeping and scientific innovation exploded during the early modern period. This went along with a marked increase in literacy in all of Europe by 1800 due to the rise of Protestantism, commercial demand and a growing demand for literate servants by increasingly powerful states.¹ Scholarly interest into the development of this information overload is also increasing, with publications on the history of knowledge by Peter Burke and the instruments of power of the Dutch *Staten-Generaal* by Theo Thomassen.²

One of the main culprits in this information explosion was the Dutch East India Company (VOC). The VOC created more than 2800 meters of archival documents in the Netherlands, Jakarta and smaller colonies like Cape Town and Colombo. As a whole, these collections form the archives of the VOC consisting of an estimated total of twenty million written pages.³ The archive was designated as part of UNESCO World Heritage in 2003. However, these archives were not created as preservation for posterity. Instead, they served the purpose of managing and building on previously acquired information. It is not difficult to imagine that the managing of colonies required an extensive information system, if only because the voyage from Batavia to the Dutch Republic took 237 days on average.⁴ The importance of archives to empires can hardly be understated. Historian Thomas Richards saw the (British imperial) archive as “a prototype for a global system of domination through circulation, an apparatus for controlling territory by producing, distributing and consuming information about it.”⁵ Similarly, Jan Breman argued that this

¹ R. Houston, *Literacy in Early Modern Europe 1500-1800* (London 2014), 152-154.

² P. Burke, *A social history of knowledge: from Gutenberg to Diderot* (Cambridge 2000) and T. Thomassen, *Instrumenten van de macht: de Staten-Generaal en hun archieven 1576-1796*, PhD thesis Amsterdam University (2009).

³ Information based on the website of the Arsip Nasional Republik Indonesia, <https://sejarah-nusantara.anri.go.id/archive/> [accessed 15/05/2019].

⁴ J. Bruin, F. Gaastra, I. Schöffer, A. Vermeulen, *Dutch-Asiatic shipping in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries*, Volume 1 (Den Haag 1987), 74 and 89.

⁵ T. Richards, *The Imperial Archive: Knowledge and the Fantasy of Empire* (London 1993), 17.

use of detailed archives took away the feeling of operating in unknown territory for the VOC in nineteenth century Java.⁶

The VOC proved to be quite effective in managing its colonies through this information system, as it managed to survive for almost 200 years (1602-1795). The VOC sources have enabled historians to produce great pieces of research and international collaboration like 'the Dutch East India Company: Expansion and Decline' by Femme Gaastra, Chris Nierstrasz' 'Shadow of the Company', and collaboratory projects like 'Dutch-Asiatic Shipping in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries'.⁷ These works have been accomplished by treating the VOC archive as a source. This archive-as-source approach means that information is found by reading against the archival grain, comparable to reading between the lines, to account for biases that are inherent in all man-made observations. However, research like this bypasses the identity of the archive itself. Historian and anthropologist Ann Stoler reveals her thoughts on the matter with the question: "How can we compare colonialisms without knowing the circuits of knowledge production in which they operated? We need to read for its regularities, for its logic of recall, for its densities and distributions, for its consistencies of misinformation, omission and mistake – *along* the archival grain."⁸ A better understanding of an archive's knowledge production can then lead to a better understanding of the sources within the archive and of the archive's creator. Stoler proposes to treat colonial archives as a subject rather than a source: instead of trying to account for biases, she argues to let them become telling factors of the perspective of a colonial state, thereby adding an extra layer of understanding.⁹ Historians following this method have to take into account the formation of the archive: the production, form and tone of the archival material. This is what Stoler calls reading along the archival grain.

To provide a more structural framework of analysis for reading along the archival grain, Stoler puts forward the concept of archival events. Archival events are episodes in which the production of archival material on a certain subject increases. This increase

⁶ J. Breman, *Mobilizing Labour for the Global Coffee Market: profits from an unfree work regime in Colonial Java* (Amsterdam 2015), 236.

⁷ C. Nierstrasz, *In the Shadow of the Company: The Dutch East India Company and its servants in the period of its decline, 1740-1796* (Leiden 2012), Bruijn, Gaastra, Schöffner and Van Eyck van Heslinga, *Dutch-Asiatic Shipping in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth centuries*.

⁸ A. Stoler, 'Colonial archives and the arts of governance: on the content in the form', *Archival Science* 2 (2002), 87-109, specifically 99-101.

⁹ Idem, *Along the archival grain. Epistemic anxieties and colonial common sense* (New Jersey 2009), 1-53.

then reflects administrative worry on the part of the archive's creator, thus allowing insight into the perspective of this creator. To constitute as an archival event, a 'case' needs to fulfill two criteria. A physical thickening of the archive and a quickening of the pulse of the archive. A physical thickening refers to an increase in documentation on a certain subject. The second criterion, a quickening of the pulse, refers to the circulation of blood in the body. Stoler argues that during an archival event, the pulse quickens and thus circulation of information (or blood) increases between different parts of the 'body' of the administration, referring to the colonies. The cause of a quickening of the pulse and how information circulates in this heightened state can then be very telling of the body itself. There is one more aspect that can coincide with archival events, but is not a criterion. It is called the 'cribbing process' by Stoler. In this process information is transformed because of fear or eagerness of reporting.¹⁰ For example, an overseas servant under pressure to increase production of spices can inflate the numbers he reports to appease his superiors.

A study of the administrative perspective in the context of Batavia allows for a deeper understanding of the relationship between an administrative center and its archive. Studying Batavia specifically in the period 1790-1806 allows for another factor in the relationship between archive and creator: regime change. After the bankruptcy of the VOC in 1795, the Dutch East Indies possessions were put under state supervision during the Dutch time of the Batavian Republic, which was soon incorporated into the Napoleonic Empire in 1806. Did this impact the archive and the administration? This period between the bankruptcy of the VOC and incorporation into the Napoleonic Empire is of particular interest because it has not been studied extensively in the context of the Dutch colonial administration. Furthermore, two historians who have studied Indonesia extensively, Jur van Goor and Merle Ricklefs, argue that the *Hoge Regering* (High Government in Batavia) was inert and continued in its old ways during this period.¹¹ This thesis will explore whether the assertion of van Goor and Ricklefs hold true to an archive-as-subject approach as well.

The time frame chosen for this research starts slightly before the VOC bankruptcy in 1795, between 1790-1806. Starting the period in 1790 provides a baseline of the administrative perspective before the VOC's bankruptcy. This perspective can then be

¹⁰ Idem, 39, 74 and 114.

¹¹ J. van Goor, *Prelude to Colonialism: the Dutch in Asia* (Hilversum 2004), 90-92 and M. Ricklefs, *A History of Modern Indonesia since c. 1300*, third edition (London 2001), 144.

compared to that of the successors of the VOC: the *Comité der Oost-Indische Handel en Bezittingen* (1796-1801) and the *Raad der Aziatische Bezittingen* (1801-1806).¹² There are thus three periods under investigation here. While the latter two are clearly defined along the lifespan of the Comité and Raad, this is not possible for the VOC. Instead, a similar time frame of five years has been chosen because it makes the three periods more comparable from a quantitative perspective. The central research question of this thesis is: To what extent/how can archival events reveal continuities and discontinuities in the perspective of the Hoge Regering in Batavia during the period of organizational- and regime-change between 1790-1806 and its position within the hierarchy?

This research also aims to develop a number of ideas on how the concepts around archival events can be treated more concretely. Archival historian Nico Vriend developed a method to find possible archival events. In a nutshell, his method compares the frequency of certain keywords in the decisions of an administration within a certain period. The result is a list of possible archival events based on the frequency of these keywords. Vriend's method is elaborated upon in the second part of this introduction. This thesis aims to do both historical and archival research through these archival events.

Historical research into past information systems has been done before. Italian historian Filippo de Vivo chose to study the archive of a Venetian barbershop as a means of communication. This allowed to get a clear picture of how information was disseminated in early modern Venice.¹³ Besides the earlier mentioned Peter Burke and Theo Thomassen, two more historians should be mentioned for their research in specifically colonial information systems. Bernard Cohn called the British conquest of India a "conquest of knowledge".¹⁴ Christopher Bayly argued in the same vein that the expansion of knowledge was not a byproduct but a prerequisite for the rise of the British Empire. Interestingly, he also points out that overseas Europeans mostly joined existing local information systems.¹⁵

¹² During the period under investigation the Dutch Republic underwent a number of changes, including its name. To prevent referring to the same place by different names over and over, this paper simply uses 'the Republic' to refer to what is now known as the Netherlands.

¹³ F. de Vivo. *De, Information and communication in Venice: rethinking early modern politics* (Oxford 2007).

¹⁴ B. Cohn, *Colonialism and its forms of knowledge: the British in India* (Princeton 1996), 4.

¹⁵ C. Bayly, *Empire and information: intelligence gathering and social communication in India, 1780--1870* (Cambridge 1996), 6 and 44.

The most relevant research regarding this thesis is Ann Stoler's work on mid-19th century Batavia. She argues that the clear division between the ethnically Dutch and locally born in administration positions was largely a bureaucratic and symbolic one by analysing a protest in 1848 as an archival event.¹⁶ Stoler's work was critically evaluated in a discussion of historians Frances Gouda, Remco Raben and Henk Schulte Nordholt in the journal *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land, en Volkenkunde*, which focuses on the linguistics, anthropology and history of Southeast Asia. Frances Gouda even called Stoler a "race horse".¹⁷ Both her empirical and theoretical work are praised for their extensiveness.

The criticisms of Gouda, Raben and Nordholt can be divided into two categories. Firstly, all three historians notice a lack of Dutch and Indonesian historiography in her work. While Gouda and Raben partly justify this by pointing to certain weaknesses within these historiographies on subjects like race, this is really something Stoler should have dealt with herself in her work. Moreover, Stoler was given the opportunity to reply within the same article as the previous historians are quoted from but fails to address her unwillingness to engage with Dutch historiography. Perhaps that implies she agrees with the aforementioned justifications (although that would be reading against the grain).

The second category was mostly addressed by Raben and Nordholt. Raben finds that Stoler sometimes uses administrative sources to go beyond the perspective of the administration that created them. The result is a perpetuation of assumptions that are inherent in the sources, such as the generalization that most children of mixed marriages in Indonesia were abandoned, which is an overgeneralization. This is a very important criticism since the foundation of the approach of 'Along the Archival Grain' is based on analyzing archival material with a colonial perspective and it is thus important to strictly adhere to the limits of the archive-as-subject approach. Furthermore, it stresses that this approach is not a revolutionary new way of research, but rather adds an extra layer of understanding together with the archive-as-source approach. Nordholt's criticism that Stoler's primary sources are not nearly extensive enough to make meaningful statements on the archive itself also rings somewhat true. There is definitely more work needed than a number of handpicked case-studies to make statements about the identity of such a vast archive. However, Stoler's intention was not to make such definitive statements, but

¹⁶ Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain*, 56-104.

¹⁷ F. Gouda, R. Raben and H. Schulte Nordholt, 'Debate', *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* 165, no. 4 (2009), 551-556.

instead provide a starting point for discussion.¹⁸ Vriend's and this research continue on Stoler's starting point by using a quantitative method to find cases instead of picking them by hand and using this method to study the relationship between the archive and its creator.

In my view, one criticism is lacking in this debate: the in clarity of her concepts. As previously mentioned, archival events are characterized by a physical thickening of the archive and a quickening of its pulse. However, when does something constitute a 'thickening'? Vriend has provided a method to deal with this. He did not come to clear idea on what constituted a quickened archival pulse, although he too recognized the concept's in clarity. Vriend wondered whether there should be a certain threshold in the number of exchanges or perhaps the amount of channels that are communicated with.¹⁹ This research will illustrate that such a threshold would be a subjective choice by the historian and discount the difference in communication possibilities over time.

The sources used for this research consists for the majority of official records of the Hoge Regering and the administrations responsible for Batavia in the Low Countries during the period of regime change between 1790-1806. This period will be divided into three chapters, thereby reflecting the three subsequent organizations that had to manage the Dutch East Indies from the Low Countries. The most important sources for this research are the digitized *realia* on the resoluties of the Hoge Regering. Resoluties were the written form of discussions had by an administration. The *realia* on the resoluties were created by a *realist* based on a subject list provided by the Hoge Regering and the perceived importance of resoluties. This means that the in- or exclusion of *realia* was a subjective choice by the Hoge Regering and the *realist*. This is a red flag for the archive-as-source approach, but when researching what the Hoge Regering thought was most important, such a subjective choice becomes more revealing. These *realia* will be used across all chapters.²⁰ The first period (1790-1795) represents the last years under the VOC. Sources used for this period consist of the Haagse Besogne and the Preparatoir Besogne. The second period (1796-1801) represents the Hoge Regering under the Comité

¹⁸ Gouda et. al., 'Debate', 551-567.

¹⁹ N. Vriend, *Het informatiesysteem en -netwerk van de Verenigd Oostindische Compagnie*, master thesis Leiden University 2011, 96.

²⁰ The *realia* of the Hoge Regering have been made available digitally on the website of Indonesia's national archive: Arsip Nasional Republik Indonesia, <https://sejarah-nusantara.anri.go.id/archive/> [accessed 21-2-2019].

der Oost-Indische Handel en Bezittingen (Committee of East-Indian Trade and Possessions). The resolutions of the Comité and missives exchanged between the Hoge Regering and the Comité will be used here. Lastly, the resolutions of the Raad der Aziatische Bezittingen and missives exchanged between the Hoge Regering and the Raad are used for the period of the Batavian Republic (1801-1806).²¹ All of these sources very much represent a Dutch and eurocentric view on the world. This is important to keep in mind when studying the interactions of the Dutch with others.

The first chapter of this thesis introduces the information system of the VOC and the historical context up to 1790, the start of the period under investigation. The following three chapters consecutively deal with periods of about five years: Batavia under the VOC (1790-1795), the Comité (1796-1801) and the Raad (1801-1806).

The method

Ann Stoler uses the concept of archival events to analyze the racial attitudes of the Batavia administration towards locally born servants. The theory on archival events was adopted by archival historian Nico Vriend in his master thesis on the information system and network of the VOC. Vriend designed a method to find possible archival events based on their first constituting criterion: a physical thickening of the archive. However, Vriend added a qualification to this thickening: it had to be relative in his view, if a subject is always discussed frequently, it is less relevant than a subject that is discussed frequently only within a certain period.²² This research follows Vriend's assertion and puts to the test if these cases are always filtered out by his method.

In the eighteenth century, the use of classification systems grew in popularity to deal with an explosion in the production of information.²³ Stoler is aware of this development as well, as she argues that the huge amount of information necessitated an "elaborate coding system by which they could be tracked, colonial office buildings were constructed to make sure they were properly catalogued and stored."²⁴ Like most of these information systems in that time, including that of the Dutch States-General, the VOC's archive uses these resolutions as a backbone to which all other documents are tied. This

²¹ Since these sources are all in Dutch, all quotes from the sources in this thesis have been translated by me unless otherwise stated.

²² Vriend, *Informatiesysteem van de VOC*, 17-21.

²³ D. Rosenberg, 'Early Modern Information Overload', *Journal of the History of Ideas* 64 no. 1 (2003), 1-9.

²⁴ A. Stoler, 'Colonial archives and the arts of governance', *Archival Science* 2 (2002), 90.

system is called the *resolutiestelsel*.²⁵ These resoluties were then compiled into lists of subjects called *indices* or *realia*, which were essentially subject lists²⁶ The *realia* were the main source of Vriend's quantitative approach towards archival events. This research is inspired by his work. Vriend's method goes as follows. He starts with demarcating the period under research, which in this case are three periods of about five years (The VOC, the Comité and the Raad) Within these five years, the frequency of different subjects in the *realia* are compiled in a spreadsheet and divided into smaller periods to get a more precise view. Vriend chose quarter years, while this research uses trimesters instead, this explained at the end of the introduction. The *realia* can then be sorted to see which was mentioned most frequent and thus which subjects could fulfill the criterion of physical thickening. However, doing so would not account for the relative part of this thickening – and thus have a bias towards subjects that are always frequently discussed. To solve this, Vriend used a probability function called the Poisson distribution to calculate the probability that a certain subject was mentioned X amount of times within a certain time period. The Poisson distribution, named after French mathematician Siméon Denis Poisson, calculates the probability that X number of events occurs within a fixed period if these occur with an average rate.²⁷ An example:

If a subject is referenced ten times over ten periods, one would expect to see one reference for every period, which would be the average per period. However, if it turns out that nine references were within one period, one reference was within a different period and the rest of the periods did not reference the keyword, the Poisson distribution can be used to calculate the probability that nine references fall within one period. If this probability is higher than a threshold chosen by the researcher, the subject fulfills the first criterion of an archival event: relative physical thickening. In this case, the chance that a keyword is referenced less than nine times is 99,9999889%. This means that the chance that the keyword is referenced nine times or more is only 0,0000111%. It is then up to

²⁵ Thomassen, *Instrumenten van de macht*, 283-284 and 380-383.

²⁶ The *realia* of the Hoge Regering were published by the *Bataviaasch Genootschap van Kunst en Wetenschap* (Batavian Society of Arts and Sciences) in three volumes called the *Register op de generale resolutiën van het kasteel Batavia* (Index on the general resoluties of the castle of Batavia) between 1882-1886. These volumes have been digitized in a collaboration between the Corts Foundation and the Arsip Nasional Republik Indonesia. <https://www.cortsstichtingen.nl/nl/projecten/dasa> [accessed 11/05/2019] and <https://sejarah-nusantara.anri.go.id/realia/> [11/05/2019]. The biggest downside is the fact that these *realia* do not link directly to page references by which they can be linked to the resoluties. They are only linked to the date of the meeting.

²⁷ F. Haight, *Handbook of the Poisson Distribution* (New York 1967).

the researcher to set the bar for how small the chance has to be reach the threshold and be considered significant. Usual thresholds are 95%, 99% or 99,99%. Vriend chose 99,99% to limit coincidences as much as possible and this research follows suit. A qualitative analysis of correspondence on the subject between the Hoge Regering and the Republic can then turn out whether the subject also fulfills the second criterion, a quickening of the pulse of the archive.

This research has made two changes to Vriend's approach. Firstly, the range of periods has been changed. Vriend chose to sort the keywords in quarter years. This may feel like a logical thing to do in today's world where quarterly results are of huge economic importance. In fact, Vriend does not even explain why he chose quarters. Although the selection of periods could be considered somewhat arbitrary, it is such a vital part of both Vriend's and this research that a justification seems necessary. The problem with quarters is that they split the summer in two: the second quarter includes June while the third includes the rest of the summer. This may not be a problem in most cases, but in the case of the VOC summer was a vital period in terms of ship arrivals, both in Batavia and the Republic. Thus, for this research the choice was made to use trimesters instead of quarters. In this way, the second trimester covers the summer period more comprehensively, being from May to August. Secondly, while Vriend did make a quantitative analysis he only used it to prove that it could find an archival event. However, he only discussed one archival event found through this method. The rest is hardly touched upon.²⁸ This research focuses on the five most significant realia within a period, archival event or not. In conclusion, first Ann Stoler 'discovered' archival events. Then, Nico Vriend devised a method that detects possible archival events. Now, this research aims to provide insight into the continuities and discontinuities of an archive by applying it over a longer period of time and multiple regime changes.

Archival research like this seems to be a bit ahead of its time. It is not hard to imagine that handwriting recognition algorithms will become advanced enough to facilitate the complete digitization of paper bastions like the VOC archive. Looking for key words in marginalia and minutes, within what Vriend himself called "an unbelievable amount of paper", is how one would approach this archive if it had been digitized so far

²⁸ Vriend, *Informatiesysteem van de VOC*, 80-93.

that it has become text-searchable.²⁹ For now, this has only been done selectively. Although this development can take a while yet, it is very important to discuss and test theories like Stoler's archival events that could help guide archival researchers deal with a new paradigm of text-searchable, early-modern archives.

²⁹ N. Vriend, 'An Unbelievable Amount of Paper: the information system and network of the Dutch East India Company', in C. Jeurgens, T. Kappelhof & M. Karabinos (red), *Colonial Legacy in South East Asia. The Dutch Archives* (Den Haag 2012), 67-95.

1. Setting the scene: the VOC's information system and the Dutch Republic in the late eighteenth century

As mentioned in the introduction, this first chapter sets the stage by expanding on three subjects. The basics of the VOC's information system and the context in which the period under investigation in this research started (the VOC bankruptcy in 1795 and the Patroottentijd between 1780-1789) provides the background to which the Hoge Regering made policy. Subsequently, this chapter elaborates further upon the quantitative method to find archival events developed by Vriend.

The VOC's information system

The intricate information infrastructure of the VOC enabled the company to manage an impressive amalgamation of settlements and trading posts in the Southeast Indies for almost 200 years. Due to the nine-month long, one-way voyage from the Dutch Republic to the Indies the Heeren XVII could not address pressing matters in overseas settlements in a timely fashion. To solve this problem, the Heeren XVI instituted a second administrative centre in the centrally placed Batavia (modern-day Jakarta) in 1619, on the ruins of the city of Jacatra.¹ This resulted in the internal formal hierarchical structure visualized in Figure 1.1 below. Information also circulated along these lines. This meant that if a *factorij*, a small outpost, sent information to the Republic, it would travel all the way up the pyramid (if this information was relevant enough).

¹ H. Niemeijer, "The Central Administration of the VOC Government and Institutions of Batavia (1619-1811) – an introduction" in: F. van Dijk, D. Kortlang and G. Balk (red.), *The Archives of the Dutch East-India Company (VOC) and the local institutions in Batavia (Jakarta)*, (Leiden 2007).

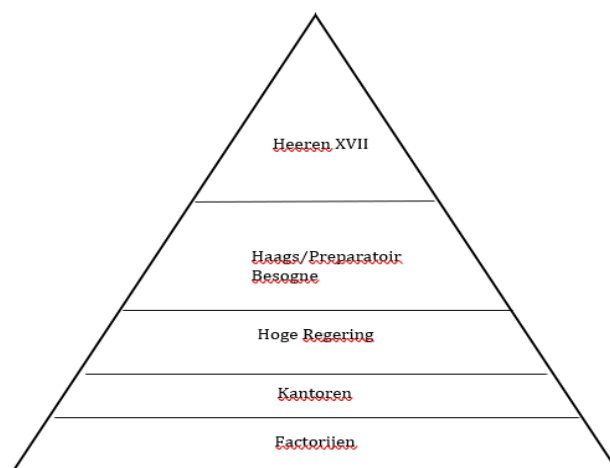


Figure 1.1: Hierarchy of the VOC

The Heeren XVII consisted of representatives of the six chambers that formed the VOC. The Amsterdam chamber had eight seats at the table. The Zeeland chamber followed with four representatives. The smaller chambers of Hoorn, Enkhuizen, Delft and Rotterdam all got one representative. The seventeenth representative periodically changed hands between the smaller chambers to prevent the chamber of Amsterdam from having a majority on its own. The chambers were allowed to nominate three candidates when a vacancy occurred. It was then up to the burgomasters of the city to pick their candidate. This resulted in an intimate relationship between the regents of the cities and the directors, according to prominent VOC historian Femme Gastra. This meant that “repercussions of party factions, political antitheses and cabals could very easily infiltrate the board of directors.² Whether this held true for the Hoge Regering in Batavia as well is a central theme in this thesis.

Information infrastructures like the VOC’s were not created within a day. According to American social historian Woodruff Smith, such organizations systematically stored and organized business information. With the passing of time, more and more VOC officials realized the value of this information in doing long-term predictions. The forming of dossiers and standardization of information became more and more important to this end.³ Examples of this standardization of information within the

² F. Gastra, ‘The Organization of the VOC’ in: Van Dijk, Kortlang and Balk (red.), *The Archives of the VOC*, 13-19.

³ W. Smith, ‘The function of commercial centres in the modernization of European capitalism: Amsterdam as an information exchange in the seventeenth century’, *The journal of economic history* 44, nr. 4 (1984), 985-1005, 997-1003.

VOC are rife. One of the most complete examples is the *zaken-index op de resoluties van de Heeren XVII*. This is an index on all the meetings of the highest administrative body of the VOC, the Heeren XVII. It is compiled into topics and ordered alphabetically.⁴ This allowed the user to quickly navigate through an ocean of information. These were not open to the public however. Severely restricting access to archives was the norm in Europe until the twentieth century.⁵

After a couple of decades had passed, the incoming communication from the East Indies grew too voluminous for the Heeren XVII to deal with it themselves. Instead, they instituted a commission called the *Haagse Besogne*. Company official Pieter van Dam described the mandate of the Haagse Besogne in 1701: “In the Besogne, those papers, books and letters are read and examined that came from the East Indies. After this process, a concept is formulated that would then be presented to the Heeren XVII for deliberation.”⁶ Essentially, the Haagse Besogne commission functioned as a filter of sorts for the Heeren XVII. The commission made provisional decisions that had to be ratified by the Heeren XVII, although they could also make amendments. After 1790, this job was taken over by the *Preparatoir Besogne*, which is discussed in the second chapter.

The Hoge Regering was established in 1609 to gain more permanent profitable trade relations and was composed of the Governor-General and the Council of the Indies, consisting of nine members.⁷ The task of the council was “to assist the Governor-General in all such matters as the general management of trade, war, government and in the administration of justice in all civil and criminal matters”.⁸ A decade later, on 30 May 1619, the VOC conquered the Javanese port town of Jaccatra. Previously, the Hoge Regering had resided mostly in Banten or Ternate. However, Jaccatra provided the VOC with a harbour, a repair dock and a permanent central warehouse and an administrative

⁴ Nationaal Archief, Den Haag (NL-HaNA), Archive of the Dutch East India Company (VOC), 1602-1795 (1811), 1.04.02, Zakenindex op de resoluties van de heren XVII, inventory numbers 221-224.

⁵ Governments severely restricted access to their archives to protect state secrets and prevent historians from writing unfavorable histories about them. The VOC, a ‘state within a state’, was mostly occupied with the former: it wanted to protect its sailing routes and matters like price predictions. For more information, see: M. Duchein, ‘The History of European Archives and the Development of the Archival Profession in Europe’, *American Archivist* 55 (1992), 14-25, 22-24.

⁶ Selection of relevant parts, my translation of P. van Dam, *Beschryvinge van de Oostindische Compagnie*, published by F.W. Stapel (Den Haag 1927). 313-314.

⁷ R. Parthesius, *Dutch Ships in Tropical Waters: the development of the Dutch East India Company Shipping Network in Asia 1595-1660*, (Amsterdam 2009).

⁸ Translation provided by H. Niemeijer in Niemeijer, ‘The central administration of the VOC government and the local institutions of Batavia (1619-1811) – an introduction’ in: *Archives of the VOC*, 62.

centre. The Hoge Regering set itself up hastily and renamed the town as Batavia.⁹ Batavia instantly became a vital hub for the VOC in the economically vibrant intra-Asian network that had existed long before the Dutch, Portuguese or Spanish started participating in it.¹⁰ Furthermore, Dutch colonial presence varied in terms of violence and control over the region. Two examples in this regard are the massacre of the nutmeg-producing Banda Islands under the directive of governor-general Jan Pieterszoon Coen (1587-1629) and the artificial trading island of Dejima where the VOC was at the mercy of the Japanese authorities for its monopoly.¹¹

The *Kantoren* and *factorijen* in Figure 1.1 represent the actual colonies the VOC possessed outside of Batavia. A kantoor functioned as a regional hub to which the smaller factorijen, or outposts, were subordinate. The kantoren were all subordinate to the Hoge Regering in Batavia.¹² In turn, the Hoge Regering was subordinate to the Heeren XVII. However, the relationship between the Hoge Regering and the successors of the VOC (the Comité and the Raad) was less clear-cut. How and why this happened is explored in the third and fourth chapters.

The VOC and the Dutch Republic in the late eighteenth century

The VOC dominated European-Asian trade for the first half of its 200-year existence.¹³ The Company was able to make itself a key player in the inter-Asian market because of the numerous kantoren and factorijen it had acquired either through violent means or trade negotiations. As part of such a large corporation, Company traders were able to take advantage of price differences within the Asian market in buying and selling goods. However, the eighteenth century was not nearly as profitable as the seventeenth had been. This decline in profits has long been thought to be the result of rising costs due to conflicts with the English, an inability to adapt to changes in consumer demands (spices to cash crops) and the inflexibility of the monopoly system and corruption within the VOC. This view has been championed by Gaastra.¹⁴ Corruption was already thought to be the cause at the time of the VOC's bankruptcy in 1795, where the pun *Vergaan Onder Corruptie*

⁹ Idem, 61-63.

¹⁰ J. Abu-Lughod, *Before European Hegemony: the World System A.D. 1250-1350*, (Oxford 1991), 291-315.

¹¹ Ricklefs, *Modern Indonesia*, 33-34 and M. Opstall, *Handeldrijven op Japan: 1609 tot 1880* (Den Haag 1980), 9.

¹² Gaastra, 'Organization of the VOC' in: *Archives of the VOC*, 56-58.

¹³ D. Ormrod, *The Rise of Commercial Empires: England and the Netherlands in the Age of Mercantilism, 1650-1770* (Cambridge 2003), 31-43.

¹⁴ F. Gaastra, *De geschiedenis van de VOC* (Zutphen: Walburg Pers, 2002), 159-173.

(perished under corruption) was used originally. However, Dutch social historian Chris Nierstrasz argues that our understanding of corruption is defined much more broadly than it was back then. While we consider embezzlement, nepotism and illegal private trade as corruption since it goes against the interests of the Company, many Company servants thought of themselves as entrepreneurs taking care of the business of the Company as well as looking out for themselves.¹⁵

Els Jacobs and Chris Nierstrasz see a number of other reasons that featured more prominently. Firstly, European competition grew much, much stronger. The English East India Company (EIC) was backed by the English fleet, while the VOC only received support in 1783, at which point it was already too late. Secondly, English overseas servants also had much more of a *carte blanche* compared to their Dutch counterparts. Thirdly, the dominance of the British navy already dealt a huge blow to the Dutch in the Fourth Anglo-Dutch War (1781-1784), almost bankrupting the VOC and breaking the final straw of Dutch naval superiority.¹⁶ Furthermore, while the VOC's profits declined in the eighteenth century, its administration -and thus the costs of said administration- bloomed. As a matter of fact, the Company doubled the amount of people it sent out in the second half of its existence from 317.000 to 655.000.¹⁷ The VOC was also the largest of its kind in terms of shipping figures.¹⁸ Lastly, the collapse of a number of Asian empires destabilized trade even more.¹⁹

Back in the Republic, the situation was also not quite peaceful. As we have seen earlier in this chapter, Gaastra argues that political strife in the Republic easily translated to the VOC chambers. Jonathan Isreal typifies the situation at the close of the eighteenth century as one of economic, political and imperial crises. As the Fourth Anglo-Dutch War broke out, a movement called the Patriot Revolution (1780-1787) gained ground between the so-called *Patriotten* and *Orangisten*. The main philosophical difference between them was

¹⁵ E. Jacobs, *Koopman in Azië: de handel van de Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie tijdens de achttiende eeuw* (Zutphen 2000), 9 and Nierstrasz, *In the Shadow of the Company*, 3-5.

¹⁶ Within the first month (January 1781), the British already captured over 200 Dutch vessels (!). J. Isreal, *The Dutch Republic: Its Rise, Greatness and Fall 1477-1806* (Oxford 1995), 1097.

¹⁷ Nierstrasz, *In the Shadow of the Company*, 2-5, and Gaastra, 'Organization of the VOC in: *Archives of the* 45-46. For the amount of people transported: F.S. Gaastra, *Geschiedenis van de VOC* (Zutphen 1991), 175-177.

¹⁸ In terms of shipping, the Dutch were by far the largest: J.R. Bruijn, F.S. Gaastra and I. Schöffer, *Dutch Asiatic Shipping in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (Den Haag 1979), Volume II and III.

¹⁹ C.A. Bayly, *Imperial Meridian: the British Empire and the world, 1780-1830* (London 1989), part one and two.

the place of ordinary people in politics. The Patriotten wanted to increase their influence in politics while the Orangisten saw this as destructive to society. A revolutionary booklet by Baron van der Capellen called out the inalienable right of the Dutch people to civil liberty and political freedom, obviously inspired by the recent American Revolution (1765-1783). The booklet argued that this right had existed before they had been occupied by the Habsburg Charles V and Philip II but it had not been reinstated after the Dutch Revolt (1568-1648) had proven successful. Instead, Van Der Capellen argued, these rights had been suppressed by stadholders and regents.²⁰ The Patriotten started civilian militias (again inspired by events in North-America) while the Orangisten were in control of the standing army. When princess Wilhelmina (1751-1820) was arrested by Patriotten near Schoonhoven in 1787, her brother, newly-appointed Prussian king Friedrich Wilhelm II (1786-1797) considered this an insult to his family and after strong British encouragement he sent an army of 26,000 men. The Patriot militias disintegrated at the sight of this vast army and the Patriot Revolution died down. Many of the Revolution's supporters fled the Republic in fear of intimidation, often to France. In the following years, Austria was the main arbiter of the Low Countries until the French Revolutionary army made its way into the Southern Netherlands in 1792 while the Orangisten remained in power.²¹

In 1790, the Dutch Republic and the VOC were thus in heavy weather. Shipping had taken a hit by the British which drastically impeded Dutch trade and geopolitical power. Revolutionary sentiments inspired by the Dutch Revolt and the American Revolution resulted in political strife within the country. All in all, the Dutch Republic and its Southeast Indian possessions were at a very vulnerable point in history. This is where the story of this research starts as the last years of the Hoge Regering under VOC rule provide a point of comparison to the later periods under the Comité and Raad.

²⁰ Israel, *Dutch Republic*, 1098-1100.

²¹ Idem, 1122-1139.

2. Pepper production and local succession in Java: the final years of the VOC in Batavia

As a whole, this chapter aims to establish a baseline of the perspective of the Hoge Regering under the VOC to make evident continuities and discontinuities with the two subsequent periods under the Comite (1796-1801) and the Raad (1801-1806). The five most significant cases of the period (in terms of relative physical thickening) are discussed as possible archival events to this end. Placing these events into the context of the VOC's decline could shine a new light on the primary causes of this decline and provide the link between Dutch historiography and Stoler's theory that was missing according to her critics. Additionally, the source material will be used as a testcase for Stoler's archival events. Doing so allows for a critical assessment of her rather vague concepts. Vriend has already clarified this with regards to a physical thickening (by introducing relative thickening), but it remains unclear when the second criterion, a quickening of the archival pulse, is fulfilled. Leading questions for the quantitative analysis are thus two-fold. First, are the cases found by using the realia in a quantitative perspective archival events? And if so, what do these archival events tell us about the administrative perspective at the time and about the theory of archival events in practice?

Before we delve into the specific keywords, it should be interesting to put the period under research into a quantitative context of the VOC period as a whole. Vriend has calculated that writers of realia wrote 377 realia annually on average in the eighteenth century. He also notes that the frequency varied wildly over the years. This notion is supported by the data analyzed for this chapter (Figure 2.1).

Year	1790	1791	1792	1793	1794	1795	Total
Realia written	0	404	699	205	190	438	1906
Pages of resoluties	3267	3143	2912	2802	1940	1530	15594

Figure 2.1: Absolute amount of realia on the resoluties of the Hoge Regering, 1790-1794.¹

¹ Arsip Nasional Indonesia, Jakarta (ID-JaAN), Archief van de gouverneur-generaal en raden van Indië (Hoge Regering) van de Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie en taakopvolgers, 1612-1812, Net-generale resoluties, inventory numbers 1114-1134 and the digitized realia between 1790-1795, https://sejarah-nusantara.anri.go.id/realia_search/?description=&subject=&date_from=01%2F01%2F1790&date_to=01%2F01%2F1796&order_by= [accessed 09/05/2019].

Besides the big discrepancies between the years, what immediately catches the eye is the fact that there were zero realia produced in the year 1790. Over this period of time, there were 3,267 pages worth of resoluties produced by the Hoge Regering.² This seems to be plenty of material to write realia on, especially when we look at the following year. In 1791, the Hoge Regering produced 3,143 pages worth of resoluties that were compiled by the realist, the writer of realia, into 404 realia.³ There is no apparent relationship between the amount of resoluties and the amount of realia, so there has to be another explanation. One reason could be that the realia for this year were simply lost. The realia were first written annually in so-called *jaarrealia* that were then compiled into the official realia. Perhaps the *jaarrealia* of 1790 was lost. While this is possible, the year before 1790 (Figure 2.2 below) shows that the preceding year 1789 was also significantly lower in realia while having 5,432 pages worth of resoluties.⁴ Since we have established that the realist compiled the realia on the basis of the resoluties, a different explanation could be that he did not deem the resoluties discussed relevant enough to include them. While this does not seem very plausible with such a large number of resoluties, the 1789 case shows that a very low number of realia was also possible and perhaps a conscious effort by the realist. Whether this was a conscious effort or a random mistake, the fact that the *Hoge Commissie* (High Commission) was instituted to investigate administrative abuses in Batavia in 1791 does not seem like a coincidence. As has been said, the resoluties were the backbone of the archive and thus vital for the Heeren XVII in order to hold the Hoge Regering accountable for their actions. The realia made the resoluties much more accessible and were thus also of huge importance to the VOC. While it remains uncertain why the *jaarrealia* of 1790 is missing, the fact remains that the Heeren XVII was worried about the Hoge Regering at this stage.

² ID-JaAN, Archive of the Hoge Regering, resoluties hoge regering, inventory numbers 1114-1116.

³ Idem, 1117-1120.

⁴ Idem, 1109-1113.

Year	1785	1786	1787	1788	1789	Total
Realia written	182	175	1268	226	8	1859
Pages of resoluties	2789	3794	6473	6330	5423	24809

Figure 2.2: Absolute amount of realia and corresponding amount of resoluties of the Hoge Regering, 1785-1789.⁵

Now that a general overview of the administrative production has been established we can move on to the analysis of the specific realia. As has been said, the incidence of realia within the period 1790-1795 have been counted in the timespan of trimesters. These realia already give an indication of where an increase in “physical thickness” takes place. Figure 2.3 is what a top ten of non-relative realia for the period under investigation looks like.

Realia	# of realia in trimester	Year and trimester	Total
Circulaire Ordres	21	1791-3	61
Bantam	19	1791-1	39
Java	19	1792-1	33
Peper	17	1791-1	22
Inlandsche Vorsten	13	1792-1	40
Inlandsche Vorsten	12	1791-3	40
Ceylon	11	1791-2	42
Ceylon	11	1792-2	42
Landerijen en Landb	10	1792-3	18
Zeezaaken	10	1792-1	32

Figure 2.3: Non-relative realia on the resoluties of the Hoge Regering, 1790-1795.⁶

However, this does not yet account for a relative increase in thickness. Realia like “Ceylon” (modern-day Sri Lanka) are featured more prominently simply because they are discussed on a more regular basis. When the Poisson distribution is applied to the data, the top ten looks like Figure 2.4 below.

⁵ ID-JaAN, Archive of the Hoge Regering, resoluties hoge regering, inventory numbers 1088-1113 and digitized realia between 1785-1789, https://sejarah-nusantara.anri.go.id/realia_search/?description=&subject=&date from=01%2F01%2F1785&date to=01%2F01%2F1790&order by= [accessed 09/05/2019].

⁶ Idem, digitized realia, https://sejarah-nusantara.anri.go.id/realia_search/?description=&subject=&date from=01%2F01%2F1790&date to=01%2F01%2F1796&order by= [accessed 09/05/2019].

Realia	# realia in trimester	Year and trimester	Total
Peper	17	1791-1	22
Java	19	1792-1	33
Bantam	19	1791-1	39
Circulaire Ordres	21	1791-3	61
Landerijen en Landb	10	1792-3	18
Randzoenen	9	1792-2	16
Preanger Landen	6	1791-3	6
Batavia en Batavias	7	1791-2	9
Ambagten en Amba	7	1792-1	10
Diaconie	6	1791-3	7

Figure 2.4: Relative realia on the resoluties of the Hoge Regering, 1790-1795.⁷

We instantly see that the realia Ceylon is gone from the top ten. When accounting for the relativity of frequency of realia, it actually drops from the 7th and 8th spot to the 23rd and 24th. Since the average incidence of Ceylon in the realia is rather high at 2.8 per trimester, big outliers are less significant. In other words, since Ceylon is one of the most discussed realia on average any outliers would have to be more pronounced to keep its spot in the top ten.

A similar movement can be seen in the references to the *Circulaire Ordres*. These were general orders circulated by the Hoge Regering on the direction of the Heeren XVII across all settlements owned by the VOC. Their subject could range from strict orders to curtail illegal private trade to calls for help from an administration drowning in paper. One such example is a circulaire ordre published in 1790 which appealed to “anyone that has the ability, inclination and time to spare to help with the calculation of the Company’s shipping”.⁸ This also supports the earlier notion that the year 1790 was a tough year administratively. The lack of realia in 1790 could thus be explained by a shortage of administrative personnel. Going back to the data, we can see that the circulaire ordres drop from the first to the fourth spot in significance, due to this realia having the highest average per trimester of all keywords within this period. Similarly, the realia on *Inlandsche Vorsten* also drop out of the top ten relatively “thick” keywords (to places thirteen and sixteen). We can conclude that Vriend’s quantitative method accounts well for the criterion of relative thickness.

⁷ Ibidem.

⁸ My translation. The quote is sourced from A. van den Belt, *Het VOC-bedrijf op Ceylon: een voorname vestiging van de Oost-Indische Compagnie in de 18^e eeuw*, doctorate thesis (Leiden 2008).

However, physical thickness is only one of two criteria of an archival event. A quickening of the pulse is the second one. This quickening refers to an increase in the amount of correspondence on a subject. Such an increase can take the form of commissions or missives to subordinate ranks, and the Heeren XVII in the Republic. For the largest part of the VOC's lifespan, the earlier discussed Haagse Besogne was the commission that decided what information needed to be passed through to the Heeren XVII. Between 1790-1795 the Haagse Besogne ended up with a large backlog. For instance, in 1793 the Haagse Besogne was still only up to the incoming correspondence from Banten from the year 1790.⁹

Besides the vast quantity of information, the administrative struggles also had a political background: at this point in the Dutch Republic the *Patriottentijd* (1780-1787), erupted. This ideological battle took place in all echelons of Dutch politics. In 1786, when the Company had to turn to the Dutch government for support as it could no longer fulfill its financial duties, the Patriot-led States of Holland suggested an increase to the amount of directors in the boards of the Amsterdam and Zeeland chambers, with the idea that the new appointees would be Patriotten. However, Zeeland opposed this and the board expansion was confined to Amsterdam. In Amsterdam, the newly appointed Patriot directors formed the *Departement tot de Indische Zaken* (*Department for Asian Affairs*). This body remained inactive for four years because the Zeeland chamber refused to approve it until 1790. The Vijfde Departement would henceforth be known as the Preparatoir Besogne. This Besogne took over the tasks of the Haagse Besogne, although there was some overlap in the years 1790-1791. The biggest difference however, was its members. The Haagse Besogne consisted of four directors from Amsterdam, two from Zeeland and one from every other chamber. The Preparatoir Besogne excluded the smaller chambers: out of its ten members, six were Amsterdam directors while the remaining came from the Zeeland chamber.¹⁰ The differences between them seem to have been small. The Haagse Besogne wrote down the date of their deliberations and signed their name at the end of the discussion of every outpost. One book usually spanned several years. The Preparatoir Besogne instead used numbers to differentiate between different subjects within the discussion of an outpost and did not sign their name at the end of the

⁹ NL-HaNA, VOC archive, stukken van commissies uit de Heren XVII en de kamer Amsterdam, Haags Besogne en andere commissies, inventory number 4506, 14 October 1793.

¹⁰ Gaastra, 'Organization of the VOC' in: *Archives of the VOC*, 17-18.

deliberations.¹¹ This is corroborated by Gaastra, who contends that the Besogne could not provide the Patriot influence it intended to.¹²

Pepper in Banten

The realia that took the number one spot are on the subject of pepper in the first trimester of 1791. All of them were actually dated 10 March 1791.¹³ What the quantitative approach did not account for, was the presence of identical realia under a different keyword. In this case, pepper and Banten (located on West-Java) both popped up as significant results. This underscores the significance of the event, since the realia were deemed relevant in the context of all discussion of both peper and Banten. The VOC was in Banten at the grace of its Sultan. A century earlier, a civil war had broken out between the Sultan Ageng (r. 1651-1683) and his son and successor Haji (1682-1687), in which the son sought support from the VOC.¹⁴ In return, the VOC was granted permission to build a headquarters in Banten, called *Fort Speelwijk*.¹⁵ However, in achieving this victory over his father the crown prince lost effective control over the state he so desired to rule and the important pepper trade and became a vassal state of the VOC.¹⁶ The cause of the pepper discussion was a report made up by *capitein-militair* Van Rhijn on the production of pepper in Western Banten which implied that the pepper gardens were in a bad state. A number of actions were taken to foster more efficient production, ranging from a political appeal, financial remuneration and both administrative and physical control. They appealed to Banten Sultan Abul Mohammad Ali Uddin (r. 1777-1802) to increase supply by making changes in a number of specific pepper gardens that were not doing well according to Van Rhijn.¹⁷ The Sultan complied and even donated all uncultivated lands to the pepper

¹¹ For instance, see NL-HaNA, VOC archive, commissies uit de Heren XVII en de kamer Amsterdam, Haags Besogne en andere commissies, inventory number 4505, 21 September 1793 and Vijfde department van de kamer Amsterdam en preparatoir besogne, inventory number 4512, 403.

¹² Gaastra, *Geschiedenis van de VOC*, 166-170.

¹³ ID-JaAN, digitized realia, https://sejarah-nusantara.anri.go.id/realia_search/?description=&subject=peper&date_from=01%2F01%2F1791&date_to=01%2F01%2F1792&order_by [accessed 7/4/2019].

¹⁴ M. Ricklefs, *Modern Indonesia*, 95-104.

¹⁵ K. Ueda, S. Wibisono, N. Harkantingsih and C. Lim, 'Paths to Power in the Early Stage of Colonialism: An Archaeological Study of the Sultanate of Banten, Java, Indonesia, the Seventeenth to Early Nineteenth Century', *Asian Perspectives* 55, no. 1 (2016), 89-119, 110-114.

¹⁶ M. Ricklefs, *Modern Indonesia*, 95-104.

¹⁷ A. Ota, 'Cooperation, compromise and network making: State-society relationship in the Sultanate of Banten, 1750-1808', *South East Asia: History and Culture* 37, (2008), 137-165.

planters.¹⁸ While there is no threat expressed to force compliance, it can be assumed that there was an implicit threat of violence since the VOC considered the Banten Sultanate to be subordinate to the Company and thus expected it to comply. However, it goes without saying that there were many Asian polities before and during the presence of Europeans in Asia. It has also already been established that Asian societies were not quite the open terrain where European companies could exploit these local economies freely. Instead, Asian rulers often adapted to the new situation by using said Europeans to their advantage.¹⁹ One such example was exhibited in the Banten Wars where crown prince Haji used the VOC (who also used him) to dethrone his father Sultan Ageng.

The Hoge Regering also ordered an increase in financial compensation for the planters. These planters, which were referred to by the VOC as *Wetangers*, who by the close of the eighteenth century had developed a very clear sense of what their work should be worth and were known to run when this was not offered.²⁰ Although there is no value ascribed to the increase of wages in the realia, according to historian Atsushi Ota's research on pepper cultivation reports about 7.5 Spanish Reals per bahar was deemed appropriate.²¹ This was only reported to have been paid once. Ota also claims that no detailed information is available about the area after 1790, while there were actually 62 realia on the subject of Banten after 1790.²² Furthermore, one of the realia in this event describes the order to surround all pepper gardens with coffee trees. There was thus a conscious Company effort to cultivate both pepper and coffee in Banten, albeit with a primary focus on pepper. Additionally, one realia within this event approves that "all of the pepper in South-East, and East Banten should be made equal with Banten pepper." By regulating the price the Company could try and prevent one pepper farm undercutting the other.²³

¹⁸ ID-JaAN, digitized realia, https://sejarah-nusantara.anri.go.id/realia_search/?description=&subject=peper&date_from=01%2F01%2F1791&date_to=01%2F01%2F1792&order_by [accessed 7/4/2019].

¹⁹ H. Kwee, *The Political Economy of Java's Northeast Coast, c. 1740-1800*, (Leiden 2006), 4-45.

²⁰ Wetangers were migrants from Java (Wetang meaning east).

²¹ According to the VOC Glossarium, a *Bahar* is an Asian unit of measurement which equates to about 375 pounds: <http://resources.huygens.knaw.nl/vocglossarium/VocGlossarium/vocoutp> [accessed 9/4/2019]. For S. Ota's assertions, see: Ota, 'State-society relationship in the Sultanate of Banten', 137-165.

²² ID-JaAN, digitized realia, https://sejarah-nusantara.anri.go.id/realia_search/?description=&subject=Bantam&date_from=01%2F01%2F1790&date_to=01%2F01%2F1795&order_by [accessed 7/4/2019].

²³ ID-JaAN, digitized realia, https://sejarah-nusantara.anri.go.id/realia_search/?description=&subject=peper&date_from=01%2F01%2F1791&date_to=01%2F01%2F1792&order_by [accessed 7/4/2019].

In terms of administrative control, captain-military Van Rhijn was ordered to execute these decrees and report back. The commander of Banten was ordered to be extra vigilant in preventing the Wetangers to run away. If caught, the commander was supposed to put them to work for the pepper planters or the Sultan of Banten, who presumably both saw the Wetangers as a valuable source of labor.

The decline in pepper production was also reported to the Republic. The Haagse Besogne only mentioned a party of thirty guns being sent back because of defects within this period, but the Preparatoir Besogne discussed the decline in detail (including the return of the aforementioned guns).²⁴ The Besogne struggled to comprehend who exactly was to blame for the decline. While earlier correspondence indicated that two Company servants were to blame, an official report indicated that “the reason behind the decline should be sought at the side of the Sultan.”²⁵ However, the governor of Banten had already accepted the resignation of one of these servants a year prior, indicating that he did feel it was their responsibility. The Besogne concludes that while perhaps negligent, the Company servants were hardly to blame because their gardens had actually seen an increase in production in the year 1790, although this did not offset the decrease in total production of Banten. A later discussion by the Preparatoir Besogne on the subject discussed the value of the Sultan’s promise to increase pepper production, noting that “due to all of the admonitions towards the Sultan, we had expected another increase in the following year.”²⁶ They lament the fact that the opposite happened and order the Banten governor to use all measures necessary to increase production and decrease the costs of the *comptoir* (outpost) in their last entry of the Besogne before the VOC was declared bankrupt and transitioned into the Comité Oost-Indische Handel en Bezittingen.²⁷ Although the Sultan comes out of this looking lazy and unwilling to cooperate, this could be far from the truth. How the Sultan reacted to complaints of the Company cannot be deciphered from VOC sources. Furthermore, the willingness of Company officials in Banten to make themselves look better by speaking ill of the Sultan should also not be discounted.

²⁴ NL-HaNA, VOC Archive, commissies uit de Heren XVII en de kamer Amsterdam, Haags Besogne en andere commissies, inventory numbers 4505, 21 September, 1792 and 4506, 14 October 1793.

²⁵ NL-HaNA, VOC Archive, commissies uit de Heren XVII en de kamer Amsterdam, Vijfde department van de kamer Amsterdam en Preparatoir Besogne, inventory number 4513, 384.

²⁶ Idem, 4514, 357.

²⁷ Idem, 4515, generaal extract onder de materie van ad. 4.

All in all, this case should be deemed an archival event. Its relative increase in physical thickness was established by the quantitative approach and further supported by the fact that under both pepper and Banten the event was in the top three significant results. In terms of a “quickening of the pulse” of the archive, there is a number of communications. The report that alarms the Hoge Regering leads them to decide to send an appeal to the Sultan of Banten. Furthermore, initial reporter Van Rhijn and his associates are charged with following up on the measures taken. This could constitute the setting up of a commission of sorts, which is also a sign of a quickening pulse.²⁸ The Banten commander was ordered to be extra careful in controlling the whereabouts of the Wetangers, which is another line of communication. Lastly, Banten’s *Politieke Raad* (political council, the highest local administration of a settlement outside of Batavia) was to be informed of all these proceedings.²⁹ These constitute the subordinate lines of communication. The correspondence of Batavia with their superiors in the Republic are also numerous but much more confusing in nature. The Preparatoir Besogne receives contradicting reports on who is to blame for the decline in pepper production: Company servants or the Sultan. In the end, an increase in the pepper production of the Company convinces the Besogne that the decline was to be blamed mostly on the Sultan and his empty promises of improvement. These empty promises can also be seen as the Sultan stringing along the VOC so that they would leave him alone a while longer. However, to get a more evensided picture one would have to adopt an archive-as-source approach. This highlights why it is problematic to use the archive-as-subject approach to study subjects other than the creator of the archive: it could result in a onesided picture of events. In any case, this matter was deemed important on both the Asian and European side of the Company. This makes sense as pepper was the most important product that came from Banten and was in that sense vital to its profitability and thus survival.³⁰ We can thus see that a quickening of the archival pulse can also be seen in the communication towards the superiors of the Hoge Regering. This supports Stoler’s theory that archival

²⁸ In this specific realia, Van Rhijn, c.s. (and associates) are ordered to follow up on the measures in Banten. ID-JaAN, digitized realia, https://sejarah-nusantara.anri.go.id/realia_search/?description=van+rhijn+c.s.%2C+als&subject=peper&date_from=01%2F01%2F1791&date_to=01%2F01%2F1792&order_by= [accessed 9/4/2019].

²⁹ Niemeijer, ‘Central administration of the VOC’ in: *Archives of the VOC*, 120.

³⁰ NL-HaNA, commissies uit de Heren XVII en de kamer Amsterdam, VOC archive, Preparatoir Besogne, 4514, 357-360.

events reflect issues that are important to the archive's creator. Additionally, it further shows that archival events can be found using Vriend's quantitative approach.

The duality of the Banten governor's answers in regard to who was to blame for the decline was also relevant. While his actions and earlier messages implied it was the fault of Company servants, the official report later mostly blamed the Sultan. This is where we can see a process of information disfiguration come to light. This is what Stoler calls a cribbing process, in which "an anxious rush to fulfill a superior's demand for information" can result in confusing information being transmitted throughout the Company's hierarchy.³¹ The Banten case also illustrates the first example of how political change, can affect the Company's administrative structure. The *Patriottentijd* impacted communications in Batavia as the *Haagse Besogne* was replaced by the *Preparatoir Besogne*, in which the six chambers of the VOC were no longer proportionally represented. Instead, the commission was made up of the Amsterdam and Zeeland Chambers, with the Amsterdam directors holding a permanent majority.

Java succession

The number two realia is a geographical one: the comptoir of Java. The risk of such a geographical location is that while the amount of realia within a trimester can look significant while the specific realia have little to do with one another. This seems partly true in the Java case. Out of the nineteen references within the first trimester of 1792, eight regard the measures to be taken for succession in case Prince Mangkunegara I, one of the (then two) local royal leaders in Central Java, passed away.³²

The succession realia on Mangkunegara I requires some context. According to Indonesia expert and historian Merle Ricklefs, Prince Mangkunegara I of Surakarta (1726-1795), also known as Mas Said in his earlier years, was one of the most flamboyant figures of eighteenth-century Java. By age 20 he was already one of the most accomplished military commanders in Java. He fought in the Chinese War (1740-1743) and a number of princely rebellions that merged into the Third Javanese War of Succession (1746-1757). At this point the old Mataram Kingdom was split in two Sultanates by the treaty of Gyanti (1755): Yogyakarta and Surakarta. The former was to be headed by Sultan

³¹ Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain*, 23-24 and 182-187.

³² ID-JaAN, digitized realia, https://sejarah-nusantara.anri.go.id/realia_search/?description=&subject=Java&date from=01%2F01%2F1792&date to=05%2F31%2F1792&order by= [accessed 7/4/2019].

Hamengkubuwana I, while the latter was headed by Pakubuwana III (r. 1749-1788) IV (1788-1820). Their successors, Hamengkubuwana II (r. 1792-1810, 1811-1812, 1826-1828) and Pakubuwana IV (1788-1820), would play a role in the archival event discussed here. Mas Said submitted two years after the treaty of Gyanti (129, Ricklefs) to Surakarta, Yogyakarta and the VOC. He gained a princely domain under Surakarta and he became Pangeran Adipati Mankunegara I (r. 1757-1795). Hamenkubuwana I of Yogyakarta wanted to destroy Mangkunegara but had to abide by the peace. The animosity remained..³³ Ricklefs describes Java as being in near-constant turmoil.³⁴ With this in mind, the fact that the VOC wanted a succession plan for Mangkunegara I in place makes sense, as this would both appease a powerful player in Javanese politics and provide political continuity on Java.

Mangkunegara I's appeal to enlarge his assets was denied by the Hoge Regering and if he and his son died, the VOC would ensure that an inheritance of 4000 rice fields would be given to his grandson.³⁵ They certainly considered themselves a factor, as Governor-General Alting and the Hoge Regering wrote to the Heeren XVII that "we thought it of utmost importance that the oldest sons of kings would become crownprinces so that the successions would be more predictable in the future (...) And that we are under the impression that the influence of the Company on these kings has never been greater than it is now."³⁶ Setting this up took some back and forth: Sultan Hamengkubuwana II of the Yogyakarta Sultanate and the Company exchanged eight letters between 1792 and 1796.³⁷ The amount of realia on Java succession turned out to be less than expected. However, the exchange of letters between the Sultan and the Hoge Regering makes up for this lack in physical thickening. Furthermore, the exchange of information throughout the

³³ Ricklefs, *Modern Indonesia*, 97-100, 129-130.

³⁴ Idem, *Soul Catcher: Java's fiery prince Mangkunagara I, 1726-1795* (Singapore 2018), 282-320 and Idem, 'the Origin of Prince Mangkunagara I's Appellation as the Catcher of Souls', *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* 171, no. 4 (2015), 543-548.

³⁵ ID-JaAN, digitized realia, https://sejarah-nusantara.anri.go.id/realia_search/?description=&subject=Java&date_from=01%2F01%2F1792&date_to=05%2F31%2F1792&order_by= [accessed 8/4/2019]. Tjajas padij were rice fields.

³⁶ NL-HaNA, VOC Archive, ingekomen stukken uit Indië, overgekomen brieven en papieren, inventory number 3945, Missive W.A. Alting en Rade van Indie aan de Bewindhebbers der Gen. O. I. Compagnie, Batavia 31 January 1793.

³⁷ ID-JaAN, Archief Hoge Regering, Inlandse Vorsten, inventory number 3587, folios 723-726, 767-770, 789-796, 857-860 and 877-880, https://sejarah-nusantara.anri.go.id/search_letters/?ruler=Sultan%20Hamengkubuwono%20II [accessed 8/4/2019].

VOC hierarchy and with the Sultan fulfils the second criterion of a quickened pulse of the archive. In conclusion, the Java succession case should be considered an archival event.

Now, did the VOC in the Republic consider the impression that “the influence of the Company on these rulers has never been greater than it is now” and the securing of a succession plan as equally important?³⁸ This seems to be the case. The Preparatoir Besogne reiterated three times how content they were with enduring peace and increased influence of the Company in the local courts.³⁹ In the last year of the Preparatoir Besogne, 1794, they went a little more into depth about the importance of a regular succession. The commission urged Java governor-general Van Overstraten to “do anything possible to make sure that from now on the throne will not be left vacant”.⁴⁰ Clearly, the commission attached much importance to a peaceful succession of local power in Java. The Hoge Regering felt it had a greater influence on the Javan rulers than ever before.⁴¹

If we look back at Stoler’s criteria for archival events, we can conclude that the succession case of Java fits the criteria of both a relative physical thickening and a quickening of the pulse through increased communication between the Sultan, the Hoge Regering and the Preparatoir Besogne. The only trait that seems to be lacking is that of a cribbing process. However, the fact that there was no obfuscation of information does not automatically mean that it was no archival event. It is clear that all parties thought this issue to be highly relevant. This indicates a high level of administrative worry on the subject and it is this administrative worry that defines archival events according to Stoler.⁴² While this case is well described within secondary literature, this method allows the historian to see how important both the Hoge Regering and the Republic considered local succession in Java to be in comparison to both other subjects and over a longer period of time. Although it may be common sense that keeping a favorable peace was important to the Dutch in Asia and the Republic, this method provides a more quantifiable

³⁸ NL-HaNA, VOC Archive, ingekomen stukken uit Indië, overgekomen brieven en papieren, inventory number 3945, Missive W.A. Alting en Rade van Indie aan de Bewindhebbers der Gen. O. I. Compagnie, Batavia 31 January 1793.

³⁹ Idem, commissies uit de Heren XVII en de kamer Amsterdam, Preparatoir Besogne, inventory numbers 4512, 377-387, 4513, 357-372 and 4514, 336-351.

⁴⁰ NL-HaNA, VOC archive, Preparatoir Besogne, 4515, general extract ad. 65 and 67.

⁴¹ According to Ricklefs, the VOC had always believed that legitimacy consisted of little more than being the son of a previous king. Therefore, in the VOC’s search for stability, it supported rulers whom Javanese notables frequently believed to have no legitimate right or ability to rule. The Dutch thereby exacerbated rather than resolved this source of instability. See Ricklefs, *Modern Indonesia*, 101.

⁴² Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain*, 106-107 and 129.

way of ascertaining how important the subject was to the eyes of the VOC compared to other subjects. So again this approach only gives further insight in the mindset, continuities and discontinuities of the creator of the archive.

The Circulaire Ordres

Moving on to the fourth spot on the list of possible archival events, the *circulaire ordres* (circulatory orders), this is definitely a different type of event. Circulaire ordres were orders that the Heeren XVII submitted to the Hoge Regering in Batavia to be circulated amongst all colonies.⁴³ The ordres within the last trimester of 1791 are quite varied in the subjects they try to regulate. The 21 ordres that were put out can be put into four categories (Figure 2.5).⁴⁴

Subject	Ordres
Administrative correction	10
Cost reduction	5
Private trade	4
Miscellaneous	2

Figure 2.5: Circulaire ordres in categories.

As Figure 2.5 illustrates, nearly half of all circulaire ordres concern unrelated administrative corrections and recommendations. One example is a reminder to register the use of all working tools and send said documentation to the Republic. While these orders imply that there was improvement to be made in the local administrations, the individual realia are not related to each other. As a consequence, the physical thickness of this case is not as high as the method indicated in Figure 2.4. This is because circulaire ordres is a very broad header under which many policies can fall. Since the circulaire ordres are discussed frequently within the realia of the Hoge Regering with a mean of about four per trimester, the ten administrative orders are not sufficient to be considered as a significant (99,9%) *relative* physical thickening. Adjusted for subject, the realia on the circulaire ordres within the last trimester of 1791 only come to a 99,6% Poisson value, just barely not significant enough.

⁴³ Van den Belt, *VOC-Bedrijf op Ceylon*, 45-46.

⁴⁴ ID-JaAN, digitized realia, https://sejarah-nusantara.anri.go.id/realia_search/?description=&subject=circulaire+ordres&date_from=09%2F02%2F1791&date_to=01%2F01%2F1792&order_by= [accessed 16/04/2019].

According to Stoler's quickening of the pulse, one could argue that the case both does and does not suffice. If we look at how this information travels down through the hierarchy from the Heeren XVII to the factorijen, it could be said that since these circulaire ordres permeate every layer of the VOC hierarchy there is a definite quickening of the pulse when these are put out. However, the transmitted information itself only gets copied by the Hoge Regering and circulated throughout the possessions of the VOC. There is no response or discussion between the different layers of the VOC hierarchy. It thus seems unnatural to call this a quickening of the archival pulse even though, as a pulse always does, it originates from the heart and reaches every part of the body (the colonies). It is unclear what the heart should be in this metaphor. Should it be the hierarchically highest body (in this case the Heeren XVII)? Or should it be the body under investigation (which would be the Hoge Regering in this case)? Using the metaphor of the quickening pulse to qualify possible archival events is thus problematic. The definition of an increase in communication between different layers is equally insufficient. The concept of a quickening pulse would be better served with the added requirement that there needs to be an exchange of information or opinions as well at some point within the event. In this way, possible events like these orders can be excluded. While these circulaire ordres do reflect a degree of administrative worry, this worry came solely from the Heeren XVII. The Hoge Regering was merely copied and circulated the orders.

Landerijen en Landbouw

The final subject that the quantitative method provided is *Landerijen en Landbouw* (land and agriculture). These are for the majority (six out of ten realia) individual decisions on for example whether Batavian inhabitants could build a sugar mill or organize a bazaar (temporary market).⁴⁵ The leftover realia concern general regulation on running these lands or the renting of them. While there is a definite relative thickening, these decisions are on a decidedly local scale. This means that there can hardly be a quickening of the pulse on this subject, and the deliberations of the Preparatoir Besogne on Batavia suggest the same: nothing is mentioned in reference to these individual decisions or general regulations besides the very general advice to make sure "not to cut all the wood and give

⁴⁵ ID-JaAN, digitized realia, https://sejarah-nusantara.anri.go.id/realia_search/?description=&subject=Landerijen+en+Landbouw&date+from=09%2F02%2F1791&date+to=01%2F01%2F1793&order+by= [accessed 17-04-2019].

the young trees a chance to grow.”⁴⁶ This lack of information exchange shows that it is not an archival event.

Conclusion

The first quantitative analysis in this chapter concerned the general amount of realia produced by the Hoge Regering in Batavia between 1790-1795.. The most striking result was the complete absence of realia in the year 1790. The obvious explanation for this is that these records were lost. However, the fact that the Hoge Commissie was instituted to investigate administrative abuses a year later indicates that the Heeren XVII also considered this to be a problem.

The Banten case was the first of the realia discussed in this chapter. The case was established as an archival event based on its first and third spot in the quantitative analysis and the communication lines towards subordinate and superior communication lines. Furthermore, the ambiguity in the Banten governor’s answers when asked to explain the decline in pepper cultivation indicates the existence of a cribbing process, a phenomenon that can accompany archival events. Researching the second requirement for archival events, a ‘quickening of the pulse of the archive’, also turned out that while the Haagse Besogne was active until the Company’s demise in 1795, the ‘filter’ function of this commission was taken over by the Preparatoir Besogne for incoming correspondence from 1790-1795. While the Haagse Besogne consisted of representatives of all participating chambers, the Preparatoir Besogne was made up of only the Amsterdam and Zeeland chamber. Although this commission was set up in the context of the Patriottentijd (1781-1787) and should thus be considered an example of the Company adapting to political change, the actual work does not seem to be carried out very differently besides a few formal differences. The Dutch side of the VOC thus maintained continuity in its information infrastructure when faced with political change in the final years of its existence. Whether the successors of the VOC adopted this same continuity, as Van Goor and Ricklefs argued, is explored in the following chapters.

The case of succession in Java was also an archival event: it was quantitatively relevant (number two on the list) and the increased communication between Sultan Hamengkubuwana II, the Java comptoir, the Hoge Regering and the Republic. While there

⁴⁶ NL-HaNA, VOC archive, commissies uit de Heren XVII en de kamer Amsterdam, preparatoir besogne, 4512,4513, 4514 and 4515; the quote is from 4514: 339.

seems to have been no cribbing process, a reading of the *Preparatoir Besogne's* deliberations on the subject makes abundantly clear how important they deemed a predictable and peaceful succession.

The case of the *Circulaire Ordres* was the first of the realia that was established as quantitatively significant that did not hold up to qualitative scrutiny. The individual realia were on a range of subjects that did not pass the significance threshold. However, this exercise problematizes Stoler's second criterion for archival events: the quickening of the pulse of the archive. While such a metaphor fits these orders very well, a collection of general instructions, can hardly be described as an archival event.

The final result of the quantitative method was the subject of *Landerijen en Landbouw*. Like the *Circulaire Ordres*, the individual realia were too disparate to constitute a quantitatively significant event. Furthermore, they discuss individual decisions on local matters that are not transmitted to the Republic nor were they part of an exchange of information necessary to establish a quickening pulse. This result was thus not an archival event in any respect, emphasizing the importance of not taking a quantitative analysis like the one employed in this research at face value.

All in all, this chapter has provided a glance at what the *Hoge Regering* thought to be of high importance. The primary result was a large amount of administrative worry on the cultivation of pepper in Banten. The prevention of succession disputes was also deemed as important, as the *Preparatoir Besogne* reiterated multiple times in the Java case.

On the theory of archival events, this chapter showed that the quantitative method first employed by Vriend is effective at finding some archival events. Being able to detect these archival events enables the researcher to construct a perspective of the creator of an archive. This perspective can then be compared to existing literature to provide a more complete picture. However, the two non-archival events in the top five results also showed that this method alone is not enough to establish archival events. More qualitative research is required to do so. The case of the *circulaire ordres* did show how Stoler's 'pulse' metaphor is problematic, but that this can be mitigated by adding the qualification of an exchange of information or ideas (factually correct or not). Although *circulaire*

ordres do indicate a level of administrative worry, the source of this worry was the Heeren XVII. The Hoge Regering merely copied and circulated these orders.

3. An administration in isolation

The last chapter provided an overview of the priorities of the Hoge Regering in Batavia under the auspices of the VOC through the archival events that were discovered. In the winter of 1795, French revolutionary troops could advance over the frozen rivers to reach the northern Netherlands. Their advance was well-known at the time, and Patriot sentiments that had flared up only a decade ago resurfaced in the form of pamphlets and reading societies and action. In 1795, pressure of the advancing French led to 'a carpet of risings unfolding ahead of them' as historian Jonathan Israel describes.¹ The French generals in the Netherlands promised to not interfere in the setting up of a new republic and thus the Patriots renamed the Dutch Republic to the Batavian Republic in 1795. Did this seemingly sweeping political change have any bearing on the administration in Batavia? This chapter starts with a look at the political changes in the Republic before discussing the results of the quantitative analysis of realia to look at the continuities and discontinuities compared to the baseline of VOC period (1790-1795). Two organizations were charged with taking care of the Dutch East-Indian colonies during this period: the Comité der Oost-Indische Handel en Bezittingen (1795-1800) and the Raad der Aziatische bezittingen (1800-1806). This chapter concerns the former while chapter four concerns the latter period.

At the close of 1795, the States General conceded to widespread demand for a National Assembly to reform the constitution. The Assembly would have to be filled with delegates chosen by the ordinary people. In 1796, all males over the age of twenty that did not receive poor relief were eligible to vote. The National Assembly assembled first on 1 March 1796.² The Assembly also instituted the Comité der Oost-Indische Handel en Bezittingen, which was under the control of the new National Assembly.

Although revolutionary spirits were high at this time in the Republic, revolutionary reform was slower. The main reason behind this was that there were two main groups that pushing for reform: the radicals and the anti-Orangist federalists. The former wanted

¹ Israel, *Dutch Republic*, 1120.

² Idem, 1123.

to do away with the federal framework of the Republic. They were in the minority.³ The latter wished to keep much of the Republic's original structure and institutions in place.⁴ The radical revolutionary spirits cooled down further in the following years because of a severe defeat of the Dutch navy at the hands of the British at the Battle of Camperdown in 1797, marking the end of Dutch naval power as a force in global politics. As historian Jonathan Israel quotes an English visitor in 1800: "turmoil of revolution has left Dutch society in a remarkably orderly state".⁵

The political revolutionary élan was thus tempered in the Batavian Republic, and the National Assembly's gears turned slowly. However, it had also brought a new political-economic perspective to the fore: liberalism. Liberals of the time saw the monopolies of the trading companies as discouraging innovation. They saw themselves supported by the fact that all major trading companies went out of business within a forty-year time span.⁶ In reality, the reasons for the decline differed in each of these trading companies. However, this did not prevent them from believing that liberal economic policy was the new way to go. To transform from a monopoly system to a liberal one meant that the interrelation between political power and the production of trade goods had to be dismantled.⁷ Rulers in South East Asia had used their control over production as leverage in political battles and alliances amongst themselves and with external parties such as the VOC, as we have seen in the Java succession case in the second chapter.

In the view of colonial historian Jur van Goor, criticism towards this interrelation between monopoly and political power affected colonial policy only when Herman Willem Daendels, a general in the French revolutionary army, was named Governor General of

³ The radicals wanted to dissolve provincial structures and the concomitant regional autonomy. Their plan was to draw up new departments (subordinate to the National Assembly) out of a combination of the provinces, rename them and thus abolish the old way by breaking the links to the former provinces. This was also the central theme of the constitution pushed through by the radicals after their coup in 1798. Israel, *Dutch Republic*, 1124.

⁴ The reforms the anti-Orange federalists wanted to make were more oriented on curtailing the power of the Orange stadholders. See: De Wit, *Strijd tussen aristocratie en democratie in Nederland, 1780-1848: kritisch onderzoek van een historisch beeld en herwaardering van een periode* (Heerlen 1965), 1203.

⁵ Israel, *Dutch Republic*, 1122-1124.

⁶ For both the French and Dutch companies the final nail in the coffin was war: the Seven Years' War and the Fourth Anglo-Dutch War respectively, while the English East India Company was curtailed later in 1813 under pressure of British private interests which carried heavier weight than their Dutch counterparts. See: H. Furber, *Rival Empires of Trade and Orient, 1600-1800* (Minneapolis 1976) and van Goor, *Prelude to Colonialism*, 89.

⁷ For more characteristics of the monopoly system of colonial trading companies, see: van Goor, *Prelude to Colonialism*, 92-94.

the East Indies (1808-1811). Daendels was appointed by Napoleon to combat the supposed corruption in the Dutch East-Indies and reorganize Java's defence against the British. In his short tenure in Batavia, he curtailed the power of the local regents by treating them as administration officials instead of feudal lords and directed the construction of the *Grote Postweg*, a postal road that would serve as a backbone for infrastructure in Java. His policies were continued during the English occupation under Lieutenant Governor Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles (1811-1816) and even after the Dutch had resumed power in 1816.⁸ However, with the advent of the *cultuurstelsel* and the concomitant reinstatement of the local rulers as a vital link in the production of trade goods the liberal policies faded almost as quickly as they had crystalized.⁹

In his 'Prelude to Colonialism', Van Goor argues that the period between 1780 and 1830 has been unpopular among Dutch historians because of the many failures at the time. He asserts that this period is actually extremely interesting due to the many social and administrative experiments undertaken.¹⁰ Unfortunately, he only treats the periods under Daendels and Raffles somewhat extensively.¹¹ As towards the successors of the VOC, he only remarks that since communications between the Netherlands and Java had grown increasingly difficult, the Hoge Regering in Batavia became almost autonomous.¹² Since the colonies could not be resupplied with men, money and supplies from the Republic, the administration had to open up their market to traders such as the Americans. The loss of vast parts of the VOC's Asian trade network to the British had forced the Hoge Regering to turn towards agricultural production instead of the traditional monopolization of luxury goods. Van Goor argues that these external circumstances forced the Hoge Regering to let go of its mercantilist company system, in comparison to the liberalization of the English East India Company, which converted

⁸ Liberal policies included: wage-based remuneration and a refined taxation system.

⁹ Van Goor, *Prelude to Colonialism*, 98.

¹⁰ *Idem*, 83-85.

¹¹ This has somewhat changed in the meantime. In 2013, Frans Grijzenhout, Niek van Sas and Wyger Velema published an edited volume on the Batavian Republic called *Het Bataafse Experiment. Politiek en cultuur rond 1800* (Nijmegen 2013). Furthermore, Alicia Schrikker also published an article on a similar period in Sri Lanka: A. Schrikker, 'Grijs geworden in dienst van de Compagnie. Het lot van achtergebleven Compagniesdienaren op Ceylon na de Engelse overname, 1796-1808', in: J. Lindblad and A. Schrikker (red.), *Het verre gezicht. Politieke en culturele relaties tussen Nederland en Azië, Afrika en Amerika* (Franeker 2011), 142-162. While these works do touch on the period and area, they brush past the subject of this research, which is the Hoge Regering in Batavia.

¹² This difficulty arose because of the English naval dominance at the time, which even forced Dutch traders to fly under a neutral flag. Van Goor, *Prelude to colonialism*, 83-98.

under extensive debate.¹³ However, in his conclusion he only refers to Daendels and Raffles as those promoting new policies in the colony. Did Van Goor discount the policies of the Hoge Regering merely because (according to him) they were forced by external circumstances and had no other options? This seems unreasonable because the administration still enacted liberal policies even though the ‘revolutionary’ Comité der Oost-Indische Handel en Bezittingen specifically ordered the Hoge Regering to keep business and the organization of the Hoge Regering as it was, besides a few specific reforms in a missive sent from Amsterdam 13 October, 1796.¹⁴ This is corroborated by historian Merle Ricklefs who asserts that after its bankruptcy, “the VOC’s territorial possessions now became the property of the Netherlands government. There was little immediate change in Indonesia, however, for the same personnel remained in their jobs and pursued their old ways.”¹⁵

During the lifespan of the Comité, an ideological disconnect existed between the Republic and Batavia. In the Batavian Republic, the Comité drew up lists of all servants that had sworn an oath acknowledging the common people’s sovereignty (instead of the Orangist stadholder) and of those that refused. The Comité also ordered reports on the political stances of its servants.¹⁶ This ideological supervision was basically absent with regards to the Comité’s overseas servants, who could continue “*op den ouden voet*” (as they had done).¹⁷ The realia for the period of the Comité (1795-1800) can provide us with further insight as to what the Hoge Regering’s policy priorities were during the period of the Comité der Oost-Indische Handel en Bezittingen. Did they stick to their old ways like the historiography implies?

¹³ Van Goor, *Prelude to colonialism*, 91-92. This agricultural turn had already started in the 1750’s when Java became an even bigger producer of coffee than the original producing areas in Arabia. For more information, see: G. Knaap, ‘Coffee for Cash. The Dutch East India Company and the Expansion of Coffee Cultivation in Java, Ambon and Ceylon 1700-1730’, in J. van Goor (red.), *Trading Companies in Asia 1600-1830* (Utrecht 1986), 33-51.

¹⁴ NL-HaNA, Archive of the Comité der Oost-Indische Handel en Bezittingen, minuut-missiven van het Comité naar Indië en China, inventory number 31, 13 October 1796 and alphabetisch zakenregister op de missiven van het Comité naar Indië en China, inventory number 32.

¹⁵ Ricklefs, *Modern Indonesia*, 144.

¹⁶ NL-HaNA, Archive of the Comité, Nagekomen stukken, ‘Lijsten van werklieden die de verklaring hebben afgelegd (of geweigerd) van afkeer van het Stadhouderschap en erkenning van de volks-souvereiniteit, alsmede van hen, die zijn aangebleven en afgedankt,’ 1796 – 1797, inventory number 201A and ‘Rapport omtrent de talenten, politieke denkwijze, enz. der ambtenaren in dienst van het Comité. Met bijbehorende stukken. 1796 augustus.’, inventory number 238G.

¹⁷ NL-HaNA, Archive of the Comité, inventory numbers 31, 14 April 1796 and 32.

In the previous chapter, we established the possible archival events by looking at the criterion of relative physical thickening of the realia produced by the Hoge Regering. The second criterion, a quickening of the pulse, further qualifies an archival event as such. In this case that means if it can be found back in the Haagse- or Preparatoir Besogne, which functioned as a filter of information between Southeast Asia and the Heeren XVII. This filter was copied by the Comité and for the first years it even had the same name. Similarly, this commission was tasked with “checking the Indonesian trade and administrative books and reflecting on any errors or inconsistencies”.¹⁸ However, it proved difficult to analyze the archive of this committee in the same way as was done in the second chapter for two reasons. Firstly, the discussions of the Besogne have been fused into the resoluties of the Comité.¹⁹ This prevented a clear overview of all the discussions the Besogne had over the years. Secondly, the material that the Besogne discussed, in between the resoluties of the Comité, mainly relates to requests from individuals on matters like tax exemption. However, the lack of discussion on policy and trade books could very well be due to the standstill in communication during these years because of British naval dominance.

Because it turned out that the Besogne is not well-suited for a communication analysis, this chapter uses the outgoing communication of the Comité to the East Indies. These missives should also reflect the topics that the Comité regarded as being so important that they took the gamble of sending it across the British-dominated oceans. Although there is more to be found here, the isolation of the Dutch East Indies from the Republic is also visible when comparing the archives of the VOC and the Comité. The VOC's outgoing missives are bound in books that contain one to three years of outgoing missives, while the Comité's five years' worth of outward communication is bound in one book.²⁰

¹⁸ NL-HaNA, Archive of the Comité, Departement tot het huishoudelijk bestuur in Indië en de Kaap. Notulen van het departement van het huishoudelijk bestuur, inventory number 139, 9 June 1796.

¹⁹ For instance, see NL-HaNA, Archive of the Comité, Copie-resolutiën van het Comité, inventory number 11, 21 February 1796.

²⁰ NL-HaNA, VOC Archive, kopieboek van uitgaande missiven, instructies en andere papieren van de Heeren XVII en de kamer Amsterdam aan de kantoren in Indië, inventory numbers 312-344 in comparison to NL-HaNA, Archive of the Comité: Copieboek van missiven van het Comité naar Indië en China. 1796 April 14 – 1800 maart 13, inventory number 33.

Before we delve into any possible archival events, a look at the total amounts of realia and resoluties produced by the Hoge Regering:

Year	1796	1797	1798	1799	1800-may	Total
Realia written	129	184	154	108	232	801
Pages of resoluties	1292	2567	2725	3070	1335	9654

Figure 3.1: Absolute amount of realia and corresponding amount of resoluties, 1796-1800 (1 January - 6 May).²¹

Two main points come to mind when comparing these numbers with those calculated in the second chapter. Firstly, the amount of realia varies again, although not as much as it did in the previous chapter. Furthermore, there seems to be no direct relationship between the amount of resoluties and realia. For example, in 1799 the Hoge Regering produced more than twice the amount of resoluties it did in 1800, even though the amount of realia is only half of what it was in 1800. Even more so, the realia of 1800 above only go up to 6 May, as this is the date that the Comité was replaced by its successor, the Raad der Aziatische Bezittingen. It does seem odd that the realia, which are based on the resoluties, do not always increase or decrease concomitantly with these resoluties. This implies that the creator of the realia did not deem some resoluties as being relevant enough to be included.

Moving on to the specific realia that came to the fore in the quantitative analysis, Figure 3.2 shows the top five possible archival events based on a relative thickening.

Realia	# realia in trimester	Year and trimester	Total
Heemraden	30	1800-1	33
Suykermolens	13	1800-1	15
Contracten	7	1800-1	7
Landerijen en Landbouw	6	1800-1	9
Ambagten en ambagtskv	4	1800-2	4

Figure 3.2: Relative realia on the resoluties of the Hoge Regering, 1795-6 May 1800.²²

²¹ ID-JaAN, Archive of the Hoge Regering, Net-generale resoluties, inventory numbers 1135-1153 and the digitized realia 1795- 6 May 1800, https://sejarah-nusantara.anri.go.id/realia_search/?description=&subject=&date from=01%2F01%2F1796&date to=05%2F06%2F1800&order by= [accessed 13/05/2019].

²² ID-JaAN, digitized realia, https://sejarah-nusantara.anri.go.id/realia_search/?description=&subject=&date from=01%2F01%2F1796&date to=05%2F06%2F1800&order by= [accessed 13/05/2019].

Heemraden, Suykermolens and Contracten

The realia that this approach deemed most significant is on the *heemraden*. A heemraad was a provincial administration that was subordinate to the colony in which it resided. They were mostly founded in the Dutch colonies that had sizeable territorial possessions, namely the Cape and Java. In Batavia, the heemraad was made up of a president, a vice-president and seven more members. Out of these seven, three were company servants and four were burghers of Batavia. They had two main tasks. Firstly, the heemraad was given judicial authority on property disputes in the hinterlands of Batavia. Both local and European landowners fell under the heemraad's jurisdiction as long as property disputes lay at the heart of the issue. Secondly, they were charged with building and maintaining roads, bridges, dams and canals by the Hoge Regering.²³

However, in 1800 the Hoge Regering expanded the responsibilities of the heemraad. As discussed in the introduction, the cultivation of cash crops overtook the monopolization of luxury goods in terms of profitability over the course of the eighteenth century. Java coffee production was already outproducing its Arabian counterpart by about 1750. However, sugar cultivation was still in its infancy on Java. According to expert on the history of sugar cultivation Roger Knight, Java was at this point only a minor centre, producing artisan non-industrial sugar.²⁴ In general, sugar cultivation at the time was thought to be most efficient when done in plantations. However, in most of the Dutch East-Indies, sugar was only cultivated as part of a multi-crop agricultural cycle. The Batavian hinterlands were an exception to this. Over the course of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries a form of plantation production evolved.²⁵ This did not stop in the 1800s as this chapter will show.

The Landerijen en Landbouw case in the second chapter showed that the Hoge Regering was still issuing individual permits for sugar mills. In 1800 however, the administration delegated this responsibility to the heemraad. The heemraad then had to do an "objective" cost-benefit analysis of the mill and its renter to see whether it was "reasonable" to rent it out. To allow for this analysis, the heemraad had to send out a

²³ L. Balk and F. van Dijk (red.), *Inventory of the archive of the gouverneur-generaal en raden van Indië (Hoge Regering) van de Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie en taakopvolgers* (Jakarta, Den Haag 2002), 26-33.

²⁴ R. Knight, *Sugar, Steam and Steel: the industrial project in Colonial Java, 1830-1885* (Adelaide 2017) 2-8.

²⁵ Idem, 130-132.

commission to measure the state of the mills and their surroundings.²⁶ Furthermore, they presumably looked at the would-be renter's finances as well because they had to investigate the mill and the renter. In an effort to keep down the rent on the sugar mills (and thus the price of sugar), the Hoge Regering put a cap on the price of the sugar mills.²⁷ Who these potential sugar millers usually were is not clear from the sources. However, since this opportunity was only open to those who could muster a sizeable private investment, in practice this position was probably only open to burghers of the city of Batavia . The Hoge Regering's regulations make it look like there was an increasing amount of sugar mill renters that could not turn a profit and renters that paid many years in advance and would thus be given preference by the owners because they could provide instant funds. The Hoge Regering tried to mitigate this by forbidding sugar mill owners to give preference to renters who could pay multiple years of rent at once. The former is implied by the aforementioned fact that the heemraad now had to do a cost-benefit analysis prior to an agreement, suggesting that this was either not done or done poorly in the past. Lastly, sugar mill renters now had to make sure they had paid all their dues annually or risk a refusal of an extension on the rent by the heemraad. The efforts of the Hoge Regering are made explicit when it proclaimed that: "to promote the cultivation of sugar and help the sugar mill owners, all outstanding loans that have been given by the administration would be no higher than 4,5% annually".²⁸ A realia later in the month reiterates the absolute prohibition of private sale of sugar by the millers (presumably to prevent undercutting).²⁹

The administration made the sugar mill market more accessible to those that could not pay the mill's rent years in advance. However, these potential investors still had to undergo scrutiny by the heemraad to see if they could be expected to turn a profit. In this

²⁶ Unfortunately, it remains unclear who made up this commission of the heemraad. The new responsibilities of the heemraad were only in effect until 7 February 1809, when Daendels abolished the institution and divided its responsibilities between two other previously existing institutions: the College van Schepenen and the Commissaris voor de Zaken tot den Inlander. For more information, see: D. Nurmananingsingh, *Inventory of the College van Heemraden in Batavia 1682-1807*, Arsip Nasional (Jakarta 2003).

²⁷ ID-JaAN, digitized realia, https://sejarah-nusantara.anri.go.id/realia_search/?order_by=&description=&date_to=06%2F05%2F1800&date_from=01%2F01%2F1800&page=2&subject=Heemraden [accessed 17/05/2019].

²⁸ ID-JaAN, digitized realia, https://sejarah-nusantara.anri.go.id/realia_search/?order_by=&description=&date_to=06%2F05%2F1800&date_from=01%2F01%2F1800&page=2&subject=Heemraden [accessed 18/05/2019].

²⁹ Ibidem [accessed 18/05/2019].

way, the Hoge Regering seems to have aimed for a sugar production model in Batavia's hinterlands with financially steady renters who were not so rich that they could lock a mill down by paying several years' worth of rent in cash. The promotion and protection of sugar cultivation was thus high on the Hoge Regering's priorities, especially at the start of 1800. The first, second and third place on the list of possible archival events (heemraden, suykermolens and contracten) concern the same theme of promoting sugar cultivation in a responsible manner. This reinforces the first criterion of an archival event, the physical thickening of the archive. Since the realia were only mentioned three and two times outside of the first trimester of 1800 respectively, the physical thickening is also relatively high compared to other periods. Thus, relative to other years the frequency of these realia is quite high.

However, the second criterion of an archival event is the 'quickenning of the pulse' of the archive. This proved more complicated in this period, since communication between the East Indies and the Republic was scant and uncertain. There were no mentions of heemraad reform under any of the relevant categories that were provided in the index on the missives.³⁰ However, two missives regarding the topic of sugar were sent. Under the headers "sugar" and "sugar in sacks", two individual cases of sugar trade were discussed, both in 1798.³¹ Unfortunately, neither mentions anything that remotely implies encouragement of the Comité to increase sugar cultivation by the Hoge Regering or the role the heemraden were to play in this.³²

The lack of communication between Batavia and the Netherlands makes it hard to argue that this is an archival event according to Stoler's definition, since there is no 'quickenning of the pulse'. However, the fact that the realia of heemraden and suykermolens (sugar mills) were at the top by such a margin, they still reflect that this was one of the most important policy changes relative to the other realia. Furthermore, the fact that the Hoge Regering tried to make sure that the cultivation of sugar was done by those who could bear the responsibility but were not rich per se is a policy that reflected the Dutch East Indies' conversion from a monopoly holding company to an agricultural colony, just like Van Goor described. While this is thus by no means a

³⁰ The *Alphabetisch zakenregister op de missien van het Comité naar Indië en China* (32) sorted the missives sent by the *Comité* by category. There is also a 'secret' version of this for the more sensitive messages (36). Both were void of anything regarding heemraden or suykermolens (or sugar in general).

³¹ NL-HaNA, Archive of the Comité, inventory numbers 31, 5 september 1796 and 29 May 1798 and 32.

³² NL-HaNA, Archive of the Comité, inventory numbers 31,32, 34 and 36.

historical breakthrough, the policymaking of the Hoge Regering suggests that it was not as passive and conservative as has been argued by van Goor and Ricklefs. The administration did not seem to be bothered with enacting a singularly mercantilist or liberal policy. It combined liberal policies such as the opening of Batavia for neutral foreign ships with a mercantilist approach to sugar cultivation. The heemraad now had to pick the best candidates for sugar cultivation based on their finances being steady and their willingness to renew their permit annually, as they were not allowed to pay years in advance anymore. The Hoge Regering thus seemingly provided its burgher middle or upper-middle class with an avenue for investment without breaking its own monopoly on exporting sugar from the Dutch East-Indies. The produced sugar was purchased by the Hoge Regering at a fixed price and resold later on.

Landerijen en Landbouw

The realia Landerijen en Landbouw (Lands and Agriculture), concern the upkeep of infrastructure around Batavia. With the realia being mentioned six times at the start of 1800 and only three times before this, there is definitely a relative part to the physical thickening of the archive here. However, since communication was so sparse there was no discussion on this between Batavia and the Republic. This case thus also lacks the 'quickened pulse' formally required for it to constitute an archival event. However, this case also definitely reflects the attitude of the Hoge Regering. As we saw in the previous section, infrastructure upkeep was the responsibility of the heemraden. The Hoge Regering put forward new resoluties to help finance the upkeep of roads. For instance, the Hoge Regering allowed the heemraden to collect a tax of $\frac{1}{4}$ percent of the value of the property of all land and homeowners between the city and Ancol, situated one hour's worth of travelling east from Batavia by foot.³³ Furthermore, to ensure payment was made on time any latecomers would have to pay double. Two groups were excluded from the tax: all those from *inlandsche natiën* (natives) who did not own a carriage and those that were deemed too poor to pay. Unfortunately, the Hoge Regering did not specify what the threshold would be for being 'too poor'. In any case, the Batavian administration did not seem to have expected locals to have any taxable property.³⁴ At the very least, the Hoge

³³ NL-HaNA, Verzameling buitenlandse kaarten Leupe 4.VEL, Plan van de post Zoutelande of Anziol, geleegeen een uur gaans beoosten Batavia, 1762, 1211.

³⁴ ID-JaAN, digitized realia, https://sejarah-nusantara.anri.go.id/realia_search/?description=&subject=Landerijen+en+Landbouw&date_from=01%2F01%2F1800&date_to=06%2F05%2F1800&order_by= [accessed 23/5/2019].

Regering took into account the vulnerability of its poorer subjects. At a time where men were sparse and resupplies from Europe were impossible, it made sense to be careful with all subjects in the East Indies.

Ambagten en Ambagtskwartieren

The last spot is *Ambagten en Ambagtskwartieren* (crafts and craftsmen's lodgings). The realia was only mentioned during the first trimester of 1800, hence its relative thickness. However, within this trimester, it was only mentioned four times. It could be argued that four mentions is hardly enough to speak about a thickening. This can be considered one of the faults of the quantitative approach to find archival events. The approach ascribes a high degree of significance to realia that are mentioned only a couple of times within the same period, and not in other periods. However, this problem is also one of sample size. If the amounts of realia go up, the relative thickness within a certain time frame helps discern between frequently mentioned realia and infrequently mentioned realia that have a significant increase within a certain period. This case should not be considered an archival event and with only four mentions it does not seem to reflect the priorities of the Hoge Regering either.³⁵ However, a short description of the content of these realia seems in place.

Conclusion

After the VOC's bankruptcy, the new Comité was made subject to the National Assembly by the anti-Orangist federalists and radicals. Furthermore, the leaders of the Comité made sure the members of the organization were ideologically up to the times by recording who would and would not swear an oath of loyalty towards the new regime (and especially against the old Orangist one) and were investigating the political leanings of its subjects. However, due to the naval dominance of the British, communication with the possessions of the Comité became nigh impossible and the committee instructed the Hoge Regering to continue "on the old foot". The revolutionary elán of the Comité was thus not put into practice in the administration of the Dutch East Indies. However, Ricklefs' argument that "there was little immediate change, for the same personnel remained in their jobs and

³⁵ ID-JaAN, digitized realia, https://sejarah-nusantara.anri.go.id/realia_search/?description=&subject=Ambagten+en+Ambagtskwartieren&date_from=01%2F01%2F1800&date_to=06%2F05%2F1800&order_by=-date [accessed 17/05/2019].

pursued their old ways” should be nuanced. While the Comité was indeed unable to enact real change on policy in the East Indies, the Hoge Regering made a concerted effort to adapt to the new, isolated and autonomous situation. The Hoge Regering enacted policy that gave the heemraden greater authority in administering who rented sugar mills and in levying taxes for infrastructure building and maintenance. Furthermore, these policies paid extra attention to not only favour the richest inhabitants. In the case of the sugar mills, the Hoge Regering even curtailed the ability of the more affluent to get preference in renting these sugar mills by paying years in advance. At a time of fierce debate between the value of mercantilist policies versus liberal policies, the Hoge Regering seemingly did not lean one way or the other. Instead, it held a pragmatic approach in which the cultivation of cash crops like sugar and the welfare of its population were dominant. However, it remains unclear who the Batavian inhabitants were. This is one of the limitations of this archive, especially when researching the execution (and effectiveness) of policy. However, since this research looks more at the intentions of the Hoge Regering this limit is not as constraining. While coffee cultivation was equally important to the East Indies, its production had been going well since the 1750’s as has been discussed.

In terms of archival events, this chapter proved more troublesome than the first. Due to the almost complete lack of communication it proved difficult to establish the second criterion of archival events: a quickening of the pulse of the archive. However, since this was due to the international political situation it is impossible to establish whether there would have been communication regarding these cases if the British had not been so dominant at sea. Perhaps it is not as useful to use a quickening of the archival pulse as a criterion for archival events because it discounts varying communication possibilities over time. The fact remains that the aforementioned cases came to the fore out of 765 realia and these still reflect the priorities of the Hoge Regering even if an archival pulse is lacking. The *Ambagt en Ambagtskwartieren* case showed the limits of the quantitative approach adopted in this research when there are less realia in a period.

The last interesting result of the quantitative analysis is that cases that received the highest priority all happened in the first or second trimester of the year 1800. Since there was no change of personnel within the Hoge Regering during this period and communication with the Republic concerning these subjects was non-existent, the cause behind this sudden flurry of like-minded policies remains vague. However, the fact that

the Hoge Regering enacted pragmatic autonomous policy at this time is of itself already proof that they did not continue “in their old ways”, as they were instructed by the Comité and they were not as passive as has been argued by Merle Ricklefs and Jur van Goor.

4. Batavian autonomy

The last chapter provided two main results. Firstly, the passivity of the Hoge Regering in the period after the bankruptcy of the VOC was nuanced. Secondly, the cases in the last chapter illustrated that while a 'quickenning of the pulse' is needed for a case to be an archival event, a lack of it does not have to mean the case was not of importance to the Hoge Regering. Will this trend continue under the reign of the new Raad der Aziatische Bezittingen (1800-1806)?

The organization of the Raad followed the Comité in its approach towards handling information. The Departement tot Indische Zaken, the successor of the Preparatoir Besogne, decided on individual matters instead of functioning as an information filter.¹ Since these are not relevant towards resoluties by the Hoge Regering, the letters exchanged between Batavia and the Republic are used instead (like in the previous chapter).

The Raad was the second iteration of Dutch state control over the Dutch East Indies. The organization would last only five years because of the incorporation of the Batavian Republic into the Napoleonic Empire by Napoleon Bonaparte (1804-1814, 1815). The Comité and Raad were succeeded by Herman Willem Daendels (1808-1811), appointed by Napoleon, and Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles (1811-1816) under the English. Both are thought to have made quite sweeping changes, as was discussed in the third chapter. However, the previous chapter also nuanced the inactivity and inflexibility of the preceding Dutch administrations that historians like Van Goor accused them of.

This chapter again starts with a look at the absolute amounts of information created by the Hoge Regering. Afterwards, this period's top five realia are discussed one by one, after which general conclusions are drawn.

¹ "Department on Indonesian matters".

Year	May 1800	1801	1802	1803	1804	1805	1806	Total
Realia Written	561	436	582	519	162	177	0	2437
Pages of Resoluties	2505	3732	6546	3878	1664	4441	1455	24221

Figure 4.1 Total amount of realia and pages of resoluties, May 1800-1805.²

The first thing that catches the eye in Figure 4.1 is that similar to the second and third chapter, there seems to be no obvious relation between the amount of realia created and the number of pages of resoluties were written. This further supports the notion that the writing of realia was an active process of making choices in what to include and exclude in the realia. Secondly, the amount of realia is very high in the first four years. The 1800-1806 period had at least twice as many realia written annually than the preceding period under the Comité and the following years. While this could be a coincidence, it could also point towards the fact that the Hoge Regering was more active in areas that were considered important enough to be written down as realia. In any case, it is hardly surprising that the five cases that are discussed in this chapter all fall within the aforementioned period, as shown in Figure 4.2.

Keyword	Keywords in trimester	Year and trimester	Total
Maccasser	31	1801-1	43
Inlandsche Zaken	22	1802-1	38
Rijstbasaar en Rijst	18	1800-2	35
Schepenen	15	1803-1	33
Verstrekking	13	1800-3	24

Figure 4.2: Top five cases sorted by Poisson value.³

Makassar

The first case is on the governorship of Makassar on South Sulawesi.⁴ The VOC possessed a factorij in the city from which the Dutch had tried to gain monopolies on the spices cultivated by local people in South Sulawesi, with differing amounts of success since the early 1600's. South Sulawesi had always been a contentious ground, with oft-changing power dynamics between several Buginese and Makarese states.⁵ While alliances with

² ID-JaAN, Archive of the Hoge Regering, Net-generale resoluties, inventory numbers 1149-1174 and the digitized realia 6 May 1800-1806, https://sejarah-nusantara.anri.go.id/realia_search/?description=&subject=&date_from=05%2F01%2F1800&date_to=01%2F01%2F1807&order_by= [accessed 19/05/2019].

³ ID-JaAN, digitized realia, https://sejarah-nusantara.anri.go.id/realia_search/?description=&subject=&date_from=05%2F01%2F1800&date_to=01%2F01%2F1807&order_by= [accessed 19/05/2019].

⁴ Makassar is located in the eastern part of the Indonesian archipelago, in the province South-Sulawesi.

⁵ Ricklefs, *Modern Indonesia*, 73-84.

the VOC were commonplace after 1600, alliances against the VOC were equally frequent.⁶ During the case mentioned above, the Dutch were only able to protect their own position and that of their principal ally, Bone (ruled by Sultan Ahmad Dursale Syamsuddin La Tenrituppu (1775-1812), while their ally and others frequently battled one another. According to Merle Ricklefs, the Dutch would hold no significant influence until the later nineteenth century.⁷

The first point of exchange regarding 'Makassar' between the Hoge Regering and the Raad was on the appointment of Makassar's new governor P.T. Chassé. He was appointed by the Raad after having served as the *opperhoofd* of Sumatra's Western coast in 1800.⁸ This was met by some bewilderment by the Hoge Regering, as they had been under the impression the post's current holder, mister W. Beth, would get an extension. In a missive to the Raad, the Hoge Regering expressed their concern that such in clarity harmed the unity of the Hoge Regering and stressed that they should be more clear in their instructions in the future.⁹ The Raad answered coldly: "we did not deem this strife worthy of our consideration and assume that the unity of the council has recovered and will not be disturbed so lightly again."¹⁰

The realia passed in the first trimester of 1801 concern a number of issues, but the most important one is that of maintaining peace between all of the different sultanates and principalities. This is similar to the policy adopted by the VOC in the second chapter with regards to succession in Java. The first realia recommends the new Governor-General Chassé to make sure that his ally Bone does not conquer the neighboring state of Maros, also located on South Sulawesi¹¹ Furthermore, he had to make sure that Bone would give back the land loaned out to the state once its leader had passed. Furthermore, the Hoge

⁶ One such example is the christianization of Ternate, which initially gave them a higher status within the VOC hierarchy. However, in 1681 Ternate allied itself with Tidore against the VOC regardless of this conversion. See: Ricklefs, *Modern Indonesia*, 76 and 81.

⁷ Idem, 82.

⁸ P. Chassé on Sumatra's West Coast, ID-JaAN, digitized realia: https://sejarah-nusantara.anri.go.id/realia_search/?date_from=&subject=&order_by=date&description=chass%C3%A9&date_to= [accessed 25/05/2019]. An *opperhoofd* was the principal of a smaller factorij under the VOC.

⁹ Chassé was appointed governor of Makassar in 18 December 1799. NL-HaNA, Archive of the Raad, Excerpta uit de missiven van de verschillende colleges en autoriteiten te Batavia, 1800-1806, inventory number 147, received July 1800, no. 87.

¹⁰ NL-HaNA, Archive of the Raad, minuut-afgaande missiven van de Raad naar Batavia. 1800 juni 9 – 1806 juli 24, inventory number 68 and alphabetisch zakenregister op de afgaande missiven van de Raad naar Batavia, inventory number 70, page 473 no. 66.

¹¹ https://sejarah-nusantara.anri.go.id/rulers_index/?description=bone&first_letter=&order_by= This is the source for the name of the ruler of Bone, Sultan Ahmad Dursale Syamsuddin La Tenritupu.

Regering stressed that Tanete, another rival state on the island, should not perish.¹² Instead, Chassé should try to mediate a peace between Tanete and Bone as soon as possible and in general to “go about the work with the utmost care in regards to these war hungry states”.¹³ Thus, Chassé had to make sure that the states in South Sulawesi were in balance relative to each other to maintain peace. And although the Dutch did not have a huge influence here until the later nineteenth century according to Ricklefs, they definitely tried. The Hoge Regering literally told Chassé to “maintain the upper hand in the courts of Bone and Tanete.” To this effect, Chassé was to undertake two measures. Firstly, he was to force all rulers to sign contracts with the Dutch and specifically to do so in Makassar. This gave the factorij a symbolical importance as a place where even local rulers had to comply. Secondly, the Hoge Regering placed a local head, with the rank of *regent* on Telo, located slightly to the east of Makassar. His job was to prevent any marriages that were thought to be detrimental to the “Company’s interests”.¹⁴ There was no mention of the Raad sending any instructions regarding these policies in the missives they sent to Batavia.¹⁵

One last point of interest is that in many of the instructions to the new governor Chassé regarding internal policy, the Hoge Regering refers to proposals and practices that his predecessor Beth had started.¹⁶ While it makes sense to not start anew every time a post changes hands, the references to his proposals and the bewilderment at Chassé’s appointment could also imply the Hoge Regering’s preference for Beth instead of Chassé at this post. It seems he did well in the long term, as Chassé was promoted to the Hoge

¹² Tanete was a small kingdom on the West coast of South Sulawesi. See: I. Caldwell, ‘Power, State and Society among the pre-Islamic Bugis’, *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land-, en Volkenkunde*, vol. 151:3 (Leiden 1995), 394-421, 406.

¹³ ID-JaAN, https://sejarah-nusantara.anri.go.id/realia_search/?description=&subject=Maccasser&date_from=01%2F01%2F1801&date_to=01%2F05%2F1801&order_by= [accessed 03/07/2019].

¹⁴ Idem, [accessed 03/07/2019].

¹⁵ NL-HaNA, Archive of the Raad inventory numbers 68,70, minuut-secrete missiven van de Raad naar Batavia en China. 1800 augustus 14 – 1801 december 7, inventory number 79 and alphabetisch zakenregister op de secrete missiven van de Raad naar Batavia en Chine. 1800 augustus 14 – 1804 juli 10, inventory number 81.

¹⁶ For example: proposals for measures against smuggling and a policy against gambling. ID-JaAN, digitized realia, https://sejarah-nusantara.anri.go.id/realia_search/?description=beth&subject=Maccasser&date_from=01%2F01%2F1801&date_to=01%2F05%2F1801&order_by= [accessed 23/05/2019].

Regering as *directeur-generaal* (responsible for trade and shipping) by Daendels in 1809.¹⁷

The Makassar case should be considered an archival event. The quantitative approach showed that there was a relative physical thickening of the archive, the first criterion of an archival event. The second criterion, a quickening of the pulse, is arguably also present. The only exchange between the Hoge Regering and the Raad was on the appointment of Chassé. However, the orders given to Chassé in the realia were also sent to him, because they confirm his arrival in Makassar in the same letter where they voiced their complaints. What we see here is an interesting dynamic in the power relations between the Raad and the Hoge Regering. While the Raad had the right to appoint governors and exercised it as such, the Hoge Regering maliciously complied by making sure the new governor-general enacted the policy of their favorite, Willem Beth.

Inlandsche Zaken

Inlandsche Zaken (local affairs), is the next subject on the list. The individual realia are on a disparate range of subjects. This is to be suspected under a header as general as this one. The two main 'events' described within the realia of the first trimester of 1802 are the transformation of a number of regencies within what the Dutch called the *Preanger Bovenlanden* (Priangan, West Java). The regent of Parakan Muncang (located in the regency of Bogor), Soeria Nata Koesoema, was fired and jailed because of what the Hoge Regering termed 'bad behavior'. Although the Hoge Regering did not specify the kind of behavior that warranted this, the fact that his debt was to be recovered by repossessing what he left behind and take his jewelry for whatever amount of debt was left implied that the Hoge Regering had no trust that the debt would be repaid. The neighbouring regency of Sumedang was incorporated into Parakan Muncang due to the high debts it had incurred and a new regent, Wira Tanoe Redja, was installed on April 16th, 1802. It is important to note here that the 'bad behavior' of both regents is a subjective term used by the Hoge Regering. Since there is little context on what constituted said bad behaviour, this could range from anything between outright hostility, low production, non-compliance or simply the inability to pay back incurred debt. The indebtedness of regents

¹⁷ J.G. Taylor, *The Social World of Batavia: European and Eurasian in Dutch Asia* (Wisconsin 1983). 99-104 and missives sent between Daendels and Chassé: Archive of the Hoge Regering, Intern, Briefwisseling van gouverneur-generaal W. Daendels met diverse functionarissen, inventory numbers 2669-2672.

and other high officials in the Priangan region to the Company was a common feature according to historian Peter Boomgaard.¹⁸

The same happened with the regencies of Batoelaijang and Bandung. Ranga di Koesoema, regent of Batoelaijang was fired for, as the sources say, continuous bad behavior and the regency was incorporated into the larger Bandung regency as long as the new regent of both areas, Wiera Nata Koesoema, took over its debt.¹⁹

These decisions seem like very pragmatic solutions to perceived problems between the Hoge Regering and local rulers. However, the plantation-filled Preanger Bovenlanden were to be a central element to the economy of the Dutch East Indies after Daendels had the Grote Postweg constructed.²⁰ The Preanger Bovenlanden were thus already high on the priorities of the Hoge Regering. We already saw in the third chapter that the administration had made the heemraden and their inhabitants responsible for the upkeep of roads. Taken together, we can conclude that the Hoge Regering made a concerted effort to make the Preanger Bovenlanden more (economically) viable. While this effort was not as successful as those of their successors, it can be argued that they laid the groundwork for these more sweeping changes. While this was thus an interesting and revealing case, the lack of any exchange of information prevents us from calling this an archival event.

Rijstbasaar en Rijst

Rijstbasaar and rijst (rice bazaar and rice) is the third possible archival event of this chapter. The realia describe a number of measures taken because of a large shortage of rice. The shortage posed a large risk to everyone in the colonies: there were so few new people coming into the Dutch East Indies that the Hoge Regering spoke of “a critical state”, with regards to the supply of men and goods.²¹ Now more than ever, the Hoge Regering had to take care of all of Batavia’s inhabitants. Only handing out food to a select group of people during a potential famine could cause social tension. The shortage of supply was due to the continuing British naval dominance at the time. The reasons behind the rice

¹⁸ P. Boomgaard, ‘Buitenzorg in 1805: The Role of Money and Credit in a Colonial Frontier Society’, *Modern Asian Studies* 20:1 (1986) 33-58, specifically 41-42.

¹⁹ ID-JaAN, digitized realia, https://sejarah-nusantara.anri.go.id/realia_search/?order_by=&description=&date_to=01%2F01%2F1803&date_from=01%2F01%2F1802&page=2&subject=Inlandsche+Zaken [accessed 27/05/2019].

²⁰ The Grote Postweg connected the Preanger Bovenlanden with the port of Batavia.

²¹ NL-HaNA, Archive of the Raad, inventory number 147, missive van 3 September 1801, no. 7 and 8.

shortage seem to be twofold. Firstly, sugar plantations are known to be very water-intensive. They could have depleted the soil, preventing rice to be cultivated for a while. Secondly, again the English naval dominance made it very difficult to allocate rice from the different factorijen to where it was needed.²²

Since the stakes were this high, it is not surprising that the Hoge Regering churned out a plethora of policies designed for three things: keeping the price of rice down (thus preventing formation of a monopoly) and ensuring that the inhabitants of Batavia were fed. To the first end, the Hoge Regering decreed that all rice imported from Java and Cheribon had to be sold to the 'Company' first, after which it would be distributed on their rice bazaar at a fixed price. Furthermore, rice exports from Java and Cheribon were forbidden from going anywhere else but Batavia. Secondly, the Hoge Regering forbade anyone from refusing to sell any rice they had above anyone's subsistence needs. The punishment on this count was severe: an instant public flogging, explicitly "without any form of due process". Lastly, the Hoge Regering even allowed a regency on East Java to stop producing indigo and pepper to cultivate rice instead.

Towards the end of ensuring the inhabitants of Batavia had access to food, papers were handed out by the *drost* (bailiff) of the city. The above measures apparently were not enough for those in Batavia. On 27 August, 1800, the Hoge Regering allowed any person living in Batavia and a number of outposts was allowed two month's worth of rice.²³ It remains unclear if "any person" actually meant all persons in Batavia regardless of status. However, the lack of supply of men from Europe made the Hoge Regering more dependent on the men that were present in the Indies. Furthermore, only handing out food to a select group of people during a potential famine could cause social tension, of which there is no mention in the realia. In any case, the price policies definitely improved every person's ability to buy rice in Batavia.

While there is ample mention of the Hoge Regering asking for supplies, men and cash, the shortage of rice in 1800 itself is only mentioned in a report detailing the causes

²² NL-HaNA, Archive of the Raad, Overgekomen Stukken, Copie-memorie over de oorzaken van het toenemende gebrek aan rijst op Java, door F. van Boekholtz. 1801 February 7, inventory number 394I.

²³ ID-JaAN, digitized realia, https://sejarah-nusantara.anri.go.id/realia_search/?description=&subject=Rijstbasaar+en+Rijst&date from=01%2F01%2F1800&date to=01%2F01%2F1801&order by= [accessed 28/05/2019].

of the shortage sent on 7 February 1801.²⁴ There is no record of an answer from the Raad.²⁵

This case again brings to the fore the pragmatism of the Hoge Regering. The governor-general and council rolled out a range of measures with two very clear goals: a feasible rice price and access to rice for all or many in Batavia. There are no data on the effects of these policies in the archives. However, on 3 September 1801, the Hoge Regering wrote to the Raad that partly because the Javan coasts had been left undisturbed by its enemies (the English and pirates) this year, there was again a sufficient quantity of rice.²⁶ At the very least the colony had survived.

It seems odd that the Raad would not even respond to such a pressing threat to the survival of the Dutch East Indies. However, there are a number of possible explanations for this. Firstly, the organization of the Raad was only definitively organized on 26 November 1800. These issues thus confronted the Raad in their very first months. Perhaps they did not know what to do, or simply felt that they could not do anything from such a distance (and the British navy preventing effective communication). A quickening of the pulse should thus also be relative to the possibilities of communication available at the time. In the case of the Hoge Regering, this differed greatly over time as we have seen. In any case, even though the Raad did not react to the issue, the rice shortage should still be considered an archival event because of its influence in the Dutch East Indies. For six months to a year, these policies dominated all Dutch rice transport and trade. The paper trail ranges from provisional food stamps handed out to inhabitants of Batavia to decrees that forbade the export of rice to anywhere else but the colonial capital. Although an exchange of information or ideas did not happen in this case, this event permeated Batavian society and thus its archive. A quickening of the pulse does not seem to be necessary to constitute an archival event.

Schepenen

The next case concerns the *Schepenen*. These were council members that made up the *College van Schepenen*. This was the most powerful municipal body in Batavia, with a mandate on all civil and criminal matters regarding burghers and strangers.²⁷ The College

²⁴ NL-HaNA, Archive of the Raad, inventory number 147, 7 February 1801.

²⁵ Idem, inventory numbers 68 and 70, 79 and 81.

²⁶ Idem, inventory number 147, 3 September 1801.

²⁷ For instance, the earlier mentioned *landdrost* was subservient to the College van Schepenen.

consisted of nine members, four burghers and four administration officials. The body was chaired by a member of the Hoge Regering.²⁸ The specific case in 1803 concerns the release of a person of their paid service and giving them ‘burgher freedom’ by the Hoge Regering. These were all men that volunteered for service with functions like bookkeepers, soldiers and stores managers who now had to find a different enterprise. The decisions to release individuals made up twelve of the fifteen realia within the first trimester of 1803.²⁹ Within the next three years, at which point Daendels came to Batavia, this decision was taken only once more: ten days after the end of the first trimester of 1803.³⁰ Where did this flurry of releases come from? There are a number of factors that explain this. Firstly, the Hoge Regering had lost or given up a number of factorijen to the British. In 1795, William V of the Netherlands (r. 1751-1795) instructed Dutch governors of overseas territories to hand them over to the British while he was fleeing Napoleon’s armies. The British took Ambon and Banda under this authority. Nuku (r. 1783-1805), a member of the royal house of Tidore who had led a rebellion against the Dutch years decades earlier, again smelled an opportunity and took Maluku, Tidore and Ternate with British assistance. Afterwards he was recognized as Sultan of Tidore by the British.³¹ The effects of the Napoleonic wars could thus be felt in Indonesia as well. Besides the obvious loss in trade and control in the area, the Hoge Regering now faced another problem: the men running these factorijen came back to Batavia, and were now sitting idle. They complained about this in a letter to the Raad back home twice in 1802. The first time they react to a promise of the Raad to make a decision on the idle servants of the lost territories. This is a decision the Hoge Regering anticipated with “the greatest impatience”. The second time was less on edge as it simply said “expecting a disposition on the servants of lost territories”.³² There does not seem to have been an answer by the Raad within the common and secret missives they sent to the Hoge Regering.³³ In 1802, the Governor-General of Batavia, Pieter Van Overstraten (r. 1796-1801), passed away. It was a tradition for the new Governor-General, which was to be Jonannes Siberg (r. 1801-1805), to pardon

²⁸ Niemeijer, ‘Central Administration’ in: *Archives of the VOC*, 67-69.

²⁹ The other realia are too disparate to be relevant enough for description here.

³⁰ ID-JaAN, digitized realia, https://sejarah-nusantara.anri.go.id/realia_search/?order_by=&description=&date_to=01%2F01%2F1806&date_from=01%2F01%2F1800&page=2&subject=Schepenen [accessed 29/05/2019].

³¹ Ricklefs, *Modern Indonesia*, 77-78.

³² NL-HaNA, Archive of the Raad, inventory number 147, 31 January 1802, no. 58.

³³ NL-HaNA, Archive of the Raad, inventory numbers 68 and 70, 79 and 81.

a number of criminals over the heads of the College van Schepenen.³⁴ These pardons were not equal to giving Company servants their burgher freedom. However, the timing was similar, there were hardly any other instances of the doling out of burgher freedom within the period and these men were a problem to the Hoge Regering, as they waited impatiently for the *Raad* to make a decision on the matter.

This case again highlights the Hoge Regering's willingness to adapt. Faced with multiple problems that resulted from the Napoleonic wars, (ceding Ambon and Banda to the British and the difficulty of communication between the Indies and the Republic), the Hoge Regering reinvented an old tradition of pardons to solve the issue of idle servants under Siberg. In terms of archival events, the Schepenen case should qualify as one. The issue of idle servants was a topic of discussion between the Hoge Regering and the Raad, even though said communication proved troublesome. There was thus some quickening of the pulse, even though the problem was eventually solved solely by the Hoge Regering.

Verstrekking

The last of the cases under discussion is under the header of *Verstrekking*, or 'provision'. It is important to remember that these policies were enacted right in the middle of the rice shortage discussed as the third case in this chapter and a war with the British. The Hoge Regering seems to have wanted to keep its military personnel satisfied (and loyal) by creating provisions around health and payment of military personnel. For instance, soldiers were to be given half portions of both potatoes and rice whenever possible, presumably to save rice. Furthermore, during the monsoon period of 1800, European and local soldiers would receive additional sugar and coffee.³⁵ While the Raad sent many missives to the Hoge Regering on the subject of military matters, none of them pertain to measures taken here. Instead, they were individual cases of payment, punishment or complaints.³⁶

Taken alone, this case is not an archival event. There was no attempt by either the Hoge Regering or the Raad to exchange ideas or information on the subject. Since this case thus lacks a quickening of the archival pulse, only one of the two criteria to be an archival

³⁴ Niemeijer, 'Central Administration' in: *Archives of the VOC*, 66-70.

³⁵ ID-JaAN, digitized realia, https://sejarah-nusantara.anri.go.id/realia_search/?description=&subject=Verstrekking&date_from=01%2F01%2F1800&date_to=01%2F01%2F1806&order_by= [accessed 29/31/2019].

³⁶ NL-HaNA, Archive of the Raad, inventory number 68 and 70, 79 and 81.

event is fulfilled. However, the plethora of policies on military personnel imply that they were of crucial importance to the colonial administration. Furthermore, the possibilities for communication were slim at this time due to war with the British. This means that again we see that a quickening of the pulse is not absolutely necessary in establishing the priorities of an administration. This is important because it implies that a quickening of the pulse should perhaps not be considered as a criterion for archival events. Instead of deciding whether an archival event 'has' a quickened pulse, it might be more fruitful to investigate how much of a pulse there was within the historical context of that event. Otherwise, cases that would be archival events can be discounted merely because there was no way to communicate reliably, for example in the case of war.

Conclusion

All in all, the Hoge Regering was much more active under the Raad (1800-1806) than under the Comité (1795-1800). This is reflected in the archive: under the period of the Comité, the Hoge Regering created 765 realia and 10,989 pages of resolutions. In the Raad period, these numbers were 2,437 and 22,766 respectively. Furthermore, there was more communication between the Hoge Regering and the Raad when compared to the Hoge Regering with the Comité: in three out of the five cases under the Raad there was contact between the two, while this was true for zero out of the five cases under the Comité.

The Makassar case proved interesting because of the strict adherence to the policies of the predecessor of the newly appointed (by the Raad) P.J. Chassé. This highlighted how the Hoge Regering was able to stick to its own policies when faced with Raad intervention.

The case discussing Inlandsche Zaken (local affairs) turned out not to be an archival event due to the lack of communication between the Indies and the Republic. However, it did reflect early attention to the Preanger Bovenlanden, which would prove to be vital to the Dutch East Indies under Daendels, Raffles and the Dutch state only decades later. It could be argued the the groundwork for this development later in the nineteenth century was laid by centralizing regencies and, as we saw in the third chapter, making the heemraden and the inhabitants of their area responsible for road upkeep.

The cases of the rice shortage and supplies (number three and five) should not be considered on their own. The supply case was related to the case of rice shortage and both

are in part results of the geopolitical tensions at the time. Considering these cases together increases the first criterion of archival events (relative physical thickness). However, both cases did not receive a reaction by the Raad, even though the Hoge Regering asked for help when it was short on food. Still, taken together, the policies that followed out of these cases changed Batavian society for the duration of the shortage and thus its archive. This suggests that a quickening of the pulse is not necessary for a case to be an archival event and physical relative thickening is more important factor.

Conclusion

This research has studied the making and functioning of the VOC archive to gain insight into the Hoge Regering in Batavia during the unruly period of 1790-1806 by studying the flow of quantitatively found archival events through a changing information structure. Analysis of these events turned out that the Hoge Regering became a more independent body that showed more initiative than historiography indicated. Furthermore, the underlying theory of archival events and the method to find them was tested. The main point of criticism in this regard was the inflexibility of the criterion of a quickening of the pulse.

Analysis of the general realia over the period 1790-1806 turned out one main point of interest. The realia do not have a positive or negative relationship with the resoluties by the Hoge Regering they refer to. Instead, the inclusion of certain realia seems to have been a (subjective) choice by the realist based on the importance of the resolution. While it is tempting to argue that a higher amount of realia means more important subjects were discussed, there are other factors to consider. This subjective choice can change through the passing of time or simply a change in realist. Vriend found a similar lack of relationship between the realia and the resoluties and also presumed that the realist based his choice on what he deemed most important. A comparative study of the realia under different periods of realists could provide further insight into choices made by the realist.

All in all, how did archival events reveal continuities and discontinuities in the perspective of the Hoge Regering in Batavia during the period of organizational- and regime-change between 1790-1806 and its position within the hierarchy? In general terms, the Hoge Regering had become quite independent from its Dutch superiors. In the period under the VOC there was still some back-and-forth between the two, but that disappeared almost completely in the following period. While the amount of realia dropped under the Comité, the Hoge Regering continued enacting its own policies. Policies like the cases of heemraden and inlandsche zaken suggest a longer-term effort to invigorate the Preanger Bovenlanden, which would gain hugely in economic significance in the next decades. One constant between the Hoge Regering under the VOC on the one hand and under the Comité and the Raad on the other was the influence on local politics. Whether it was about guaranteeing the succession of the oldest son in Java or preventing

unfavorable marriages in South Sulawesi, the Hoge Regering knew it had to maintain its influence in local politics. This is the biggest continuity in the policy of the Hoge Regering, although such a priority would be high on the list of any colonial administration. The Hoge Regering's focus on the Preanger Bovenlanden, based on the *Inlandsze Zaken*, *heemraden* and *suykermolens* cases, partly laid the groundwork for an area that would become economically vital later in the century. Additionally, their malicious compliance in making P.J. Chassé carry out his predecessor's policy and administrative innovations such as the adaptation of the pardon tradition in the *Schepenen* case and reorganization of the *heemraden* provide a counter to the picture of traditional policy as instructed by the *Comité* and the inertia argued by *Ricklefs* and *Van Goor*. The Hoge Regering had become an almost independent body.

The independence of the Hoge Regering was also illustrated in the development of the *Haagse Besogne*. This commission functioned as a filter that selected important matters for the *Heeren XVII*. Although it was replaced by the *Preparatoir Besogne*, this body carried out the same task. However, during the two subsequent periods the *Besogne* was transformed into the *Indische* or *Vijfde Departement* and now solely handled individual cases. The lack of answers from the Republic in the *Rijstbasaar* and *Rijst* and *Schepenen* cases suggest that the independence of the Hoge Regering was accepted in the Republic as well. The Hoge Regering thus became much more independent after the VOC was bankrupted. However, this change was not caused by the revolutionary changes back in the Republic. There were two factors that caused this. The first and most important factor is the British naval dominance that forced the Hoge Regering to resolve its issues without advice from the Republic. Secondly, the administrative upheaval that accompanied the successors of the VOC (especially the *Comité* and less extensively the *Raad*) meant that even if a number of the cases discussed above did make it home, they were unlikely to be answered. The reason behind the organizational upheaval that happened under the successors of the VOC was also due to the nationalization of the Dutch possessions in Asia and the fact that both successors made sure that the organization in the Republic was staffed by people of an anti-Orangist inclination. While the revolutionary *elán* in the Republic thus had an indirect influence on the Hoge Regering, the Batavian administration kept a pragmatic approach.

The theory of archival events and the method of detecting them allow the historian to construct an image of what information a certain administration considered as important and how its information system dealt with cases that it deemed as priorities, with the added backing of a quantitative analysis based on relative physical thickening. The concept of a quickening of the pulse remains hard to pin down, as was illustrated in the case of the *Circulaire Ordres*. The added requirements of relativity and an exchange of ideas or information could correct for external factors (like British naval dominance) and the more standard ‘pulsations’ of the archive. Unfortunately, the choice of whether a case is considered to have this criterion then still remains subjective. However, whether a case did or did not fulfill a quickening of the pulse was not decisive in whether it was an archival event, as could be seen in the *Rijstbasaar en Rijst* case. This implies that a relative physical thickening is a much more important factor than a quickening of the pulse. This thesis argues that a quickening of the archival pulse should not be considered as a criterion for archival events because it would discount archival events that happen when there is little possibility for information exchange. That is not to say that is not a useful concept. The exercise of looking for a pulse provides an insight into the relationship between different organizational layers and both side’s perspectives. The quickening of the archival pulse can be used more effectively as an open question than the binary one Stoler proposes (is there a pulse or not). Answering to what extent a pulse has quickened during an archival event allows the researcher to account for disparities in the possibility for information exchange. This accounts for the difference in communication possibilities at different points in time and for the subjectivity in the researcher’s decision on whether there is enough quickening to constitute an archival event. Quantifying the pulse of the archive, as Vriend suggested, would be just as subjective and has the added drawback of discounting differing communication possibilities over time.

There was only one instance of a cribbing process (the pepper case in the VOC period) found in this paper. That is not to say that officials were more honest in their reporting after the bankruptcy of the VOC. This research has shown that there was both less communication and less oversight under the successors of the Company, causing these cribbing processes to remain more under the surface than earlier in the lifespan of the VOC.

This thesis was a combination of historical and archival research. The theory of archival events and the method to detect them lend themselves well for such a combination because of it presumes a relationship between archival production and the disposition of the archive's creator. Furthermore, the use of quantitative and qualitative research in this thesis made it possible to zoom in and out across different cases. The downside of using a large amount of cases is that these cases need to be contextualized. This is a laborious process and takes up a lot of space that would ideally be reserved for analysis of more cases.

The quantitative approach has been proven to be effective over a longer period of time, which provides ample opportunity for further research. The small amount of realia that made the Verstrekking case in the fourth chapter physically significant highlighted that the quantitative approach gets more accurate in finding archival events when more data are put into it. For historical research, this means that the quantitative approach is well-suited for research into multi-layered organizations and comparison between these over a long period of time. An example would be the perspective of the Hoge Regering compared to that of the Heeren XVII during the eighteenth century, which would provide an 'along the grain' perspective on the relationship between these layers. The quantitative approach could also be applied to international comparative research between organizations, which would provide a deeper understanding of their differences and similarities. For instance, a comparison between the upper layer of the VOC and the British EIC.

Archival event theory also holds value to the archivist. It connects the different archives of an organization almost like no other approach because archival events by nature showcase those moments where an organization kicks into a higher administrative gear. The production of material and how it was circulated during these moments of crisis then allow the archivist to have a deeper understanding of how the archive was produced and whether the hierarchy functions as expected. These are both valuable to the archivist describing a new archive or correcting an already indexed one. Physical analyses like the quantitative approach adopted here can teach us a lot about the link between archives and their creators. A system in which someone like a realist can make vast archives accessible is certainly worth studying in a time where we ourselves are again dealing with an incredible increase in (digital) information – to which there is still no solution.

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- Kopieboek van uitgaande missiven, instructies en andere papieren van de Heeren XVII en de kamer Amsterdam aan de kantoren in Indië, inventarisnummers 312-344.
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- Minuut-missiven van het Comité naar Indië en China. 1796 April 14 – 1800 mei 14, inventarisnummer 31.

- Alfabetisch zakenregister op de missiven van het Comité naar Indië en China. 1796 April 14 – 1800 maart 13 (mei 14), inventarisnummer 32.
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- Minuut-secrete missiven van het Comité naar Indië en de Kaap. 1796 mei 2 – 1800 mei 8, inventarisnummer 34.
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- Departement tot het huishoudelijk bestuur in Indië en de Kaap. Notulen van het departement van het huishoudelijk bestuur. Met bijlagen. 1796 maart 8 – 1800 mei 14, inventarisnummer 139
- Lijsten van werklieden die de verklaring hebben afgelegd (of geweigerd) van het afkeer van het Stadhouderschap en erkenning van de volks-sovereiniteit, alsmede van hen, die zijn aangebleven en afgedank. 1796-1797, inventarisnummer 201A.
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- Excerpta uit de missiven van de verschillende colleges en autoriteiten te Batavia, in patria van 1804 tot 1806 ontvangen. Met lijst der van de Raad van Justitie te

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